

Hylands School

Chelmsford Road, Writtle, Chelmsford, Essex CM1 3ET

Inspection dates

7–8 November 2017

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Inadequate
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
16 to 19 study programmes	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Following the previous inspection, pupils' achievement declined and leaders were slow to make the necessary improvements.
- Pupils across the school do not yet make enough good progress from their starting points.
- Over time, leaders have not done enough to reduce pupils' absence. The progress the pupils make is limited because too many of them miss too much time from lessons.
- Exclusion levels remain too high. Pupils spend too much time out of lessons due to poor behaviour and this is not improving quickly.
- Leaders do not check carefully enough the quality of education received by the pupils who are taught off site. Leaders do not know whether the pupils make sufficient progress.
- Pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities do not make good progress. Leaders do not know which support meets their needs most effectively.
- Over the past academic year, leaders have improved the quality of teaching and learning across the school. The progress pupils make is improving and is now better than in the past.
- Teaching is improving but is not yet consistently good.
- Leaders' actions have accelerated the progress disadvantaged pupils make. While the difference between the progress made by these pupils and other pupils nationally is still too large, it is diminishing.

The school has the following strengths

- Leaders demonstrate that they have the capacity to improve the school further.
- The quality of leadership, teaching, learning and assessment is improving. Leaders now have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and have begun to implement plans for improvement.
- New leaders' have consolidated past improvements and built on them. Leaders have raised expectations and have increased staff accountability for the progress pupils make.
- Leaders have secured effective provision in the sixth form. Students in the sixth form make progress in line with other pupils nationally.
- Pupils are safe. Leaders identify the risks to pupils at the school and take effective action to minimise them.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Reduce the amount of lesson time missed by pupils by:
 - taking action to improve pupils' attendance
 - improving the support provided to pupils at risk of exclusion, to reduce the number of pupils excluded from school.
- Secure good education for pupils educated off site by:
 - routinely checking on the progress pupils make and taking action where they fall behind
 - following up on pupils' absence rigorously and providing the correct support to improve attendance.
- Improve the quality of teaching and the progress pupils make, so that progress is at least good, by:
 - identifying what pupils already know and can do, and setting work which builds on pupils' starting points
 - tailoring teaching to overcome the barriers to learning that disadvantaged pupils face
 - ensuring that the needs of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are well understood and catered for throughout the school.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Leaders' work to improve attendance has been ineffective. Absence rates are consistently above the national average. The percentage of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, persistently absent is consistently very high. Pupils miss too much time at school and so do not make good progress.
- Exclusion rates remain too high. Leaders' actions to reduce the time pupils miss from lessons due to exclusion have not had enough of an impact. Therefore, too many pupils miss out on learning because of their poor behaviour.
- A small proportion of pupils are educated elsewhere on behalf of the school. As a result of their adapted curriculum, these pupils' attitudes to education have improved. They have fewer incidents of exclusion. However, leaders' expectations for the pupils are too low. They do not track the progress these pupils make out of school closely, or put support in place in school for them to catch up on missed work. Leaders' tracking of these pupils' attendance is perfunctory. As a consequence, leaders do not have a good understanding of the effectiveness of off-site provision for this group of pupils.
- Leaders have not made good use of funding for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. Over time, the pupils have not made as much progress as they should. Their absence rates are too high. A disproportionate percentage of exclusions from school are for these pupils. This significant group of pupils is not receiving a good standard of education.
- Leaders' work to improve teaching over the past 12 months has focused on their identified features of effective teaching, such as how to use questioning well. As a result, much teaching is improving quickly. However, while the quality of teaching is better than it was, teachers do not consistently make the best use of the techniques they have learned. For example, teachers sometimes do not give pupils enough time to answer questions, or they ask questions that require only one-word answers.
- New leaders have implemented rigorous monitoring processes to embed and develop the work which was started prior to their arrival. Leaders at all levels regularly check the effect teaching has on the progress pupils make. Leaders provide timely feedback to help teachers to improve their practice.
- Where teachers need additional support, leaders provide it. As a consequence, the positive features, which leaders expect, that are emerging in classroom practice are becoming more established. This is improving the progress pupils make.
- Senior leaders and governors have recently sharpened the focus on the work of middle leaders. Middle leaders are now held more to account for pupils' progress. Leaders regularly check the progress pupils make and intervene to help them catch up if they fall behind. For example, extra poetry sessions were put on for those who did not fully understand this area of English. These pupils now produce work of a more analytical nature and are making more progress than they previously did.
- Leaders provide focused support for pupils outside of the usual lesson time. For example, they use one-to-one tuition and revision sessions targeted at individuals. They have improved the progress made, especially by disadvantaged pupils. In 2017,

disadvantaged pupils' key stage 4 outcomes for English and the English Baccalaureate were notably higher than in 2016. However, although reducing, the gap between the progress they make and that of other pupils nationally remains too wide.

