

Inspection of Bede Academy

Sixth Avenue, Blyth, Northumberland NE24 2SY

Inspection dates: 30 April and 1 May 2024

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| Overall effectiveness | Good |
| The quality of education | Good |
| Behaviour and attitudes | Requires improvement |
| Personal development | Good |
| Leadership and management | Good |
| Early years provision | Good |
| Sixth-form provision | Good |
| Previous inspection grade | Good |

The principals of this school are Nicky White (Primary) and Andrew Thelwell (Secondary). This school is part of the Emmanuel Schools Foundation, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Professor Mark Pike, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Stewart McKinlay.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils in all phases enjoy coming to school. They are proud to attend Bede Academy. They feel cared for and valued. Attendance is high. Pupils feel that bullying is rare and is dealt with effectively.

Leaders, staff and pupils are rightfully proud of their work to help place the school at the heart of the community. The core virtues adopted by the school — love, wisdom, fairness, self-control, courage, humility and integrity — are more than just words on posters; they are virtues that adults demonstrate daily and strive to nurture in all pupils. There is a resolute belief that all pupils can make a positive difference, no matter what challenges they currently face.

Expectations of what pupils can achieve are high. In the primary phase, pupils achieve very well in all subjects. In the secondary phase and sixth form, pupils and students do not achieve as highly.

In the secondary phase, behaviour is not consistently good. Low-level disruption in lessons is not always dealt with effectively. This impacts negatively on the learning of others. At social times, and during lesson changeover, pupils do not always behave as well as leaders expect. Some pupils say this makes them feel uncomfortable, although they stress that they do feel safe. Behaviour is more settled in areas of the school where staff are present and supervising pupils more closely.

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

Children get off to a strong start in the early years. Staff have developed a welcoming environment. Resources and equipment are carefully selected to provide opportunities for children to independently access and develop their learning. Important routines, such as moving from the classroom to outside, are planned so that children learn how to keep themselves and others safe in a busy environment. The teaching of early reading is a strength, and pupils achieve highly in their national phonics screening checks in Year 1.

Across the primary phase, pupils achieve very highly in national tests. Leaders have carefully identified what pupils need to learn, and teachers select appropriate resources and activities to help them learn effectively in mathematics, reading and writing. In other subject areas, such as physical education and history, leaders are still refining some aspects of what they want pupils to learn and how it will be taught. Despite these changes, pupils are successful in these subjects.

Achievement in the secondary phase and sixth form is not as strong. In subjects where leaders have clearly identified what they want pupils to learn, and where lessons are appropriately sequenced, pupils achieve better. Teachers check on pupils' learning and adjust their teaching when pupils require additional support. In subjects where pupils' achievement has been weaker historically, new curriculums are now in place, and pupils are benefiting from this, learning more and

remembering more over time. Pupils can talk confidently about their learning. Their writing is improving, demonstrating improved understanding across a range of subjects.

New staffing and systems for sharing information with teachers about the specific support that individual pupils require are in place to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). These pupils are supported well in all aspects of school life. Parents of pupils with SEND, and the pupils themselves, are mostly positive about the changes that have taken place over recent years, although a small number remain dissatisfied.

The school does not make full use of the opportunities as an all-through school. What pupils learn in the different phases of school is not always carefully planned so that what pupils learn in Year 7 builds on what they covered in Year 6. In the secondary and sixth form phases, curriculum plans clearly identify what pupils will learn through a well-considered personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) provision that meets their needs. Pupils develop a good understanding of issues, including protected characteristics. However, in the primary phase, the PSHE curriculum is less carefully planned, and pupils' understanding of issues such as democracy is relatively weak.

Pupils receive high-quality careers guidance and advice. This supports them to take well-informed decisions about their next steps. Leaders have worked with local employers to ensure that the range of courses that pupils can choose to study in the secondary school and sixth form provide pupils with the knowledge and skills to be successful when they leave school.

The secondary phase has grown significantly in size over the last four years due to an increase in the number of pupils joining Year 7. This increase has coincided with the COVID-19 pandemic. This has made it harder for leaders to review and amend existing school systems if necessary. Some systems have struggled to cope under the strain of additional pupil numbers. For example, the reading capabilities of pupils in Year 7 are carefully assessed to identify those pupils who would benefit from additional support with their reading. Weaker readers receive carefully matched support to improve their reading. However, there are more pupils who would benefit from support than current systems are able to help.

