

# Inspection of Bexhill High Academy

Gunters Lane, Bexhill-on-Sea, East Sussex TN39 4BY

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Inspection dates:	13 and 14 May 2025
The quality of education	<b>Good</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Good</b>
Personal development	<b>Good</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

The headteacher of this school is Craig Neal. This school is part of Attwood Academy Trust, which means other people also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Tom Attwood.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils at Bexhill High Academy are proud to be part of the school. They appreciate the support and guidance they are given and value the opportunities to flourish beyond their lessons. Pupils are enthusiastic about the sporting fixtures, school trips and clubs that they attend, in particular the annual whole-school production. Pupils benefit from opportunities to develop their interests and leadership skills, for example by leading charity events in the local community.

Pupils recognise the significant improvements to the school, especially to the curriculum and teaching. They learn an ambitious curriculum and increasingly achieve well. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and those who are disadvantaged.

Pupils typically behave very well. They follow the schools' expectations for their conduct in lessons and around the school. Pupils know who they can go to for support if they are worried about anything. Bullying is rare, but when it does happen, pupils are confident to report it because they know that it will be dealt with effectively. This makes them feel safe.

Pupils benefit from a thorough programme of personal development. This includes well-organised careers education and help with how to keep safe in the local community, as well as online.

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

The school is a pleasant, vibrant place to learn. The school's focus on the core values of being 'aspirational', 'firm but fair' and of 'collective responsibility' has led to significant improvements across the whole school. Senior leaders and trustees accurately identify the school's strengths and relative weaknesses. They put in place secure plans to make things better. Staff are proud to work at the school. They feel well supported with their workload and well-being.

The curriculum is broad and balanced. It caters for pupils' interests well. An above-average proportion of pupils take the English Baccalaureate set of GCSE qualifications. Pupils are also able to study a range of other subjects, including both academic and vocational subjects.

The school recognised that, previously, pupils' outcomes were too low. The school has reorganised the content of the curriculum so that pupils learn new information in a logical order. Staff are well trained in adapting learning to meet pupils' needs, especially pupils with SEND. They do this increasingly well. Teachers are becoming more consistent at checking what pupils have learned before moving on to teach new knowledge. As a result, current pupils remember more of what they are taught, and so they achieve more than previous cohorts.

The school has identified that some pupils do not read accurately or fluently enough when they join the school. These pupils receive additional help to improve their reading, including help with phonics where this is needed. This helps them to access the rest of the curriculum more successfully.

The school has high expectations for pupils' behaviour and conduct, which pupils rise to meet. Lessons are rarely disrupted. Pupils who need additional help to maintain positive behaviour are identified and supported to improve. Pupils appreciate the rewards they receive for making positive contributions to the school, such as the 'Year 8 lottery'.

The school uses appropriate processes to identify, support and review the needs of pupils with SEND. The school works well with outside agencies to provide additional help for those that need it. Pupils who are part of the special educational needs resource base typically attend lessons with the rest of the school. They value being able to access the resource base when they need to, for example if they need help to regulate their emotions or to receive additional help to meet the needs of their education, health and care plans.

Pupils' attendance is a high priority. Most pupils attend school regularly. The school works well with pupils and their families to help improve the attendance of those pupils who sometimes struggle to come to school.

The school's approach to developing pupils' character is well organised. The school helps pupils to understand local risks in the community, as well as more global risks that pupils may face, for example online. Pupils appreciate the age-appropriate sex and relationships education they receive, along with learning about how to maintain good physical and mental health. The school is inclusive and ensures that differences are celebrated.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- Sometimes, teaching moves on too quickly and pupils' understanding of the curriculum is not secure enough before new content is taught. This means that pupils have gaps in their knowledge, and they underachieve. Leaders should ensure that all teachers follow the school's agreed procedures for adapting learning and checking pupils' understanding consistently well so that pupils' achievement rises further.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	138895
<b>Local authority</b>	East Sussex
<b>Inspection number</b>	10362401
<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Academy sponsor-led
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1,455
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair/Chair of trust</b>	Tom Attwood
<b>Headteacher</b>	Craig Neal
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.bexhillacademy.org">www.bexhillacademy.org</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	7 February 2024, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school is sponsored by The Attwood Academy Trust. It is the only school in the trust.
- There have been many changes in staffing and leadership in the school since the last graded inspection in 2023. There is no longer an executive principal. The headteacher took up the substantive post in January 2024.
- The school has a specially resourced provision for pupils with SEND called the LINK. All pupils who attend this provision have an education, health and care plan for autism spectrum disorder.
- 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 held meetings with the headteacher, other senior leaders and staff.
- The lead inspector also met with a representative of Mulberry Schools Trust, who has been supporting the school.
- Inspectors held a meeting with members of the trust board.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, modern foreign languages, history, geography and art. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with the subject leader, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also visited lessons and spoke to pupils about their learning in some other subjects. In addition, one inspector met with the teaching and learning team to discuss their work and another looked at samples of pupils' work from across a range of subjects.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, 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.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View, and considered the views of staff and pupils in Ofsted's online surveys. Inspectors also spoke to pupils and staff in meetings and around the school site.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of the school's documentation and records.

## Inspection team

Catherine Old, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Helen Middleton	Ofsted Inspector
Mike Serridge	Ofsted Inspector
Paul Grundy	His Majesty's Inspector
Alan Johnson	Ofsted Inspector

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