

# Inspection of Heybridge Co-Operative Academy

The Street, Heybridge, Maldon, Essex CM9 4NB

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Inspection dates: 27 and 28 April 2022

## **Overall effectiveness**

## **Requires improvement**

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The quality of education

**Requires improvement**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Good**

Personal development

**Good**

Leadership and management

**Requires improvement**

Previous inspection grade

Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

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

Many pupils join Heybridge having missed long periods of their education because of acute medical needs or due to permanent exclusion from other schools. Some have not had positive experiences in their education previously. All pupils are welcomed by leaders and staff, who make sure that pupils re-engage in their learning and enjoy school life.

Pupils value the care and support staff provide for them. They feel safe and free from bullying.

Pupils enjoy their learning because lessons include projects that capture their interest. Pupils engage well in tasks because learning is adapted to meet their personal needs. Those pupils who attend school regularly thrive and are well prepared for the next stage in their education. That said, there is more work to do to develop the curriculum so that all pupils achieve as well as they should.

Primary-age pupils are provided with a nurturing environment in which to learn. All of them return successfully to mainstream schools or specialist settings.

A significant proportion of older pupils do not come into school for lessons. Instead, they receive a blend of school-based lessons and remote learning at home. Not all these pupils engage fully in this way of learning.

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

In English and mathematics, curriculum plans set out clearly the content and vocabulary to be taught, and in what order. However, in other subjects the curriculum is not so well planned. Leaders have not considered fully what they want all pupils to learn and when. Teachers do not plan and deliver lessons that enable pupils to build on what they have learned previously. Not all teachers have been trained sufficiently to teach leaders' intended curriculum.

Leaders have continued with the arrangements put in place during the pandemic to deliver the curriculum to pupils remotely through online lessons and resources. This enables many more pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs to engage in their learning. However, leaders neither monitor pupils' attendance sufficiently during these online lessons nor check the impact remote learning has on pupils' achievement. Leaders do not have a clear strategy to improve this.

Reading is prioritised for primary pupils. Leaders have made sure that phonics is taught consistently and successfully to these younger pupils. Daily reading supports pupils to practise and apply their reading skills. As a contrast, there is no clear approach to teaching secondary-age pupils to read. Leaders plan to extend phonics teaching into Year 7 this year, but this is not currently in place.

Leaders have developed effective personalised timetables for the primary-age pupils. Pupils are taught to learn and play together, and to manage their emotions and behaviour. Leaders ensure that staff are well trained so that they can support primary-age pupils with any very challenging behaviour effectively. Staff have high expectations of pupils and use the right approaches when dealing with serious incidents. High-quality care and support enable most pupils to remain in lessons and learn successfully.

The secondary school site is typically calm and orderly. Pupils say that they get better at the self-management of their behaviour and emotions because of the strong relationships that they build with staff. Disruption does happen but is managed effectively by staff who know what to do when dealing with challenging behaviour. Staff do this in a sensitive and consistent way to prevent incidents from escalating. Records show that fixed-term exclusion is used appropriately and only for the most serious incidents as a last resort.

Overall attendance is low. However, pupils arrive in school with a history of poor attendance. Leaders ensure that most pupils' attendance improves during their time at the school. Leaders have put clear procedures in place to follow up pupil absence quickly and ensure that they remain safe.

Pastoral support is a strength. Staff know pupils and their backgrounds well and this enables pupils to get the right support and help when they need it. Parental responses during the inspection were overwhelmingly positive about the school's provision and its staff.

Pupils' personal, social and health education is enhanced by a life-skills curriculum for primary pupils, and a pupil leadership programme and outdoor learning curriculum for secondary pupils. Careers education is firmly established. Most Year 11 pupils progress successfully on to further education or training.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding in the school. All staff are suitably trained and know what to do if they have concerns about pupils. Leaders and experienced staff manage complex safeguarding matters effectively. Daily welfare checks are made on those pupils who learn remotely online. Systematic, electronic procedures are in place to record concerns. Records show that safeguarding matters are followed up in a timely way. Links with the police, youth offending and other support agencies are well established.

The single central record is secure. All of the necessary checks are made when appointing adults to work with children.

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

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

- The curriculum for subjects other than English and mathematics is underdeveloped. In some areas of the curriculum, leaders have not considered fully what they want all pupils to learn, or when, to enable pupils to build on what they have learned previously. Staff have not been trained sufficiently to deliver leaders' intended curriculum effectively. Leaders should provide staff with training to enable them to plan a curriculum that identifies what they want pupils to learn, and in what order, during their time in school. Leaders should monitor the impact these revised curriculum plans have on pupils' learning and progress.
- Arrangements to educate pupils remotely online do not work effectively. Pupils do not engage often enough in order to learn successfully. Leaders do not maintain accurate records, for example, of how often pupils log on, or the progress they are making when online. Leaders should implement a clear plan to improve the quality of remote learning. They should monitor how effectively pupils gain from this form of learning.

## 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>	143591
<b>Local authority</b>	Essex
<b>Inspection number</b>	10225282
<b>Type of school</b>	Alternative provision
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	5 to 16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	138
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Roger Abo-Henrikson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Phillip Davis
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.heybridgeca.co.uk">www.heybridgeca.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- The school converted to an academy in September 2017. It is part of the Keys Co-operative Academy Trust. When the predecessor school, Heybridge Alternative Provision School, was last inspected in July 2015 it was judged to be outstanding.
- The school opened a primary site in Witham, Essex for pupils aged five to 11 in 2020. Currently, 19 pupils attend this provision.
- The school caters for pupils who have complex social, emotional and mental health needs, and many have been permanently excluded or are at risk of exclusion from their mainstream schools.
- All pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Six of them have an education, health and care plan.
- The school uses four registered alternative provisions. The school also provides outreach support to local schools for pupils who are at risk of permanent exclusion as well as supporting pupils' reintegration back into mainstream schools.

## 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 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- During this inspection, inspectors held meetings with the chief executive officer, the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and the executive headteacher of the primary provision, other middle leaders, teachers, support staff and two groups of pupils.
- Inspectors also met with two governors in an online meeting. The executive headteacher attended as a trustee of the trust and as a member of the governing body.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, English, mathematics, science, art and design and technology. This included discussions with subject leaders, visits to lessons, meetings with staff and pupils and scrutiny of pupils' work.
- To check leaders' management of safeguarding, inspectors scrutinised the school's single central record and met with two designated leaders for safeguarding.
- Inspectors considered the 40 responses to Ofsted Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, and the 33 free-text responses from parents. Inspectors also considered letters sent from parents. Ofsted surveys of the views of pupils and staff were not carried out.

## Inspection team

John Mitcheson, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Clare Fletcher

Ofsted Inspector

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