

Inspection of Hailey Hall School

Hailey Lane, Hertford, Hertfordshire SG13 7PB

Inspection dates:	13 and 14 May 2025
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

The headteacher of this school is Paul Delamaine. This school is part of a single academy trust, Hailey Hall Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The headteacher is the chief executive officer (CEO). The trust is overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Rosemary Bolton.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils have often experienced a disrupted education prior to coming here. They are ably supported by well-trained staff to gradually re-engage with education. The school has high expectations for these boys. Many of them respond well to the academic or vocational opportunities provided to them. The school ensures pupils have the necessary qualifications and work experience for their post-16 opportunities. Some pupils need more time and support to settle into school and succeed. However, by the end of Year 11, pupils leave having secured places in college, training or work.

The school provides a range of mental well-being support. Many pupils use these taught strategies to manage their emotions independently. This means they focus in lessons, cope socially and show respect. Pupils understand the school rules. They know the consequences of not following the agreed 'code of conduct'. They are treated fairly. Pupils who need additional help to meet the expected behaviour standards receive individual tailored support. Pupils know that bullying or discrimination is not tolerated and is quickly and effectively addressed.

Pupils earn 'respect points' to access extra-curricular activities such as using the gym, computing or playing pool. Pupils like the reward trips offered, such as go-karting. Some pupils take on leadership roles, for example as 'mental health ambassadors'.

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

The school has addressed the areas for improvement from the last inspection successfully. Pupils are now offered a broad range of qualification routes to access a suitable post-16 pathway. Most pupils achieve well from their starting points. The school's curriculum is clearly structured to build knowledge over time and revisit key learning. Staff have the necessary subject knowledge to teach the curriculum well. They fill gaps in pupils' missed learning in English and mathematics, while also advancing their skills, for example in art and music. Staff select topics that will pique the boys' interests. Pupils can recall current learning well and show a pride in their work.

Many pupils arrive here as reluctant readers. The school has prioritised overcoming this. Books are chosen that the boys can relate to. Pupils' reading fluency has improved through targeted interventions. Pupils will now read out loud, share opinions about texts and have a wide vocabulary.

Pupils respond well to clear learning routines. Staff ensure pupils have the help they need to manage their emotions and access their learning. Staff provide clear instructions and advice to pupils, to help them to succeed in a range of tasks. Staff check how well pupils secure their knowledge and address misconceptions, for example in spelling and punctuation. Pupils show increased resilience when making mistakes or trying new learning. However, sometimes the work set by staff is not as ambitious as it could be. This means some pupils are not moving on to new or more-demanding work when they need to. This can limit how highly they achieve, or hinders them from starting a higher qualification pathway sooner.

Pupils benefit from a well-thought-out personal development and careers programme. They learn how to manage risks online, challenge stereotypes and to form healthy and safe relationships. Pupils are taught to recognise discrimination and misogyny, and to accept difference. Therefore, pupils have a mature, respectful and balanced view of the modern world. They hold mock elections to understand democracy and to form balanced opinions. There are regular visits to different businesses to inform career choices and practice job interviews.

Some pupils do not attend school regularly enough. Leaders take effective action to improve this for specific pupils. For instance, they refer pupils and families to appropriate agencies to help overcome barriers to attendance. However, there remain a few pupils who miss school due to unwelcome behaviours. Suspensions are used appropriately to aim to address this. The school has a range of individualised strategies to help pupils reintegrate back into school, including offering bespoke behaviour targets, rewards and break-out spaces to work in. This works in most individual cases over time: however, for some pupils it is not yet seeing sustained improvement in their behaviour or attendance quickly enough and they miss out on learning as a result. The school does not yet have a sufficiently clear whole-school approach to tackling attendance or reducing pupils' disengagement from learning.

The trust provides effective oversight of the school's work and fulfils its statutory duties. It also seeks external quality assurance for standards. The trust is diligent and challenging in its questioning of school performance, yet is also mindful of staff's well-being and workload.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school's actions for addressing pupils' disengagement from learning or repeated unwelcome behaviours are not yet having the desired impact in sustainably improving school attendance overall. Therefore, some pupils are not achieving as well as they could, and are still missing too much school. The school should apply its existing behaviour management strategies in a more whole-school strategic and cohesive way to improve attendance and engagement for more pupils overall.
- Sometimes, in some subjects, the work that the school sets for pupils is not suitably ambitious to extend pupils' knowledge further. This means that some pupils do not achieve highly or do not move on to a higher qualification pathway soon enough. When pupils are emotionally ready to learn more, the school should provide work that specifically deepens and stretches pupils' understanding to maximise their outcomes.

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	142257
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10345414
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	84
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Rosemary Bolton
CEO of the trust	Paul Delamaine
Headteacher	Paul Delamaine
Website	www.haileyhall.herts.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	28 and 29 September 2022, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Hailey Hall School caters for boys who have social, emotional and mental health needs. All pupils have an education, health and care plan.
- The school currently uses one 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. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, senior leaders, the special educational needs coordinator, subject leaders, teachers and support staff.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, art and design and music. For each deep dive, the inspectors spoke to leaders, visited lessons, spoke with pupils, look at pupils' work and spoke with teachers and support staff.
- The lead inspector met with six trustees, including the chair of trustees.
- The inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation, including the school improvement plan, trustee minutes and visit reports as well as school reports to the trustee board.
- The lead inspector spoke with the school's effectiveness adviser, commissioned from the local authority by the trustees.
- 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.
- The inspectors considered the responses gathered through Ofsted Parent View. The lead inspector also spoke to a selection of parents by telephone. Inspectors considered the responses to the staff survey and pupil survey. In addition, the inspectors spoke to pupils from across the school during the inspection.

Inspection team

Sara Boyce, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Susan Sutton

Ofsted Inspector

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