

# Inspection of Clayton Hall Academy

Clayton Lane, Clayton, Newcastle-under-Lyme, Staffordshire ST5 3DN

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Inspection dates: 21 and 22 September 2021

## **Overall effectiveness**

## **Requires improvement**

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The quality of education

**Requires improvement**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Requires improvement**

Personal development

**Requires improvement**

Leadership and management

**Requires improvement**

Previous inspection grade

Good

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

Most pupils at Clayton Hall Academy are happy and want to do well. Pupils move between lessons calmly and play together sensibly on the tennis courts during social times. Pupils are polite and courteous to visitors.

Pupils generally behave well in lessons. In a small number of classes, pupils told us that their learning is disturbed by the behaviour of others. Pupils are confident that staff will deal with bullying if it occurs. However, some staff do not always tackle or report the use of derogatory language.

Leaders want pupils to have a 'gold standard education', but there is too much variation in what pupils' learn. In some subjects, pupils have gaps in their knowledge at the end of Year 8. This does not help them when they begin key stage 4.

Leaders are keen to ensure that pupils have wider experiences which link to future careers. Visits and trips are planned carefully to help show pupils what opportunities are available when they leave school. There are also several sports and performing art clubs, as well as the Duke of Edinburgh's Award which pupils can take part in.

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

Leaders have clear intentions for the school's curriculum. They want to ensure that the curriculum supports all pupils, including those from disadvantaged backgrounds and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. They have worked closely with subject leaders to look at how pupils can build on what they know and remember in each year. However, this is not yet successful in all subjects.

There are some subjects where the curriculum is being delivered well, for example in English. Teachers have planned carefully how pupils build on their knowledge over time. Teachers have identified the key knowledge and skills pupils need to revisit each year so that pupils are able to make progress in their learning. Pupils encounter challenging literary texts and topics. For instance, pupils in Year 8 study classical myths before moving on to dystopian literature in Year 9. Pupils are also able to compare texts effectively in order to produce detailed written responses. Pupils feel suitably challenged by the English curriculum and are secure in what they know.

This is not yet the case for all subjects. Leaders have planned their curriculums in order to identify what pupils should know by the end of each year in mathematics, science and languages. However, by the end of Year 8, pupils are not given sufficient time to secure the depth of knowledge and understanding they need. Consequently, they struggle to make connections in what they are learning. This means that pupils are not well prepared to begin their key stage 4 courses in Year 9.

Leaders have provided training to help teachers check pupils' learning more effectively. Teachers use short questions at the start of lessons to understand what pupils can remember. Pupils say they find this useful. Teachers also identify where pupils need further practise and support at the end of lessons. Teachers value the opportunity to share approaches to teaching between subjects. However, subject teachers have not yet had sufficient time to review their curriculum or discuss effective teaching approaches in their own subject.

In most lessons, pupils show a positive attitude towards their learning. They have good relationships with their teachers and respond quickly to instructions. Pupils spoke positively about the recent changes that have been made to the school's behaviour policy. However, this is not the experience of all pupils. Not all staff follow the behaviour policy consistently, and some classes have low-level disruption. This means that some pupils have their learning interrupted. In addition, staff do not always respond effectively if pupils use derogatory language towards each other.

Leaders have put in place a detailed careers programme for all pupils. This covers a range of knowledge and skills so that pupils are ready to move on to their next stage of education. Staff identify what further guidance pupils need through an annual questionnaire. All Year 11 pupils have an individual interview with the trust's careers officer. As a result, the school ensure that the vast majority of Year 11 pupils secure a place in education or training.

Leaders have a plan which sets out the school's personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum. Although topics cover a wide range of issues, including health, well-being and equalities, some teachers do not always follow the curriculum plan, and it is unclear how topics build pupils' knowledge over time. Leaders have selected a team of teachers to deliver these lessons who are provided with plans and resources. However, there has been insufficient training of staff to deliver these lessons effectively. As a result, the PSHE curriculum is not being delivered well. Pupils consistently describe negative experiences of PSHE lessons and say that they do not think the content meets their needs.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Safeguarding procedures and processes are fit for purpose. Senior leaders are aware of contextual issues in the local community and are alert to these in school. There is a clear system in place for staff to log any concerns, and the designated safeguarding lead works closely with the pastoral team. Staff receive regular training on safeguarding, including a briefing each week on any new matters. Senior leaders ensure that all serious concerns are referred to the relevant external agency.

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

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

- In some subjects, pupils do not gain the depth of knowledge and understanding they need by the end of key stage 3. They struggle to understand how and why their learning in each subject connects and are not well prepared for key stage 4. Leaders should ensure that pupils gain the knowledge they need by the end of key stage 3 to successfully move to their next stage of learning.
- Teachers have not had sufficient time or training to strengthen and evaluate the curriculum in their subjects. As a result, teachers do not reflect well enough on what has been successful or where improvements could be made. Leaders should ensure that subject teachers are given sufficient opportunity to enhance their teaching of their subjects.
- The PSHE curriculum is not being implemented effectively. This means that some pupils do not have a secure understanding of issues such as different cultures, religions and ethnicities. Leaders should ensure that an effective PSHE curriculum is implemented in order that pupils have a better understanding of equality and diversity.
- In some classes, pupils experience low-level disruption. Additionally, a small number of pupils are subject to derogatory language from their peers. This has a negative impact on pupils' learning and experience of school. Leaders should ensure that all teachers follow the school's behaviour policy consistently in order to improve pupils' experience of school.

## 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.

If you are the school and you are 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	142278
<b>Local authority</b>	Staffordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10201056
<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	856
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Tim Edwards
<b>Principal</b>	Catherine Reid
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.claytonhallacademy.org">www.claytonhallacademy.org</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	12 September 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school is part of the United Endeavours multi-academy trust.
- The multi-academy trust consists of three schools.
- The school uses three registered alternative provisions.

## Information about this inspection

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

This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation.

- Inspectors focused on the following subjects: English, mathematics, science, history and languages. Inspectors examined leaders' plans, visited lessons, looked at pupils' work and talked with pupils about the way these subjects are taught. They also looked at other subjects to check how they are planned and taught.

- Inspectors reviewed a range of school documents. These included information about behaviour, attendance, the school curriculum, and improvement planning. The school website was also checked.
- Inspectors talked to staff and leaders about safeguarding arrangements. They examined how leaders make employment checks on staff and scrutinised further safeguarding records. They also asked how incidents reported by pupils are recorded and analysed.
- Inspectors observed informal times of the day to evaluate safeguarding and pupils' behaviour.
- Inspectors held meetings with the chief executive officer, the principal, senior leaders, subject leaders, teachers and pupils. They also talked informally to pupils and staff to gather general information about school life.
- Inspectors considered 114 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and 107 free-text comments. Inspectors also considered 55 pupils' questionnaires and 25 responses to Ofsted's survey for staff.

### **Inspection team**

Mark Howes, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Peter Kent	Ofsted Inspector
Huw Bishop	Ofsted Inspector
Mark Sims	Her Majesty's Inspector
Tim Bassett	Ofsted Inspector

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