

The Boston Grammar School

Address: South End, Boston, Lincolnshire, PE21 6JY

Unique reference number (URN): 139180

Inspection report: 28 April 2026

Exceptional	
Strong standard	●
Expected standard	● ● ● ● ●
Needs attention	●
Urgent improvement	

✓ **Safeguarding standards met**

The safeguarding standards are met. This means that leaders and/or those responsible for governance and oversight fulfil their specific responsibilities and have established an open culture in which safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and concerns are actively identified, acted upon and managed. As a result, pupils are made safer and feel safe.

How we evaluate safeguarding

When we inspect schools for safeguarding, they can have the following outcomes:

- **Met:** The school has an open and positive culture of safeguarding. All legal requirements are met.
- **Not met:** The school has not created an open and positive culture of safeguarding. Not all legal requirements are met.

Strong standard ●

Attendance and behaviour

Strong standard ●

Pupils attend very well. Attendance rates are above national averages and continuing to rise because leaders drive highly effective approaches for all pupils, including those who are disadvantaged or have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Staff actively promote strong attendance through clear expectations that pupils understand and value, recognising the importance of being in school and learning. When attendance begins to cause concern, leaders put tailored support in place quickly so that pupils who face barriers are helped to attend consistently well. Persistent absence is below average and continues to fall as a result of leaders' focused, responsive work.

Pupils' behaviour across the school is excellent. They move around the school calmly and purposefully, showing courtesy towards staff and each other. In lessons, pupils are attentive, focused and keen to learn. Older pupils, including students in the sixth form, act as highly effective role models and mentors for younger pupils. Behaviour at social times is courteous and polite. Bullying is rare. Pupils are confident that staff would act swiftly and decisively on any concerns about discrimination or bullying should it occur. When individual pupils struggle with their behaviour, staff provide focused, highly effective support that helps them succeed. Suspensions are very low.

Expected standard ●

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard ●

Leaders provide strong strategic direction for the curriculum and teaching. They have designed an ambitious and well-sequenced curriculum that sets out clearly what pupils should learn and when. Leaders review and refine curriculum plans regularly, using information from their checks of pupils' knowledge to spot gaps and strengthen learning. They help pupils to secure firm foundations, particularly in essential areas such as reading, writing, communication and number skills.

Teaching is generally effective. Teachers know pupils' needs well, including any specific barriers to learning pupils face due to additional needs or disadvantage. They often make helpful adaptations in lessons to meet these needs, although some adjustments lack precision. In many subjects, pupils learn new knowledge securely and build on what they already know. Teachers explain ideas clearly, typically check pupils' understanding and use questioning well to move learning on. Occasionally, they do not pick up misunderstandings quickly enough. Additionally, some pupils who join the school with high prior attainment are not sufficiently challenged. As a result, although attainment is high overall, progress for some pupils is not as strong as it could be. Leaders are addressing this through targeted staff training and curriculum developments.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

Leaders have created an increasingly inclusive culture where staff understand pupils' individual needs and respond to them with care. Leaders identify needs early through close work with primary schools, early meetings with families and ongoing checks once pupils arrive. Staff use clear systems to spot emerging needs quickly, and leaders assess these carefully so that support is well matched. They review pupils' progress regularly to ensure that help is effective in reducing pupils' barriers to learning.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive well-organised support. Leaders ensure that pupils receive tailored teaching, mentoring and appropriate adjustments to the curriculum. However, occasionally teachers do not make the precise adaptations needed in lessons to fully meet pupils' needs.

Disadvantaged pupils benefit from a clear strategy that prioritises high-quality teaching and targeted support. Leaders use additional funding for these pupils to provide mentoring, enhanced careers guidance and additional academic help.

Leaders maintain strong oversight of pupils who are known to social care. They work closely with external agencies and families to ensure that these pupils receive timely, coordinated support. Other vulnerable groups, including young carers and pupils facing social or emotional barriers, receive personalised help that enables them to stay engaged in school and make progress.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders provide clear strategic direction and strong moral purpose. They know the school well, understand its strengths and have identified the right priorities, for example, to improve pupils' achievement. This is evident in the curriculum changes leaders have already implemented. Leaders draw on their understanding of the school's context to make decisions that are firmly rooted in what is best for pupils. Leaders have recently reviewed provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities to ensure that pupils receive the right support and that barriers to learning are removed more effectively. This work shows leaders' commitment to making decisions that meet pupils' needs.

There have been recent changes in governance, including new structures and a new chair of the board. Governance is now well organised, and trustees meet their statutory duties effectively. For example, they oversee the school's safeguarding procedures. They provide appropriate challenge and support, drawing on a wide range of evidence to check the impact of leaders' actions. Leaders engage well with parents, external professionals and the wider community. They work closely with local partners to strengthen support for pupils.

Staff benefit from high-quality professional development that builds expertise and supports consistent teaching. Staff speak positively about leaders. They feel highly valued, well supported and know that their workload is considered carefully.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

Leaders provide a comprehensive personal development programme. Dedicated 'life skills' lessons form the core of this provision, supported effectively by tutor time and assemblies. Pupils generally develop their knowledge well across the curriculum. Disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) access the full programme and learn successfully.

