

# Pool Hayes Academy

Castle Drive, Willenhall, West Midlands WV12 4QZ

## Inspection dates

25–26 September 2018

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
16 to 19 study programmes	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- Outcomes are not improving quickly enough at GCSE in the English Baccalaureate (EBacc) subjects of English, Spanish and geography.
- The proportion of pupils achieving good grades in EBacc subjects at GCSE is very low.
- Leaders' and governors' evaluation of pupils' progress is not rigorous enough, including the impact of additional funding for disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities.
- Leaders have been unable to tackle weaknesses in some subject areas quickly enough.
- Teaching is not yet consistently good, particularly in English, Spanish and geography. Teachers across different subjects do not give enough focus to improving pupils' reading and literary skills.
- There is not enough challenge in teachers' questions or in tasks set for pupils to move on more quickly to the next steps in their learning, including for the most able pupils.
- Disadvantaged pupils have not made enough progress over time up to the end of key stage 4.

### The school has the following strengths

- Leadership, teaching and outcomes in the sixth form are good.
- Pupils' behaviour, personal development and well-being are good and improving.
- Care, guidance and support for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are strong.
- Pupils feel safe in school.
- The number of pupils entered for EBacc subjects at GCSE increased significantly in 2018.
- Teaching is much improved in mathematics and is good. There are also strengths in teaching in physical education (PE), art and design, dance and drama.
- Leaders have tackled much of the previous weak teaching and are driving through improvements.
- Changes to the curriculum are leading to better outcomes for pupils.
- Parents and pupils responding to surveys were overwhelmingly positive about the school.

## Full report

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

- Improve outcomes, especially in EBacc subjects including English, geography and Spanish, by:
  - establishing consistently strong leadership across subjects
  - ensuring that there is consistently good teaching in these subjects, including at key stage 3, to encourage more pupils to choose language GCSE options in Year 9.
- Improve leadership and governance by ensuring that:
  - the evaluation of pupils' progress is more rigorous and includes the impact of additional funding for disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities
  - governors hold leaders more closely to account for the outcomes for disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities.
- Improve teaching across subjects so that it is consistently good by ensuring that teachers:
  - have consistently high expectations for pupils' literacy and know how to improve pupils' reading skills
  - set challenging questions that encourage pupils to discuss issues in greater depth
  - provide greater stretch and challenge in tasks to enable pupils to move on more quickly in the next steps in their learning.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Requires improvement

- Leaders recognise that outcomes and teaching are not yet good enough, especially in EBacc subjects including English, geography and Spanish.
- They have been unable to address concerns about leadership in some subject areas quickly enough where weaknesses in teaching remain.
- Senior leaders have an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses including in teaching. They know what they need to do to improve further.
- The principal, supported by senior leaders, has brought about improvements in pupils' behaviour. It is now good. He has successfully tackled previous weak teaching in science and especially in mathematics where outcomes are improving rapidly.
- A programme of support, development and challenge for teachers has led to either teachers improving, including in mathematics and science, or moving on. Teachers in strong-performing subjects have been paired with those in weaker areas. Newly qualified staff and trainees have been well integrated into the school and are participating in a full programme of development. Leaders know, however, that there is more to do to share good practice in teaching. There was a high staff turnover last year, which means work has had to start again with a number of new staff.
- Until recently, the curriculum was not as broad and balanced as it is now. It has been redesigned with the interests of pupils at the fore. Soon after the principal's appointment, leaders overhauled the curriculum to ensure a greater emphasis on the more academic EBacc subjects at GCSE. This was achieved without losing the strengths in other subjects. The number of pupils entered for GCSE in EBacc subjects increased significantly in 2018 because more pupils took Spanish and all pupils were required to choose either geography or history.
- Pupils report a wealth of extra-curricular activities and an enrichment programme on Wednesday afternoons, including in music, sport, drama and politics.
- Leaders strongly promote spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and fundamental British values. This is achieved as part of the curriculum, including the programme for personal, social and health education, and through other events such as assemblies, trips and visitors to the school. Pupils spoken to said that their views are heard and that democratic principles are in place in the school.
- The principal has set out a clear vision based on core values. The wider school community including staff, pupils and parents is overwhelmingly supportive of the leadership of the school. The ethos is one of respect for pupils' differences.
- Middle leaders are outward-looking. They have embraced support from senior leaders and from the trust. They know the strengths and weaknesses in their own areas of responsibility but do not have such a clear view as senior leaders of the overall evaluation of the school's effectiveness.
- Leaders' partnership with the trust is ensuring additional capacity for the school to improve at senior leadership level. Many of the changes to leadership and the strategies introduced are new and have not had sufficient time to have an impact.

