

# School inspection report

27 to 29 February 2024

## **Bede's Senior School**

The Dicker

Upper Dicker

Hailsham

East Sussex

BN27 3QH

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## Summary of inspection findings

1. Governors have effective procedures to monitor the work of the school to ensure that the Standards are met. They visit the school frequently and receive reports. Leaders have an accurate understanding of the relative strengths and weaknesses of the school. This understanding informs ambitious strategic development planning which is sufficiently resourced. Leaders promote a regime of assurance, self-evaluation and improvement in teaching.
2. Leaders have an appropriate understanding of risks relating to facilities, activities and vulnerable pupils. A strategic approach ensures that effective measures are in place to mitigate potential risks that are identified.
3. Leaders provide a wide curriculum and a varied range of activities. Teaching ensures that pupils are fully engaged in their educational activities. Leaders and staff pay close attention to the needs of pupils. The feedback which pupils receive about their work is frequent, detailed and thorough, enabling them to improve it further.
4. Leaders use a range of approaches to support the best outcomes for pupils. These include clear leadership of academic and pastoral matters and boarding. Thoughtful and typically effective strategies promote positive behaviour, particularly in tutor groups and in the single-sex boarding houses. There are, however, occasional incidences of inconsiderate behaviour by male pupils towards female pupils.
5. Leaders provide a comprehensive programme of personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) and relationships and sex education (RSE). Consequently, pupils understand how to be healthy and are prepared for life in modern Britain. Pupils develop their understanding of diversity and inclusion. A culture of tolerance and respect is evident in the boarding houses where pupils live and work together well and form close friendship groups.
6. Leaders promote a culture where all in the community understand their safeguarding responsibilities. Liaison with external agencies is prompt. Recruitment checks are thorough and accurately recorded. Pupils are taught how to keep safe, including when online.

## The extent to which the school meets the Standards

- Standards relating to leadership and management, and governance, are met.
- Standards relating to the quality of education, training and recreation are met.
- Standards relating to pupils' physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing are met.
- Standards relating to pupils' social and economic education and contribution to society are met.
- Standards relating to safeguarding are met.

## Recommended next steps

Leaders should:

- Take effective steps to reduce incidences of inconsiderate behaviour by male pupils towards female pupils.

## Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

7. Governors monitor the school effectively. They visit the school to meet with pupils and staff regularly and feed their findings back to the wider governing body. Governors receive regular reports from school leaders and scrutinise and monitor school practice and procedures as part of their quality assurance process. Consequently, they provide appropriate challenge and support to school leaders so that leaders fulfil their responsibilities effectively.
8. Leaders successfully promote the aims of the school which are understood and promoted by staff. As a result, the school provides a broad curriculum and wide range of activities.
9. Governors and leaders share an ambitious strategic vision for the school. They regularly reflect on the success and development of the school and have effective monitoring processes in place. Leaders have an accurate view of school strengths and areas for further development. Leaders use this understanding of these to inform their plans for the school, both in the short and longer term. Governors ensure that the school is sufficiently well resourced for these plans to be executed successfully.
10. Leaders' relationship with local children's services and other external agencies is effective. Leaders respond quickly and efficiently to concerns and incidents and follow local authority reporting thresholds into account when doing so. This ensures that pupils are well supported when any issues arise.
11. Leaders manage and record complaints appropriately within the timeframes stated in the school policy. For boarders, there are notices in all houses and around the school as to how to raise a complaint. Parents receive reports regularly about pupils' progress and attainment. All other required information is made available to parents, largely through the school's informative website.
12. Leaders implement a strategic approach to the management of risk. Risk assessment procedures at the school are systematic. Risk assessments effectively cover aspects such as estates, activities and vulnerable pupils. These ensure that appropriate action is taken to reduce any identified risks. Leaders ensure that staff receive relevant and effective training in preparing and managing risk assessments so that they are confident and competent in doing so.
13. Leaders ensure that the school fulfils its duties under equality legislation. There is an appropriate three-year written accessibility plan in place to increase access both to the site and the curriculum.

