

Bishop Heber High School

Address: Chester Road, Malpas, Cheshire, SY14 8JD

Unique reference number (URN): 111424

Inspection report: 14 July 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 ●

Achievement

Strong standard ●

Over time, pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, have consistently achieved well above-average outcomes in end of key stage 4 examinations. They benefit from a culture of high expectations, coupled with a personal development programme that equips them with the scholarly attributes needed to succeed.

Pupils confidently articulate and demonstrate their understanding and deep knowledge of subjects. They use subject-specific vocabulary fluently. Pupils act on feedback from teachers to rectify mistakes or misconceptions. Pupils take pride in their work and their accumulation of knowledge.

Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, achieve highly and they are very well prepared for their next steps in education, employment or training.

Leaders' focus on improving pupils' reading has paid dividends and any gaps in pupils' reading knowledge are closed quickly. Similarly, pupils are well supported to overcome any barriers in number so that they can access the curriculum freely.

Inclusion

Strong standard ●

Leaders are determined that all pupils succeed regardless of any barriers to learning. They leave no stone unturned in accurately identifying and addressing pupils' needs. Staff know pupils very well and use detailed information to devise precise strategies that help to remove barriers.

Governors support the school to use additional funding innovatively to bolster the opportunities for disadvantaged pupils. For instance, disadvantaged pupils benefit from a Year 7 residential trip and a bespoke summer school that helps them to build friendships and work as part of a team. Pupils with barriers to learning or wellbeing fully embrace the extensive extra-curricular programme. This contributes to their wider development and helps them to achieve very well.

Pupils who are known, or previously known, to social care benefit from leaders' skilful work with the virtual school, ensuring that they receive bespoke support. Young carers benefit from highly effective provision that recognises the challenges that they face and enables them to participate fully in school life. As a result, these pupils thrive.

The highly inclusive environment fosters a great sense of belonging. Pupils know that staff care deeply for them, and this is reflected in the high expectations staff hold. Pupils respond positively, contributing to a culture in which all pupils are encouraged and supported to succeed.

Leaders place heavy emphasis on pupils' personal development. They are relentless in tearing down barriers so that disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities can engage in the programme fully. It is carefully designed to match pupils' needs and is responsive to local needs and issues too. For instance, students in the sixth form learn about how to drive safely on country lanes.

Pupils value their learning in this area. They articulate how it helps them to be better citizens. This is demonstrated clearly in their conduct around school, the kind way in which they treat others, their determination to succeed and their understanding of fundamental British values. Pupils' knowledge across a wide range of topics is deeply embedded. For example, they eloquently explain their understanding of consent, maintaining physical health and democracy. Their comprehension is strengthened through expert visitors who bring the learning to life. Moreover, pupils' understanding and appreciation of the world is cultivated through a range of exciting trips. For example, pupils enjoyed historical and religious sites in Rome, geographical wonders at Mount Vesuvius and exhilarating water sports in France.

The comprehensive careers programme prepares pupils well to make informed and ambitious choices about their futures. This is complemented by an abundance of opportunities that support pupils' career aspirations. For instance, they gain first-hand experience of the armed forces through the cadet programmes or develop their business acumen through young enterprise schemes.

Pastoral care is characterised by empathy and high expectations, ensuring that pupils feel both supported and challenged. Pupils with barriers to learning and wellbeing are encouraged to step up to the mantle of responsibility. Some of them proudly represent their peers as year representatives. Pupils are involved in decision making at the school. For instance, pupils voted on which local, national and international charities to support.

Expected standard

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

Pupils are confident, resilient, polite and friendly. They get along harmoniously and blossom in a culture of mutual respect. During social times, pupils from different year groups mix well, chatting or enjoying a game of football together. Older pupils act as role models for younger ones. For example, peer mentors induct new Year 7 pupils into the school with compassion and authority.

Pupils self-regulate their behaviour highly effectively, which leads to a calm and purposeful atmosphere in the school. Pupils show exemplary attitudes to learning. For example, they are highly focused in lessons, diligently follow the school's systems and engage enthusiastically in their studies, including taking responsibility for any independent study.

