

# Haydon Bridge High School

**Address:** Haydon Bridge, Hexham, Northumberland, NE47 6LR

**Unique reference number (URN):** 122328

## Inspection report: 20 January 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.

## This school requires special measures

His Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires **special measures** because it is failing to provide an acceptable standard of education, and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

### Needs attention

#### Curriculum and teaching

Needs attention 

The curriculum is generally well sequenced and ambitious. However, leaders have only recently taken action to improve the way in which it is taught. The quality of teaching across the curriculum is variable. Improved training is helping teachers deliver the curriculum more effectively. However, this work is in its infancy.

In some lessons, teachers check pupils' learning and resolve misconceptions well. They adapt their teaching to better meet individual pupil's needs. The school's strategy to introduce 'bell work' retrieval tasks and to encourage pupils' use of mini whiteboards supports this. However, teachers' application of this approach is not consistent. Sometimes, teachers do not identify pupils' starting points or knowledge gaps. When this is the case, teaching is not matched well to pupils' needs and some pupils fall behind. This includes pupils who are disadvantaged and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Opportunities for pupils to practise independently and become fluent in what they learn are limited, especially at key stage 3. Too often, pupils do not complete tasks fully. Leaders have recently introduced appropriate systems to support pupils whose basic skills in reading and mathematics are not secure. Strategies to support pupils' handwriting and spelling are not well developed.

#### Inclusion

Needs attention 

Systems to identify and support the individual needs of pupils are variable. Leaders are in the early stages of ensuring that a culture of inclusion is embedded more deeply across the school. This work is reinforced by appropriate staff training. There is a recently developed graduated approach to support the needs of pupils. Support plans are in place for all pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. These plans are available to all staff to help them adapt the curriculum. When teachers implement these plans well, obstacles to pupils' learning are reduced. However, this approach is inconsistent and some pupils' needs are not met as effectively as they could be.

Staff work closely with disadvantaged pupils at an individual level and monitor their progress. Leaders have developed a pupil premium strategy that identifies appropriate barriers and related improvement strategies. However, leaders do not monitor the impact of these strategies and interventions closely enough.

Leaders work in close partnership with families, professionals and other agencies to support vulnerable pupils. Leaders make sure that pupils' personal education plans, which establish the support for looked-after children, are well considered and reviewed regularly to ensure that the plans remain suitable. The school uses alternative provision in the best interests of pupils.

## **Personal development and wellbeing**

**Needs attention** 

There are variations in the quality of the personal development and wellbeing programme. Leaders have recently adapted the school day to strengthen pupils' experience of the personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum. There is now a dedicated 30-minute slot each afternoon when this takes place. The curriculum is ambitious and age-appropriate. However, there is limited support in place to ensure that teachers deliver this curriculum effectively. Pupils consider fundamental British values, including respect and cultural diversity. They learn about online and offline risks. Pupils also discuss relationships and sex education and health education. Other agencies, such as the police, have spoken with pupils about local safeguarding dangers relating to rivers and train lines. Pupils recognise the importance of what they learn in these lessons. However, their knowledge of some areas lacks depth.

A limited programme of clubs is available for pupils to attend at lunchtimes and after school. These include music, drama, art and football. Leaders do not have a clear picture of the extent to which pupils participate in these extra-curricular activities, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and disadvantaged pupils. Two recent overseas trips to Berlin and France have helped to develop some pupils' cultural experiences.

Careers information, education, advice and guidance is delivered through the PSHE programme. This is not developed as well as it needs to be. Pupils' knowledge of careers is limited. Not all pupils have encounters with colleges, apprenticeship providers or technical education. Leaders know that this is an area that needs to improve and they have plans to address it.

Pupils appreciate the additional staff appointed to support their pastoral needs. Pupils are confident in accessing this support when they need to and say it has helped them to feel a sense of belonging.

## **Post 16 provision**

**Needs attention** 

Over time, students' achievement in A-level subjects has been significantly below the national average. Achievement in applied general qualifications is close to average. Recent improvements to the post-16 provision are beginning to have a positive impact. Changes to entry requirements mean that students study courses that are suitable so that they can be successful. Leaders' work to improve staff expertise has improved how effectively the curriculum is delivered.

Students learn best when the curriculum is adapted to meet their needs, including students with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are disadvantaged. Teachers use retrieval activities effectively to check students' starting points. They ask

probing questions to deepen students' learning. However, while many students secure their knowledge and skills, this is not consistently the case across all post-16 subjects.

Students enjoy a range of non-qualification activities offered to them. These include the Duke of Edinburgh's Award programme, fundraising events and supporting lessons in lower school. Students appreciate these opportunities. The post-16 'Life' programme teaches students about wider personal development issues in an age-appropriate way. Students are supported well to progress to the next stage of employment, training or education through employer visits and trips to universities. Most go on to appropriate destinations when they leave school.

