

Boroughbridge High School

Address: Wetherby Road, Boroughbridge, York, North Yorkshire, YO51 9JX

Unique reference number (URN): 121699

Inspection report: 30 June 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.

Expected standard

Achievement

Expected standard 

Staff use effective strategies to close any gaps in pupils' basic knowledge and skills. These strategies have a significant positive impact, particularly for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and disadvantaged pupils, and gaps close quickly. However, disadvantaged pupils still do not achieve as well as their peers. Despite this, many progress successfully to post-16 destinations as a result of the support they receive.

Work in pupils' books shows that they generally achieve well. Teachers give pupils helpful feedback on what they have done well and next steps for improvement. In most subjects, pupils use this feedback to help them to make further progress through the curriculum.

Overall, pupils' attainment in national examinations is close to the national average. Most pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, employment or training.

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

Over time, attendance has improved, including for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and disadvantaged pupils. Leaders' strategies to improve attendance have had a positive impact for pupils who are persistently or severely absent and individuals that leaders have focused on. These strategies need further time to embed to ensure that they have impact on all pupils and lead to higher attendance overall.

Leaders have a clear strategic focus on improving the culture for learning across the school. This has a positive impact on pupils' conduct across the school and their learning in the classroom. The renewed behaviour policy ensures that staff understand leaders' expectations for behaviour and use consistent approaches to managing it. These approaches are firmly embedded, and pupils understand what is expected regarding working individually, as a class and in pairs.

Pupils typically behave well, follow the agreed school routines and show positive attitudes to their learning. This contributes to a safe and calm environment. Pupils manage their behaviour independently both in lessons and at less structured times. Leaders accurately identify pupils who may need an adapted approach to managing their behaviour and ensure these pupils get the support that they need.

Leaders and staff deal with any incidents of bullying, unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation, violence and derogatory language quickly and effectively.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

The curriculum is effectively designed to enable pupils to build on their knowledge and remember learning over time. It is broad and ambitious and contributes to pupils' development of their strengths and interests. Leaders ensure that the curriculum supports pupils to secure the necessary skills in reading, writing and mathematics.

Leaders have a clear understanding of the areas that need development to improve the quality of teaching and learning. They have established a set of clear expectations with teachers. These routines and teaching strategies are typically resulting in improved teaching and levels of pupil engagement. Leaders recognise that some of these expectations need embedding more consistently in some subjects.

Teachers demonstrate secure subject knowledge. They generally check pupils' progress through the curriculum. They usually use this information to inform the next steps that pupils need to take to move their learning on. Most teachers adapt resources to meet pupils' individual needs, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and disadvantaged pupils. These adaptations are more effective in some subjects than in others.

For pupils who speak English as an additional language or who are at the early stages of learning to read, leaders use effective programmes to accelerate progress. These programmes have a positive impact on pupils. They support them well to improve their reading skills and to catch up with their peers.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

Boroughbridge High School is a welcoming and accepting school. Leaders and staff know pupils well. They identify barriers to learning and wellbeing quickly and accurately.

Leaders use additional funding thoughtfully to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, disadvantaged pupils and other vulnerable pupils. Teachers and the pastoral team check pupils' progress through the curriculum and review pupils' individual support plans regularly. Typically, staff put swift and effective support in place where necessary.

Some pupils have complex external factors that impact negatively on their learning. Leaders are relentless in ensuring these pupils get the support that they need and that they feel a sense of belonging.

Leaders have high expectations for pupils. They use individual pupil plans to help teachers adapt their lessons so that pupils can access the curriculum successfully. When pupils need further support, staff use a range of strategies to meet pupils' needs. This includes using the school's intervention base, where pupils receive precise support to develop their social skills and to manage their wellbeing.

Leaders work closely with external agencies, such as medical practitioners who attend the school each week. They build positive working relationships to ensure that pupils receive the specialist support they need to succeed.

Leaders use alternative provision when they are confident that this is in the best interests of pupils.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders and governors know their school well and identify the right priorities to ensure that pupils receive a high-quality education and care from adults. Leaders' actions are informed

by research evidence and working proactively with other professionals to share good practice.

Leaders and those responsible for governance fulfil their statutory duties effectively. Leaders ensure a culture of belonging for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and those with other vulnerabilities. This has been achieved in a range of ways, such as through the improved culture for learning, increased levels of attendance and introducing the positive behaviour policy. Leaders use additional funding for pupils with SEND and the pupil premium grant well. They have increased pastoral support for pupils, which has led to assisting them with their learning or their social and emotional health effectively.

Governors play an active role in checking the progress of school development work. In addition to the formal meetings and committees, governors visit regularly to see the progress that leaders are making. Governors' understanding of the school enables them to support and challenge leaders effectively. Governors consider the wellbeing of staff, particularly that of leaders. They support the school in creating staffing capacity across the federation. This enables leaders to concentrate on school priorities and developing high-quality provision for pupils.

Leaders are models of high expectations and professionalism. They provide staff with appropriate training that helps to develop their expertise. Staff are proud to work at the school. They appreciate leaders' approachability and support.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

There is a comprehensive personal development programme in place that ensures pupils are fully prepared for their next steps and the wider world. Careers education is a strength of this programme. Pupils benefit from a range of opportunities that include, for example, a careers fair, individual careers support and links with local employers. Pupils learn about the wide range of opportunities available to them post-16 and move on successfully to a range of destinations.

