

# Inspection of a good school: Boston High School

Spilsby Road, Boston, Lincolnshire PE21 9PF

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Inspection dates: 16 and 17 July 2024

## Outcome

Boston High School continues to be a good school.

The headteacher of this school is Andrew Fulbrook. The school is a single academy trust, which means other people in the trust have responsibility for running the school. The trust is overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Lisa Smith.

## What is it like to attend this school?

Most pupils, parents and carers, who expressed an opinion, speak positively about Boston High school. The school has an inclusive and welcoming ethos. Relationships are typically positive. Pupils say that they feel safe in this popular school. They know who they can talk to about any worries or concerns they may have. Pupils behave and attend well. They are friendly and polite. Similarly, students in the sixth form say they feel happy and settled in the school community, including many who have joined the school from other settings.

The school promotes pupils' personal development well. A well-thought-out enrichment course is complemented by a range of extra-curricular activities and visits. Pupils are proud of their involvement in the 'greenpower' project promoting engineering and mechanics for girls, for example. The school takes pupils' mental health and well-being seriously. The weekly 'pulse' survey, for example, informs pastoral staff which pupils might need extra help and support.

Expectations are high around the school and in most subjects. Many pupils and sixth-form students achieve well. Pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL) perform especially well. However, some pupils and sixth-form students do not achieve as highly as they could, particularly the most able.

## What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

The school has developed an ambitious and inclusive curriculum for all pupils. It offers a broad range of academic subjects that meet the interests and aspirations of pupils, including sociology and business studies. French, art and history courses are particularly popular. Subject leaders have developed programmes of study that build pupils' knowledge and skills progressively year on year, including in the sixth form. They have

ensured that the content of the curriculum promotes pupils' social, moral and cultural understanding of the world they live in. For example, in English, pupils study core texts reflecting the diversity of established authors through the 'literature in colour' initiative. Consequently, pupils have a strong understanding of, and respect for, people from backgrounds that are different to their own.

Reading is well promoted in the school. Dedicated spaces for reading, such as 'the next chapter', invite pupils to read independently and with others. Older students act as positive role models to younger pupils. Leaders have strengthened the support for pupils who need extra help to develop their reading and comprehension skills. These programmes, including for pupils with EAL, are having a demonstrably positive impact. Pupils who were previously reluctant to read now do so with greater enthusiasm and confidence.

Teachers have strong subject knowledge. New concepts and ideas are presented clearly and accurately, drawing upon a range of well-selected resources. The school has recently strengthened its approach to assessment. Teachers and other adults regularly check how well pupils have grasped new knowledge and skills before moving the learning on. They typically provide pupils with clear advice about their successes in learning and what could be improved. However, pupils and sixth-form students are sometimes unsure how to act upon the feedback they are given. Staff do not always check to ensure that all pupils apply the advice they receive, particularly when extended depth and greater detail are required in written work. Consequently, despite strong attainment, not all pupils achieve as highly as they could. Sixth-form students say that they enjoy their lessons but would like more guidance to improve the academic quality of their work.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well supported. They benefit from the close support of adults and dedicated learning spaces, such as the 'hub' and 'snug', which strongly promote inclusion in the main school and into the sixth form. The large majority of parents who expressed an opinion agree.

The school has a strong curriculum for pupils' personal development. Enrichment lessons make a distinct contribution towards pupils' readiness for life in modern Britain, covering themes, such as healthy and respectful relationships, the responsible use of social media and online safety. Pupils have a strong understanding of fundamental British values and the protected characteristics.

The school is rightly proud of its track record in supporting all pupils towards their next steps in education, employment or training. Pupils receive the impartial guidance they need to make informed choices about their future. Sixth-form students are similarly well supported.

Staff feel well cared for and are highly supportive of the school. They value the opportunities provided for their professional development, including recent work on strengthening the school's approach to assessment. Morale is positive.

## Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

## What does the school need to do to improve?

### (Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school has developed an ambitious and inclusive curriculum for all pupils. Sometimes, however, teachers' expectations of what pupils, and students in the sixth form, can achieve in some subjects are not always as high as they should be. They do not always ensure that pupils and students consistently apply their knowledge and skills as fully as they might when completing tasks, particularly those that require extended detail or acting upon feedback. As a result, despite strong attainment, some pupils and sixth-form students, do not achieve as highly as they could. The school should ensure that teachers provide clear and precise advice that helps all learners to demonstrate greater depth in knowledge and understanding so that they achieve as highly as they should.

## Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in March 2018.

## How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

## Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	139140
<b>Local authority</b>	Lincolnshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10298497
<b>Type of school</b>	Grammar (selective)
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Girls
<b>Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	809
<b>Of which, number on roll in the sixth form</b>	228
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Lisa Smith
<b>Headteacher</b>	Andrew Fulbrook
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.bostonhighschool.co.uk">www.bostonhighschool.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	13 March 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information about approved technical qualifications and apprenticeships.
- The school makes use of one registered alternative education provider.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other members of the school’s senior leadership team. They also met with subject leaders, the head of the sixth form and the school’s coordinator of the provision for pupils with SEND.
- The lead inspector met with the chair of the school’s governing body.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, art and mathematics. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum with subject leaders, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils’ work.
- The lead inspector met with the school’s leaders with responsibility for reading and pupils who speak English as an additional language. He also listened to pupils from key stage 3 read to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors observed pupils’ behaviour in school and around the school site during social time. They spoke with several groups of pupils, both formally and informally.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils’ interests first.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View and Ofsted’s surveys for staff and pupils.

## **Inspection team**

Chris Stevens, lead inspector

His Majesty’s Inspector

Julie McBrearty

Ofsted Inspector

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