

Inspection of Hailey Hall School

Hailey Lane, Hertford, Hertfordshire SG13 7PB

Inspection dates:

28 and 29 September 2022

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are safe and well cared for at Hailey Hall. Lessons and breaktimes are calm. Pupils appreciate the way staff take time to understand their social and emotional needs. They value the support which helps them to complete their time in school and move on to further education.

In some lessons, pupils are not always taught well enough the knowledge and skills they need to improve. This means that they do not catch up quickly enough in the important skills necessary to support future learning. This is especially the case with their reading and writing.

Pupils do not achieve as well as they should because expectations of what they can do are not always high enough. There are not enough opportunities for pupils to achieve qualifications, including GCSEs in a broad range of subjects. This limits some pupils' choices for further study.

Most pupils have had long periods out of education. Staff are skilled at supporting them to make positive behaviour decisions. Pupils say that bullying 'doesn't really happen'. They know that there are adults in school to help them if they have concerns.

Pupils work hard to achieve 'respect points' for kindness and being role models. They enjoy the weekly celebration assemblies, where they receive recognition for their hard work and effort.

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

Leaders have acted to improve the quality of education since the previous inspection. However, in some subjects, they have not given enough thought to the important knowledge that pupils need to be as successful as they can be in their learning. Leaders have not designed a curriculum that focuses precisely on what pupils need to do to get better in English, including in their reading and writing. Consequently, pupils do not catch up quickly enough when they start school in key stage 3. This limits the level of qualifications, including GCSEs, they can achieve by the time they leave.

Pupils achieve well in subjects such as art. This is because leaders check what pupils already know and have constructed a curriculum that builds on pupils' existing knowledge and skills. Similarly, pupils become fluent in mathematics because teachers give them time to practise what they have learned before they approach more complex tasks.

Although leaders are still developing the personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education curriculum, pupils benefit from a well-considered programme of enrichment activities and experiences beyond the school's academic offer. This includes a wide variety of trips, as well as geography and history lessons. Team

activities help pupils to develop self-awareness and an understanding of the world around them. However, leaders have not given enough thought to how these activities fit into the school's overall curriculum. The history learned in English, for example, is not taught so that it links to the history content pupils are taught in humanities. Therefore, pupils do not get the depth of learning they need and, consequently, cannot recall important detail well enough. In addition, there is more work to do to broaden the range of subjects in which pupils can gain GCSEs.

Leaders promote pupils' personal development well overall. They support pupils to value their education and attend school more regularly. Leaders follow up on absences meticulously. In key stage 4, pupils take on significant roles with great pride, such as anti-bullying ambassadors. In this role, they help younger pupils to manage their behaviour. As a result, pupils respect each other, and their behaviour is good.

Pupils speak highly of adults in the school and value the support they receive to re-engage in learning. A strong programme of guidance helps to prepare them to take the next steps when they leave the school. This includes careers advice and work experience. The programme helps them to make decisions about their future. They are also taught to travel independently. If pupils show an interest in a course, such as photography, leaders will go the extra mile to provide this.

Since the previous inspection, trustees have acted to improve how they work with school leaders. However, they do not challenge leaders rigorously about pupils' achievement and the impact of actions taken to improve the quality of education. Trustees do not make sure they have all the detailed information they need, including about the types of behaviour incidents and how leaders use this to inform curriculum and quality improvement. This reduces their effectiveness in holding leaders to account for the school's performance.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and adults make sure they know pupils well. This means that staff are well placed to spot any signs that may mean a pupil is at risk. Staff ensure that attendance and safeguarding concerns are recorded in sufficient detail.

Staff report and record any concerns promptly. Leaders work collaboratively with external partners to get pupils the help they need quickly.

Leaders carry out all the necessary employment checks on staff and safeguarding checks on visitors to the school.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, including English, leaders have not designed a well-ordered curriculum that identifies precisely what they want pupils to know. This means that teachers do not know the detail of the information they need to check to understand how well pupils are achieving and what they need to do to improve. Leaders should make sure that they identify the important skills and knowledge that pupils need to learn in all subjects and that curriculum plans set out the order in which to teach them. Staff training should be focused on developing teachers' expertise and confidence to teach the school's full curriculum effectively.
- Teachers do not identify precisely what pupils already know and can do in reading and writing when they join the school. They do not identify the knowledge that pupils have not learned in these subjects, so pupils do not achieve as well as they should. Leaders should ensure that teachers precisely identify the knowledge and skills in reading and writing where pupils' understanding is less secure. Teachers should use this information to plan teaching that helps pupils to catch up quickly and achieve well in reading and writing.
- While most pupils remain in education and achieve well in the subjects offered, the range of opportunities for pupils to gain qualifications is not broad enough. As a result, some pupils are limited in their choices when they leave the school. Leaders should continue their work to develop the curriculum further so that pupils have access to the qualifications they need to take the next steps in education, employment and/or training at the end of Year 11.
- Trustees evaluate some of the aspects of leaders' work well. However, they do not routinely request or receive all the information they need to identify trends in pupils' behaviour and link them to aspects of the quality of provision. This weakens their capacity to support further improvements. Trustees should ensure that they have all the information they need to hold leaders to account effectively so that the quality of education and pupils' behaviour continue to improve.

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.

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	142257
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10241108
Type of school	Special
School category	Academy special converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Boys
Number of pupils on the school roll	77
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Richard Parperis
Headteacher	Paul Delamaine
Website	www.haileyhall.herts.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	19 September 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Hailey Hall School is a special school for boys who have social, emotional and mental health needs. All pupils have an education, health and care plan (EHC plan).
- The school no longer provides residential care.
- The headteacher took up the post in February 2020.
- Leaders use one registered provider for a few pupils who access alternative provision as part of their education provision.
- The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded 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.

- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other senior leaders and spoke with staff and pupils.
- The lead inspector also met with four trustees, including the chair of the board of trustees.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation, including the school's single central record of pre-employment checks on staff, school policies, minutes of trustee meetings and records of pupils' attendance.
- Inspectors considered two responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, and 22 responses from Ofsted's staff survey. They also considered 41 responses from Ofsted's survey for pupils. Inspectors considered the school's own information relating to the views of parents.
- The subjects covered in depth as part of this inspection were English, including reading, mathematics, art and PSHE. In each subject, inspectors spoke with subject leaders, teachers and pupils. Inspectors visited lessons and looked at pupils' work, alongside pupils' individual EHC plans.

Inspection team

Cindy Impey, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Damian Loneragan

His Majesty's Inspector

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