### The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to leadership and management, and governance

14. All the relevant Standards are met.

## Section 2: Quality of education, training and recreation

15. Teachers provide a rich and supportive learning experience, making use of effective educational strategies to promote positive outcomes for pupils. Leaders undertake a comprehensive programme to monitor and improve the quality and consistency of teaching.
16. The broad and flexible curriculum enables pupils to choose academic and/or vocational pathways through the school in which they make good progress. All members of the school community regard vocational and academic qualifications with parity of esteem. Pupils choose to study towards the qualifications which match their interests and abilities, are interested in their work and put in effort and then make good progress as a result.
17. Pupils develop advanced levels of skill and attain high standards in aesthetic and creative programmes. Pupils acquire technical skills across the creative arts, enabling them to develop their own photographs or make their own furniture. In mathematics, pupils extend their problem-solving skills through mathematics competitions and their interest through lecture days. Throughout the curriculum, pupils are able to apply their learning to real-world situations and are typically fully engaged in their learning. They work collaboratively to improve their analytical skills and learning.
18. Well planned teaching approaches and individualised programmes allow pupils to make rapid progress. Teachers use effective teaching methods, in particular using probing and targeted questions, to ensure that pupils understand the topic they are being taught. There is a consistent approach to marking and feedback across subjects and year groups. Feedback is detailed and prompt and pupils are helped to make good progress as a result. Pupils are regularly assessed, and their progress monitored by leadership both at senior and departmental level. As a result, leaders provide additional support, where required, so that all groups of pupils make similar rates of progress. Leaders provide many opportunities for extra help and tuition. Pupils benefit from many revision sessions outside of normal lesson time.
19. Well-resourced and effective provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) supports pupils with a wide variety of needs to learn well. Pupils benefit from one-to-one or group learning enhancement lessons which are timetabled as part of the curriculum. Classroom teachers, tutors and other key staff contribute positively to their support with the result that pupils with SEND make good progress in their studies.
20. There are extensive resources for the support of pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL). These enable teachers to deliver the curriculum to this group of pupils well. As a result of effective teaching, pupils who have EAL make good progress with their understanding of English and progress in line with their peers across the curriculum.
21. The curriculum and teaching do not undermine British values such as those of individual liberty and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. Instead, they promote a culture of inclusivity, respect, and understanding through discussions on confidentiality, personal safety, and respect for differing opinions.
22. Leaders provide many co-curricular opportunities which have a positive effect on the development of pupils. These activities provide opportunities for pupils to excel in specific areas. Pupils are given the opportunity to perform in music, drama and dance and showcase their achievement in shows and concerts.

**The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to the quality of education, training and recreation**

**23. All the relevant Standards are met.**

## Section 3: Pupils' physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing

24. Leaders have embedded a school culture that encourages mutual respect. Pupils work well with their teachers and with each other. Classroom teaching reinforces the culture through specific content in tutor periods and PSHE, and through expectations of respectful behaviour in lessons.
25. A strategy is in place to promote positive behaviour and prevent bullying. This includes a mixture of sanctions and restorative conversations to educate the pupils and improve behaviour. Incidents are logged effectively and there is two-way sharing of behaviour information with the safeguarding team. Whilst this is effective overall, there is still some occasional inconsiderate behaviour by some male pupils towards female pupils.
26. Pupils develop their spiritual and moral understanding through tutor periods and assemblies. The thoughtful running of boarding allows boarders the opportunity to explore the local environment. Planning includes trips to the local area and, following pupils' request, a trip to the South Downs so they can experience the beauty of the local area. These enable pupils to be mindful and appreciative of their surroundings.
27. The curriculum encourages pupils to discuss issues and listen to each other. Pupils actively encourage each other in class, and this has led to pupils having high levels of self-awareness and confidence. Self-confidence of pupils is also improved and aided by an academic and non-academic curriculum that is wide ranging so that pupils can work on the activities that they choose. In addition, teachers are supportive in class and in their feedback to pupils, further helping to develop pupil self-confidence. Leaders support pupils in pastoral and academic matters. Their needs are considered and this results in pupils feeling well supported, also building their confidence.
28. Sport helps to promote wellbeing and confidence with physical fitness and challenge. Much of the sport is at an elite level. The school won the National Schools U18 football competition in 2022, and many pupils play representative sport. A number of male pupils have gone on to represent their county in cricket, and some footballers have moved on to professional clubs. Female pupils are similarly represented with several England cricketers and hockey players emerging.
29. The PHSE and RSE programmes are well planned and resourced with specialist teachers delivering a programme which is constantly evolving in response to feedback from staff, parents and pupils. The well-planned curriculum responds to topical issues. For example, recent focus has been on gender stereotyping and women in science, thus promoting respect. Teachers monitor the pupils' progress effectively at the end of each unit and pupils develop their understanding of the nature of sexuality and relationships, how to be healthy and how to prepare for life in modern Britain. The grouping of lower school pupils for PSHE in the lower school has led to respectful dialogue between males and females in this part of the school and has developed empathy between the genders through emphasising shared responsibility for healthy relationships.
30. Leadership and management ensure that suitable arrangements are in place to monitor and confirm that all required checks and maintenance needed to meet health and safety standards are carried out. Staff are well trained in health and safety. The school ensures compliance with the fire regulations through measures such as regular fire evacuation drills and fire risk assessments. Leaders



