



**ISI** Independent  
Schools  
Inspectorate

**EDUCATIONAL QUALITY INSPECTION**

**BEDE'S SENIOR SCHOOL**

**FEBRUARY 2017**



## SCHOOL'S DETAILS

<b>School</b>	Bede's Senior School			
<b>DfE Number</b>	845/6006			
<b>Registered charity number</b>	278950			
<b>Address</b>	Bede's Senior School The Dicker Upper Dicker Hailsham East Sussex BN27 3QH			
<b>Telephone number</b>	01323 843252			
<b>Email address</b>	school.office@bedes.org			
<b>Headmaster</b>	Mr Peter Goodyer			
<b>Chair of governors</b>	Major General Anthony Meier			
<b>Age range</b>	13 to 18			
<b>Number of pupils on roll</b>	757			
	<b>Boys</b>	467	<b>Girls</b>	290
	<b>Day pupils</b>	460	<b>Boarders</b>	297
	<b>Sixth Form</b>	349		
<b>Inspection dates</b>	22 to 23 February 2017			

## PREFACE

The registration authority for independent schools is the Department for Education (DfE), which directs inspection according to a specified frequency or at any time where the DfE has particular concerns about a school. The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Secretary of State for the purpose of inspecting schools which are, or whose heads are, in membership of the associations which form the Independent Schools Council (ISC) and reporting on the extent to which they meet the Independent School Standards ('the standards') in the Schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

All association independent schools will have an inspection within three years from April 2016, in accordance with the Framework and DfE requirements. The inspection may be of COMPLIANCE ONLY or a combined inspection of EDUCATIONAL QUALITY AND COMPLIANCE depending on a number of factors, including findings from their most recent inspection. Schools judged not to meet the standards following their inspection may also be subject to a progress monitoring visit before their next routine inspection. The progress monitoring visit will judge whether the school has taken the necessary action to meet any unmet standards identified at their previous inspection.

Inspections do not include matters that are outside of the regulatory framework described above, such as: an exhaustive health and safety audit; compliance with data protection requirements; an in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features; contractual arrangements with parents; an investigation of the financial viability of the school or its accounting procedures.

The inspection was also carried out under the arrangements of the ISC Associations for the maintenance and improvement of the quality of their membership.

**This is an EDUCATIONAL QUALITY inspection, reporting on the quality of the school's work.** It focuses on the two key outcomes:

- The achievement of the pupils, including their academic development, and
- The personal development of the pupils.

Since the school was last inspected, the framework for inspection has changed. The current inspection framework uses different criteria and arrangements for grading from those used in previous inspection frameworks. The judgements made on this inspection are, therefore, not directly comparable to judgements made on previous inspections.

Inspectors may be aware of individual safeguarding concerns, allegations and complaints as part of the inspection process. Such matters will not usually be referred to specifically in the published report but will have been considered by the team in reaching its judgements.

All inspections of independent schools in England are conducted according to the requirements of the Independent School Standards Regulations. However, different inspectorates apply different frameworks that are suited to the different types of schools they inspect. The ISI terminology reflects quality judgements that are at least equivalent to those used by the national inspectorate, Ofsted. ISI reports do not provide a single overarching judgement for the school but instead give a clear judgement about key outcomes for pupils and information on the quality of the school's work.

**The headline judgements must include one of the ISI descriptors 'excellent', 'good', 'sound' or 'unsatisfactory'.**

## INSPECTION EVIDENCE

The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with members of staff and with the chair of governors and the nominated governor for safeguarding, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended house and form meetings, and chapel. Inspectors visited boarding houses and the facilities for the youngest pupils, together with the learning support and educational resource areas. The responses of parents and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined curriculum and other documentation made available by the school.

### Inspectors

Dr Christopher Ray	Reporting inspector
Ms Kate Bainbridge	Team inspector (Head of sixth form, HMC school)
Mr David Forster	Team inspector (Deputy head, HMC school)
Dr John Guntrip	Team inspector (Deputy head, HMC school)
Mr Michael Horrocks-Taylor	Team inspector (Deputy head, HMC school)
Mr Alistair McConville	Team inspector (Deputy head, HMC school)
Mrs Jean Gray	Team inspector for boarding (Former senior teacher, HMC school)
Mr Jeremy Hallows	Team inspector for boarding (Head, HMC school)

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## 1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

### About the school

- 1.1 Bede's Senior School is a co-educational day and boarding school for pupils aged between 13 and 18 years. The school was founded in 1978 on the site of Bede's Preparatory School in Eastbourne and relocated to its current site in 1979. The St Bede's School Trust Sussex has a single board of governors who oversee the linked senior and preparatory schools.
- 1.2 The school has five boarding houses and five houses for day pupils. The current headmaster took up his post in September 2016.