- Despite the improvements, the barriers to learning faced by disadvantaged pupils are not widely understood. Teachers are often unaware of who the disadvantaged pupils in their classes are, or what their needs are. They do not teach these pupils as effectively as they should and, consequently, disadvantaged pupils do not make good progress.
- Following weak student achievement in 2016, leaders correctly identified the need to improve the standard of vocational education in the sixth form. Leaders focused on raising teachers' expectations of what students could achieve. They ensured that the work students completed was more closely matched to examination board requirements. Leaders liaised closely with parents when students were at risk of falling behind. As a consequence, the outcomes achieved by students in BTEC National diplomas in 2017 were in line with those of other students nationally.
- Leaders' use of Year 7 literacy and numeracy catch-up funding is effective. Leaders identify the barriers faced by these pupils in making good progress. They put effective additional teaching support in place to overcome these barriers. As a result, pupils who join the school below the expectation for their age in Year 7 make good progress. They catch up with their peers in the school.

Governance of the school

- Governors have not been effective over time in holding leaders to account for the quality of education pupils receive. Ofsted visited the school to inspect behaviour in May 2015. Governors have taken too long to act on Ofsted's recommendations to analyse behaviour more carefully and to reduce the time pupils miss from lessons due to exclusions. As a result, these weaknesses in the school persist.
- Governors now challenge leaders with much more precision. They ask the right questions. For example, governors have challenged leaders for information on the progress made by disadvantaged pupils. Governors meet leaders regularly to review progress on key areas for improvement, such as outcomes in English and mathematics. They have considered a report from the trust on the quality of teaching and learning. Governors now have a good understanding of the issues facing the school and are beginning to address them.
- Trustees have recently put in place additional support for the school. They provide leadership expertise to departments such as mathematics and English, for example. Most notably, the new acting headteacher and executive headteacher have been put in place by the trust. The impact of the work of these new leaders is already being felt in the school.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders ensure that appropriate checks are in place for all adults working in the school. All staff are trained to an appropriate level to deal with safeguarding concerns, and systems for reporting and recording concerns are clear and robust. Leaders have put in place effective structures for securing the safety and welfare of pupils.
- Leaders are proactive in promoting the safety of pupils. They work with other education settings to improve communication about concerns regarding pupils' well-being. When leaders are not satisfied with the support pupils receive from other agencies, they are persistent in following this up to ensure that pupils do receive the help that they need.
- Leaders know the risks to pupils in the school and provide guidance to pupils to minimise those risks. Pupils are taught about how to keep safe in personal, social and health education, through workshops and in assemblies. Pupils have recently had an assembly on gang culture, for example. Because of leaders' vigilance, pupils are safe.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Teachers do not pay enough attention to the individual starting points of pupils. Teaching is not sufficiently varied to take into account what pupils already know and can do. This means that some pupils spend time completing work which is too easy. Others struggle to complete work which is too hard. Therefore, while most pupils make adequate progress, some do not.
- Teachers do not have a good understanding of the barriers to learning faced by disadvantaged pupils. While the progress disadvantaged pupils make has improved, this is because leaders have targeted support towards them outside lessons. It is not because they are consistently well taught. Although the difference between the progress made by disadvantaged pupils and the progress made by other pupils nationally has diminished, it remains too wide.
- Since the school's last section 5 inspection in 2013, standards have dropped. New leaders have once again raised the expectations of what teachers should do. Leaders now closely monitor the work of teachers. They give timely feedback on the effectiveness of what they see. Leaders are aware of where teaching is less effective and are providing support to ensure that this improves. They hold teachers to account for the progress pupils make. As a consequence, teaching has improved quickly.
- Teachers increasingly demonstrate features of effective teaching. Effective questioning is a feature of many lessons. Teachers also provide additional challenges for those pupils who have successfully completed tasks. However, teaching is not yet consistently good. For example, while much science and English teaching is effective, teaching across mathematics, modern foreign languages and humanities subjects is too variable. Pupils' experience of lessons, and the progress that they make, depends too much on which teachers they have.