ensure that the premises and accommodation are suitably maintained to a high standard. Measures are in place to ensure only authorised people access appropriate buildings.

31. Supervision protocols are effective across the school. Staff are appropriately allocated to monitor pupils during breaks, transitions, and extracurricular activities, maintaining a secure environment.
32. Admission and attendance registers are kept clearly. Leaders closely monitor attendance and address any absenteeism effectively.
33. First aid is administered in a timely and competent manner. Suitable first aid provision is available day and night. The medical centre is suitably equipped and appropriately staffed by trained personnel.
34. Leaders in boarding take time to get to know boarders. They are quick to assess individual needs and issues and, if deemed necessary design bespoke care packages. Boarding houses are well appointed. Sleeping accommodation, bathrooms and recreational areas are all to a high specification. As a result, boarders feel supported and well cared for.

### **The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to pupils' physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing**

- 35. All the relevant Standards are met.**

## Section 4: Pupils' social and economic education and contribution to society

36. The broad curriculum encourages pupils to debate complex issues in class, such as those related to responsibility, action, and right and wrong. Through this, pupils develop high levels of moral understanding. Additionally, PSHE lessons allow pupils to consider actions and outcomes in terms of law and justice. Pupils talk openly and maturely about the actions people take and the impact on individuals and society, such as how industries impact the local and global economy and environment. This allows pupils to have a well-developed understanding of broader social and environmental issues.
37. The active promotion of British values is embedded within the curriculum and school activities, including tutor group sessions that enhance global awareness and encourage democratic engagement through house council meetings and the PSHE programme. The comprehensive curriculum promotes respect for diversity, the law, public institutions, other cultures, and democracy through discussion and exploration, for example, of civil rights.
38. The curriculum promotes an awareness of economic issues so that older pupils demonstrate a sophisticated understanding of retailing and pricing strategies in different markets. Pupils develop an acute awareness of how their economic decision-making impacts on global society.
39. There is a well-developed careers programme throughout the school with clear progress and coverage to help pupils become well prepared for their life beyond Bede's. The school explores a range of different pathways beyond school, including applications to universities, degree apprenticeships and vocational apprenticeships. Tutors and boarding staff provide accurate and targeted advice to pupils, supported by use of the careers team's resources. This enables pupils to identify destinations most appropriate for them. Destinations data is monitored, and trends are picked out. Parents are kept involved and informed through regular newsletters and seminars.
40. Leaders provide extensive support for pupils from overseas. They create a well-supported programme for pupils at all age ranges that enables those pupils to feel secure and well placed to play a full role in society.
41. Support of local and national charities enables pupils to contribute to the wider community. Houses variously support a local animal welfare centre and Ukrainian refugees. Sixth Form pupils who follow the Bede's Diploma are also expected to volunteer, both within school and further afield. Helping with school events and work at a local primary school are examples of this. Such voluntary work enables pupils to make a noticeable contribution to the local community. Work experience gives these pupils further experience of life beyond school.

