

Inspection of a good school: Beaumont Hill Academy

Salters Lane South, Darlington DL1 2AN

Inspection dates:

8 and 9 May 2024

Outcome

Beaumont Hill Academy continues to be a good school.

The principal of this school is Adrian Lynch. This school is part of Education Village Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Mike Butler, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Helen Radcliffe. There is also an executive principal, Caroline Green, who is responsible for this school and one other school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils flourish at Beaumont Hill Academy. A sense of community is part of everyday life for pupils and staff. Pupils enjoy coming here. Well-skilled leaders and staff provide high levels of support for pupils. Pupils recognise this. They know they have adults that look after them and help them learn. The school is nurturing and inclusive. Staff know pupils very well. This is seen in the positive and caring relationships between them.

The school's curriculum is ambitious. It is designed so that pupils are successful and well prepared for future success. Pupils work hard to achieve their best. They are motivated to do well. This is seen in pupils' positive attitudes to learning and behaviour.

The personal development offer is carefully organised to enrich pupils' learning beyond the classroom. School visits to local history museums or to London to visit the Houses of Parliament, broaden pupils' experiences. The student council actively work with fellow pupils and leaders to bring about positive change in school. Pupils are well prepared for adulthood through skills-based activities like the pupil led café.

Parents and carers value the work of the school. They recognise the bespoke understanding the school has of its pupils. One parent reflected this as, 'The school has embraced my child for who they are.'

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

The school has developed different curriculum pathways to meet the range of needs pupils have. Every pupil has an education, health and care (EHC) plan. The school uses

carefully planned transition to help pupils make a bright start to school. This includes children who join in early years. This work helps the school to decide, with precision, which pathway of learning is best for pupils. The school regularly reviews the curriculum to ensure it is well matched to pupil need. Across all pathways, communication is a high priority. Pupils and staff effectively use a range of communication resources so pupils can share their ideas and needs clearly. For example, during the inspection, some students on the sixth-form pathways eagerly used their resources to sound out what is in the bag as part of morning routines.

In subject-specific areas of the curriculum, the school has planned out the key knowledge and skills they want pupils to build over time. The curriculum design enables pupils to gain accreditations and qualifications in a range of subjects. Pupils enjoy their learning and recall the lessons they have enjoyed. The foundations of these curriculums and key concepts are also part of the semi-formal and pre-formal pathway offer. Sometimes, the school is not consistently clear about how some pathways, key concepts and curriculum planning connect together. This means in a small number of curriculum areas the school's understanding of the impact across pathways is not as precise as it is in other areas of learning.

Reading is a high priority across school. The school continues to develop and foster a love of reading for pupils. Older pupils can remember key books they have read. The school ensures that pupils who are learning to read receive daily phonics lessons. This includes children in early years. Pupils read books that help them to apply the sounds they know with increasing confidence. However, when teaching phonics, sometimes staff do not use clear and distinct pronunciation of letter sounds. This means that some pupils do not learn to read as effectively as they could.

The school ensures that the pathways and wider-therapeutic work that pupils need are built into their daily school offer. Staff liaise well with a range of professionals to support pupils' development. Pupils regularly access the on-site pool. They have access to rebound therapy and daily physiotherapy work. The school is prompt in seeking additional advice from professionals when pupils' circumstances, or needs, change.

Pupils play an active part in school development. The school council contributes effectively to school life. Pupils have worked together with leaders to make ongoing positive changes to social times. An ambitious personal, social and health education (PSHE) offer helps pupils understand how to keep healthy and stay safe online. Pupils and staff live out British values in daily school life. Assemblies are also helping pupils to understand key values. Pupils are well prepared in their journey towards adulthood. Students in the sixth form prepare breakfast for each other each day. Alongside this, a careers offer ensures pupils and students access the world of work. This includes careers fayres, which include families, engagement with local employers and through weekly careers lessons.

Pupils learn in calm and focused classrooms. The expert knowledge of staff supports pupils to regulate their behaviour effectively. When pupils face challenge around this, leaders and staff carefully plan purposeful support help pupils further. Pupils are clear that when things go wrong, and they can, adults are quick to provide help. Behaviour at social times is positive. Pupils play together well. Children in early years make use of a range of

outdoor opportunities when playing. They write, climb, jump, dig and pedal with their peers using different areas of their outdoor offer. Attendance is a high priority for the school. The school has a precise understanding of pupils and any barriers to attendance. Effective support for pupils and families around attendance helps pupils to attend more regularly.

Leaders are reflective. They relentlessly focus on developing practice across school. Staff feel well supported by leaders. Staff, including early career teachers (ECT), appreciate how their well-being is prioritised by leaders. Representatives for local governance and the trust provide purposeful support and challenge to 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)

- In a small number of subjects, the knowledge of teachers and intention of leaders for curriculum areas and pathways are not consistently aligned. How curriculum pathways and subject-specific curriculums work together is not fully understood impacting on the school's assurance of the curriculum in these areas. The school should continue to ensure that staff are well skilled to teach the specifics of the curriculum and that the school understands and assures themselves of the curriculum intentions across the different pathways.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged school to be good in November 2018.

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

Unique reference number	138093
Local authority	Darlington
Inspection number	10297365
Type of school	Special
School category	Academy special converter
Age range of pupils	2 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	330
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	25
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Helen Radcliffe
Principal	Adrian Lynch
Website	www.educationvillage.org.uk
Dates of previous inspection	21 and 22 November 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of Education Village Academy Trust.
- The school is a special school that educates pupils from two to 19 years.
- The school provides education for pupils with a range of learning difficulties. All pupils have an EHC plan.
- The number of pupils on roll has increased since the previous inspection.
- The school's curriculum offers seven pathways of learning for pupils who attend.
- The school does not use any alternative providers.
- 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

- 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 leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Prior to the inspection, the lead inspector reviewed documents on the school's website, as well as published information about the school's performance and previous Ofsted inspections.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading and communication, mathematics, history and PSHE. Inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons and spoke to teachers and teaching assistants. They spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors listened to pupils reading with a familiar adult.
- 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.
- Inspectors gathered views of parents informally through phone calls and formally through responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View, and free-text responses. The views of staff were considered in meetings with them and through the staff survey. Pupils' views were considered through pupil meetings, pupil survey responses and during lesson visits.
- Inspectors met with leaders responsible for the development of ECTs.
- Inspectors spoke with representatives responsible for governance, including members of the education standards committee and the board of trustees. Inspectors also met with the chief executive officer of the trust and those responsible for school improvement.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in classes, during breaks and at lunchtime.

Inspection team

Emily Stevens, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

David Penny

Ofsted Inspector

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