Pupils attend school regularly. Overall attendance rates are above national average. Leaders carefully analyse absence data to spot patterns and trends and they employ

effective strategies to raise attendance and to reduce persistent absenteeism. They take considered action to improve any dips in attendance for groups of pupils. For example, this year, they have successfully increased the attendance of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. It is too soon to see the impact of leaders' work to strengthen the attendance of disadvantaged pupils, which is currently in line with the national average for this group.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Leaders have a clear understanding of the quality of teaching in the school. They have further refined the key stage 3 curriculum to ensure that it enables pupils to build knowledge securely over time. Overall, the curriculum is broad, ambitious and well ordered.

Teachers are experts in their subjects and deliver content clearly. They apply leaders' chosen teaching approaches, as set out in The Heber Way. Teachers use assessment effectively to check that pupils' understanding is secure before moving on to new concepts. Teachers design activities that help pupils to apply and to practise their learning. At times, there are some small pockets of inconsistency meaning that highly-effective teaching is not fully embedded consistently across all subjects. In addition, a small number of teachers are further developing their adaptive practice to ensure that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported consistently well to access learning.

Leaders and teachers accurately identify any deficits in pupils' knowledge including in reading, writing and mathematics. Effective strategies and support are deployed to help to fill these gaps. For example, pupils at the early stages of reading receive expert teaching that leads to them becoming confident and fluent readers.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders act in pupils' best interests, extending their consideration beyond academic achievement. As such, their vision to ensure that pupils are 'happy at Heber' is realised in practice. This provides the right environment for pupils to blossom. Leaders have created an inclusive school where pupils, regardless of disadvantage or additional needs, are all supported to reach the same high standards.

Governors are committed to the school and know it well. They use this knowledge to provide appropriate challenge to leaders. Governors support leaders in building constructive relationships with parents and carers. This engagement helps to strengthen trust between the school and the community.

The school is outward facing and works with a range of organisations to enhance its own practice. Similarly, leaders share their expertise with other schools. Leaders are clear about the strengths and areas for improvement in the school. At times, more precision is needed in identifying the best strategies to use to bring about improvement or, in the case of curriculum and teaching, to ensure consistency.

Staff are very proud to be a part of this school. They feel valued because leaders care about staff's wellbeing. Leaders have established an evidence-based programme of professional learning that draws effectively on staff's expertise.

Post-16 provision

Expected standard 

Leaders have created an inclusive sixth form that serves the needs of the local community. In light of this, they have widened access for students who face barriers to learning. Students are supported well to meet the demands of academic study, including through opportunities to build their independent study skills. In lessons, teachers typically adapt learning appropriately to ensure that students progress through the curriculum successfully. Students can opt to study further qualifications to complement their chosen A-levels such as core mathematics.

Teachers use their subject expertise to deliver the curriculum well and in line with The Heber Way. They make regular checks on students' learning. Students produce high-quality work which shows their secure understanding of the subjects that they study. They achieve well in examinations at the end of key stage 5.

Students engage fully and benefit from myriad opportunities to contribute to school life. They organise events such as cake sales and carol services, which younger pupils enjoy. The sixth-form committee acts as an intermediary between students and school leaders. For example, members of the committee successfully worked with leaders to install a coffee machine for students.

Students benefit from work experience and careers conventions that help them to make informed choices about their future education, employment or training. The majority of students proceed to ambitious destinations.

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

Pupils and students in the sixth form are 'happy at Heber'. They are extremely proud to belong to this caring community. Older pupils act as superb role models for younger pupils. Relationships across year groups are warm and respectful. Pupils feel safe and they are free from discrimination. They value the close relationship that they have with their form teacher and other staff.

The school's motto, 'Prêt d'accomplir' (ready to achieve), sets an ambitious standard. Pupils strive to achieve highly, whether in their academic work or in other endeavours, such as on the netball court or creating an impressive harvest festival basket. Pupils, including those with barriers to learning and wellbeing, enjoy success across a range of activities.