### What the school seeks to do

- 1.3 The school aims to prepare pupils to lead a full and worthwhile life in the wider world as well-rounded, confident and balanced members of their communities. It strives to provide an outstanding education focused upon the needs of the individual so that they may pursue to the highest levels their passions and interests.

### About the pupils

- 1.4 Nationally standardised test data provided by the school indicate that the ability of the pupils is above average. The number of pupils requiring support for special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is 118. They require support with a range of learning and physical disabilities. Two of these pupils have statements of special educational needs or an education, health and care (EHC) plan. There are 143 pupils for whom English is an additional language (EAL), 141 of whom receive support from the school. The school provides support for those with special gifts and talents, for example in sport, music, dance and drama. A number of pupils are financially supported by the school's bursary scheme.
- 1.5 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school. Where the school's own names differ from those used nationally, the details are given in the table below:

<i>School name</i>	<i>National Curriculum name</i>
First year	Year 9
Lower fifth	Year 10
Upper fifth	Year 11
Lower sixth	Year 12
Upper sixth	Year 13

### Recommendations from previous inspections

- 1.6 The previous full inspection of the school by ISI was a standard inspection in November 2010. The recommendations from that inspection were:
- Develop and implement consistently throughout the school an effective assessment and marking strategy.
  - Improve the quality of food for all pupils.

- Reappraise further the working of the school timetable in order to ensure more productive use of time in the school day.
- 1.7 The school has fully met the recommendations to develop and implement consistently throughout the school an effective assessment and marking strategy and to reappraise further the working of the school timetable in order to ensure more productive use of time in the school day, and partially addressed the recommendation to Improve the quality of food for all pupils. Further detail is given in the main text of the report.
- 1.8 The recommendations of the intermediate boarding inspection in January 2014 were:
- Offer sixth form boarders additional opportunities to exercise independence and to engage collectively in a wider range of age-appropriate activities.
  - Continue the improvement noted by boarders in the quality and variety of food.
- 1.9 The school has fully met the recommendation to offer sixth form boarders additional opportunities to exercise independence and to engage collectively in a wider range of age-appropriate activities, and partially addressed the recommendation to continue the improvement noted by boarders in the quality and variety of food.

## **2. KEY FINDINGS**

2.1 The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements is excellent.

- The progress of pupils, including those with EAL and SEND, is excellent.
- The breadth and quality of pupils' achievements beyond the academic curriculum are outstanding.
- Pupils work together and support each other superbly.
- Pupils demonstrate a substantial willingness to work for and with their teachers.
- Unchallenged lateness to lessons impedes pupils' learning to some extent.

2.2 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.

- The pupils have contributed strongly to a school community which is an excellent model of cohesion and harmony.
- Pupils greatly value and respect diversity within and beyond the school.
- Pupils consistently and confidently make informed choices about their life and future.
- Pupils value charity, empathy and concern for others highly, and demonstrate these in their own behaviour and actions extremely well.

### **Recommendations**

2.3 In the context of the excellent outcomes, the school is advised to make the following improvement:

- Ensure that pupils are consistently punctual for all lessons so that their learning is not impeded by avoidable lateness.



