

Bedale High School

Address: Fitzalan Road, Bedale, North Yorkshire, DL8 2EQ

Unique reference number (URN): 121670

Inspection report: 14 July 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

Achievement

Strong standard 

Pupils achieve well and standards are rising quickly. Pupils' work shows well-developed knowledge, accurate vocabulary and confident use of skills across subjects. Pupils can recall prior learning and apply ideas from one subject to another. Disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities produce work of the same high quality as their peers.

Published outcomes over time in national examinations and tests do not reflect the school's current picture. Most of these outcomes reflect a time before the school's recent improvements and were already considered at the last inspection. The school's most recent outcomes, which show the impact of the school's new systems and teaching, are much stronger. This is particularly notable given the high number of pupils with additional needs and the movement of some pupils in and out of the school. Pupils are now secure in their learning. Gaps are quickly closing and pupils with additional needs are making positive progress from their starting points. Pupils are well prepared for their next steps in education, employment or training.

Attendance and behaviour

Strong standard 

Leaders have driven rapid and secure improvement in attendance by tracking patterns closely, acting early and making school a place pupils want to be. Leaders use a four-pillar approach of incentives, support, engagement and clear expectations. This is having a clear impact. Attendance is now in line with national figures and continues to rise. The rates of attendance for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are above national averages. Disadvantaged pupils' attendance is improving at a notably fast rate. Persistent absence has reduced significantly. Leaders use imaginative ideas, such as the Bedale Festival, early-to-lunch passes, reward trips and the Attendance Lounge to motivate pupils. These rewards are shaped by pupil voice, so they feel fair and inclusive. Pupils understand the importance of attendance and can explain their own attendance figures with confidence.

Behaviour across the school is calm, respectful and positive. Pupils value the clarity and consistency that the behavioural system brings. Lessons are settled, movement around the site is purposeful and social times are relaxed. Pupils manage themselves well and show enthusiasm for learning. Staff apply behaviour routines consistently and pupils understand the rules. Bullying is rare and pupils trust adults to act quickly if concerns arise. Leaders analyse behaviour trends carefully and have reduced suspensions and low-level sanctions over time, including for disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND.

Curriculum and teaching

Strong standard 

Leaders have designed a broad and ambitious curriculum that gives pupils the knowledge they need for their next steps. They understand the quality of teaching well and make careful decisions to strengthen it further. At subject level, the curriculum is clear and well sequenced, so pupils build knowledge over time. Teachers know their subjects and explain

new ideas with confidence. In lessons, pupils use the right vocabulary and can talk about what they have learned in detail.

Teaching is consistent and helps pupils understand and practise new content. Routines, such as structured starters, modelling and independent work, help pupils feel secure. Staff check pupils' understanding often and respond quickly when pupils need more help. When pupils need to catch up with reading, writing or mathematics, leaders put support in place straight away. This includes reading programmes, handwriting help and extra practice with key vocabulary.

Teachers know pupils well and make sensible changes to help those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, those who are disadvantaged and those known to social care. Leaders check teaching closely and give staff the training they need to teach the curriculum well. These approaches ensure that all pupils build knowledge securely and feel well supported in every subject.

Inclusion

Strong standard ●

Leaders have created a caring and ambitious culture where every pupil is known well and supported to succeed. Staff identify pupils' needs quickly, including those who have special education needs and/or disabilities (SEND), are disadvantaged or are known to social care. Teachers use seating plans and simple classroom strategies that help pupils take part in lessons with confidence. These approaches are used across the school and help disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND access the same curriculum as their peers.

Leaders reduce barriers to learning through thoughtful support. This includes targeted reading programmes, handwriting help and small group interventions. These are checked carefully to make sure they are working. Staff receive thorough training in a step-by-step support process and in meeting a wide range of needs. Leaders work closely with families and other professionals. For example, coffee mornings have been introduced to help parents and carers communicate with school leaders. The school has a very positive relationship with the local team responsible for supporting pupils in care. Pupils who are looked after receive detailed and personalised plans that help them move forward positively.

Leaders track vulnerable pupils closely. For example, they check attendance, behaviour, enrichment engagement and progress and take action when gaps appear. Additional funding is used with care and has led to better attendance, stronger reading and improved engagement. Pupils say they feel valued and included.

Leadership and governance

Strong standard ●

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 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.

Staff describe systems that are well organised and supportive, with behaviour routines that help them teach and workload that feels manageable. Professional development is extensive, evidence-informed and matched closely to staff needs. Early career teachers feel well supported. Middle leaders value the coaching they receive and appreciate being trusted to make thoughtful choices about their subjects.

Leaders act in pupils' best interests and make decisions that focus on their safety, wellbeing and success. They work constructively with families by listening carefully and responding to feedback. Leaders also advocate firmly for vulnerable pupils when working with external agencies and ensure that vulnerable pupils receive timely help and the right provision. They challenge professional partners when necessary and persist until support is in place.

Governance is effective and purposeful. Governors meet regularly and ask probing, strategic questions that help them understand the school's work. They fulfil statutory duties, monitor safeguarding and equality carefully and consider staff wellbeing in their decision-making. Governors have a clear, values-led vision for the school and are determined that it should serve its community well.