Pupils know how to keep themselves safe, both online and in the community. They understand potential risks and use the strategies they learn to reduce them. Pupils develop a broad understanding of fundamental British values such as democracy and tolerance. They learn about different cultures and deepen their understanding of diversity in modern Britain through events such as 'Culture Day'.

There are numerous leadership opportunities for pupils. Peer councils play an active role in shaping school life. For example, they recently shortlisted entries for the school's 'Individual freedom' logo competition for Boston Grammar School Pride. Student leadership and student voice are thoughtfully combined so that pupils' views genuinely influence provision.

Pupils benefit from a wide range of extra-curricular opportunities. They join clubs including motor-car engineering, pickleball, golf, enterprise and investment, iPad sketching and producing the 'Grammar Gazette'. Many pupils complete the Duke of Edinburgh's Award. These experiences build pupils' confidence, interests and character. Leaders remove barriers to participation so disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND can take part fully.

Leaders have created an effective careers programme. Local employers visit the school to bring the world of work to life, and pupils gain valuable insights through university visits and work-experience placements. Pupils receive appropriate support for their next steps with carefully tailored careers guidance. This helps many pupils move on successfully to their next stage of education, employment and/or training. Leaders provide focused, individual support for pupils who face barriers to learning, helping them choose ambitious destinations.

Post 16 provision

Expected standard 

Leaders have a clear understanding of the purpose and quality of the post-16 curriculum. They have strengthened provision in recent years. As a result, students' progress has improved and is now in line with national averages. The curriculum is well planned, and students with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive tailored support that helps them achieve academically, develop confidence and prepare for adulthood. Teachers encourage discussion that develops students' thinking, and students usually learn well. Leaders track progress closely so they can step in quickly when support is needed. Independent study sessions are purposeful and deepen learning.

Students benefit from warm, positive relationships with staff. A wide range of enrichment, mentoring, leadership and cultural opportunities build their character and confidence. For example, various activities broaden students' horizons, including visits to theatres, galleries and museums. Contributions to music groups, school productions and the production of the student-led 'Grammar Gazette' develop students creatively. Many students take part in the 'Well Time' programme, which strengthens their study habits, motivation and resilience.

Students receive extensive careers guidance. They visit employers and universities, and complete work experience. As a result, they are well informed and speak confidently about their future plans in education, employment or training.

Needs attention

Achievement

Needs attention 

Published information on achievement in national examinations shows that, while pupils achieve highly overall, there is variability in their attainment and progress over time. This includes students in the sixth form. Some pupils, in particular those with high prior attainment, and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), do not achieve as well as they should. Leaders are fully aware of this and have taken steps to drive improvements. However, while there is early evidence their actions are leading to better progress, it is too soon to see the full impact of this in the school's published outcomes.

Pupils who need help with developing the basic knowledge and skills in reading, writing and mathematics are well supported to do so, including pupils with SEND and pupils who speak English as an additional language. Typically, pupils are well prepared for their next steps in education, training or employment.

What it's like to be a pupil at this school

Pupils are proud to attend Boston Grammar School. They join a community with a long history and distinctive traditions, such as Beast Mart, Charter Day and 'Puddox'. These contribute to a strong sense of identity among pupils. Pupils understand the school's core values of care, achievement, respect and excellence. They see these values modelled consistently in daily interactions.

The school's 'Golden Principles' provide clear expectations for learning and behaviour. These help pupils take responsibility for their attitudes, effort and conduct. Pupils behave exceptionally well. They know what successful learning looks like and understand the behaviours that enable it. They enjoy their lessons, show curiosity about the topics they study and recognise that leaders expect them to work hard and aim high. However, outcomes in national examinations are variable, and some pupils, particularly those with high prior attainment, do not achieve as well as they could.

Pupils feel safe. They trust staff. Relationships between pupils and staff are warm and respectful, and pupils treat one another with kindness. Bullying is very rare and pupils are confident that staff deal with any issues effectively. Attendance is high. Pupils value the positive, caring environment that supports both their academic and personal development.

The 'BGS 100' programme helps pupils build a portfolio of achievements. These strengthen their character and encourage them to contribute positively to school life and beyond. Pupils celebrate the school's growing cultural diversity through events such as Cultures Day, taking

pride in sharing their individual heritages. They enjoy participating in performances, clubs and a wide range of sports. Sixth-form students value the leadership roles available to them, including mentoring younger pupils and helping to plan whole-school events. These opportunities build confidence and self-esteem, equipping students with skills for life after school.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that achievement is raised, particularly for high prior attainers, through consistently high-quality teaching across subjects, including sufficient challenge and effective checks of learning that identify and address pupils' gaps.
 - Leaders should ensure that teachers meet all pupils' needs more fully by making consistently precise and effective adaptations to the curriculum and teaching.
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About this inspection

This school is part of a single academy trust, Boston Grammar School, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, John McHenry (who is also the headteacher) and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Emma Woods.

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

Following our renewed inspection framework, all inspections are now led by His Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMIs.

Inspectors spoke with the chair of trustees, the headteacher and a range of senior leaders during the inspection.