The school is an oasis of calm where pupils behave extremely well. They interact maturely with one another and with staff. Pupils are confident that staff will resolve any issues that arise. They learn free from disruption and are keen to attend school regularly. Pupils work hard and take pride in their achievements. A firmly embedded culture of being committed to learning helps pupils to achieve very well. They gladly celebrate each other's successes.

Pupils embrace leadership roles, such as head boy and girl and year group representatives. They know that their voices are heard.

Pupils are furnished with an extensive range of opportunities that not only prepare them to take up their place in society but also contribute to their wellbeing. Sixth-form students visit a range of universities and some complete the gold Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme. Pupils enjoy a plethora of sporting activities, including hockey, rugby and tennis, as well as other clubs that pique their interests, such as origami and musical theatre. Their view of the world is enriched by trips to places such as Sorrento, Rome, Wales and the battlefields of France.

Next steps

- Leaders should refine their strategies for further strengthening teaching, so that teachers can deliver the curriculum consistently well.
 - Leaders should ensure that adaptive teaching strategies are fully embedded, so that they are used consistently effectively to support pupils.
 - Leaders should continue to refine their strategies for improving attendance, particularly for disadvantaged pupils, so that these pupils benefit from all that the school has to offer.
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About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors in this school is Sue Anderson.

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

This inspection took place from 14 to 15 July 2026.

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 HMI.

Inspectors spoke with the headteacher, senior leaders, staff, pupils and representatives of the governing body during the inspection.

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 currently makes use of 2 unregistered alternative provisions.

Headteacher : David Curry

Lead inspector:

Jenny Jones, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Stephen Ruddy, Ofsted Inspector

David Roberts, Ofsted Inspector

Alyson Middlemass, Ofsted Inspector

Katy Davies, Ofsted Inspector

Facts and figures used on inspection

This was the data available at the time of the full inspection, taken from [different sources](#). More recent data may have been published since the full inspection took place.

 The inspector(s) used this data during the full inspection on 14 July 2026

School and pupil context**Total pupils**

1,282

Above 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

1,321

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: 1,154

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

12.87%

Well below average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals at any point in the last 6 years.

National average: 28.9%

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

2.50%

Close to 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

8.58%

Below average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with reported special educational needs support 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 (final)	55.4%	45.4%	Above
2023/24 (final)	66.7%	45.9%	Above
2022/23 (final)	67.3%	45.3%	Above

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 (final)	53.8	46.1	Above
2023/24 (final)	55.9	45.9	Above
2022/23 (final)	56.6	46.3	Above

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)	0.72	-0.03	Above
2022/23 (final)	0.90	-0.03	Above

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)	50.0%	25.8%	Above
2023/24 (final)	55.6%	25.8%	Above
2022/23 (final)	36.0%	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 (final)	46.1	34.9	Above
2023/24 (final)	50.0	34.6	Above
2022/23 (final)	44.3	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)	0.71	-0.57	Above
2022/23 (final)	0.55	-0.57	Above

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)	50.0%	53.1%	-3.1 pp
2023/24 (final)	55.6%	53.1%	2.4 pp
2022/23 (final)	36.0%	52.4%	-16.4 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)	46.1	50.4	-4.3
2023/24 (final)	50.0	50.0	0.0
2022/23 (final)	44.3	50.3	-6.0

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)	0.71	0.16	0.55
2022/23 (final)	0.55	0.17	0.38

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)	94%	92%	Average
2022 leavers (revised)	93%	93%	Average
2021 leavers (revised)	95%	94%	Average

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 (final)	37.18	35.00	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	35.40	34.38	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	36.70	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 (final)	0.0	0.0	Close to average
2023/24 (revised)	-0.1	0.0	Close to 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 (3 term)	6.9%	8.4%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	6.7%	8.9%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	6.5%	9.0%	Below

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)	17.1%	23.4%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	19.2%	25.6%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	19.3%	26.5%	Below

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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