Personal development and wellbeing

Strong standard ●

Leaders have created a thoughtful and ambitious personal development programme. This helps pupils grow into confident, respectful and responsible young people. The programme is well planned and taught with care, giving pupils the knowledge and skills they need for later life. Pupils learn about healthy relationships, online safety and personal wellbeing in a clear and age-appropriate way. They talk confidently about how to stay safe, how to make sensible choices and where to seek help if they need it. Lessons encourage pupils to reflect on their beliefs, understand right and wrong and consider the impact of their actions. Pupils show respect for different viewpoints and understand the importance of British values. They demonstrate highly developed social skills in lessons and around the school.

The school provides rich opportunities for pupils to understand and appreciate cultural diversity. Pupils learn about different communities, traditions and democratic processes. Assemblies, form-time discussions and subject teaching help pupils think deeply about ethical issues and current events. Pupils eloquently articulate their understanding of these themes.

The school's wider offer of enrichment is a strength. Pupils enjoy a broad range of clubs, performances and activities that help them develop their talents and interests. For example, pupils have opportunities to take part in drama productions, such as 'The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe', and in other activities, including the Duke of Edinburgh's Award, rowing, cricket and international trips. Leaders track participation and adapt opportunities to meet pupils' needs.

Careers education is well organised and gives pupils clear guidance about future pathways. Older pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), receive helpful support to prepare for adulthood, such as planning for further education, apprenticeships, employment and independent living.

Leaders make sure disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND can access all aspects of the programme, including trips, clubs and leadership roles. Staff know pupils well and make

sensible adjustments so everyone can take part.

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

This is a school that has improved rapidly. Pupils here experience a calm, welcoming and ambitious school. They feel safe, included and able to succeed. Pupils speak positively about the clarity and consistency of routines, which help them settle quickly into learning. Around the site, pupils move purposefully and behave respectfully, creating an environment where everyone can focus. Bullying is rare and pupils trust staff to act quickly if concerns arise. They say adults listen to them and take their worries seriously.

In lessons, pupils enjoy their learning and respond well to teachers' high expectations. They are highly positive about improvements to teaching and feel this is helping them to learn much more. Pupils value the support they receive, especially those who have vulnerabilities and those who face barriers to learning. These pupils say staff understand them well and help them make good progress through the curriculum. As a result, pupils achieve well from their starting points and feel well prepared for their next steps.

Pupils feel they belong at the school. They build positive relationships with staff and with each other. They appreciate the wider experiences on offer. They benefit from an array of clubs and activities that develop their social skills and cultural capital. These range from basketball, music and Lego to Legends and Labyrinths and the Military Students Social Club. Pupil leaders are proud of their roles and shape meaningful change at the school. For example, they help choose themes for the new house system, influence uniform changes, improve breaktimes and negotiate more time to complete homework.

Pupils thrive because behaviour is calm, expectations are clear and adults model kindness and respect. They learn how to contribute positively to their community, think carefully about ethical issues and understand the importance of treating others well. Pupils experience a school where they feel valued and able to achieve their best. Attendance has improved securely and pupils understand why coming to school every day matters.

Next steps

- Leaders should continue to strengthen attendance for pupils who are disadvantaged to ensure that any gaps in learning and achievement between them and their peers continue to close rapidly.

About this inspection

The co-chairs of the board of governors in this school are Jan Reed and Steve Ingram.

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

Following our updated 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 the headteacher, senior leaders, middle leaders, governors and a representative from the local authority. They spoke with teaching and non-teaching staff. They observed and spoke to pupils in lessons and at social times of the school day. They looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also considered responses made to Ofsted's online survey which collated the views of parents and carers.

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 does not make use of any alternative provision.

A new headteacher has been appointed since the previous inspection.

Headteacher: Christopher Stokes

Lead inspector:

Chris Carr, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Michael Wardle, His Majesty's Inspector

James Evans, His Majesty's Inspector

Helen Lane, 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 14 July 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

560

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

700

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)

21.25%

Below 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

3.21%

Close to 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

24.11%

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)	39.6%	45.4%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	30.7%	45.9%	Below
2022/23 (final)	28.9%	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)	46.1	46.1	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	42.0	45.9	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	40.1	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)	-0.30	-0.03	Below
2022/23 (final)	-0.48	-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)	29.4%	25.8%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	27.8%	25.8%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	15.8%	25.2%	Close to average

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)	39.2	34.9	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	37.0	34.6	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	32.3	35.0	Close to average

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)	-0.72	-0.57	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	-0.94	-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)	29.4%	53.1%	-23.7 pp
2023/24 (final)	27.8%	53.1%	-25.4 pp
2022/23 (final)	15.8%	52.4%	-36.6 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)	39.2	50.4	-11.2
2023/24 (final)	37.0	50.0	-13.0
2022/23 (final)	32.3	50.3	-18.0

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)	-0.72	0.16	-0.88
2022/23 (final)	-0.94	0.17	-1.10

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)	88%	92%	Average
2022 leavers (revised)	92%	93%	Average
2021 leavers (revised)	95%	94%	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)	8.8%	8.4%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	11.4%	8.9%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	11.0%	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)	18.9%	23.4%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	28.8%	25.6%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	29.9%	26.5%	Close to average

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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