

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



22 March 2018

Mr Andrew Fulbrook
Headteacher
Boston High School
Spilsby Road
Boston
Lincolnshire
PE21 9PF

Dear Mr Fulbrook

Short inspection of Boston High School

Following my visit to the school on 13 March 2018 with Tracey Ydlibi, Ofsted Inspector, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. The visit was the first short inspection carried out since the school was judged to be good in November 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection.

You provide strong and confident leadership and have a clear sense of direction for the school. You are well supported by the senior leadership team and the governing body. Several changes of middle leadership are helping to bring about improvement.

Your self-evaluation is detailed, honest and accurate. It shows that you know the school very well. The areas for improvement you have identified match those noted by inspectors. For example, despite some recent improvements, pupils do not make enough progress in some subjects, particularly mathematics. Your comprehensive plans to tackle such areas for improvement are clear and relevant. You are using these effectively to build on the school's many strengths and tackle its few areas of weakness.

Classrooms provide a very calm and productive working environment. Teachers use time well, and relationships between pupils and teachers are excellent. Questioning is used extremely effectively to probe pupils' knowledge and understanding. Teachers generally plan lessons well, ensuring that work is set at the right level and that pupils are appropriately challenged. Pupils take pride in their work and appreciate the feedback they get from teachers to help them improve it. Consequently, most pupils make strong progress in most subjects. Leaders, however, recognise that teaching is not as good or consistent as it should be in some subjects, including mathematics.

Your governors are a considerable asset to your school. The governing body has a detailed awareness of the school's strengths. It also has a very clear understanding of the areas requiring development and what needs to be done to bring about improvement. Consequently, governors are well placed to provide the right level of challenge and support to you and other leaders.

You and the other staff have created an aspirational culture for all pupils at Boston High School and a strong sense of community. Relationships are exemplary. The vast majority of staff, pupils, parents and carers have a positive view and support the work of the school. Pupils are quite rightly proud of their school.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders and the governing body have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. You keep detailed records and these meet all requirements. You make thorough checks to ensure that all employees and volunteers are suitable to work with pupils.

The school has effective systems to monitor the well-being and safety of pupils. It works closely with other agencies. All members of staff and governors receive up-to-date training. Pupils are well informed about the things they can do to keep themselves safe. Consequently, pupils are confident that they are safe and know who to turn to if they have any concerns. Pupils speak of the wealth of support available to them. They particularly value the school's student support centre.

Inspection findings

- At the last inspection, inspectors asked the school to increase the challenge in lessons for the most able pupils. The school has worked successfully at this and inspectors saw that most pupils are being challenged at the right level in lessons. As a result, the most able pupils made above-average progress in 2017. Based on data provided by the school, the most able pupils are on track to make similarly good progress in 2018.
- The previous inspection report also called for the school to improve the consistency of teaching in science. Leaders have had some success in bringing improvement to this subject. Teaching in science is more consistent. In 2017, pupils made average progress in their GCSE courses by the end of Year 11. Leaders, however, have correctly identified that the teaching of some science subjects in the sixth form is not yet good enough and are taking the required action to resolve this.
- Pupils are making strong progress in their GCSE subjects. Pupils' attainment improved in 2016 and they made faster progress than in the previous year. These improvements were sustained in 2017 and, overall, progress was above the national average. Data provided by the school and work seen in pupils' books show that pupils across all year groups are making faster progress than in previous years. They are on track to achieve ambitious targets. Attainment and progress have been particularly strong in English.

- The school's strategies to support the small group of disadvantaged pupils are having a positive impact on their progress. Disadvantaged pupils make significantly faster progress than other pupils across the country. This is because staff understand the additional barriers that some disadvantaged pupils face and give them extra support.
- In the sixth form, students in Year 13 made faster progress than average in 2015 and 2016. In 2017, however, there was a dip and progress was below the national average. The fall was largely due to the underachievement of the most able girls. Leaders have taken action to reverse this dip in progress, including weekly monitoring and mentoring of the most able girls. Data provided by the school on current students in Year 13 indicates that progress is back on track to be where it was in 2015 and 2016.
- Most pupils attend school regularly and attendance has been above the national average in recent years. In the past, however, too many disadvantaged pupils were absent frequently and the attendance for this group was below the national average. Consequently, the school took action to improve the attendance of disadvantaged pupils. Leaders put a range of support into place, and the attendance of this group of pupils is improving compared to previous years.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they work with subject leaders to improve teaching in subjects where it is weaker, particularly mathematics, so that pupils make consistently good progress in all subjects throughout the school.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Lincolnshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Nigel Boyd
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, inspectors met with you, other senior leaders and governors. Inspectors visited a number of subject areas with your senior leaders to observe teaching and look at pupils' work. They met with groups of pupils. Inspectors scrutinised the school's safeguarding arrangements and records, including the school's record of recruitment checks on staff. They reviewed records about attendance and examined a range of other documentary evidence, including that relating to your ongoing self-evaluation and data on pupils' attainment and progress.

Inspectors considered the views of 80 parents through their responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, and Ofsted's free-text service. They considered 37 responses to Ofsted's survey for staff. There were no responses to Ofsted's survey for pupils.