

# The Boston Grammar School

South End, Boston, PE21 6JY

**Inspection dates** 22–23 May 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- Students are making better progress towards their GCSEs than is found nationally.
- The school's own records show that students have reached much higher levels in their work, including in English and mathematics, than most students nationally.
- The teaching in the large majority of lessons is good or better.
- The sixth form is good. Students are making good progress, especially towards the highest A-level grades.
- Students' behaviour in and out of lessons is outstanding. They are proud of their school.
- The school has an effective team of leaders, who are developing the skills of teachers with extra responsibilities in order to drive further improvement.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teachers and leaders do not measure how well students are working often enough or accurately enough. This prevents them from challenging students who could do even better.
- Teachers do not consistently match the difficulty of the work they set to the abilities of individual students.
- Teachers do not always mark students' books in a way that helps them to improve.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 26 lessons. Many of these were done jointly with members of the school leadership team. They looked at students' books and listened to them read.
- Meetings were held with governors, teachers, school leaders and students.
- Inspectors considered the views of 41 parents and carers to the online questionnaire (Parent View).
- A range of documents were considered, including minutes of governors' meetings, the school's self evaluation, safeguarding documents and policies.

## Inspection team

John Hucker, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Robin Fugill	Additional Inspector
Susan Thomas	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The Boston Grammar School is much smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- All students are boys up to Year 11. The sixth form takes boys and girls.
- Most students are White British.
- The proportion of students eligible for the pupil premium is about one third of the national average. The pupil premium is funding provided to support students known to be eligible for free school meals and children of members of the armed forces. In this school, these numbers are very low.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is well below average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- The Boston Grammar School converted to become an academy on 1 January 2013. When its predecessor, also The Boston Grammar School, was last inspected, it was judged to be satisfactory. At this time it was part of the Boston Grammar Schools Federation, sharing a governing body with Boston High School (Girls).
- The school does not use any alternative provision for its students. No students at this school are entitled to the Year 7 catch-up premium.

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

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by recording how well students are learning, more accurately and more often, so that teachers and school leaders can challenge students to do even better.
- Raise the quality of teaching so that more is outstanding by:
  - matching the difficulty of the work more closely to individuals within each class
  - consistently marking books in ways that help students to improve the quality of their work.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Students entering this school are selected using the 11-plus test. Attainment on entry is above average. The school's own tests, as students prepare for their examinations, show that most students' knowledge, understanding and skills have developed well. The school expects that GCSE results for students gaining five GCSEs at grade C and above will be much higher than the national average. Students are not entered for any GCSE examination early.
- The school's own information shows that students are making good progress over their time at the school. This is evident in lessons where students concentrate hard, respond well to stimulating teaching and make good progress. For example, in a physical education lesson in Year 10 students made particularly good progress in their understanding of the human skeleton because the teaching was stimulating.
- Since the academy was formed, students in the sixth form have been making faster progress. The school's own information shows that students are now making good progress in a range of subjects. In lessons and in their work it is clear that a large proportion of boys and girls are working at the level of the highest grades at A-level. In lessons they are often given opportunities for individual investigation which they use well.
- In Key Stages 3 and 4, the small numbers of students in each year group supported by the pupil premium are making better progress than other students and closing the gap with their classmates in both English and mathematics. These pupils are given additional individual support to help them to catch up.
- Students at school action, school action plus and with statements of special educational needs all make similar progress to other students. These groups are very small and are well taught often through additional one-to-one support.

### The quality of teaching is good

- In the large majority of lessons observed the teaching was good or better. Teachers are skilled at tailoring their lessons to best suit groups of bright students. Skilful questioning and good subject knowledge are features of the teaching in the sixth form.
- Teachers make lessons relevant in order to stimulate the students. In a Year 8 German lesson, the text book was used for occasional reference, but the very good use of German was focused around the boys' interests in popular sporting events.
- Most teachers have excellent relationships with their students. As a result, students are keen to learn and confident to speak out, without fearing that they might make a mistake. Students say that their teachers make lessons fun and cite the use of drama to explore historical situations and characters as a particularly stimulating example.
- Topics that sometimes cause embarrassment are treated very sensitively. Year 10 boys dealt very maturely with the explicit nature of some of Twelfth Night. Many teachers ask students to answer questions and solve problems for themselves. This approach helps them prepare for their next stages of education. Such methods, used to develop students' abilities to learn by themselves, are not used consistently by all teachers.

