

Inspection of The Heys School

Heys Road, Prestwich, Manchester M25 1JZ

Inspection dates: 25 and 26 June 2024

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

The headteacher of this school is Paul McKendrick. This school is part of The Rowan Learning Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Phillip Rimmer, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by George Wilson.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils benefit from the calm atmosphere that permeates this friendly and welcoming school. Staff model how to talk with kindness and respect. This is reflected in how pupils talk to each other and to visitors. Pupils are happy in school. They are encouraged to take part in community activities and to be responsible citizens. Pupils take pride in their school and in their achievements.

The school has high expectations for pupils' behaviour. Most pupils behave well and there is rarely any disruption to learning. Skilled staff provide highly effective support for those pupils who need more help to regulate their own behaviour and emotions.

The school has considerably raised its aspirations for pupils' achievement. In the main, pupils produce high-quality work, and they demonstrate knowledge through their positive contributions to lessons. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) enjoy the same broad and balanced curriculum as their peers. Pupils achieve increasingly well.

The school has an unwavering determination that no pupil should miss out on the many wider opportunities that the school offers. The strong relationships that staff forge with pupils, particularly those who are disadvantaged, bring this to fruition. Pupils benefit from a myriad of experiences that help them to blossom.

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

In recent years, the school has overhauled the curriculum to ensure that it is suitably ambitious. Pupils study a wide range of subjects that match their interests and aspirations. However, the proportion of pupils studying the English Baccalaureate suite of subjects in key stage 4 remains low. This is because the school has prioritised giving pupils more choice over their options at GCSE.

The published data for 2023 does not reflect how well current pupils at the school are learning. The revised curriculum is structured in a way that helps these pupils to build well on their prior knowledge. Pupils are making better progress than they did in the past.

For the most part, the curriculum is delivered well. In many subjects, teachers understand the importance of checking what pupils have understood and they address misconceptions swiftly. In these subjects, teachers provide pupils with regular and meaningful opportunities to reflect on what they have learned. This is helping pupils to build a rich body of subject knowledge over time.

Occasionally, in a few subjects, teachers do not check that pupils' knowledge is secure before introducing new learning. From time to time, some pupils develop gaps in their knowledge that remain unchecked.

The school is committed to developing pupils' love of reading. For example, pupils enjoy regular opportunities to read together as a class. Many pupils read out loud with confidence and fluency. The school has clear strategies in place to identify those pupils who find reading more difficult. Staff know the precise deficits in these pupils' reading knowledge. This enables them to provide bespoke support which helps these pupils to catch up quickly with their peers.

The school is knowledgeable about identifying pupils who may have SEND. It puts in place effective strategies tailored to pupils' additional needs. This helps pupils with SEND to learn well.

The school understands the importance of pupils attending regularly. It has implemented effective measures to improve pupils' rates of attendance. These strategies are starting to have a positive impact. However, there are still too many pupils who are absent from school too often. These pupils miss out on important learning.

In school, pupils demonstrate positive attitudes to their learning. They are motivated to succeed. The number of pupils suspended from school has fallen sharply. This is resulting in less time lost from learning for the whole school community.

There is a well-designed programme for personal, social, health and economic education. Pupils learn about healthy relationships in an age-appropriate way. The school makes sure that pupils receive the information that they need to help keep themselves safe and to prepare them well for life in modern Britain. Pupils have many opportunities to learn about, and to learn from, people of different cultures, backgrounds and faiths.

The school furnishes pupils with extensive careers education and the expert guidance required to make fully informed choices about their futures. This helps most pupils to progress seamlessly into further education, employment or training.

The academy trust has provided effective support to the school. Trust leaders work closely with the school and those responsible for governance to ensure that pupils receive a high-quality education while managing the workload of teachers. This has empowered teachers to focus on meeting the needs of their pupils. The work done by the school to support pupils, including those who are disadvantaged and those with SEND, is impressive.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some pupils do not attend school as regularly as they should. This means that

they do not benefit from the high-quality curriculum or wider opportunities that the school offers. The school should ensure that it supports these pupils and their families to improve their rates of attendance over time.

- In a few subjects, teachers do not check that pupils have learned the knowledge in the curriculum sufficiently well. On occasion, some pupils develop gaps in their learning as a result. The school should ensure that teachers are fully equipped to identify and remedy pupils' gaps in knowledge before introducing new 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.

Further information

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

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	147883
Local authority	Bury
Inspection number	10337716
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	595
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	George Wilson
CEO of the trust	Phillip Rimmer
Headteacher	Paul McKendrick
Website	theheys.school
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The Heys School converted to become an academy in June 2020. When its predecessor school, Prestwich Arts College, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be inadequate overall.
- The school uses one registered alternative provision.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement 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.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other leaders. The lead inspector also met with the CEO, the chair of the board of trustees, the chair and vice-chair of the local governing body and with leaders of the trust.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: mathematics, geography, English, science and music. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors met with leaders to discuss their strategies for behaviour and attendance. They also considered a range of information about the school, including published outcomes and the support provided for pupils with SEND and other forms of disadvantage.
- Inspectors met with a range of staff and considered their views through Ofsted's online staff survey.
- Inspectors met with pupils formally and informally around the school, in lessons and during breaktime. Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey for pupils.
- Inspectors took account of the views of parents through the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses.

Inspection team

Mark Enser, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Chris Glennon	Ofsted Inspector
Chris Meldrum	Ofsted Inspector

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