- Strong leadership of special educational needs ensures very effective support for pupils. However, the extent to which leaders evaluate the impact of additional funding, the quality of the support and the progress that these pupils have made lacks rigour, as does leaders' evaluation of all pupils' progress overall. This includes the evaluation of pupil premium funding on outcomes for disadvantaged pupils.
- There has been some success with the Year 7 catch-up premium. A smaller percentage of pupils were below the expected standard in English and mathematics by the end of Year 7 than at the start. This was a consequence of effective targeted support, particularly in mathematics.
- The overwhelming majority of parents who responded to Parent View said they would recommend the school to another parent.
- Pupils responding to their survey were very positive about the school.

## **Governance of the school**

- Governors have an accurate view of most of the school's strengths and weaknesses, based on the assessment information they receive from leaders. They are prepared to ask challenging questions. They set their own agenda and are not dictated to by the trust. They have a wealth of experience and educational knowledge in their membership. They hold leaders to account, including middle leaders. They consult pupils well by inviting representatives to attend their meetings to give their views. They are active in the life of the school through regular visits and attendance at events.
- Governors ensure that safeguarding is their key priority. They check that leaders are fulfilling their safeguarding duties through regular checks. They scrutinise policy documents and keep themselves up to date with the latest guidance. The following points for development remain:
  - they do not receive sufficient information to be able to evaluate the progress of pupils currently in the school or the impact of pupil premium and special educational needs funding on pupils' progress
  - they are over-reliant on what leaders tell them about pupils' performance.

## **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Members of staff spoken to were clear in their understanding of what to do if a safeguarding incident or disclosure occurred. There is a strong culture of vigilance and rigour in following up any disclosures. Leaders meet their statutory duties for the information they must keep. Senior leaders regularly review records which are held securely. They are up to date with training and the latest guidance.
- Pupils and students spoken to said that they feel safe. This view was shared by those responding to the pupil survey and in Parent View free-text comments. The curriculum has been adapted this year to help pupils learn about safety. The programme focuses on different aspects of safety on a weekly basis, for example the dangers of child sexual exploitation and bullying. Pupils spoken to were aware of the risks and what to do in such potentially dangerous situations.

- According to one parent responding to Parent View, and summarising the views of others, the school provides a 'safe learning space and deals promptly with concerns'.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

## Requires improvement

- Teaching in some subjects including English, geography and Spanish is not yet consistently good.
- In English, pupils have not been taught sufficiently well the phonics skills needed to attempt to read difficult words. When reading aloud, if they get stuck on an unfamiliar word the teacher too often readily tells them what it is, rather than encouraging the pupil to try to work it out using their phonic knowledge.
- Teachers do not conform consistently to the school's policy for marking. This shows in their different approaches to basic literacy. Pupils' spelling and punctuation errors are either corrected by the teacher, indicated with symbols which pupils do not always understand, or ignored altogether. The extent to which teachers promote literacy in writing across subjects is variable. Consequently, even some students in the sixth form display basic literacy errors. Where teachers provide effective feedback, pupils know what they have to do to improve.
- In Spanish, there is an overemphasis on grammar at the expense of communication in the target language. This leads to passivity unless a pupil is involved in answering a question.
- Too often, pupils are set low-level activities such as matching tasks and copying which slow the pace of learning and lead to some pupils becoming bored. Where pupils are offered a choice of work, too many tend towards the easier challenge. Where more challenging tasks are provided for pupils, including the most able, they are too often slow to get to them or finish them quickly and easily.
- Teachers' questioning does not sufficiently stretch pupils in their thinking and understanding. Questions are often closed and require minimal answers.
- There are examples of strong teaching across the school including in mathematics, PE, dance, drama, and art and design. Teaching in science and especially mathematics has improved over time.
- Teachers have strong subject knowledge. Pupils also reported that teachers are 'passionate' about their subject. For example, in PE expert knowledge enables teachers to give clear explanations and model the techniques of basketball.
- In the best teaching, including in mathematics and science, open-ended questioning enables teachers to recap on prior learning and pupils to explain what they have learned. There is a clear focus on the skills that are being taught with teachers setting increasingly demanding tasks. In mathematics, lessons are planned well to meet pupils' needs. Routines are well established.
- Relationships between teachers, other adults and pupils in lessons are strong. Additional adults work well with identified pupils and know when to step back to allow pupils to work on their own or with others.
- Lessons proceed for the most part with pupils engaged well in their learning and are mostly free of low-level disruptive behaviour. Where low-level disruption occurs, it is