- Teachers mark students' books often. They tell students how to improve, but only sometimes check to see if the students have followed the advice given. Effective approaches to marking and feedback to students are not used consistently by all teachers.
- Not all teachers consistently match the difficulty of the work to the abilities of individual students. The best teachers set slightly different tasks and are skilled at asking questions that either support or challenge individuals' thinking, as appropriate. This is the case in the teaching of literacy skills and numeracy across all subjects. They are taught to all students, rather than tailoring the learning a little differently to the needs of individuals.
- Those students who are eligible for the pupil premium and disabled students and those who have special educational needs, benefit from additional one-to-one and individual teaching. This ensures that these pupils do as well as their peers and in the case of the students eligible for the pupil premium is helping them to make faster progress so that they catch up with other students.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils** are outstanding

- Students are very happy at the school. They feel safe and bullying is rare. Action is taken quickly when it occurs. Students are fully aware of the different kinds of bullying and how to respond to them.
- Outside of lessons behaviour is impeccable. Students are polite, courteous and kind. They act as ambassadors. They feel that attending the school is a privilege. If there is any lapse in behaviour, the school's systems deal with them well promptly. As a result, the school very rarely excludes students.
- Students are very keen to take on responsibilities, such as becoming a prefect or a member of the school council. A great many of the students enjoy representing the school in competitions, such as national football competitions, technology challenges and quizzes. For such a small school, they have an excellent track record.
- Attitudes to learning are exemplary. In lessons, students are hungry for learning. They enjoy any opportunity to learn for themselves and can be quite competitive about success. They like it when their thinking is challenged, so they have to think in new ways.

### **The leadership and management** are good

- Senior managers and governors are resolutely leading the school through a period of change. The school has become a stand-alone academy, but had little chance to appoint new staff. The academy has no direct ties to the local authority or an academy trust. Senior managers plan to buy in support and training from a variety of providers. Parent View shows that parents are very supportive of the school.
- School leaders regularly observe the work of teachers in their lessons. They use these opportunities to carefully check how well students are learning. They make sure that teachers are offered the right support and, when appropriate, courses to help them to improve. School leaders revisit lessons to check on the impact of any action they take.

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- For a small school, there is a very good range of subjects and choices of examination courses. Students take part in a variety of enrichment days and there is a wide choice of clubs, activities and school visits. Together, these experiences add to the students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. High numbers of students continue their education or training at 16 and 18 years of age.
  - School leaders use the information they collect very well. However, the system they use does not collect information frequently or accurately enough. Leaders cannot support or challenge students quickly. Some targets set for students are not ambitious enough to promote even better progress and higher standards. The physical education department is leading the way by developing a more detailed analysis of its students' performance.
  - School leaders, teachers with extra responsibilities and classroom teachers do not routinely measure the success of new ideas, methods and projects on improving the students' progress or attainment. When they do measure it, they do not always learn from the results and take action quickly.
  - **The governance of the school:**
    - Many governors were new to the role in September. The Chair of the Governing Body was appointed two days before the inspection. They are aware of strengths and weaknesses within the school. They understand the financial position of the school and work within its constraints. Interim arrangements are in place to link pay increases to teachers' performance. At the moment, they rely heavily on the school leaders for information, but have planned for training and organisation of governors so that they can give better direction to the school. Safeguarding requirements are met and governors ensure that pupil premium funding is spent effectively. They are aware of the success of the school compared to schools nationally, but not yet in enough detail.
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## What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	139180
<b>Local authority</b>	Lincolnshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	418360

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

<b>Type of school</b>	Grammar (selective)
<b>School category</b>	Foundation
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Boys
<b>Gender of pupils in the sixth form</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	533
<b>Of which, number on roll in sixth form</b>	180
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Stephen Woodliffe
<b>Principal</b>	Paul Marsh
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	N/A
<b>Telephone number</b>	01205 366444
<b>Fax number</b>	01205 310702
<b>Email address</b>	Enquiries@bostongrammarschool.co.uk



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