

# Inspection of Bedford High School

Manchester Road, Leigh, Lancashire WN7 2LU

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Inspection dates: 3 and 4 October 2023

**Overall effectiveness** **Good**

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The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Previous inspection grade Good

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Most pupils enjoy their time at Bedford High School. They value the strong relationships that they have with their teachers and peers. This helps them to feel safe and cared for in school.

Pupils endeavour to live by the school's 'Bedford SPIRIT' virtues. They are tolerant and respectful of differences between themselves and others. As a result, pupils relish being part of a friendly school community.

Pupils respond well to the high expectations that the school has for their achievement. Pupils are keen to attend additional 'strive' support sessions when needed. This helps them, including pupils with special education needs and/or disabilities (SEND), to improve their study skills and achieve well.

Pupils, including those with SEND, enjoy roles of responsibility in school. For instance, pupils on the junior leadership team support various community events. This develops their communication skills and confidence to work with different people.

Pupils expand their experiences of the wider world through various trips and visits. For example, they enjoy performing at the Royal Albert Hall and at local care homes. Pupils visit a wide range of museums, theatre productions and art galleries. These opportunities help pupils to understand and appreciate life beyond school.

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

Over time, the school has made considerable improvements to the quality of education. It has worked closely with local education experts to redesign the curriculum. The school has taken effective actions to improve the take up of the English Baccalaureate suite of subjects at key stage 4. For instance, there has been a marked increase in the number of pupils taking up Spanish in Year 10.

The key knowledge and vocabulary that pupils need to learn is mapped out well for teachers. Teachers use coaching and collaboration time to share good practice. They use their subject expertise to design effective learning activities. As a result, pupils learn the intended curriculum well.

Most teachers check and identify gaps in pupils' learning effectively. This enables teachers to revisit and address misconceptions. Nonetheless, from time-to-time, some teachers use these assessment strategies less successfully. This means that a small number of pupils do not have secure prior knowledge when they meet new content.

Staff identify the needs of pupils with SEND accurately. The school invites parents and carers to discuss how they can work in partnership to support these pupils.

External services are used effectively, to ensure that pupils with SEND achieve as well as they should.

The school meticulously identifies pupils who struggle to read. Staff offer swift support so that pupils can become confident and fluent readers. The school promotes reading well. Pupils use the well-resourced school library regularly. They routinely read a wide range of texts. This expands pupils' vocabulary and helps them to access the wider curriculum.

In the main, most pupils understand and follow the school routines well. They are keen to succeed and they behave well in class. Nevertheless, a small number of teachers do not use the behaviour systems consistently well. This means that a small minority of pupils disrupt some lessons. This hinders a few of the pupils from achieving as well as they should.

Pupils learn about a range of ways to keep a healthy body and mind. They know how to keep safe from crimes, toxic relationships and online risks. Pupils enjoy learning about and tasting food from different cultures. This widens pupils' experiences of different societies.

The school prepares pupils well for their next steps. They receive quality careers information and guidance. For example, pupils take part in mock interviews, work placements and careers fairs. This means that pupils gain valuable insights into the world of work. Pupils understand the different routes that they can take after Year 11. They feel well-informed about their career choices.

Parents appreciate the information that they receive from the school's online platforms. This helps them better support pupils with work at home.

Governors understand their roles and responsibilities. They offer constructive challenge and support to the school. The school consults staff when new policies or changes are introduced. This helps staff to manage their workload well. Staff are proud to work at the school.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- At times, some teachers do not use assessment strategies consistently well. This means that some pupils do not have secure prior learning before they move on to new content. The school should support teachers to identify and address misconceptions quickly before new learning is introduced.

- Some teachers do not use the behaviour management systems as well as they should. This means that some lessons are disrupted by a small minority of pupils. The school should ensure that teachers use behaviour systems consistently well to manage pupils' behaviour.

## 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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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.

## Further information

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

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	106523
<b>Local authority</b>	Wigan
<b>Inspection number</b>	10289910
<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1093
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Local authority
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	David Whitehead
<b>Headteacher</b>	Paul McCaffery
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.bedfordhighschool.co.uk">www.bedfordhighschool.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	9 May 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The current headteacher was appointed in September 2021.
- The school make use of five unregistered alternative providers for eight pupils.
- The school provides before- and after-school care for pupils.
- 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.

## Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, senior leaders and subject leaders. Inspectors met with a range of other staff and leaders during the inspection.
- Inspectors spoke with representatives of the governing body, including the chair of governors. Inspectors also spoke with representatives of the local authority and the alternative providers.
- The inspectors observed pupils' behaviour during social times and during movement around the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: mathematics, science, English, Spanish, computing and history. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with leaders and teachers, visited a sample of lessons, reviewed samples of pupils' work and spoke with some pupils. Inspectors also met with subject leaders to review other areas of the curriculum.
- Inspectors spoke with the leaders responsible for personal development, pupil premium, behaviour and attendance, alternative provision, early careers teachers, SEND and reading.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documents, including leaders' self-evaluation, attendance and behaviour records.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors reviewed the single central record, took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- The inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses. The inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's online surveys for staff and pupils.

### **Inspection team**

Amina Modan, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Michael Gun-Why	Ofsted Inspector
Gil Bourgade	Ofsted Inspector
Tuesday Humby	Ofsted Inspector

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