### **3. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS' ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS**

- 3.1 The quality of pupils' academic and other achievements is excellent.
- 3.2 Pupils, including those with SEND and EAL, make rapid progress and their achievements within and beyond the classroom are often outstanding and sometimes exceptional. These outcomes are underpinned by the leadership's focus upon and support for pupils as individuals. For example, the evening prep system provides flexibility for pupils to develop their learning and study skills in a variety of ways that match their individual needs.
- 3.3 Results at GCSE and A-level examinations are above national averages for maintained schools. The school has been consistently ranked in the top fifty or so schools by national measures of progress for sixth form pupils. Pupils with SEND and EAL make slightly better than average progress compared with other pupils in the school, promoted by the expert tuition available through dedicated departments and the targeted guidance given to them through lessons. Pupils' outstanding progress is supported by leaders' effective tracking and monitoring of the achievements of individuals and groups of pupils, such as those with SEND. This strategic approach to marking and assessment enables teachers to identify individual needs and general patterns and providing a strategic approach to marking and assessment. This meets a recommendation of the previous inspection. Almost all parents and pupils who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaires agreed that teaching enables pupils to make good progress.
- 3.4 Pupils demonstrate excellent knowledge and understanding in all areas of learning. Exceptional levels of skill were noted in vocational and professional areas such as animal management, dance, drama and sport. Pupils use their excellent awareness of their own prior learning to develop their skills and understanding, as seen in a ballet class. Some exceptional examples of pupil work were seen including an innovative film created in media studies, an original GCSE music composition, and a perceptive A-level English essay on modern literature. Pupils are able to employ substantial analytical skills, as seen in a sixth form history lesson on the USA during the 1920s. They are willing to link experimentation in their studies to in-depth research from a variety of resources available to them through the school's intranet and virtual learning environment. They demonstrate outstanding independent learning skills through, for example, unique design projects, and in their work on extended projects.
- 3.5 Pupils are able to combine academic achievement with great success in creative and sporting domains. Many pupils have qualified for the final stages of national mathematics competitions. Two pupils have won university prizes and commendations for literature. A substantial number have achieved merits and distinctions in externally accredited examinations in dance, drama and music. Many have been selected for the National Youth Orchestra and Glyndebourne Youth Opera, while others have been given roles in professional stage, film and television productions. Pupils compete at county and national levels in sports such as cricket, tennis, and football. They are successful in achieving places at selective art, dance, drama and music schools as well as universities. A large majority of pupils appreciate the helpful university and careers advice provided for them, but a small minority are looking to the school to improve this part of its provision.
- 3.6 Pupils typically exhibit high levels of enthusiasm in lessons. This was especially notable in a GCSE religious studies lesson as pupils enthusiastically debated and discussed the importance of sacraments in Christianity. Pupils are willing to challenge the teachers by asking questions in order to develop their understanding. They are able to use their initiative and develop their own ideas, as seen, for example, when a group of pupils discussed how they might represent the plight of refugees dramatically. Pupils were observed singing during Chapel with pure delight, as house groups competed against each other to 'raise the roof', with a decibel meter used to determine the loudest house. Pupils show excellent concentration, as observed during a ballet class developing essential examination technique, and in a sixth form mathematics lesson on methods in mechanics. However, a small minority of pupils who responded to the questionnaire disagreed that most of their lessons

were interesting. The failure of some teachers to challenge some pupils' lateness impeded learning at the start of lessons.

- 3.7 Pupils apply themselves to their work superbly and demonstrate outstanding attitudes towards learning and achievement. They are determined to get the best out of themselves and are always willing to encourage each other and support each other superbly. This was seen in a biology lesson as one pupil carefully explained the processes of digestion to another pupil with SEND. Pupils are keen to celebrate each other's achievements in and beyond the classroom. Their positive approaches to learning are promoted by the excellent relationships between teachers and their pupils. Teaching typically creates a highly collaborative and productive atmosphere. This is evident not just in formal lessons, but also in the very wide range of activities, from animal care and debating to cookery and chess. The variety of activities now available to pupils demonstrates that the school has met a recommendation of the previous inspection.
- 3.8 Pupils are highly articulate and listen attentively to the views and opinions of others. They enjoy discussion and debate. They express themselves clearly and confidently, benefitting from positive and often individually targeted encouragement from their teachers. Pupils with EAL demonstrated considerable fluency in English when communicating their ideas, for example during discussions about motivation in the workplace. Pupils regularly speak in assemblies and Chapel services, thus enhancing their presentational skills. In the best lessons all the pupils were involved and demonstrated strong communication skills.
- 3.9 Pupils show an outstanding grasp of mathematical concepts and methods. Their mathematical skills are well developed in all areas of the subject. They enjoy using mathematics and are eager to apply their skills in other parts of the curriculum such as computer studies and accountancy, for example when dealing with profit and loss calculations. Pupils typically possess strong information and communication technology (ICT) skills. This was seen when pupils used sophisticated digital techniques to design a poster during an art lesson. Pupils' ICT skills are developed through their routine use of ICT as a learning tool across all areas of the curriculum, promoted by the ready availability of a wide range of computer and digital resources.

