

Biddick Academy

Address: Biddick Lane, Washington, Tyne and Wear, NE38 8AL

Unique reference number (URN): 139839

Inspection report: 10 March 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 ●

Attendance and behaviour

Strong standard ●

Leaders' actions have significantly improved attendance. Pupils now come to school more regularly. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and those who are disadvantaged have also seen big improvements in their attendance. Leaders act quickly when pupils start to miss learning. For example, staff meet every day to review pupils' attendance and put the right support in place. Leaders work closely with families and make sure everyone understands that attendance matters. Clear routines at the start of the day help pupils arrive on time and ready to learn.

Pupils' behaviour in school is calm and respectful. Pupils enjoy learning and rarely experience any disruption to lessons. When leaders raised expectations, suspensions rose for a short time. These have now dropped sharply as routines have become well established. The school's 'tell us' system helps leaders spot patterns and act fast. Pupils report confidence in this system and trust staff to deal with issues such as bullying quickly. Staff apply behaviour systems fairly and make sensible adjustments for pupils with SEND. Pupils feel listened to, supported and safe.

Inclusion

Strong standard ●

Leaders have built a culture of inclusion in the school. Many pupils face more than one challenge, such as special educational needs and/or disabilities, disadvantage or involvement with social care. Leaders understand this and have thorough systems for identifying different needs. They act quickly when pupils need help.

Staff are well trained to recognise pupils' needs and provide the support they require. In lessons, pupils benefit from clear modelling, helpful scaffolding and targeted questioning. Staff monitor pupils' progress carefully and ensure that everyone takes part in the same ambitious learning. Pupils with more complex needs benefit from additional support from the school's 'Unity Centre' resourced provision. They thrive at the school and take a full and active part in school life. They achieve at a similar level to their peers.

Leaders remove barriers that might stop pupils from learning well. For example, they offer nurture groups and carefully crafted therapeutic support. They also provide targeted check-ins for pupils who are vulnerable. Leaders use additional funding wisely. This has helped improve attendance, behaviour and learning for disadvantaged pupils.

Leaders work closely with external agencies and the virtual school so that pupils who need extra support receive it quickly. The school rarely uses alternative provision. When it does, these placements are purposeful and precisely tailored to meet pupils' needs.

Leadership and governance

Strong standard ●

Leaders at this school have brought about rapid and lasting improvement. Since joining the trust, the school has acted with renewed purpose and high ambition. Leaders understand the school well and have chosen the right priorities. These include improving outcomes for

vulnerable pupils, strengthening the curriculum and continuing to raise expectations. Leaders' actions have led to demonstrable improvement across all areas of the school. Staff speak with pride about the school's inclusive and aspirational culture. They are proud of the many improvements that have been made.

Governance is a strength of the school. The local academy council has considerable professional expertise. It fully meets its statutory responsibilities. Governors check information carefully, listen to staff and pupils and hold leaders to account in a fair and constructive way. Trust leaders visit the school regularly and provide high-quality support and challenge. This has helped the school improve quickly and securely.

Leaders and governors put pupils' needs first. Staff receive high-quality training that enables them to support all pupils effectively. Early career teachers say they feel well supported and valued. Leaders take staff wellbeing seriously and adjust workload when needed. This is reflected in the high morale of staff. Leaders have strengthened methods of communication and are continuing to build trust with parents and carers.

Personal development and wellbeing

Strong standard ●

Leaders have created a highly effective personal development programme that runs through daily life in the school. Pupils learn about healthy relationships, growing up and staying safe. Staff teach pupils how to recognise risks, both online and offline. Leaders adapt lessons when new concerns arise, such as issues linked to social media. Pupils say these sessions help them feel informed, confident and able to speak to a trusted adult if something worries them.

Pupils develop a detailed knowledge of the world around them. They apply their learning about British values. Younger pupils explain how Parliament works, and older pupils discuss the views of different political parties and the dangers of extremism and intolerance. Pupils develop a secure sense of right and wrong.

Pupil leadership is a notable strength. Pupils are elected by their peers and run drop-in 'surgeries' to listen to pupils' views. Pupil leaders point to real changes they have influenced, such as improvements to school lunches and the one-way system. The school's 'you said, we did' approach sets out how pupils have been listened to. Pupils learn to respect the views of others and take pride in improving their school.

The school offers a wide range of clubs and experiences. Pupils enjoy many opportunities such as rowing, Warhammer, choir, table tennis and drama. Leaders make sure disadvantaged pupils can take part. The school's careers education is well established and impactful. Pupils meet employers, complete work experience and receive close support to plan their next steps. Leaders act early if a pupil is at risk of not moving into education, work or training.

The school provides high-quality pastoral care. Staff know the pupils well, and pupils trust adults to help them. Leaders use precise plans to ensure that vulnerable pupils get the right support at the right time. The school provides a safe and nurturing place where pupils grow academically, socially and emotionally.

Expected standard

Achievement

Expected standard 

Pupils achieve broadly in line with national averages in tests and assessments at the end of key stage 4. The school has addressed the causes of some variability across different subjects in the most recent outcomes. Current pupils across all year groups are now benefiting from a new curriculum and more consistent teaching. They talk confidently about their learning and demonstrate knowledge they have remembered. Pupils' work shows clear progress. For example, in mathematics, pupils show how they use what they learned in earlier geometry topics to tackle more complex problems.