The school recently introduced a new behaviour policy. Pupils are clear about the behaviour expectations. Pupils say that in a minority of lessons, predominantly in the secondary phase, learning is still disrupted by low-level disruption. Inspectors saw examples of this in lessons where teachers were not using the new behaviour policy consistently. The school is providing additional support and clarifying expectations for these staff.

A small number of pupils, mostly in Year 7, find it extremely challenging to meet the school's behaviour expectations. Leaders work closely with primary schools to identify these pupils and the support they require. However, some pupils are frequently suspended from school. Many have had multiple suspensions. The school

has appointed additional and specialised support staff to help these pupils improve their behaviour. They work effectively with outside agencies. These approaches have had some success in helping pupils meet the school's behaviour expectations. Work is underway to provide a dedicated support hub for pupils who will need significant support in the future.

Leaders, governors and trustees have a strong understanding of the school. They have secure systems for identifying strengths and areas in need of additional work. Staff in school feel well supported by leaders. They welcome challenge as an opportunity to improve their provision and have an even greater impact on an increasing number of pupils.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The new behaviour policy is not consistently applied by some staff in the secondary phase. This contributes to unsettled behaviour in some lessons. This impacts on how well pupils can learn. The school should ensure that all staff know, understand and use the new behaviour policy consistently and effectively to help pupils behave well.
- A minority of younger pupils in the secondary phase find it very challenging to meet the school's behaviour expectations. Steps taken to help these pupils behave as expected have had limited impact. They have been suspended from school on multiple occasions. The school should evaluate the approaches used to support these pupils and make necessary changes so that they improve their behaviour and are subject to fewer suspensions over time.
- Some pupils who join the school in Year 7 need additional support with their reading, but they do not receive it. These pupils do not improve their reading fluency and comprehension as swiftly as they could. The school should ensure that these pupils receive appropriate reading interventions and support to help improve their reading and enable them to access and do well across the full curriculum.
- The primary phase PSHE curriculum has undergone frequent changes over the last two years. This has contributed to some gaps in pupils' knowledge. The school should ensure that the primary-phase PHSE curriculum clearly identifies the knowledge that pupils need to learn at each stage and carefully considers how gaps in existing knowledge will be addressed.

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

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| Unique reference number | 135619 |
| Local authority | Northumberland |
| Inspection number | 10323018 |
| Type of school | All-through |
| School category | Academy sponsor-led |
| Age range of pupils | 3 to 18 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 1,987 |
| Of which, number on roll in the sixth form | 196 |
| Appropriate authority | Board of trustees |
| Chair of trust | Stewart McKinlay |
| CEO of trust | Professor Mark Pike |
| Principal | Nicky White (Primary) Andrew Thelwell (Secondary) |
| Website | www.bedeacademy.org.uk |
| Dates of previous inspection | 20 and 21 June 2023, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 |

Information about this school

- Bede Academy is an all-through school, situated across two sites. The south site provides teaching for early years and primary-aged pupils, and the north site provides teaching for secondary-aged pupils and sixth-form students.
- The school is part of the Emmanuel Schools Foundation, a multi-academy trust.
- The school has a Christian ethos. The most recent section 48 inspection of the school's religious character took place in March 2024.
- The school uses two registered alternative providers, operated by the local authority, and two unregistered 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

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 second 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 of the school.
- Inspectors held discussions with the principals, leaders responsible for behaviour and attendance, leaders in charge of personal development and careers, the safeguarding team, the early years leader and the sixth-form leader.
- Inspectors met with the special educational needs coordinator and looked at samples of pupil support plans. Inspectors looked at the provision that pupils with SEND were receiving across all aspects of school life.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in reading, mathematics, physical education, history and English. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors met with governors, trustees and the CEO of the trust.
- 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 spoke to teachers, teaching assistants and other staff over the course of the inspection.
- Inspectors met with groups of pupils on both sites and spoke to others informally during the inspection.
- Inspectors considered responses to the Ofsted Parent View survey and surveys of staff and pupils.
- Inspectors took account of a wide range of documentary information, including the school's policies, its self-evaluation, records of behaviour and documentation related to safeguarding.

Inspection team

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