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- Leaders have not established a consistent approach to dealing with bullying. Bullying does occur and it is not always effectively dealt with. Pupils reported that bullying is sometimes dealt with quickly and well. They said that at other times bullying is allowed to persist.
- Pupils are confident to report concerns about their well-being, and their concerns are recorded, but leaders do not keep accurate records of all instances of bullying. For example, instances of homophobic behaviour are not recorded as bullying. Cyber bullying is recorded separately from other bullying. Leaders' records of bullying therefore do not give an accurate picture of the amount of bullying which happens.
- Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe. Pupils are effectively taught about the risks to their welfare. Pupils spoke to inspectors about the importance of walking home in groups. They have been given guidance on e-safety and the use of fireworks, as well as about the dangers of gangs and drugs.
- Most pupils spoken to by inspectors said they feel safe in school. The majority of parents who responded to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, agreed that their children feel safe at school.
- Leaders have developed the curriculum to ensure that teachers and pupils work together well outside the normal classroom setting. Timetabled sessions include car design, yoga, first aid and cricket. All teachers and pupils take part in some of these sessions and they develop a better understanding of each other's interests and personalities. As a result, relationships around the school are mostly good.
- There is a culture of tolerance and respect at the school. Pupils reported that it is OK to be different.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is inadequate.
- Leaders have not done enough to ensure that pupils value their education. Consequently, too many pupils have negative attitudes towards their education and miss school. Absence rates are too high and this reduces the progress pupils make.
- Disadvantaged pupils have particularly high levels of absence and persistent absence. Leaders have not done enough to ensure that they meet the needs of this significant group of pupils. As a result, the barriers these pupils face to learning are increased. Their regular absence makes it even harder for them to make good progress.
- Too many pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities regularly miss school. Their learning needs cannot be met because they are not in lessons.
- Despite the efforts of leaders to improve behaviour, the number of pupils excluded from school remains well above the national average. This has been the case since at

least 2014. Pupils who present challenging behaviour are not effectively supported to behave well. As a consequence, these pupils miss too much time in lessons and do not make as much progress as they could.

- Leaders do not monitor the attendance of pupils educated by other institutions on behalf of the school closely enough. These pupils miss too much time in education. Leaders are not rigorous in following this up and do not know what these pupils are doing when they are absent.
- Many pupils are late to lessons. This hinders the progress they make, and interrupts the learning of others.
- Low-level disruption is not common in lessons. Where lessons are interrupted, this is because the teaching does not meet the needs of pupils in the class. Pupils then become disengaged and prevent others from learning.
- Behaviour around the school site is generally calm. Pupils move around the site in an orderly fashion.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Pupils' attainment and progress at the end of key stage 4 in 2016 and 2017 were low because leaders had not taken effective action to remedy weaknesses. Actions taken over the past academic year, and the greater urgency for improvement since September 2017, have helped most pupils across the school to make better progress because teaching has improved. However, older pupils did not have time to make up for the gaps in their learning by the end of key stage 4.
- In 2016, disadvantaged pupils made significantly less progress than other pupils nationally in a range of subjects. In 2017, the pupils made better progress than in 2016 in English and in the English Baccalaureate subjects: approximately half a grade better than in 2016. The difference between the progress made by disadvantaged pupils at the school and that of other pupils nationally is diminishing, but it remains.
- Leaders do not measure the progress made by pupils being educated elsewhere on behalf of the school closely enough. They do not know whether these pupils are making as much progress as they should be. Therefore, leaders are not able to amend the support these pupils receive to ensure that they make good progress.
- Leaders do not monitor the impact of the support they put in place for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities closely enough. Leaders are therefore not aware of what works and what does not work. Leaders have also not been effective in reducing the amount of lesson time missed by pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. As a result, these pupils make less progress than they should.
- Most pupils in the school now are making better progress than in the past. In a range of subjects, pupils are now taught effectively. Pupils, therefore, make more rapid progress than in recent years. This is most evident in English and in science because this is where stronger teaching is most consistent.
- In addition to benefiting from better-quality teaching overall, pupils are also making better progress because of the targeted support leaders give them. Closer tracking of

pupils allows leaders to identify which pupils have fallen behind and to put in place additional help for them. For example, since the start of September 2017, daily monitoring of the work of some pupils in English has led to a 9% increase in the number of pupils on track to reach their targets.