Through the curriculum for personal, social and health education, pupils learn how to keep safe and healthy. This includes learning about online and offline risks to their wellbeing and healthy relationships. Leaders ensure that the programme is tailored to ensure all pupils understand risks, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and other vulnerable pupils. Leaders reinforce important learning from the curriculum during assemblies.

Pupils develop their understanding of fundamental British values, those who are protected by law and cultural diversity in modern Britain. Pupils learn to be respectful and tolerant. This is evident in the way that they respect and support each other. Further work is needed to ensure pupils have a more detailed understanding of these areas.

Pupils appreciate the extensive pastoral support that the school provides. This support is tailored to the needs of individual pupils. It helps them to get back on track when they are experiencing challenges.

The school ensures that enrichment activities are accessible to all pupils, including those

with SEND and disadvantaged pupils. Leaders think carefully about how to adapt the programme to ensure all pupils benefit from the experiences. Pupils have a range of suitable opportunities that broaden their experiences and enable them to develop their talents and interests in areas such as the arts and sports and in the newly formed horticultural and outdoor activity clubs.

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

Pupils benefit from a broad and well-designed curriculum. The knowledge and skills that pupils develop enable them to progress successfully to the next stage of their education, training or employment. The proportion of pupils securing the qualifications that they need in English and mathematics is generally close to national averages. The school ensures that there is a wide range of subjects for pupils to study in key stage 4. Pupils' achievement has improved over time. This has enabled pupils to embark on post-16 courses that reflect their talents and interests.

Staff know the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities well. They understand their barriers to learning and those of other vulnerable groups, including disadvantaged pupils. As a result, pupils make appropriate progress through the curriculum from their starting points. There is some work to do to ensure that staff consistently check pupils' understanding so that they do not fall behind in their learning.

Pupils enjoy wider opportunities, such as sports clubs, music groups, visits and residential trips, including trips abroad. Pupils recognise that the wide range of experiences beyond the classroom make a positive difference and help build their character, such as the Duke of Edinburgh's Award and pupil leadership opportunities.

Pupils behave well. They typically work hard, concentrate on their learning and conduct themselves sensibly around the school site. Pupils have responded well to the renewed behaviour policy. There is a positive culture in the school. Pupils are respectful and courteous with staff and with their peers.

Pupils thrive in an inclusive ethos at Boroughbridge High School. There is a sense of belonging. Pupils are well cared for and supported. They feel safe and know who to go to if they have a concern. Bullying is rare, and staff deal with it effectively if it does happen. Most pupils attend well and enjoy coming to school.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that the strategies they use to improve attendance impact on a wider range of pupils so that attendance increases overall.
- Leaders should continue to ensure that they embed all elements of the teaching strategy, including adaptive teaching, so that staff teach the curriculum consistently well and pupils can access learning in all subjects successfully.

- Leaders should ensure that disadvantaged pupils continue to receive the support that they need to bring their attainment more in line with their national counterparts.
 - Leaders should ensure that pupils develop a more detailed and secure knowledge of the personal, social, health and economic education curriculum.
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About this inspection

The school is part of the Boroughbridge High School and King James's School Federation. The school shares the governing body with King James's School.

The chair of the board of governors is Andrew Howard.

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 (HMIs) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMIs.

Inspectors spoke with senior leaders, a range of pupils and staff, members of the governing body and the local authority principal adviser for the education team 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 makes use of one alternative provision.

Headteacher: Kathryn Stephenson

Lead inspector:

Ruth Craven, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Harkireet Sohel, Ofsted Inspector

John Downs, Ofsted Inspector

Sam Vickers, Ofsted Inspector

Facts and figures used on inspection

This was the data available at the time of the full inspection, taken from [different sources](#). More recent data may have been published since the full inspection took place.



The inspector(s) used this data during the full inspection on 30 June 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

438

Well below 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

763

Well 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)

21.92%

Close to average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals at any point in the last 6 years.

National average: 28.9%

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

5.25%

Well above 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

26.03%

Well above average

What does this mean?

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

National average: 13.4%

Location deprivation

Close to 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)	38.5%	45.4%	Close to average

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	31.5%	45.9%	Below
2022/23 (final)	18.3%	45.3%	Below

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)	43.0	46.1	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	40.0	45.9	Below
2022/23 (final)	34.4	46.3	Below

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)	-0.48	-0.03	Below
2022/23 (final)	-0.64	-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)	0.0%	25.8%	Below
2023/24 (final)	6.7%	25.8%	Below
2022/23 (final)	0.0%	25.2%	Below

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)	22.0	34.9	Below
2023/24 (final)	25.5	34.6	Below
2022/23 (final)	24.4	35.0	Below

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)	-1.63	-0.57	Below
2022/23 (final)	-1.20	-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)	0.0%	53.1%	-53.1 pp
2023/24 (final)	6.7%	53.1%	-46.5 pp
2022/23 (final)	0.0%	52.4%	-52.4 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)	22.0	50.4	-28.4
2023/24 (final)	25.5	50.0	-24.5
2022/23 (final)	24.4	50.3	-25.9

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)	-1.63	0.16	-1.80
2022/23 (final)	-1.20	0.17	-1.37

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)	93%	92%	Average
2022 leavers (revised)	93%	93%	Average
2021 leavers (revised)	95%	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
2022/23 (final)	35.45	34.16	Close to average

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)	9.4%	8.4%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	10.9%	8.9%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	13.9%	9.0%	Above

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)	30.1%	23.4%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	32.9%	25.6%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	39.4%	26.5%	Above

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.

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