



17 September 2026

Dear Parents and Carers

A very proud day for Bedale High School

Today is an incredibly special day for our school community, and I am delighted to finally be able to share with you the report from our Ofsted inspection in July.

Ofsted has judged **Bedale High School to be at a 'Strong standard' in every area of its work**, with safeguarding standards met. Under Ofsted's new framework, a Strong standard means that *"leaders are working above the standard expected of them."*

Bedale High School is the only secondary school in North Yorkshire to have achieved a Strong standard across every area of Ofsted's new inspection framework, and one of only a small number of secondary schools nationally to have done so.

For our school and our community, this is an achievement of which we should be enormously proud. For me, however, this report means considerably more than a set of inspection judgements.

When I arrived at Bedale High School in September 2024, the school was in a difficult place. Examination results had been poor for many years, attendance was too low, behaviour was challenging, finances were stretched and, just weeks earlier, Ofsted had downgraded the school to Requires Improvement. I knew then that Bedale could be so much more.

The changes we needed to make were significant, and I would be dishonest if I pretended that the journey was always easy. Change is difficult. Expectations changed quickly and substantially, and there were times when the decisions we made attracted considerable criticism. There were difficult days for staff, students, parents, governors and for me personally.

But we remained absolutely determined to do what we believed was right for the young people of Bedale, and today we can see what that determination has achieved.

Our GCSE results are now well above national averages. Attendance has improved dramatically. Behaviour has been transformed. Expectations in classrooms are higher. Our curriculum is stronger. Our students have more opportunities than ever before. Most importantly, Bedale High School has become a school in which young people can be proud to belong. Ofsted saw that too.

Inspectors describe Bedale as **"a calm, welcoming and ambitious school"**, where pupils *"feel safe, included and able to succeed."* They found that pupils enjoy their learning, respond positively to teachers' high expectations and *"feel they belong at the school."*

They found that **"pupils achieve well and standards are rising quickly"**, recognising that our most recent results demonstrate the impact of the new systems and teaching now established across the school.

Perhaps the sentence that means the most to me is in Ofsted's assessment of leadership:

"Leaders have brought clarity, consistency and ambition to the school's work. They have a secure understanding of what is going well and where further improvement is needed. Leadership capacity has been

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Headteacher

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Chairs of Governors



strengthened, which has helped the school to focus more sharply on improvements and meeting the needs of all pupils. **This has had considerable impact in a remarkably short period of time, with significant gains seen across all aspects of the school's provision."**

That achievement belongs to everyone.

It belongs to our staff, who have worked extraordinarily hard, embraced higher expectations and given so much of themselves to our students.

It belongs to our governors, who have supported and challenged the school while never losing sight of what we were trying to achieve.

It belongs to our parents and carers, who have trusted us with the most important people in your lives and supported us, including when some of the changes we made were difficult.

And, above all, it belongs to our students. I am immensely proud of them. They have risen to every challenge we have placed before them. They have accepted higher expectations of their attendance, behaviour, uniform and learning, and they have shown what young people at Bedale High School are capable of achieving.

There is a sentence towards the end of the report which, for me, captures what all of this work has ultimately been about:

"Pupils experience a school where they feel valued and able to achieve their best."

That is the Bedale High School we set out to create.

Just two years ago, few could have imagined that Bedale High School would so quickly become the only secondary school in North Yorkshire to have achieved this level under Ofsted's new framework, and one of only a handful nationally. Yet that is what our students, staff, families and governors have achieved together.

But this is not the end of our ambition. Our values are Courage, Commitment and Compassion, and those values have carried this school through a remarkable period of change. We will continue to expect more of ourselves because our young people deserve nothing less. Our ambition remains to provide an exceptional education, without exception, for every child who walks through our doors.

Today, though, is a moment to recognise just how far we have come, and to celebrate something genuinely special. Thank you for believing in Bedale High School. Thank you for supporting us. And thank you to everyone who has played a part in transforming our school.

I hope that, as you read the enclosed report, you feel as proud of your school as I do.

Yours faithfully

Mr C Stokes
Headteacher

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