

Inspection of Bamburgh School

Norham Avenue, South Shields, Tyne and Wear NE34 7TD

Inspection dates:	24 and 25 September 2024
The quality of education	Outstanding
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Outstanding
Early years provision	Outstanding
Previous inspection grade	Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils flourish at Bamburgh School. Warm, respectful relationships underpin the high-quality education that pupils receive. Pupils' journey from early years to key stage 4 is meticulously planned out. Everyone unites to ensure pupils secure their aspirational next steps.

Children in the early years approach learning with tangible enthusiasm. Skilful staff ensure children quickly learn the routines of the setting. Children's play is expertly crafted. It supports the targets in children's education, health and care (EHC) plans with precision. The curriculum is detailed and purposeful. It contributes exceptionally well to children's learning and progress.

Older pupils also experience an excellent academic education. All pupils leave the school with a range of accredited qualifications. The school makes this success possible through a range of methods. Pupils enjoy the teaching that they experience from specialist staff. Pupils also receive effective intervention from an in-house team of therapeutic experts. Pupils learn in a culture built around their needs. They are happy and relish coming to school. Pupils' outcomes, measured in a range of ways, are impressive.

Pupils unanimously say that the staff are the best thing about their school. They appreciate that staff treat them fairly. Pupils are safe and valued in this nurturing and ambitious school.

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

Bamburgh School sets exceptionally high standards for pupils' learning. Pupils rise to this challenge with pride. The school ensures learning is expertly matched to pupils' needs. Pupils can recall important knowledge from the curriculum in impressive ways. For example, pupils enthusiastically discuss alliances in the First World War in history. Pupils draw upon their prior learning about relationships between significant historical leaders. This recall helps pupils connect new learning in a sophisticated way. Teachers' questions encourage pupils to think hard. Pupils develop a deep body of knowledge over time.

Children in the early years have a range of complex needs. Staff make sure they understand these needs before children start school. Therefore, children get off to a flying start. The consistent approach between staff in the setting is striking. Alongside specialists, all staff target children's communication needs. This helps children make rapid progress in many ways. Staff also work closely with parents and carers. They support parents to meet their children's needs beyond the classroom. Children delight in the well-chosen activities that staff provide. They quickly learn routines through songs and repetition. Children are well prepared for their next stage.

Across the whole school, assessment is a notable strength. It contributes significantly to the progress pupils make through the curriculum. Leaders have developed the 'Bamburgh Preferred Model' over time. Staff expertly use this to track pupils' progress across all

stages, from early years to Year 11. It helps staff to quickly identify and close gaps in pupils' learning.

Reading is at the heart of the education the school provides. Staff in the primary phase are phonics experts. They deliver the phonics scheme with enthusiasm and precision. Pupils thrive in these sessions. Their special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are not a barrier to their participation and success. Pupils proudly show their phonics learning to the class. For older pupils, the school ensures a focus on reading continues. Tutor time is used effectively for extra reading support, where needed. Thoughtfully chosen texts throughout the curriculum help pupils develop a love of reading.

The behaviour of pupils at the school is impeccable. Pupils are kind to one another and celebrate differences. In lessons, pupils' motivation to learn is exceptional. They are highly engaged and take pride in the work they produce. Pupils' enjoyment of school is matched by their extremely high rates of attendance. The school ensures pupils maintain or improve their attendance. This work is highly impactful.

The school places pupils' EHC plans at the centre of their provision. Targets are carefully reviewed, amended and tracked. This is a significant part of the school's work on personal development. Alongside this, pupils enjoy an extensive range of experiences beyond the classroom. Pupils enjoy 'Bamfest' on the school site. They also experience an annual residential and class trips linked to the curriculum. Such provision in the school expands pupils' horizons and their understanding of the world.

Leaders and governors ensure pupils with SEND achieve the best possible outcomes. This shared vision becomes reality for pupils at Bamburgh School. Staff enjoy working at the school. They engage positively with leaders on matters relating to workload and well-being. Many parents comment on the difference the school makes for their child. Leaders, governors and staff are relentless in their drive to improve further. This ethos of continuous professional development leads to an exceptional provision for pupils.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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	108738
Local authority	South Tyneside
Inspection number	10322965
Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	3 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	222
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Jill Osborne
Headteacher	Peter Nord
Website	www.bamburghschool.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	13 and 14 June 2023, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Bamburgh School is a generic special school, catering for pupils aged 3 to 16 with a wide range of SEND. All pupils have EHC plans.
- The school does not use alternative providers of education for its pupils.
- 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. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024, will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other senior leaders over the course of the inspection.
- The lead inspector met with the chair of the local governing body and one other governor. They reviewed documentation relating to governance, including minutes from governor meetings.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in the following curriculum areas: English, mathematics, science and humanities. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum 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, where appropriate.
- The inspectors met with the leader responsible for early years. The inspectors also spent time in the early years provision.
- An inspector met with the leaders responsible for overseeing EHC plans.
- Inspectors met with the leaders responsible for personal development, including careers education and personal, social and health education.
- The lead inspector met with the local authority school improvement partner.
- 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.
- The inspectors met with groups of pupils formally throughout the inspection and spoke with them informally at social times and in lessons.
- A range of school documents was reviewed, including the school's improvement plan.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents and staff gathered through Ofsted's questionnaires.

Inspection team

Hannah Millett, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

David Penny

Ofsted Inspector

Marian Thomas

Ofsted Inspector

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