

Bede Academy

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	135619
Local authority	Northumberland
Inspection number	381910
Inspection dates	29–30 May 2012
Lead inspector	Paul Hancock HMI

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

Type of school	Academy
School category	Non-maintained
Age range of pupils	3–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,571
Of which number on roll in the sixth form	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Nigel Robson
Principal	Gwyneth Evans
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Sixth Avenue Blyth NE24 2SY
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Introduction

Inspection team

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Her Majesty's Inspector
Additional Inspector
Ofsted Secondee
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Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice by five inspectors who observed 42 teachers teaching 42 lessons. Four were joint observations with three vice-principals and the head of primary years. Inspectors visited a further 14 lessons to look at specific aspects such as marking and behaviour. The inspectors met with the principal, the vice-chair of the governing body, they conducted a telephone call with the Chair of the Governing Body and discussed the work of the academy with students. Inspectors looked at a number of documents, including the academy self-evaluation and improvement plan, the safeguarding and equality policies, and minutes of the governing body meetings. The inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection and 808 parental and carers' questionnaires were analysed and others completed by students and staff.

Information about the school

The new purpose-built academy opened in September 2009 and is sponsored by the United Learning Trust. It is one of the first academies to cater for students from the age of 3 to 18 and presently has 1571 students on roll up to Year 11. The sixth form is due to open in September 2012. The academy's specialism is engineering and enterprise. The number of students is large compared with the average primary and secondary school. Nearly all students are White British. The proportion of students with learning difficulties and special educational needs is broadly average. A below average proportion of students are disabled or are supported by school action plus and have a statement of special educational needs. The number of students known to be eligible for free school meals is average. The first cohort of Year 11 students is currently taking their GCSE examinations. The academy expects to exceed the current floor standards this year, which the government sets for the minimum expectations for attainment and progress.

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	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key Findings

- Bede is a good academy which is quickly improving. Achievement is good and all groups of students make good progress including disabled students and those with special educational needs. Fifty-two per cent of Year 11 students are on track to gain five or more A* to C grades at GCSE including English and mathematics from low starting points when they joined the academy. This is above the academy target and close to the national average.
- Achievement in the primary years is good and standards of attainment at the end of Year 6 are average and above in reading, writing and mathematics. The academy is not outstanding because students in Key Stages 3 and 4 need to spend more time learning independently on their own programmes of study and the proportion of outstanding teaching is not high enough to sustain outstanding achievement.
- Teaching is good across the academy and support staff are well deployed to help increase gains in learning. Outstanding teaching was seen where students were fully challenged all of the time and frequently learning through independent study. The quality of teaching is not as high when the match between tasks and lesson planning does not fully meet the students' different learning needs.
- The academy's rigorous assessment information is used to good effect when planning lessons. The best marking is detailed and students are clear about how well they are doing. There are a few examples of marking and feedback to students where quality is not as high. Behaviour is good in lessons and around the academy. Students feel safe and show positive attitudes to their learning. Parents and carers value the work of the academy highly and links with partners are strong.
- Leadership, management and governance are good. Leaders have the capacity to improve the academy's overall effectiveness and ensure achievement is outstanding. The leadership of teaching and the management of performance are good and used well to support teachers in developing their practice. Senior leaders have made sustained and rapid progress in improving achievement and provision since the academy opened. They are taking robust action to make sure it continues to improve

and know the requirements to ensure the academy continues to move in the right direction.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make achievement outstanding by:
 - ensuring students in Key Stages 3 and 4 spend more time learning independently on their own programmes of study at the earliest possible age
 - making sure learning is always matched to students' individual needs and starting points.

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching and make sure teaching is always at least good by:
 - making sure all teachers are familiar with outstanding teaching strategies and how to use them
 - ensuring all marking and feedback is of the highest quality
 - making best use of and building on the professional development practice provided by the academy to teachers.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

Achievement is good and improving. Pupils and students make good progress in lessons after starting at the academy with knowledge and skills that are below and sometimes well below expectations. The starting points of many students who are now in Years 7 to 11 were significantly below the national average. The good progress is reflected in consistent improvements in reading, writing and mathematics. As a result current attainment overall is average and above in Year 6 and Year 11 for the cohorts which had significantly below average starting points. Pupils are presently beginning Year 1 with average attainment from previous starting points that were below that found nationally. This is because they get off to a flying start as a result of outstanding achievement and progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Inspection evidence confirms academy information that current attainment in reading at the end of Key Stage 1 and at Key Stage 3 is good. All groups of pupils and students are making broadly similar progress including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. The academy is on track to meet specialist targets in 2012.

