

# Bedale High School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	121670
<b>Local Authority</b>	North Yorkshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	359061
<b>Inspection dates</b>	13–14 December 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Christine Harrison

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	820
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr David Mollard
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Graham Turner
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	12 September 2007
<b>School address</b>	Fitzalan Road Bedale North Yorkshire DL8 2EQ
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by five additional inspectors. Inspectors observed 33 teachers and conducted detailed scrutinies of students' written work in English and mathematics. Meetings were held with senior and middle leaders, groups of students from four year groups, representatives of the governing body, the School Improvement Partner and a representative of the local authority. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at information about students' attainment, the school development plan and the school's records of lesson observations. They analysed the findings from 316 questionnaires returned by parents and carers.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- Whether students are making enough progress, particularly in English and mathematics.
- Whether students' behaviour is making a strongly positive contribution to their learning.
- The extent to which the school's specialism in humanities is being used to raise attainment, extend students' experience and move the school forward.

## Information about the school

This smaller than average size secondary school serves the town of Bedale and the surrounding rural area. One in six students comes from RAF Leeming and other service families. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is well below the national average. The vast majority of students come from White British backgrounds and almost all speak English as their first language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and the number with a statement of special educational needs are both below average. The school has been an Enhanced Mainstream Secondary School for students on the autistic spectrum since March 2010 and 10 students are currently supported by a specialist team. The school has held specialist status in humanities since 2007. It has received a number of awards, including the International Schools award.

The Bright Beginnings Day Care shares the school site. This provision is not managed by the school's governing body and is subject to a separate inspection.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**

**3**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**3**

## Main findings

This is a satisfactory school providing a friendly and supportive environment where students develop self-confidence and good personal skills which provide a secure preparation for the next stage of their education and future working lives. The school makes good arrangements for safeguarding so that students feel safe in school. Attendance is high, reflecting students' enjoyment in coming to school. Behaviour is good, both in lessons and around the school. Students, particularly those who are vulnerable, are well supported and cared for in school. They are confident that any isolated incidents of bullying are dealt with swiftly and effectively.

The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. There is some good, and occasionally outstanding, teaching. In those lessons, students respond enthusiastically and take an active role in their learning. However, in other lessons, teachers often do not pay enough attention to making sure that all groups within the class make good, rather than satisfactory, progress. Students are cooperative and behave well, even when teaching is not particularly engaging. The result is that their learning is satisfactory.

Over the last two years, there have been significant weaknesses in students' progress particularly, though not exclusively, in English and mathematics. A detailed analysis of students' current progress shows that the trend of improvement, initially shown by the 2010 examination results, is continuing. Students' progress is now satisfactory, though weaker in English and mathematics than in most other subjects. Students' attainment is broadly in line with the national average and their achievement is satisfactory.

The school's specialism in humanities has a very positive impact on students' experience. Work undertaken in history and geography provide some of the most exciting teaching. As one student put it 'They are just inspirational'. These departments also make a strong contribution to the wide range of extra-curricular activities and visits that are much appreciated by students and their parents and carers and are an important component of the good curriculum.

The school's leaders have worked hard to overcome problems with staffing that arose in English and mathematics and to develop better management systems to make the quality of students' experience more secure. However, the school does not make enough use of assessment information to: identify precisely where there are strengths and weaknesses in the progress of different groups of students; relate these findings to variations in the quality of teaching and to encourage teachers to take more responsibility for ensuring good progress. The school's self-evaluation is mostly accurate and there is recent evidence of students making better progress. Therefore, the school has satisfactory capacity for further improvement.