### The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to pupils' social and economic education and contribution to society

- 42. All the relevant Standards are met.**

## Safeguarding

43. Leadership at all levels take their safeguarding responsibilities seriously. Procedures are well established and well known by staff. Leaders engender a culture of openness and vigilance and, as result, pupils feel safe at school. The safeguarding policy conforms with current statutory guidance and is implemented effectively.
44. Governors conduct regular and effective reviews of safeguarding arrangements and leaders implement any actions arising from their findings promptly.
45. Safeguarding induction and training for staff, including that for the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and other members of the safeguarding team, are thorough, regular and in line with local requirements. Leaders keep up to date with changes to legislation and current trends in child protection issues. Leaders provide safeguarding updates and scenario-based training for all staff, followed by school generated quizzes to review understanding. Staff understand their safeguarding responsibilities and know how to escalate concerns when required.
46. Specific risk assessments are in place to manage individual safeguarding concerns. Parents are involved at an early stage alongside pupils and safeguarding and other relevant staff to ensure robust procedures are in place which are then reviewed regularly by the safeguarding team. This ensures that effective processes are in place to safeguard pupils.
47. Safeguarding leaders' relationship with local children's services is effective. The safeguarding team engage with social services, families and the police appropriately. They implement appropriate procedures in response to any concerns about child-on-child abuse or allegations against staff. When issues do arise, pupils are supported effectively. The safeguarding leaders maintain appropriate records of safeguarding concerns. They make effective use of an online platform to record incidents and concerns, analyse trends and respond to emerging patterns. Leaders carefully monitor pupils affected by safeguarding issues to ensure that they receive appropriate support.
48. Leaders provide a number of ways for pupils to voice concerns. As a result, pupils feel safe in their school and know who they can go to should they wish to share any concerns. The physical and mental health of pupils are given a high priority and effective communication with parents is maintained appropriately.
49. All appropriate safer recruitment checks are made in a timely manner and accurately recorded in a single central register of appointments. The nominated governor with responsibility for this area reviews the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements, including recruitment checks.
50. Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe, including when online. Suitable internet filtering and monitoring procedures are in place and alerts are immediately reviewed by members of the safeguarding team who take action as required.

### The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to safeguarding

- 51. All the relevant Standards are met.**

## School details

<b>School</b>	Bede's Senior School
<b>Department for Education 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>Phone number</b>	01323 356586
<b>Email address</b>	school.office@bedes.org
<b>Website</b>	www.bedes.org
<b>Proprietor</b>	St Bede's School Trust Sussex
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Geraldine Watkins
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Peter Goodyer
<b>Age range</b>	13 to 19
<b>Number of pupils</b>	797
<b>Number of boarding pupils</b>	327
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	6 to 7 November 2019

## Information about the school

52. Bede's Senior school is a co-educational day and boarding school for pupils situated in East Sussex. St Bede's School Trust Sussex has a single board of governors, who oversee the senior school and Bede's Preparatory School, with which it is linked. The school was founded in 1978 on the site of Bede's Preparatory School in Eastbourne and relocated to its current site in 1979. Since the previous inspection, a new boarding house for male pupils has been built to replace a previous one.
53. There are five boarding houses onsite: three for male pupils and two for female pupils.
54. The school has identified 130 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Two pupils in the school have an education, health and care (EHC) plan.
55. English is an additional language for 109 pupils.
56. The school states its aims are that every child finds joy in their pursuit of brilliance and to create a vibrant learning experience that motivates pupils to pursue their individual best.

## Inspection details

### Inspection dates

27 to 29 February 2024

57. A team of ten inspectors visited the school for two and a half days.

58. Inspection activities included:

- Observation of lessons, some in conjunction with school leaders
- Observation of registration periods and assemblies
- Observation of a sample of extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection
- Discussion with the chair and other governors
- Discussions with the head, school leaders, managers and other members of staff
- Discussions with pupils
- Visits to the learning support area and facilities for physical education
- Visits to boarding houses accompanied by pupils and staff
- Scrutiny of samples of pupils' work
- Scrutiny of a range of policies, documentation and records provided by the school

59. The inspection team considered the views of pupils, members of staff and parents who responded to ISI's pre-inspection surveys.

**How are association independent schools in England inspected?**

- The Department for Education is the regulator for independent schools in England.
- ISI is approved by the Secretary of State for Education to inspect independent schools in England, which are members of associations in membership of the Independent Schools Council.
- ISI inspections report to the Department for Education on the extent to which the statutory Independent School Standards, the EYFS statutory framework requirements, the National Minimum Standards for boarding schools and any other relevant standards are met.
- For more information, please visit **[www.isi.net](http://www.isi.net)**.

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For more information, please visit [isi.net](http://isi.net)