Virtually all parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire say they are happy with the progress their children make in the school. The academy has made raising attainment and achievement for all groups of students a top priority. Progress is slower where students who are mostly in the upper years spend insufficient time learning independently on their own programmes of study. Inspection evidence from listening to students read shows their competence and confidence is quickly improving and skills are well developed. Students' positive attitudes and willingness to learn help them to benefit from challenging and well planned activities. They lose interest when expected to listen for long periods of time before engaging in their own work and learning.

Quality of teaching

Teaching overall is good and some outstanding teaching was seen. Pupils and students make good progress because the teaching is consistently effective over time and expectations are high. Observation of teaching in lessons confirms that there is not enough outstanding teaching to drive the outstanding achievement and attainment the academy is aiming for. Teachers' subject knowledge is used very effectively to provide activities that students find interesting in most lessons. The best teaching seen during the inspection is characterised by a very rapid pace of learning, particularly in the lower years, a high work ethos, and quick engagement of pupils in their own independent programmes of study which fully challenge them to think for themselves. When the teaching is satisfactory, the match of work is not always aligned to their needs and abilities as well as it should be and students spend too much time listening to teachers talk and not engaging in their own work.

Virtually all parents and carers who responded to the inspection questionnaire feel the teaching at the academy is good. Relationships between teachers and their students are strong and characterised by mutual respect and high expectations. The teaching makes a strong impact on spiritual, moral, social and cultural education, for example through the wide range of activities available in addition to the curriculum. Assessment information is used well to ensure all students are making good progress. Nearly all work is regularly marked and progress is routinely reviewed. The academy takes swift and effective action when this is not the case. Evidence from listening to students read in Year 2 and Year 7 confirms that the teaching of reading is good.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Students' behaviour is good in lessons, over time, and around the academy because the behaviour management policy is rigorously followed and students are very aware of what is expected of them. Attendance is above average and there is little persistent absence. The number of exclusions is low and parents are quickly involved in the process. Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe. They know there are different types of bullying and the rare incidents are dealt with well. Students have confidence in the staff and know they can approach teachers with any problems or difficulties. The vast majority of parents and carers who responded to the inspection questionnaire felt the school ensured their children were well looked after. A small number of parents and pupils felt the school did not deal with bullying well. Their concerns were thoroughly investigated and no evidence was found to indicate that this was the case.

Leadership and management

Leadership, management and governance are good and the strategic vision of senior leaders and the governing body to make the academy outstanding is being realised. The capacity to drive further improvement is good and has already been demonstrated through significant gains in achievement, teaching, behaviour and attendance. Self-evaluation is accurate with a tendency at times to be over-generous. Areas for improvement are well known and the right action is driven at a rapid pace. The governing body provides strong support to drive improvement and acts as a good critical friend. It is very effective in challenging the senior leadership team about students' results and the quality of teaching. The performance management of teachers is making a good impact on improving the quality of teaching. It is closely linked to their professional development and senior leaders know there is greater potential for the best teachers to share successful strategies with all staff.

Safeguarding procedures are routinely monitored and meet requirements. The promotion of students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and the academy's Christian ethos is making a strong impact on spiritual development. The good curriculum is enriched with activities which provide a wide range of opportunities for musical, sporting and cultural events. The promotion of equality of opportunity is good and all forms of discrimination are tackled. Virtually all parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire praised the work of the academy which takes their views into account.

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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Floor standards	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



31 May 2012

Dear Students

Inspection of Bede Academy, Blyth, NE24 2SY

Thank you for all your help when I inspected the academy with my colleagues. Please would you pass on my thanks to your parents and carers for returning the questionnaires and say inspectors took all their views into account. I thought you might like to know what we found about your academy.

- Bede is a good academy which is quickly improving.
- Your achievement is good and you are making good progress.
- The quality of teaching is good and it is continuing to improve.
- Your behaviour is good, you feel safe and are well cared for.
- Senior leaders and members of the governing body are making the right improvements to help you achieve even more highly.

To help your leaders do this, I have asked them to:

- improve the achievement you make so that it is outstanding
- increase the proportion of outstanding teaching.

I know the staff would appreciate your help and I wish you every success in all you do in the future.

Yours sincerely

Paul Hancock
Her Majesty's Inspector

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