- Pupils who joined Year 7 in 2016 with low starting points were well supported during the past academic year and made rapid progress to catch up. All pupils who benefited from additional help in literacy and almost all of the pupils who received extra help in numeracy made accelerated progress by the start of Year 8. Around a third of pupils in both literacy and numeracy made even better progress and were working above the level which would be expected for their age by the time they began Year 8.

16 to 19 study programmes

Requires improvement

- Leaders focus more on students' attainment than on the progress students make from their starting points. As a result, the actions of leaders are not as closely targeted as they could be. Students across the sixth form make progress broadly in line with that of other students nationally, but they do not make as much progress as they could.
- As in other year groups, the quality of teaching in the sixth form varies too much. In some lessons, students are well supported to make good progress. In others, teachers do not meet their needs well enough. As a consequence, students make broadly average progress. There are very few subjects in which students make accelerated progress.
- Leaders in the sixth form have taken effective action to improve the outcomes of pupils studying vocational courses. Whereas in 2015 and in 2016 pupils on these courses achieved less well than their peers nationally, in 2017 the progress was in line with other pupils nationally.
- Sixth-form students enhance their leadership skills and confidence by working with younger pupils in the school and in primary schools. All sixth-form students either support or run clubs or activities, such as netball, dodgeball and 'The Big Draw'.
- Students told inspectors of the sense of community in the school. They are proud of the part they have played in this, for example in working with leaders to develop a sixth form centre. Leaders are effective in supporting students' personal development.
- Students in the sixth form receive effective advice and guidance with regard to their plans for the future. For example, they are supported in applying for university by a dedicated member of staff. They have 'mock' employment interviews from local businesses. In Year 12, all students undertake workplace-based learning. As a result, students are well prepared for their next steps in education or employment. The percentage of pupils who go into education, employment or training after leaving the sixth form is high.

School details

Unique reference number	137072
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10023446

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	780
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	92
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Sarah Jacobs
Head of School	Andrew Parry
Executive Headteacher	Christian Cavanagh
Telephone number	01245 266766
Website	www.hylands-tkat.org/
Email address	hylandsoffice@hylands-tkat.org
Date of previous inspection	12–13 March 2013

Information about this school

- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information about school contact details and examination and assessment results on its website.
- The school does not comply with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish about contact details and examination and assessment results.

- Hylands School is part of the Kemnal Academies Trust. The trust delegates responsibility for monitoring the impact of leaders' work to a local governing body.
- The Kemnal Academies Trust provides leadership support to the school, including putting in place an executive headteacher and an acting headteacher. The trust also provides support for leaders in assessing and tracking pupils' progress through another of its schools, the Debden Park High School.
- The school makes use of four alternative education providers. These are:
 - Heybridge Co-Operative Academy Trust
 - The Construction Training Partnership
 - Essex County Council Youth Service
 - Transforming Lives for Good, Chelmsford Education Centre.
- Hylands School is a smaller-than-average secondary school, serving the area of Chelmsford.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is broadly average.
- The proportion of pupils whose first language is not believed to be English is broadly average.
- The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan, or a statement of SEN, is above average.
- The percentage of pupils who join or leave the school other than at the start of Year 7 or Year 12 is above average.
- The school meets the government's floor standards, which set the minimum requirements for pupils' attainment and progress.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed parts of 35 lessons, sometimes accompanied by the school's senior leaders, to observe pupils' learning and progress.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders, middle leaders and three members of the governing body, a representative from the local authority and a representative from the trust, who is also the new executive headteacher.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation summary and improvement plans, minutes of governing body meetings and spending plans. They also looked at the school's behaviour and attendance records and its pupil progress tracking information.
- Inspectors reviewed the school's single central record of recruitment checks for staff.
- Inspectors considered 140 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. No responses were received to Ofsted's staff and pupil surveys.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils in groups and individually across different age groups.

Inspection team

Andy Hemmings, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
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Paul O'Shea	Ofsted Inspector
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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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