

# The Bolsover School

URN: 138836 | Inspected: 11 November 2025

## 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.

## Achievement

Expected standard

Key stage 4 examination results have generally been in line with national averages, with an improvement in 2025 despite a dip in the previous year. Leaders have a very precise understanding of why results dipped and have taken decisive action to address weaknesses. Results for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities have also improved. However, achievement in some subjects is not as positive as in others. Current pupils at the school are gaining secure knowledge, understanding and skills across all subjects. They recall and demonstrate their learning well. They understand how their learning builds over time. They are rightly proud of their achievements. Pupils are prepared well for their

next steps

. The majority go on to sustained education, employment or training.

## Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard

Leaders have an accurate and informed view of curriculum and teaching. They have developed a curriculum that reflects the high aspirations that best serves pupils' interests. They have strengthened a curriculum that provides pupils in Years 10 and 11 with the opportunity to gain a range of appropriate qualifications. Key stage 3 pupils study a broad range of national curriculum subjects. The school identifies the key knowledge that pupils need to learn and when.

Teachers are knowledgeable about the subjects that they teach and explain concepts clearly. They sequence pupils' learning to build on what has been learned previously. Generally, teachers use the trust's 'teaching and learning fundamentals' approach well. They model work and learning for pupils effectively. Teachers use questioning to check learning and to challenge pupils to deepen their understanding over time. The school is developing a positive culture of reading. Pupils who are at an early stage of reading are supported to become fluent and confident readers. The school is developing pupils' love of reading. Key vocabulary is reinforced in pupils' written and spoken work. Typically, teachers adapt the curriculum and teaching to address challenges and barriers that disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities face. However, at

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times, there are inconsistencies in how effectively staff use these adaptations to support pupils.

## Inclusion

### Expected standard

The school has an inclusive ethos. It aims to remove barriers and address challenges that pupils face. Staff motivate and raise pupils' aspirations. Leaders' approach to recognising pupils' individual needs is very effective. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) have their needs identified swiftly and accurately. The school uses a range of effective approaches and works well with external agencies to identify challenges that pupils with SEND may face. Pupils' individual information passports convey key information to teachers and staff effectively. These passports rightly include pupils' own views about their learning. Classroom adaptations and resources are mostly used well to support pupils' learning. Leaders identify and systematically remove barriers faced by disadvantaged pupils and pupils known to social care. Pupil premium funding is used effectively. Staff work with external agencies effectively, for example therapists and the local authority virtual school. The school's use of alternative provision is appropriate. Pupils who have gaps in their learning mostly catch up with their peers. For example, pupils who are at an early stage of learning to read are supported effectively to gain the phonics knowledge that they need to become confident and fluent readers.

## Leadership and governance

### Expected standard

Leaders are ambitious for all pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. They lead with a clear moral purpose. They ensure that the school's values are lived daily. Leaders have consistently high expectations of staff and pupils. Leaders know the school well. They identify and celebrate the school's strengths. Leaders also quickly and accurately identify aspects of the school's provision that need improving. Quality assurance processes are effective. Leaders take effective steps to address weaknesses, resulting in sustained improvement in provision and outcomes.

Trustees, governors and trust officers provide effective and appropriate challenge and support. They hold leaders to account. They work collaboratively with leaders and staff for the benefit of all pupils. They fulfil their responsibilities fully. Staff morale is positive. There is a genuine team spirit among staff. Staff are proud to work at the school. They are supported well by leaders. Staff benefit from well-thought-through professional learning opportunities. Leaders are mindful and considerate of staff workload and wellbeing. The vast majority of parents and carers are very positive about the school. Typically, a parent commented: 'I am extremely happy with the care and education my children receive at Bolsover School. The staff have been welcoming, supportive and genuinely invested in my children's wellbeing and development. It is clear that the school is a nurturing environment where children are encouraged to thrive both academically and emotionally.' Personal development and well-being Expected standard Pupils' personal development and wellbeing are underpinned by the school's ethos and core values. Pupils' tangible sense of belonging and community is nurtured and reinforced such as