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

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school currently uses no alternative provision.

Headteacher: John McHenry

Lead inspector:

Anne Maingay, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Matthew Sammy, Ofsted Inspector

Sally Wicken, Ofsted Inspector

Rebecca Thompson, Ofsted Inspector

Halina Angus, Ofsted Inspector

Facts and figures used on inspection

The data was used by the inspector(s) during the inspection. More recent data may have been published since the inspection took place.

 This data is from 28 April 2026

School and pupil context**Total pupils**

874

Close to average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils currently at this school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 1,067

School capacity

910

Below average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils who can attend the school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 1,154

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

13.96%

Well below average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years.

National average: 28.9%

Pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan

0.80%

Well below average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan. This covers pupils with more support than is available through special educational needs support.

National average: 3.09%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

6.06%

Well below average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with reported special educational support needs at the school.

National average: 13.4%

Location deprivation

Well above average

What does this mean?

Based on the English Indices of Deprivation (2019) and the school's location, we have calculated whether the school is located in a more or less deprived area.

Resourced Provision or SEND Unit (if applicable)

No resourced provision

What does this mean?

Whether school has Resourced Provision or SEND unit (if applicable).

All pupils' performance

English and maths GCSE

Percentage of pupils who achieved grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (final)	53.6%	45.4%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	62.2%	45.9%	Above
2022/23 (final)	47.2%	45.3%	Close to average

Attainment 8

A measure of pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (final)	53.1	46.1	Above
2023/24 (final)	51.3	45.9	Above
2022/23 (final)	49.0	46.3	Close to average

Progress 8

How much progress pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	-0.43	-0.03	Below
2022/23 (final)	-0.40	-0.03	Below

Disadvantaged pupils' performance

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after.

Disadvantaged pupils' English and maths GCSE grade 5 or above

Percentage of disadvantaged pupils achieving grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (final)	37.5%	25.8%	Above
2023/24 (final)	50.0%	25.8%	Above
2022/23 (final)	72.7%	25.2%	Above

Disadvantaged pupils' Attainment 8

A measure of disadvantaged pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (final)	48.0	34.9	Above
2023/24 (final)	44.2	34.6	Above
2022/23 (final)	46.9	35.0	Above

Disadvantaged pupils' Progress 8

How much progress disadvantaged pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	-0.90	-0.57	Below
2022/23 (final)	-1.02	-0.57	Below

Disadvantaged pupils' performance gap

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after. The school disadvantage gap is the difference between the performance of the school's disadvantaged pupils compared to the performance of all non-disadvantaged pupils nationally.

Disadvantaged pupils' English and maths GCSE grade 5 or above

Percentage of disadvantaged pupils who achieved grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2024/25 (final)	37.5%	53.1%	-15.6 pp
2023/24 (final)	50.0%	53.1%	-3.1 pp
2022/23 (final)	72.7%	52.4%	20.3 pp

Disadvantaged pupils' Attainment 8

A measure of disadvantaged pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2024/25 (final)	48.0	50.4	-2.4
2023/24 (final)	44.2	50.0	-5.8
2022/23 (final)	46.9	50.3	-3.4

Disadvantaged pupils' Progress 8

How much progress disadvantaged pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2023/24 (final)	-0.90	0.16	-1.06
2022/23 (final)	-1.02	0.17	-1.18

Destinations after 16

Destinations after 16

Percentage of pupils staying in education or employment for at least 2 terms after the end of secondary school (key stage 4).

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023 leavers (revised)	98%	92%	Above
2022 leavers (revised)	100%	93%	Above
2021 leavers (revised)	98%	94%	Average

16 to 18 performance

A-level average point score

The average points that students achieved per A-level entry.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (final)	27.16	35.00	Below
2023/24 (final)	26.03	34.38	Below
2022/23 (final)	29.47	34.16	Below

A-level value added

A score showing students’ progress between the end of key stage 4 and the end of their academic qualification studies.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (final)	-0.2	0.0	Close to average
2023/24 (revised)	-0.3	0.0	Below

Absence

Overall absence

The percentage of all possible mornings and afternoons missed due to absence from school (for whatever reason, whether authorised or unauthorised) across all pupils.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (3 term)	5.8%	8.4%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	6.5%	8.9%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	6.4%	9.0%	Below

Persistent absence

The percentage of pupils missing 10% or more of their possible mornings and afternoons.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (3 term)	13.6%	23.4%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	17.7%	25.6%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	16.9%	26.5%	Below

Our grades explained

Exceptional 

Practice is exceptional: of the highest standard nationally. Other schools can learn from it.

Strong standard ●

The school reaches a strong standard. Leaders are working above the standard expected of them.

Expected standard ●

The school is fulfilling the expected standard of education and/or care. This means they are following the standard set out in statutory and non-statutory legislation and the professional standards expected of them.

Needs attention ●

The expected standards are not met but leaders are likely able to make the necessary improvements.

Urgent improvement ●

The school needs to make urgent improvements to provide the expected standard of education and/or care.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) inspects services providing education and skills for children and learners of all ages, and inspects and regulates services that care for children and young people.

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