either because pupils have become bored by the lack of pace and challenge or because they find the learning too difficult.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The extent of the school's 'wrap around care' is very thorough. Staff, parents and pupils all gave moving testimonies of the impact of this support, especially for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. Staff provide well for pupils' emotional needs.
- Pupils who would otherwise drop out of school or who risk exclusion are helped to remain in school. One pupil, summing up the views of others, said, 'I wouldn't be here if it weren't for Pool Hayes.'
- Pupils reported that they feel safe. This was confirmed by the parents who responded using the Parent View free-text comments. Pupils said that they know what to do to keep themselves safe, for example on the internet.
- Bullying is rare, according to pupils. When it does occur, they said leaders deal with it effectively. Older pupils act as anti-bullying representatives for younger pupils in key stage 3.
- Pupils said they feel the school helps them to develop as responsible adults.
- Pupils get the opportunity to vote in order to experience democracy; for example they chose the revised vertical tutor system. Pupils reported that their views are valued by leaders.
- Findings from the pupil survey showed that pupils have a strong level of respect for pupils from different backgrounds. This was also evident in their conduct in lessons as well as in discussions with them.
- With a few exceptions, pupils reported that careers advice and guidance and support for the next stage in their learning were strong.
- During an assembly for Year 8 pupils and in tutor groups staff promoted well the importance of studying languages as part of the European day of languages. Leaders have recognised the need to widen pupils' cultural horizons. Pupils responded enthusiastically to the assembly.

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils conduct themselves well around the school, including in assembly and in most lessons. They are polite and well-mannered and follow instructions. There is very little low-level disruptive behaviour. This was confirmed by the pupils who spoke to inspectors formally and informally.
- Pupils spoken to all said that they enjoy their time at school.

- The level of exclusions is low compared to the national average.
- Attendance has remained broadly average over time, as has the level of persistent absence. The school's analysis indicates that attendance improved for all pupils during the most recent academic year, including disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities.
- The school has put in place further measures to promote attendance. The number of pupils arriving late has declined as the school has tightened procedures for punctuality. Leaders monitor attendance assiduously.
- Pupils are enthusiastic about the class reward system for behaviour and attendance.
- Leaders have recently introduced a new system for analysing incidents of inappropriate behaviour and trends, but it is too early to assess its impact.

### Outcomes for pupils

### Requires improvement

- The school's information on the outcomes for pupils currently in the school does not give a clear indication of the progress they have made from their starting points. The analysis focuses on the percentage of those pupils on track to achieve the school's aspirational target grades. On that basis, the percentage 'on track' is increasing with each new year group from Years 8 to 10.
- Pupils' weak literacy skills have a negative impact on their outcomes in a range of subjects. Even in more successful subjects, some pupils do not know the meaning of specific key vocabulary that is needed to support their learning.
- Outcomes at GCSE in 2017 were very low. The progress and attainment of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, in EBacc subjects including English, mathematics, science, humanities, and in religious education (RE) were low. At 7%, the entry level for EBacc subjects was very low compared to the national average. This was because very few pupils took a modern foreign language at GCSE. However, low-attaining pupils made good progress and outcomes were very high in non-EBacc subjects including sports studies and the European computer driving licence. This meant that, taken overall, the progress Year 11 pupils made from the end of key stage 2 was broadly average.
- There are signs of rapid improvement in mathematics and a very slight improvement in English in the latest provisional and unpublished outcomes for 2018. However, outcomes have remained low in humanities. They declined in geography and Spanish, although over three times the number of pupils were entered for the GCSE Spanish examination in 2018 compared to the previous year. Overall, the number of pupils entered for EBacc GCSE subjects increased significantly to 45% in 2018. However, outcomes in EBacc subjects, although improving, remain very low.
- Outcomes for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities and for disadvantaged pupils are not improving quickly enough to diminish the difference with all pupils nationally.
- Outcomes have remained strong over time at GCSE in a number of subjects including PE, dance, drama, art and design.

