

Beccles High School

Address: Castle Hill, Beccles, Suffolk, NR34 7BQ

Unique reference number (URN): 138274

Inspection report: 30 June 2026

Exceptional	
Strong standard	●
Expected standard	● ● ● ●
Needs attention	●
Urgent improvement	

✓ Safeguarding standards met

The safeguarding standards are met. This means that leaders and/or those responsible for governance and oversight fulfil their specific responsibilities and have established an open culture in which safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and concerns are actively identified, acted upon and managed. As a result, pupils are made safer and feel safe.

How we evaluate safeguarding

When we inspect schools for safeguarding, they can have the following outcomes:

- **Met:** The school has an open and positive culture of safeguarding. All legal requirements are met.
- **Not met:** The school has not created an open and positive culture of safeguarding. Not all legal requirements are met.

Strong standard

Leadership and governance

Strong standard 

The trust took over the school in September 2024. Their priorities and support have been measured, well-considered and precision-focused. Consequently, this has ensured that improvement work has had the necessary impact. Leaders have restored confidence in the community. Due to this, the experience of pupils and communication with stakeholders has improved.

Pupils, parents and carers value the support that the school and its staff provide. Leaders know their pupils well. This means that pupils in the specialist unit, those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those from vulnerable backgrounds progress well and receive the support they need.

Leaders have ensured that training is planned effectively to meet the needs of the school's cohort. In addition to an in-school training package, leaders also work alongside the trust to deliver a hybrid programme. This means that expert support is matched precisely to staff and pupils' needs. Staff feel supported and their workload is managed efficiently.

Those responsible for governance have a clear overview of the school's demographic, context and strengths and weaknesses. They provide support and challenge through regular visits and audits. As a result, leaders, those responsible for governance and trust staff work collaboratively to improve the school at pace. This is helping to drive improved outcomes for pupils.

Expected standard

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

Leaders ensure that attendance is a priority for staff and pupils. Staff have a clear understanding of the barriers that some pupils face. This means that their work with families to reduce these barriers is effective. Appropriate support and challenge from external agencies are provided where necessary. Consequently, attendance has improved rapidly for all groups of pupils. Leaders have established a positive culture around attendance. They carefully monitor patterns in absence and reward pupils who attend well. Furthermore, this work is supported by respectful and kind interactions with pupils and their families.

Pupils behave well across the school. Classrooms are focused and purposeful. Leaders and staff have embedded clear routines that help pupils make positive choices about their behaviour. Pupils move around the site respectfully. The core values of collaboration, ambition, respect and empowerment underpin the school's approach to behaviour. Pupils are confident that staff deal with behaviour effectively and fairly. Leaders' approach to supporting pupils to improve their behaviour is compassionate and well adapted to their needs. Bullying and discriminatory behaviour are not tolerated. Leaders have developed systems which have led to a reduction in these incidents.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Leaders have introduced effective and timely improvements to the curriculum. These changes have had a positive impact on the work that pupils produce and their experience of learning. Staff training is regular and effective. Teachers use high-quality resources. This, alongside precise subject knowledge, allows teachers to explain and model complex concepts. Leaders have recently focused their work on the improvement of lesson planning. As a result, pupils clearly understand the distinct steps in their learning. This means it is easier for pupils to process information and succeed. This benefits pupils who need additional support and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Staff have an in-depth understanding of their pupils. As a result, staff support pupils well. Where appropriate, adaptations are used by staff to ensure pupils' barriers to learning are addressed swiftly.

Leaders have developed a standard approach to teaching and learning. This means that pupils know what to expect from key parts of lessons and can recall previously learned facts. This systematic approach ensures that pupils have opportunities to apply newly learned concepts and make any improvements necessary. This work is further supported by trust-wide opportunities for staff to develop their knowledge and skills.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

All pupils feel welcome and valued. They are well known, which ensures that they get the support that they need to make the most of school life and learning. The school's specially resourced provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) now provides a calm and purposeful atmosphere. Leaders have used external specialist support to improve this area of the school's provision. Consequently, pupils receive tailored teaching and adaptations. Any barriers to learning that they may have are identified and addressed quickly. These pupils are fully included in the school's wider curriculum and lessons.

Staff have a secure understanding of their pupils on an individual basis. Leaders have developed strategies to identify emerging needs. They use this information to communicate strategies to teachers and put specialist support in place. This means that disadvantaged pupils, those known to social care, those with SEND and other vulnerable pupils are well supported in their learning.