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

- Improve learning and progress, especially in English and mathematics, by:
  - ensuring that all students are appropriately challenged by the work they are given
  - providing students with more opportunities to work independently and at length.
- Increase the proportion of good or better teaching by:
  - making students' progress the main priority both in planning lessons and in monitoring and evaluating the quality of lessons
  - making better use of assessment information to plan lessons that meet the precise needs of all groups of students
  - improving the consistency of the quality of teachers' written feedback so that students always know what they need to do to improve their work.
- Make better use of assessment information to analyse the progress of different groups of students, across all subjects, and use the information to make teachers more accountable for the progress of their groups.
- Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

**3**

Students' learning is satisfactory in the majority of lessons. Their learning is good when they are provided with suitably challenging work. For example, in design and technology, students are often engaged in developing several skills in a short time so that they have to concentrate very hard in order to produce work of good quality. However, in satisfactory lessons, the work is sometimes too straightforward or students do not have enough extended opportunities to work independently and learn for themselves.

Students arrive in school with broadly average attainment and leave with attainment which is also average, so they make satisfactory progress during their time in the school and their achievement is also satisfactory. Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those students who are on the autistic spectrum, receive skilful support in class and are enabled to make progress that, although satisfactory overall, is often slightly better than that of other students.

The good, mutually respectful relationships that are to be found throughout the school, provide a secure foundation for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Students understand the importance of a healthy lifestyle and almost half take part in extra-curricular sporting activities. School meals are nutritious and balanced and the proportion of students taking these meals is steadily increasing. However, sometimes the food and drink that students bring into school do not represent the healthiest choices. Many students make a positive contribution to the life of the school community, notably as prefects, as members of the anti-bullying group or the school council. The school does not yet have detailed information about how well various groups of students are represented in these important activities. Although students make satisfactory progress in English and

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mathematics, other aspects of their skills are particularly strong. For example, they speak clearly and confidently and their skills in using information and communication technology are above average. They participate enthusiastically and skilfully in enterprise activities. As a result, students are well prepared for the future and all of last year's leavers found a place in education, employment or training.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	1
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

**How effective is the provision?**

Teachers have good subject knowledge and good relationships with students. They are well aware of the levels and grades at which students are working and the targets that they are expected to reach. However, teachers do not always make enough use of this information to plan activities that meet the particular needs of all students in the class. Some of the work is rather too easy, and lacks challenge, especially for higher attainers. At times, teachers intervene too frequently when students are working alone or in groups, thus restricting their opportunities to study at length and learn for themselves about a particular topic. There is considerable variation in the quality of teachers' marking. Some books contain clear indications of how the work could be improved, others contain very little written response from the teacher. Teachers then miss the opportunity to reinforce advice and guidance that has been given in class and to ensure that students are clear about what they need to do to improve.

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Students comment on the variation in teaching quality both within and across subjects. They say, and inspectors confirm, that although some lessons are interesting and exciting, others are rather dull. Occasionally, teaching is outstanding. For example, in a history lesson, students were given a range of interesting resources and were required to analyse, make deductions, construct an argument and present their findings, all within a very short time. Students had to think and act quickly to keep up, resulting in considerable enjoyment and satisfaction and excellent development of knowledge, understanding and skills.

The school's curriculum is well organised and provides a good range of courses that match the needs of students of different abilities and interests. In Key Stage 3, students benefit from the recently introduced Activate programme where they develop good learning skills. In both key stages, 'curriculum days' make a good contribution to students' personal development. Where valuable opportunities exist beyond the school, partnerships have been established to enable students to follow, for example, courses leading to diplomas. Although students' progress is satisfactory rather than good, this is a result of weaknesses in teaching rather than in the school's curriculum.

The school works well in partnership with other agencies to provide very good care and support for students, particularly those who are vulnerable. The staff in the Learning Base and Bridge Street centre provide very effective additional support for vulnerable students and those who are at risk of becoming disaffected. They are also valued by other students in providing a source of help and sensible advice for anyone with problems. Parents, carers and students appreciate the good quality of the transition arrangements for students entering Year 7. Advice and guidance on careers and future opportunities is thorough. However, general guidance for students is not yet fully effective in ensuring that they make good progress.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>2</b>