Disadvantaged pupils increasingly attain well, and staff remove barriers so they can keep up. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities follow the same curriculum as their peers. Teachers adapt tasks so they can take part fully and achieve. Pupils are well prepared for their next steps in education, training or employment.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Leaders have a clear understanding of how well the curriculum and teaching are working. They are steadily implementing a new broad and ambitious curriculum across the school. Teachers follow plans that build detailed knowledge in a sensible order. This is having notable impact, and more pupils are now making positive progress through the curriculum. Teachers are thoroughly trained and have secure subject knowledge. They use tools such as visualisers and mini whiteboards to spot pupils' mistakes and put them right.

Teaching is structured and purposeful. In most lessons, teachers model new ideas clearly and check understanding through short retrieval tasks and targeted questioning. They insist that pupils participate fully in lessons. Pupils respond to the school's high expectations, such as the 'say no to don't know' campaign. They use clear subject-specific vocabulary to articulate their understanding.

Leaders have made reading a priority. Pupils have regular fluency lessons and receive targeted support when needed. The school is using new approaches to develop wider foundational skills, such as handwriting. Teachers know pupils' needs and adapt teaching so that everyone can take part. They use scaffolding and extra challenge for pupils with different abilities and needs. Disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities learn the same curriculum as their peers.

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

This is a calm, ambitious and welcoming school where pupils feel safe, known and valued. One pupil, speaking for many, said, 'This is a really supportive school. Teachers will help you as much as they can.'

Pupils enjoy their learning and take pride in their work. They benefit from clear and well-structured teaching methods that help them to remember more over time. Disadvantaged pupils, those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those facing extra challenges are well supported. Pupils receive tailored interventions matched to their specific needs. This ensures that they stay on track and are well prepared for their next steps.

Pupils feel a strong sense of belonging. They have positive relationships with staff and experience a culture built on kindness and high expectations. Pupils are inspired by the house team system, which encourages them to 'DARE' to take part, try new things and support one another. They are actively encouraged to develop new skills and interests, such as debating, musical theatre, creative writing and table tennis. Pupil leaders model positive behaviours that benefit the wider community. For example, they lead support for local charity food-bank donations and mental health support.

Pupils thrive because the school prepares them well for life beyond the classroom. Pupils understand their future options and feel well supported to move into further education, apprenticeships or employment. They leave the school with growing ambition and belief in what they can achieve.

Leaders have taken steps that have significantly improved pupils' attendance. Pupils understand why being in school every day matters. They arrive to warm greetings and clear routines, and they move around the site in an orderly and respectful way. In lessons, pupils behave well and take part with enthusiasm. They talk confidently about what they are learning and how teachers help them understand new ideas. Staff act quickly and consistently when problems do occur. Pupils say bullying is uncommon and trust the 'tell us' system because they know adults will follow things up.

Next steps

- Leaders should continue to fully embed the new curriculum to further improve outcomes for pupils.

About this inspection

This school is part of North East Learning Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Dame Lesley Powell CBE, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Margaret Saxton.

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 headteacher, school and trust leaders, the CEO, members of the local academy council and trustees during the inspection. They spoke with staff and pupils

and considered the views of parents.

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 school includes resourced provision for 29 pupils with autism spectrum disorder.

The school makes use of one registered alternative provision.

Since the last inspection, the school has joined North East Learning Trust.

Headteacher: Kate Morris

Lead inspector:

Chris Carr, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

John Downs, Ofsted Inspector

Martin Featherstone, Ofsted Inspector

Gemma Dixon, His Majesty's Inspector

Jacqui Johnson, 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 10 March 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

1,069

Close to 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

1,100

Close to 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: 1,153

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

30.96%

Close to 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

4.58%

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

18.71%

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 below 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)

Resourced provision

What does this mean?

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

Type of specialist provision (if applicable)

ASD - Autistic Spectrum Disorder

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 (revised)	39.0%	45.4%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	45.5%	45.9%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	35.7%	45.3%	Below

Attainment 8

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 (revised)	42.5	46.0	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	43.9	45.9	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	42.5	46.3	Close to average

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)	-0.25	-0.03	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	-0.47	-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 (revised)	22.4%	25.8%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	27.3%	25.8%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	13.3%	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 (revised)	36.6	34.9	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	32.7	34.6	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	31.3	35.0	Close to average

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)	-0.86	-0.57	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	-1.08	-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 (revised)	22.4%	53.1%	-30.8 pp
2023/24 (final)	27.3%	53.1%	-25.9 pp

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2022/23 (final)	13.3%	52.4%	-39.1 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 (revised)	36.6	50.4	-13.8
2023/24 (final)	32.7	50.0	-17.3
2022/23 (final)	31.3	50.3	-19.0

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)	-0.86	0.16	-1.03
2022/23 (final)	-1.08	0.17	-1.25

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 (provisional)	83%	91%	Below
2022 leavers (revised)	90%	93%	Average
2021 leavers (revised)	95%	94%	Average

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 (2 term)	10.0%	8.1%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	12.0%	8.9%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	10.7%	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 (2 term)	26.8%	21.9%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	33.6%	25.6%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	30.0%	26.5%	Close to average

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.

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