Leaders work closely with families and external professionals to ensure that pupils receive appropriate and coordinated support. This work ensures that pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds and those who need additional support are engaged fully in learning and other aspects of school life.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

Pupils wear their badges for participating in activities and developing skills around school with pride. Leaders prioritise pupils' personal development and wellbeing. Pupils benefit from a comprehensive programme that provides them with various opportunities and equips them with the knowledge that they need. This ensures that they have the social and moral values needed for life in modern Britain. Through this programme, pupils learn about healthy

relationships, gender equality, diversity and financial matters. Pupils enjoy learning about their local community and their role in it.

Leaders have devised a new programme of clubs, creative opportunities, coaching schemes and educational visits. These include visits to local agricultural shows, lunchtime clubs and an aerospace team. Opportunities such as a partnership with a local university and a football coaching programme have a notable impact on pupils' experience. In addition to this, pupils have taken part in expeditions to Borneo and Kenya. Leaders monitor the personal development programme closely to ensure that all pupils benefit fully from it.

Pupils speak fondly about an inclusive culture where everybody is welcome and cared for. Staff provide personalised and caring support. This helps pupils to form a sense of belonging and safety at school. Leaders monitor the quality of pastoral support and ensure that pupils have access to a range of external professionals who can support their wellbeing.

Pupils receive appropriate advice about their future options and career choices. They receive tailored guidance and benefit from work experience. As a result, pupils are well prepared for the next stage in their education, apprenticeships or employment. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive additional support in helping them access the full offer.

Needs attention

Achievement

Needs attention 

Historical weaknesses meant that pupils' achievement was significantly below the national average. While leaders continue to act to address these issues, too many pupils still have gaps in their core knowledge. Leaders' work is beginning to have an impact. As a result, pupils are producing work of a higher standard. Outcomes in national examinations do not reflect the standard of education that pupils now receive.

Leaders' work means that the curriculum is more ambitious for pupils. Teaching is typically effective. Leaders have taken action to improve pupils' attendance so that it now aligns with national averages. They have also ensured that staffing is stable, which has had a positive impact on pupils. Pupils' work demonstrates that they are progressing well through the curriculum from their starting points. Leaders' focus on core knowledge in reading, writing and numeracy has resulted in improved outcomes in these areas for many pupils.

What it's like to be a pupil at this school

Pupils enjoy attending this small community school. They benefit from caring teachers and staff. Pupils show maturity and calmness in their lessons and at social times. Historically, pupils did not receive a consistent level of teaching or a well-sequenced curriculum. This led to some pupils having gaps in their learning which resulted in weaker levels of achievement. Pupils now benefit from a well-sequenced curriculum and a generally consistent approach to

teaching. Lessons are structured well and teachers break down learning into manageable steps. This helps pupils to be successful in their learning and engage well. The curriculum now includes a wide range of subjects which pupils benefit from.

Pupils embody the school's core values of collaboration, ambition, respect and empowerment. Consequently, they have a sense of belonging and value their close-knit community. They speak openly about the improvements that their school has made in a short time.

Many pupils face significant barriers to learning. A large proportion come from disadvantaged backgrounds or have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Pupil movement in and out of the school is high. The school continually reviews and takes into account these individual circumstances. As a result, support is well matched to pupils' needs. For example, some pupils receive extra support with the core knowledge that they need to be able to access the wider curriculum.

Pupils enjoy taking part in enrichment opportunities. These include the school production, gardening club and football training with a professional coach. Pupils are welcomed into school in a supportive way. They feel safe and cared for. This culture has contributed to a rapid increase in attendance, which now aligns with national averages. This is due to continual work with pupils and their families.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that targeted and precise assessments effectively identify and address gaps in pupils' understanding.
- Leaders should foster greater resilience and independence in pupils' attitudes to learning, encouraging them to fully engage with diverse learning opportunities.
- Leaders should continue to embed the personal development and wellbeing curriculum to ensure that pupils secure a detailed knowledge that prepares them well for life in modern Britain.

About this inspection

This school is part of the Sapientia Education Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Jonathon Taylor OBE, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Peter Rout.

Inspectors carried out this full inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Following our renewed inspection framework, all inspections are now led by His Majesty's Inspectors (HMIs) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMIs.

Inspectors spoke with the CEO, trustees, the headteacher, trust staff, senior leaders, staff and pupils during the inspection. Inspectors reviewed the findings of the parent, staff and

pupil Ofsted online surveys.

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.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The headteacher took up their position in September 2024.

The school has a specially resourced provision. This is designated for pupils with moderate learning difficulties, and provides places for 22 pupils.

The school currently makes use of 7 unregistered alternative provisions.

There were 182 pupils on roll at the time of inspection.