#### **4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT**

- 4.1 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 4.2 Pupils have a superb awareness of the progress they are making in their learning, including of improvements to their achievement and their acquisition of a widening range of skills as a result of the opportunities open to them. Pupils demonstrate a willingness to take risks in their learning, which enables them to strongly develop their confidence. This was seen in their experimental photographic work involving double and multiple exposure techniques. Pupils have excellent levels of self-esteem and self-confidence, successfully promoted by the depth of pastoral care shown by the staff for individual pupils. The support given by pupils to each other is also invaluable, with pupils ready to praise the accomplishments of others and suggest sensitively how improvements in skills and techniques might be made. Almost all parents who responded to the questionnaire agreed that the school promotes an environment which successfully supports the personal development of their children.
- 4.3 Pupils have contributed highly to the creation of a strong and cohesive community which values diversity and is inclusive and tolerant. Almost all parents in their questionnaires maintained that the school actively promotes values of respect for and tolerance of those with different beliefs and faiths. Pupils deeply value the variety of faiths and beliefs within their community. They demonstrate clear and intrinsic respect for others and their cultural and religious traditions, promoted by the supportive personal, social and health education (PSHE), assembly and Chapel programmes, all of which emphasise the need for mutual understanding.
- 4.4 Pupils readily take on responsibilities. They make an excellent contribution to the life of the school through designated roles as school and house prefects, and also more informally as mentors and guides for new pupils. Senior pupils provide exemplary role models for younger pupils. During an orchestral music day for local prep schools, the pupils acted as mentors and provided active support for the younger children from other schools present. These older pupils recognised that their personal development was enriched by the experience. Pupils who talked to the inspectors spoke very positively about how their self-assurance has benefitted from the leadership roles they have taken on and from the responsibilities they are given within the boarding houses. There are many examples of pupil-led activities. For example, pupil stage management teams run drama productions, operating lighting and sound systems and providing make-up and costume support. Pupils suggest which charities the school should support and then play a very active part in fundraising. The pupils also contribute successfully to the cultural life of the wider community. For example, a school production involving sixty pupils played to an audience of two thousand in Eastbourne.
- 4.5 Pupils make a strong contribution to the running of the school through their active collaboration and engagement on a wide range of pupil committees. They provide constructive suggestions to the senior leadership of the school on academic, co-curricular, boarding, social, catering and pastoral matters; and school leaders, by taking careful note of their ideas, ensure that the views of pupils are seen to be welcomed and highly valued. Pupils show a high level of social awareness together with strong teamwork skills in their planning and organisation of charitable events. They derive great enjoyment from working with each other, as noted in a drama lesson where pupils practised their lines together and combined their talents to create props and staging, and in a cookery activity that saw pupils giving each other much mutual support and encouragement.
- 4.6 Pupils show highly developed decision-making skills through the informed choices they make about their educational programmes. This is because the PSHE programme makes pupils aware of the decisions they will face both at school and in later life. Many pupils have high academic or vocational aspirations. They understand the importance of the life choices they face and the decisions they take whilst still at school. Pupils are willing to take risks, knowing that some of their chosen pathways – academic, vocational, creative or sporting – are extremely competitive and will require great

dedication. They understand the impact of their decisions on their personal well-being. The individual support and guidance given by tutors is a clear strength when pupils face such decisions.

- 4.7 Pupils demonstrate strong spiritual awareness, readily and quite naturally using the Chapel for silent self-reflection and prayer. Pupils of all backgrounds show a commitment to developing an appreciation to the non-material and aesthetic aspects of life. The religious studies department, as well as Chapel services, encourage reflection on religious, spiritual and philosophical themes extremely well. Pupils participate with relish in the aesthetic and creative opportunities available to them in art, dance, drama and music.
- 4.8 Pupils have an outstanding understanding of the difference between right and wrong and the impact of their behaviour on the school. They are quick to admit their mistakes and willing to learn from them. Whilst encouraged by the school's rewards system, pupils believe that one does not always need to be rewarded simply for doing the right thing. The boarding and day houses play a vital role in instilling a strong sense of communal responsibility. The PSHE programme reinforces the importance of taking responsibility for one's decisions. An overwhelming majority of parents agreed that the school actively encourages good behaviour.
- 4.9 Pupils choose an active, challenging and healthy lifestyle and they have a keen awareness of the need to be safe and the importance of healthy eating. Almost all pupils who responded to the questionnaire agreed that they know how to stay safe online. Pupils' skills at staying healthy and safe are promoted by leaders' strong focus on their well-being, including their physical and mental health, and the school's highly effective approach to safeguarding. Pupils demonstrate a clear understanding of how to maintain good mental and physical health, acknowledging the value of the pastoral support available to them. The central medical and well-being facilities, counselling services, specialists in SEND and EAL, and support from day and boarding house staff all combine to ensure that the school meets the individual needs of its pupils extremely well.