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## **Urgent improvement** ●

### **Achievement**

**Urgent improvement** ●

Pupils do not achieve well. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and pupils who are disadvantaged. Pupils' achievement in national tests and examinations has been significantly below the national average for a number of years. Too many pupils do not acquire the skills and knowledge they need to progress to the next stage of education.

Across the curriculum, too many pupils have gaps in their basic knowledge. This limits their achievement and leaves them underprepared for the next stages of their learning. These gaps are not resolved quickly or effectively enough. Pupils who are often absent from school miss out on important learning. There is not an effective system in place to ensure that they are able to catch up when they return to school.

### **Attendance and behaviour**

**Urgent improvement** ●

Too many pupils are often absent from school. Overall, attendance has been significantly below national averages, including for pupils who are disadvantaged and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, for a number of years and it is not improving. The absence of pupils at key stage 4 is particularly high. This negatively affects pupils' achievement since they miss out on valuable learning. While there are systems to check on pupils' attendance and safety, leaders are not analysing information closely enough to identify and resolve any barriers to good attendance. This means that leaders' approach to tackling poor attendance lacks impact for many pupils.

Leaders have worked with staff to develop a revised behaviour system. While this is in the early stages of implementation, there are some signs of positive impact. Classrooms are generally calm but instances of low-level disruption to learning are not uncommon. Although social times are usually orderly, there are some incidents of boisterous behaviour. The number of suspensions and internal removals to the 'Restart Room' has reduced. However, there are still too many pupils who are suspended from school because of their behaviour.

Staff know pupils well. However, staff do not apply the behaviour policy as consistently as they need to. Bullying does not usually occur. If it does happen, pupils are confident to

report it and know that it will be addressed.

## Leadership and governance

Urgent improvement 

Leaders and governors know there are many areas of the school that need to be improved. However, they have not acted swiftly or effectively enough to address these concerns. Pupils' achievement and attendance have all declined significantly over time. This includes for pupils who are disadvantaged and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Governors do not ensure that all of their statutory duties are met. They do not challenge leaders sufficiently well. School leaders do not have the capacity to bring about the necessary improvements. The school has recently been supported by a multi-academy trust. While this is a positive step, it is too soon to see any impact.

The revised professional learning programme has started to have a positive impact on how well staff implement the curriculum, but this work is in the early stages. Most staff feel supported with their workload and wellbeing, although not all. Strategies introduced recently to improve engagement with the wider community have had limited uptake so far. Parents and carers value how well staff know their children. However, many parents do not think that communication from the school is as effective as it should be.

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

Pupils at Haydon Bridge High School, including those in the sixth form, do not achieve well and this has been the case for a number of years. Leaders and governors have not acted quickly enough to address weaknesses and improve pupils' experiences at school. Too many pupils do not attend school regularly. This leads to gaps in pupils' learning. For some pupils, these gaps are not identified or resolved effectively. This hampers their learning.

Most of the time, the school is calm. Most pupils want to learn and do their best. However, there are too many occasions when learning is disrupted by poor behaviour. While many pupils enjoy learning, others do not.

Pupils feel safe at school. Bullying is rare. If it does happen, it is dealt with effectively.

Many pupils have responded well to changes in the way that the curriculum is taught. They are experiencing increased success in their learning. However, these changes are only in the early stages. Pupils, including those who are disadvantaged and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, learn best when staff adapt the curriculum to their needs. However, this is not done consistently well. The careers programme at the school is not as well developed as it needs to be. Too many pupils are not well prepared for their next stage of education, employment or training.

Pupils learn about fundamental British values, such as democracy, tolerance and respect. They generally have positive relationships with one another and with staff. They learn how to keep themselves healthy and safe. They have opportunities for broader experiences, such

as engaging with the local community through 'chat and crochet' mornings. The 'Pupil Parliament' offers pupils leadership opportunities. This group works with staff to suggest aspects of the school that could be improved.

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## Next steps

- Those responsible for governance must act swiftly to ensure that leaders have the capacity they need to bring about essential improvements, so that pupils are prepared fully for the next stages of their education, training or employment.
  - Leaders must review and adapt the attendance strategy to ensure that pupils attend well.
  - Leaders must ensure that the curriculum is implemented effectively in all subjects, so that all pupils, including students in the post-16 provision, secure important knowledge and skills and achieve well.
  - Leaders should further embed the revised behaviour policy and make sure that all staff apply the policy consistently, so that pupils know how they are expected to conduct themselves.
  - Leaders should ensure that all pupils benefit from an effective personal development programme, in particular by developing the school's careers offer and its extra-curricular provision.
  - Leaders should continue their work to communicate with parents and carers and engage with the wider community, so that the school benefits from positive partnerships that are focused on enhancing pupils' experiences.
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## About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors in this school is Audrey Kingham.

