

Inspection of Boldon School

New Road, Boldon Colliery, Tyne and Wear NE35 9DZ

Inspection dates: 18–19 September 2019

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Boldon School has improved a lot since the previous inspection. Pupils are more interested in their studies and want to improve. They enjoy school because they feel welcomed and valued. Pupils behave well and feel safe. They are polite to one another and to the staff. The staff do not accept bullying. If it happens, they do everything they can to stop it. Teachers have also made sure that pupils feel safe to express their identity. At lunchtime, pupils get on well with one another and share a joke with their teachers. There is a relaxed atmosphere in the dining hall and outside in social areas.

Most teachers set high standards. In lessons, pupils follow instructions straight away. They contribute well in discussions and respect each other's opinions. Pupils are proud of their achievements and are getting better exam results than they did in the past.

Boldon School serves its community well. It provides a good range of events for local people to get involved. Most parents feel the school is doing a good job. The pupils enjoy the trips to other countries and the many visits to local places of interest. Most pupils enjoy attending one or more of the many after-school clubs.

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

The new headteacher has made some real improvements to the school. He is making sure that the quality of teaching is improving in subjects that did not perform well in the past. The curriculum in science, geography and French is more demanding than it used to be. Leaders know that some aspects of the curriculum are still not challenging enough. For example, in some subjects, pupils do not study all parts of the key stage 3 national curriculum. There are also too few pupils following the suite of subjects in the English Baccalaureate. However, it is clear that leaders are already taking steps to address this. Their plans for next year show they will only enter pupils for suitable examinations and that the English Baccalaureate will be at the heart of the curriculum.

In most subjects, teachers have thought hard about what pupils need to know. They sequence lessons carefully and use thoughtful ways to recap and review knowledge. This is helping pupils to know and remember more. Most pupils talked confidently about important ideas or concepts from their lessons. For example, pupils described how to use precise measuring equipment to make a key fob. After a science lesson, pupils accurately drew on earlier teaching to describe their findings from graphs about electrical resistance.

Good teaching and a well-planned curriculum mean pupils are making strong progress in most subjects. Disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities also do well. They make at least as much progress as other pupils nationally. This is because the teachers and support staff really care and give them extra help. This makes a considerable difference.

Teachers manage pupils' behaviour well. Pupils concentrate and often work well together, supporting each other. This means lessons are rarely interrupted. If pupils misbehave, teachers follow procedures consistently. The staff help pupils to get better at managing their behaviour. Most pupils respond well because they feel teachers treat them fairly. Older pupils very rarely misbehave. The number of times older pupils get excluded has fallen considerably. Yet the number of exclusions from the lower school is not reducing. Leaders know this and are working on it. The staff feel leaders give them good advice and support with pupil discipline.

Pupils' personal development is exceptional. Topics covered help pupils to keep themselves safe. They also get fully involved with their community. They raise money for charity and help to run a party for local senior citizens. Some older pupils are trained volunteers who help younger pupils overcome anxiety or stress. The school has an active group who raise awareness about lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender issues. This has helped to foster a tolerant culture. Pupils are very accepting of difference, so there is little bullying or name-calling. The many pupils who have transferred from other schools have settled well and their parents are delighted at how well they are doing.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders make sure all members of staff are vigilant and know what to do if they have a concern. Pupils say they are confident to talk to staff if they are worried or unhappy. Leaders consult parents and carers and refer cases to social care or the police, when necessary. Records show leaders pursue cases doggedly until they resolve them. Staff who work in 'The Hive' give vulnerable pupils excellent help and support. The curriculum includes lessons about safety, so pupils know about risks when online or threats such as county lines.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school currently organises the curriculum with a two-year key stage 3, and three-year key stage 4. Leaders describe Year 9 as a 'transition' year. However, their rationale for the transition year is vague. In practice, it means that, in subjects such as history and geography, pupils finish key stage 3 and choose their GCSE options without studying all the content of the national curriculum. This denies them their entitlement to important areas of knowledge. The school should review its curriculum and ensure that the model implemented next year fully delivers the national curriculum for key stage 3.
- The school's curriculum is not ambitious enough and does not reflect pupils' attainment on entry. Currently, there are too few pupils in Years 10 or 11 who are studying the English Baccalaureate. To address this, leaders must continue their work to strengthen history and modern foreign languages and ensure that the key stage 3 curriculum in these subjects provides a firm foundation of knowledge. Leaders and governors need to ensure their plans to increase the proportion of pupils taking the English Baccalaureate are fully implemented over the next two years.
- Behaviour in school has improved considerably. The general ethos around the school is good and most teachers feel able to teach without disruption to their lessons. Older pupils who have experienced sanctions say they have learned and are now more able to moderate their behaviour. However, some younger pupils, including some who have transferred to the school during the year, do repeatedly disrupt lessons. The number of younger pupils being excluded for fixed periods is not reducing. Leaders should monitor this carefully, intervening earlier if necessary and supporting members of staff who are less experienced in behaviour management.

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 Ofsted Parent View information 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.

If you're not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

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

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	108730
Local authority	South Tyneside
Inspection number	10110567
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	785
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Peter Hunter
Headteacher	Ian Noble
Website	http://boldonschool.com/
Date of previous inspection	3–4 May 2017

Information about this school

- The school appointed a new headteacher in January 2019. A new deputy headteacher has also been appointed. Several new governors have been recruited, including the chair of the governing body. Since the last inspection, the school has increased in size by around 200 pupils. This is because parents of children who attend a neighbouring secondary school have chosen to transfer their children before it closes in August 2020.
- The school's last section 5 inspection took place in May 2017. The school received a monitoring inspection in March 2018.
- The school does not place any pupils in alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspectors met with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and other senior leaders, including the special educational needs coordinator.
- An inspector also met with a representative of the local authority.

- Inspectors focused on the quality of the curriculum in English, science, design and technology and history. Inspectors met with the curriculum leader of each subject, visited lessons, talked to pupils, scrutinised a sample of books and held discussions with subject teachers.
- Inspectors held meetings with curriculum leaders from other subjects and met members of the pastoral team. They looked at a range of other information about behaviour, attendance, extra-curricular activities and wider enrichment events.
- Inspectors walked around the school at different times of the day to check on punctuality, behaviour and conduct. During these times, they held informal discussions with pupils. Inspectors also spoke to different members of staff, including kitchen staff, administrative staff and newly qualified teachers.
- Inspectors scrutinised the checks that the school makes on adults who work in the school. Inspectors talked to senior leaders responsible for safeguarding and looked at records of the actions they have taken to protect pupils at risk. Inspectors spoke to pupils to gauge how safe they felt and to what extent they know how to keep themselves safe. Inspectors also checked whether members of staff understand and abide by the school's safeguarding policy.

Inspection team

Chris Smith, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Jen Cave	Ofsted Inspector
Shelley Heseltine	Ofsted Inspector
Nick Horn	Ofsted Inspector

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