**How effective are leadership and management?**

The school has, over the last two years, introduced satisfactory systems for ensuring quality and there is now greater involvement of middle leaders in driving the school forward. However, some of the arrangements, notably those for departmental self-evaluation, are not sufficiently well structured and are not used consistently by the various subject departments, especially to analyse the progress of different groups of students. Although the school's self-evaluation is broadly accurate, its judgement on driving school improvement is too positive. This is because leaders place too much emphasis on the work that they have done and not enough on the impact on students' progress. Similarly, when

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observing lessons, the school's judgements are sometimes higher than is justified because the lesson observation forms encourage a judgement based on what the teacher does rather than on how well students learn. The governing body is supportive and understands the strengths and weaknesses of the school but have not yet been sufficiently effective in ensuring good progress for students. The school makes a good and steadily improving contribution to community cohesion. Partnerships with organisations in the local area are strong and the school's many international links and exchanges have rightly been recognised in the International Schools award. In addition, the school has recognised the need to introduce students to life in more multicultural areas of Britain and has made a good start with a series of visits and visitors that help to broaden students' understanding. Staff share a strong commitment to equality of opportunity for all students, with the result that there is little difference between the progress of different groups. The school acknowledges that it has not yet fully analysed the participation of the various groups in all the school's activities in order to ensure that all groups are fully represented. There are good arrangements for safeguarding students.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

**Views of parents and carers**

Over a third of parents and carers returned the questionnaires. This proportion is more than twice the average response rate for secondary schools and reflects the good partnership between parents and carers and the school. Several parents and carers provided written comments giving their views of the school. Parents and carers are generally positive about all aspects of the school. They are particularly pleased that their children are happy in school and that the transition from primary school is well managed. Several parents and carers commented on the value of the wide range of visits and extra-curricular activities. Inspection judgements confirm these positive views. Some parents and carers indicated that their children were making good progress in school. While some



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individual students do make good progress, inspection evidence shows that students' overall progress is satisfactory rather than good.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Bedale High School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 294 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 820 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	108	37	163	55	14	5	5	2
The school keeps my child safe	118	40	160	54	11	4	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	129	44	143	49	16	5	5	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	114	39	149	51	21	7	5	2
The teaching is good at this school	92	31	174	59	19	6	1	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	87	30	162	55	34	12	5	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	77	26	181	62	26	9	1	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	83	28	171	58	19	6	4	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	84	29	170	58	24	8	7	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	74	25	170	58	27	9	9	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	72	24	167	57	28	10	4	1
The school is led and managed effectively	105	36	160	54	16	5	4	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	118	40	148	50	17	6	6	2

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

### Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



15 December 2010

Dear Students

**Inspection of Bedale High School, Bedale, DL8 2EQ**

As you know, we have just finished inspecting your school and I am writing to tell you about our findings. First of all, I would like to thank you for making us feel welcome and for talking to us about how you feel about the school. As a result of the inspection, I judged yours to be a satisfactory school. The school has several important strengths. It makes good arrangements for safeguarding so that you feel safe in school. Your attendance levels are high and you behave well. I was impressed by the friendly atmosphere around school and the fact that, as one Year 11 student told me: 'You are never alone; there is always someone to help if you have a problem'. You told me how much you value the wide range of extra-curricular visits and activities, some of which you organise yourselves, and I agree that these are an important feature of the school.

However, there are things about the school that could be improved. In particular, the progress that you make is satisfactory rather than good and it is not as strong in English and mathematics as it is in some other subjects. In order to improve your progress, I have asked senior leaders in school to make better use of your grades and levels to find out where things are not going well and then to make improvements. I have asked teachers to focus more closely on ensuring that every group of students learns quickly, that the work they set is difficult enough and that you have more chances to learn for yourselves. I have also asked them to give you more detailed feedback when they are marking your work. I hope that you will play your part and make even more effort in your lessons and homework.

I know that you are all very busy in the run-up to Christmas and it was good to hear about the services in the local church and the busking to raise money for charity.

I wish you all the best for the future.

Yours sincerely,

Christine Harrison

Lead inspector

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