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, leaders from the school, members of teaching and support staff and several groups of pupils. An inspector spoke with members of the board of governors. An inspector also spoke with a representative from the local authority. Inspectors visited lessons across a range of subjects. Evidence of pupils' work was also considered.

The school does not meet 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.

In accordance with section 44(1) of the Education Act 2005, His Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading,



managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

The school may not appoint early career teachers before the next monitoring inspection. The position regarding the appointment of early career teachers will be considered again during any monitoring inspection we carry out.

Inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school makes use of one registered alternative provision.

Headteacher: David Nisbet

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### **Lead inspector:**

Tim Johnson, His Majesty's Inspector

### **Team inspectors:**

Richard Wakefield, His Majesty's Inspector

Helen Lane, Ofsted Inspector

Kate Morris, 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 20 January 2026

## **School and pupil context**

### **Total pupils**

**421**

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**

**904**

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: 1,153

**Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)**

**31.88%**

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**

**4.51%**

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**

**14.25%**

Close to average

**What does this mean?**

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

National average: 13.4%

**Location deprivation**



# 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)

# No resourced provision

## What does this mean?

Whether school has Resourced Provision or SEND unit (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 (provisional) | 13.7%       | 45.2%            | Below                          |
| 2023/24 (final)       | 21.3%       | 45.9%            | Below                          |
| 2022/23 (final)       | 44.4%       | 45.3%            | Close to average               |

## 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 (provisional) | 35.1        | 45.9             | Below                          |
| 2023/24 (final)       | 38.4        | 45.9             | Below                          |
| 2022/23 (final)       | 43.9        | 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) | -0.58       | -0.03            | Below                          |
| 2022/23 (final) | -0.35       | -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 (provisional) | 10.3%       | 25.6%            | Below                          |
| 2023/24 (final)       | 10.0%       | 25.8%            | Below                          |
| 2022/23 (final)       | 37.5%       | 25.2%            | Above                          |

### 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 (provisional) | 27.8        | 34.9             | Below                          |
| 2023/24 (final)       | 35.5        | 34.6             | Close to average               |

| Year            | This school | National average | Compared with national average |
|-----------------|-------------|------------------|--------------------------------|
| 2022/23 (final) | 40.3        | 35.0             | Above                          |

### 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) | -0.78       | -0.57            | Close to average               |
| 2022/23 (final) | -0.84       | -0.57            | Close to average               |

### 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 (provisional) | 10.3%       | 52.8%                            | -42.5 pp                |
| 2023/24 (final)       | 10.0%       | 53.1%                            | -43.1 pp                |
| 2022/23 (final)       | 37.5%       | 52.4%                            | -14.9 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 |
|------------------------------|-------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| <b>2024/25 (provisional)</b> | 27.8        | 50.3                             | -22.5                   |
| <b>2023/24 (final)</b>       | 35.5        | 50.0                             | -14.5                   |
| <b>2022/23 (final)</b>       | 40.3        | 50.3                             | -10.0                   |

## 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 |
|------------------------|-------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| <b>2023/24 (final)</b> | -0.78       | 0.16                             | -0.94                   |
| <b>2022/23 (final)</b> | -0.84       | 0.17                             | -1.00                   |

## 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 |
|-----------------------------------|-------------|------------------|--------------------------------|
| <b>2023 leavers (provisional)</b> | 84%         | 91%              | Below                          |
| <b>2022 leavers (revised)</b>     | 94%         | 93%              | Not available                  |
| <b>2021 leavers (revised)</b>     | 99%         | 94%              | Not available                  |

## 16 to 18 performance

## A-level average point score

The average points that students achieved per A-level entry.

| Year              | This school | National average | Compared with national average |
|-------------------|-------------|------------------|--------------------------------|
| 2024/25 (revised) | 20.59       | 34.99            | Below                          |
| 2023/24 (final)   | 25.25       | 34.38            | Below                          |
| 2022/23 (final)   | 36.32       | 34.16            | Close to average               |

## A-level value added

A score showing students’ progress between the end of key stage 4 and the end of their academic qualification studies.

| Year              | This school | National average | Compared with national average |
|-------------------|-------------|------------------|--------------------------------|
| 2024/25 (revised) | -0.8        | 0.0              | Below                          |
| 2023/24 (revised) | -0.6        | 0.0              | Below                          |

## 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) | 12.5%       | 8.1%             | Above                          |
| 2023/24 (3 term) | 12.3%       | 8.9%             | Above                          |
| 2022/23 (3 term) | 9.8%        | 9.0%             | Close to average               |

### 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) | 34.7%       | 21.9%            | Above                          |
| 2023/24 (3 term) | 38.7%       | 25.6%            | Above                          |
| 2022/23 (3 term) | 33.3%       | 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.

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