Headteacher: Chris Barns

Lead inspector:

Ross Marks, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Alexandra Jane Burton, Ofsted Inspector

Gary Carlile, Ofsted Inspector

Facts and figures used on inspection

The data was used by the inspector(s) during the inspection. More recent data may have been published since the inspection took place.

 This data is from 30 June 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

238

Well below average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils currently at this school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 1,067

School capacity

600

Well below average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils who can attend the school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 1,154

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

51.26%

Well above average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years.

National average: 28.9%

Pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan

15.55%

Well above average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan. This covers pupils with more support than is available through special educational needs support.

National average: 3.09%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

19.75%

Well above average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with reported special educational support needs at the school.

National average: 13.4%

Location deprivation

Well above average

What does this mean?

Based on the English Indices of Deprivation (2019) and the school's location, we have calculated whether the school is located in a more or less deprived area.

Resourced Provision or SEND Unit (if applicable)

SEN unit

What does this mean?

Whether school has Resourced Provision or SEND unit (if applicable).

Type of specialist provision (if applicable)

MLD - Moderate Learning Difficulty

What does this mean?

The type of Special Educational Needs provision provided at the school (if applicable).

All pupils' performance

English and maths GCSE

Percentage of pupils who achieved grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (final)	17.9%	45.4%	Below
2023/24 (final)	16.9%	45.9%	Below
2022/23 (final)	19.1%	45.3%	Below

A measure of pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (final)	27.6	46.1	Below
2023/24 (final)	30.9	45.9	Below
2022/23 (final)	28.4	46.3	Below

Progress 8

How much progress pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	-1.15	-0.03	Below
2022/23 (final)	-1.68	-0.03	Below

Disadvantaged pupils' performance

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after.

Disadvantaged pupils' English and maths GCSE grade 5 or above

Percentage of disadvantaged pupils achieving grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (final)	6.9%	25.8%	Below
2023/24 (final)	9.7%	25.8%	Below
2022/23 (final)	13.0%	25.2%	Below

Disadvantaged pupils' Attainment 8

A measure of disadvantaged pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (final)	20.8	34.9	Below
2023/24 (final)	25.8	34.6	Below
2022/23 (final)	26.4	35.0	Below

Disadvantaged pupils' Progress 8

How much progress disadvantaged pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	-1.48	-0.57	Below
2022/23 (final)	-1.77	-0.57	Below

Disadvantaged pupils' performance gap

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after. The school disadvantage gap is the difference between the performance of the school's disadvantaged pupils compared to the performance of all non-disadvantaged pupils nationally.

Disadvantaged pupils' English and maths GCSE grade 5 or above

Percentage of disadvantaged pupils who achieved grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2024/25 (final)	6.9%	53.1%	-46.2 pp
2023/24 (final)	9.7%	53.1%	-43.5 pp

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2022/23 (final)	13.0%	52.4%	-39.4 pp

Disadvantaged pupils' Attainment 8

A measure of disadvantaged pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2024/25 (final)	20.8	50.4	-29.6
2023/24 (final)	25.8	50.0	-24.2
2022/23 (final)	26.4	50.3	-23.9

Disadvantaged pupils' Progress 8

How much progress disadvantaged pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2023/24 (final)	-1.48	0.16	-1.65
2022/23 (final)	-1.77	0.17	-1.93

Destinations after 16

Destinations after 16

Percentage of pupils staying in education or employment for at least 2 terms after the end of secondary school (key stage 4).

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023 leavers (revised)	79%	92%	Not available
2022 leavers (revised)	93%	93%	Not available
2021 leavers (revised)	89%	94%	Not available

Absence

Overall absence

The percentage of all possible mornings and afternoons missed due to absence from school (for whatever reason, whether authorised or unauthorised) across all pupils.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (3 term)	11.9%	8.4%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	15.8%	8.9%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	15.5%	9.0%	Above

Persistent absence

The percentage of pupils missing 10% or more of their possible mornings and afternoons.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (3 term)	34.5%	23.4%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	42.6%	25.6%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	44.3%	26.5%	Above

Our grades explained

Exceptional 

Practice is exceptional: of the highest standard nationally. Other schools can learn from it.

Strong standard ●

The school reaches a strong standard. Leaders are working above the standard expected of them.

Expected standard ●

The school is fulfilling the expected standard of education and/or care. This means they are following the standard set out in statutory and non-statutory legislation and the professional standards expected of them.

Needs attention ●

The expected standards are not met but leaders are likely able to make the necessary improvements.

Urgent improvement ●

The school needs to make urgent improvements to provide the expected standard of education and/or care.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) inspects services providing education and skills for children and learners of all ages, and inspects and regulates services that care for children and young people.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk



© Crown copyright