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through the school's house system and the supportive pastoral care. Pupils value and participate in the wide range of extra-curricular, 'co-curricular' activities on offer. Pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, benefit from this well-thought-through personal development programme. Leaders ensure that the personal, social, health and economic education offer is carefully considered across the curriculum and in daily tutor-time sessions. Staff promote pupils' moral and social development well. Pupils deepen their understanding of right and wrong. They are taught the importance of equality, diversity, inclusion and respect. Pupils learn about different cultures, faiths and religions. They gain a mature understanding of, and their responsibilities related to, protected characteristics. They learn about different aspects of physical and emotional health and wellbeing. Pupils know about risks and how to be safe in the community and when online. They learn about age-appropriate relationships and sex education. They benefit from opportunities to learn about key values, including democracy, the rule of law and individual liberty. Careers provision is effective. Pupils explore the choices available to them for their

next steps

. Pupils receive appropriate information, advice and guidance. The careers programme is tailored to individual pupils' needs. Pupils benefit from work-related learning opportunities and links with employers, colleges and universities. Pupils are prepared well for their

next steps

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

Pupils say that they are safe and happy at school. Pupils are known and celebrated as individuals. They are very well cared for. Pastoral care is matched well to pupils' needs. The school lives its key values as it aims for 'nothing but the best' for all pupils. Most pupils behave well. The school is calm and focused. Relationships are polite and respectful. Pupils and staff value the school's approach to managing behaviour. They recognise that behaviour has improved in recent years. Breaktimes and lunchtimes are sociable and friendly. Pupils conduct themselves well. Overall, pupils' attendance is, on average, close to that of other schools nationally. Leaders have high aspirations for pupils' learning. Pupils engage well in lessons. Most enjoy their learning. Generally, pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, achieve in line with national averages. Pupils learn well in most subjects. The school understands the barriers and challenges some pupils face in their learning. Pupils are prepared well for their

next steps

in education, employment or training. Pupils benefit from a range of extra-curricular, 'co-curricular' opportunities through the school's 'curriculum plus' offer. They are prepared well for life in modern Britain. Pupils gain an understanding of fundamental British values such as democracy and the rule of law. They learn and appreciate the importance of respecting difference and fostering equality. Pupils value their school pledges to be trustworthy, brave and successful individuals.

Next steps

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- Leaders must ensure that teaching across subject areas is consistently and appropriately adapted to overcome the challenges and barriers faced by disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. This will enable these pupils to meet the school's high aspirations of achievement.
- Leaders should continue to build on their current work to further embed pupils' learning and raise their attainment and progress.

## Attendance and behaviour

### Expected standard

Leaders' robust actions have led to an improvement in pupils' attendance over time. The school monitors pupils' absence rigorously. Leaders support and challenge parents and carers sensitively and appropriately if their children are absent. Leaders identify and address barriers that disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities face when attendance is not high enough. This has led to an improvement in attendance for many pupils. The school has high expectations for pupils' behaviour. Pupils follow well-established routines, including at the start of the day. Staff manage behaviour consistently well. Pupils begin learning promptly and purposefully at the start of each lesson. Most pupils take pride in their work. Pupils' positive attitudes are nurtured. These attitudes contribute to a safe and calm environment. Pupils are polite and courteous. A strong culture of respect results in very few incidents of bullying or prejudicial behaviour. These incidents are dealt with swiftly and appropriately on the rare occasions when they occur. Suspensions are used appropriately. Leaders are taking effective steps to reduce the number of suspensions. Appropriate support is put in place to help some pupils improve their behaviour and conduct when this is needed.

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**For detailed performance data including disadvantage gap analysis, historical trends, and comparison tables, visit the school's profile on WhatSchool:**

<https://whatschool.ai/en/school/the-bolsover-school-chesterfield>