## 16 to 19 study programmes

**Good**

- Leadership of the sixth form is strong. Leaders have high expectations of students. They have established a purposeful culture of learning in a short period of time.
- Teaching in the sixth form is good because students are taught by the school's strongest teachers. These teachers are specialists in their subjects. Teachers structure learning well and use highly effective questioning. Students respond well to their teachers. Students enjoy their work and are engaged in challenging programmes of study.
- Outcomes are improving over time and compare favourably to national averages. In the most recently published results for 2017, A-level standards were in line with the national average and standards in vocational courses were well above the national figure. Students made good progress from their starting points.
- The curriculum has been adapted in Year 12 to enable any pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities who are not yet ready for examination subjects in the sixth form to experience a bespoke curriculum, including music.
- Students said that they feel safe and they are comfortable raising any concerns with leaders. They said they are offered good-quality additional support with their mental health and well-being.
- Students develop their employability skills well through meaningful work experience. This includes working in local museums, the council's accountancy department and primary schools.
- Improvement plans for the sixth form lack the detail needed to ensure that some aspects of provision are fully monitored and evaluated. For example, leaders have not identified how they will improve and develop the sixth form further.
- Students spoken to said they feel they should be given responsibilities earlier on and that there is scope for students in Year 12 to be more integrated with students in Year 13. Leaders have listened to their requests and strategies are now in place to deliver this.
- In the most recent years, all students have gone on to education, employment or training as a result of effective careers advice and guidance.



## School details

Unique reference number	142594
Local authority	Walsall
Inspection number	10053524

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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	1,048
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	142
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Jacqueline Thompson
Principal	Luke Baker
Telephone number	01902 368 147
Website	<a href="http://www.poolhayes.attrust.org.uk">www.poolhayes.attrust.org.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:principal@poolhayes.attrust.org.uk">principal@poolhayes.attrust.org.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- Pool Hayes is larger than the average-sized secondary school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is well above average and on a rising trend.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is above the national average.
- The percentage of pupils with an education, health and care plan is above the national average.
- The percentage of pupils from minority ethnic groups is below the national average.

- The proportion who speak English as an additional language is well below the national average.
- The school is a member of the Academy Transformation Trust, having converted to become an academy in 2016.
- The principal was appointed shortly after the school became an academy.
- No pupils attend off-site alternative provision.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 47 lessons or parts of lessons, of which the large majority were jointly observed with a member of the senior leadership team or from the trust. In addition, inspectors made other short visits to lessons and other activities.
- Inspectors heard pupils read during lessons and scrutinised their written work in English, mathematics and other subjects.
- An inspector also attended a Year 8 assembly.
- Inspectors held meetings with the principal and executive principal, other leaders and members of staff and spoke to three groups of pupils (including a student group from the sixth form). Inspectors met four members of the local governing body, including the chair, and two senior leaders of the trust. An inspector also spoke by telephone to the chief executive officer and chair of the trust.
- Inspectors took account of 63 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, as well as 51 responses to the Parent View free-text service. There were 47 responses to the pupil questionnaire. There were no responses to the staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and scrutinised a number of documents, including those relating to the school's self-evaluation, as well as governing body minutes, improvement plans and school information on pupils' recent attainment and progress.
- Inspectors also considered behaviour and attendance information and policies and procedures relating to special educational needs, pupil premium funding, Year 7 literacy and numeracy catch-up premium, safeguarding and child protection.

## Inspection team

Mark Sims, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Jonathan Keay	Her Majesty's Inspector
Graeme Rudland	Ofsted Inspector
Andrew Madden	Ofsted Inspector

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