

Inspection of Hylands School

Chelmsford Road, Writtle, Chelmsford, Essex CM1 3ET

Inspection dates: 10–11 December 2019

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Sixth-form provision

Requires improvement

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils have experienced a lot of changes since the last inspection. Some of these changes have increased their enjoyment of school and improved the overall progress they make. Other changes, particularly in staffing, have affected the continuity of their learning, and their progress in some subjects.

The school's small size means that pupils know other pupils and staff well. It is an inclusive school. It welcomes pupils from a range of backgrounds with many different needs. Pupils are kept safe. They feel free from bullying and say that it is a friendly place to be. Pupils can choose to study a wide range of subjects and take part in extra activities in sport, music and performing arts.

Most pupils are polite, pleasant and conduct themselves well. A small minority of pupils with poor attitudes disrupt the learning of others. This is because not all teachers plan learning well enough or apply the school's agreed procedures for managing behaviour in lessons.

Students in the sixth form praise the care and support provided for them. They are glad that they chose to continue their studies here because they are known well, have good facilities to use and staff go out of their way to meet their needs.

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

A significant proportion of pupils leave or join school mid-way through the year. Many have missed long periods of schooling due to poor attendance or behaviour. Despite these challenges, the headteacher has led improvements.

In recent years there was a poor-quality curriculum. Pupils underachieved because, in both key stages, pupils completed GCSE examinations after one year of study. This has now changed. Year 11 pupils will sit GCSE examinations this year having studied them for the last two years.

The curriculum is 'work in progress'. It is broad, balanced and underpins leaders' vision to encourage pupils to aspire to achieve. English and history are much further on than other subjects in implementing revised planning. Changes in subject leadership means that plans in mathematics and science are developing at a slower rate.

In English, teachers have worked with other schools in the trust to develop clear steps in learning. In history, learning is structured to enable pupils to gain skills. Their historical knowledge is underdeveloped. In both subjects, the most able pupils are not challenged enough.

Shortfalls in basic literacy present a significant barrier to pupils' learning. Reading has a low profile. Pupils do not read often enough. Leaders do not evaluate thoroughly the impact of new strategies to improve pupils' literacy.

A new leader of mathematics is leading improvement. However, pupils show a lack of fluency in doing mental calculations. There are few opportunities for them to apply their mathematical knowledge to real-life situations. In science the most able achieve well. Less-able pupils do not do as well. They do not get the same quality of teaching or the support they need to ensure that they make progress.

Not all pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) get the support they need. Teachers do not make effective use of information about pupils to adapt their planning to meet their needs. Support staff are spread too thinly. A new leader has responsibility for improving this. 'The Haven' provides a safe nurturing environment during breaks and lunchtimes for vulnerable pupils and those with SEND.

The school is calm and orderly. Older pupils feel that behaviour has improved considerably. When teaching fails to capture and retain pupils' interest, a minority of them disrupt lessons. Not all teachers manage this effectively.

Attendance is rising. Support from another school within the trust and from the local authority is leading to better attendance. Pupils are taught how to keep safe when using social media, the dangers of knife crime and 'county lines'. Weekly lessons introduced to develop their character and culture are at an early stage of

development. Steps are being taken to strengthen the quality of careers education.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The single central record is well maintained. The required checks are made when appointing new staff. Experienced safeguarding staff work together to keep pupils safe. They know the school's complex caseload well. They are diligent in following up safeguarding matters and recording their actions. They do all they can to keep vulnerable pupils safe.

Since the last inspection, 33 pupils have withdrawn from school to be home educated. There is no indication that school is seeking to off roll or indulge in gaming.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- There are inconsistencies in teaching that lead to some pupils not learning as well as they should do. Leaders should continue to monitor closely how effectively teachers plan learning and gauge the impact this has on pupils' progress, particularly for less able pupils and those with SEND.
- Not all teachers plan learning that captures and retains the interest of pupils. When pupils lose interest, some staff do not apply the school's procedures to manage pupils' misbehaviour. Leaders should provide staff with further training and support to ensure that behaviour in lessons is managed consistently.
- The most able pupils do not achieve as well as they should. Leaders must ensure that all staff provide work that engages and challenges the most able pupils.
- Pupils do not read or practise their literacy skills often enough. This presents a barrier to their learning. Leaders should ensure that new strategies introduced to improve this are monitored routinely and evaluated thoroughly to ensure that they lead to improvement.

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 Ofsted Parent View information 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.

If you're not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

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.

School details

Unique reference number	137072
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10110328
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	741
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	94
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of Governors	Clare Norton
Headteacher	Andrew Parry
Website	www.hylands-tkat.org
Date of previous inspection	7–8 November 2017

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than average.
- The proportion of pupils leaving and joining the school part-way through the year is much higher than average.
- The school is part of the TKAT Multi-Academy Trust.
- At the time of the previous inspection, there was an executive headteacher and an acting head of school in post. The acting head of school is now the substantive headteacher.
- Significant staffing changes have taken place. Over 30 staff have left or joined the school. A new team of senior leaders is in place.
- The school does not use alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

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

- Inspectors visited lessons with senior leaders to observe pupils and students at work. They carried out learning walks to observe the quality of support provided for SEN pupils. They also walked around school to gauge how effectively leaders promote pupils and students' behaviour, and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural education.
- Inspectors held meetings with senior and middle leaders, teachers, including three newly qualified staff, support staff, three members of the governing body and the senior regional executive director and regional executive director of the trust. They also met with two groups of pupils and a group of sixth-form students.
- Inspectors observed the school's work. They scrutinised pupils and students' work. They looked at safeguarding and child protection policy and procedures, self-evaluation and improvement planning, minutes of meetings of the governing body, records of behaviour and attendance, and other information provided by school leaders.
- They considered 82 free-text responses from parents and carers, 87 responses to Ofsted's online Parent View and questionnaires completed by 43 staff. They also read two letters of support sent by parents. The school did not use Ofsted's questionnaire for pupils.

Inspection team

John Mitcheson, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Caroline Pardy	Ofsted Inspector
Peter Whear	Ofsted Inspector
Sarah Fowler	Ofsted Inspector

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