

Pool Hayes Academy

Address: Castle Drive, Willenhall, West Midlands, WV12 4QZ

Unique reference number (URN): 142594

Inspection report: 9 September 2026

Exceptional	
Strong standard	
Expected standard	
Needs attention	
Urgent improvement	

Safeguarding standards met

The safeguarding standards are met. This means that leaders and/or those responsible for governance and oversight fulfil their specific responsibilities and have established an open culture in which safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and concerns are actively identified, acted upon and managed. As a result, pupils are made safer and feel safe.

How we evaluate safeguarding

When we inspect schools for safeguarding, they can have the following outcomes:

- **Met:** The school has an open and positive culture of safeguarding. All legal requirements are met.
- **Not met:** The school has not created an open and positive culture of safeguarding. Not all legal requirements are met.

Expected standard

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

Leaders understand and manage attendance well. While attendance has historically been lower than national averages, there have been improvements over time. Disadvantaged pupils are now attending more regularly because of a renewed approach that is making a positive difference. Attendance patterns are analysed to identify those pupils who are at risk of persistent absence. Appropriate actions and engagement with families are having a positive impact on attendance, including for those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Leaders have high expectations for pupils' behaviour and conduct. Leaders analyse behaviour data, and it informs strategies to support those pupils who need it. Staff and pupils are clear about the agreed approaches to managing behaviour. Social times highlight when positive relationships between staff and pupils are evident. Typically, these positive relationships result in a calm and orderly environment in lessons. Pupils are compliant and generally behave in line with expectations. This allows learning to take place in most lessons. However, engagement in some lessons can vary, and not all pupils consistently demonstrate positive attitudes towards their learning. Leaders are refining and adapting their approach to behaviour management to ensure strategies precisely meet all pupils' needs. There has been an overall reduction in the use of suspensions. Bullying or discrimination is not tolerated and is acted upon by staff if it occurs.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Leaders have an accurate understanding of the quality of the curriculum and teaching in the school. There are systems in place to monitor and support the effectiveness of the quality of teaching. These systems inform the professional development programme for staff and ensure that teachers generally have the expertise and subject knowledge required to deliver the intended curriculum.

Teachers typically provide clear explanations and use strategies that support pupils' learning. For example, in science, the use of visualisers helps pupils to see and understand science in action. Teachers model the use of subject-specific vocabulary well. Lessons typically include teachers checking on pupils' understanding. Teachers generally make adaptations to help pupils with barriers access the curriculum alongside their peers through adapted resources and strategies. However, there is variation in the implementation of the curriculum at times. The precision with which teaching strategies are used to address gaps is not consistent, and, at times, teachers move pupils on to new learning before they are ready to do so.

The school has a clear approach to developing pupils' core knowledge. Targeted and tiered interventions support those pupils who are at the early stages of learning to read. While there is a clear approach to literacy, leaders are working to ensure strategies to support pupils' numeracy are as well embedded.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

Leaders have developed a clear approach to supporting pupils who face barriers to learning and wellbeing. There has been a refinement of the processes to identify needs. Effective liaison with primary schools, staff training and regular communication of pupils' needs has resulted in appropriate strategies to support pupils. The holistic 'team around the child' approach involves parents and carers and supports staff in reviewing and modifying interventions to ensure that they have impact.

The school's strategy to support disadvantaged pupils is carefully planned and well thought out to meet pupils' needs and ambitions. The strategy tackles barriers related to attendance, achievement, behaviour and wellbeing. Funding is used effectively to ensure that pupils' needs are fully known by staff and addressed. The school liaises closely with the local authority to identify and support those pupils known to social care.

The school uses a small number of alternative providers for pupils. There are secure systems in place for ensuring the placement is in the best interest of the pupil. The school has recently opened a specially resourced provision and is developing its own internal alternative provision. This highlights leaders' commitment to creating a fully inclusive culture in the school.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders have a clear understanding of the school's strengths, their priorities and the context of the community they serve. Leaders have an aligned vision to build a school community that 'work together to support one another and achieve success'. Leaders are creating a positive culture in which pupils feel they belong.

Leaders are reflective and focused on improving opportunities for all pupils, particularly for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Pupils' best interests are at the centre of decision-making. The trust understands its responsibilities and provides an effective balance of challenge and support. It monitors priorities and the use of additional funding carefully. Leaders take appropriate action when improvement is needed, including addressing variability in teaching and outcomes. However, the impact of leaders' actions is not evident in all areas, and initiatives could be more precise in supporting all pupils.

Leaders have created a coherent professional development programme for staff that addresses the school's improvement priorities. The programme is informed by research and harnesses trust-wide expertise. Most staff feel supported in their development and are positive about the journey the school is on. Staff, including early careers teachers, highlight that leaders are considerate of workload. They appreciate the support that is in place to manage pupil behaviour and individual wellbeing.

Leaders have worked tirelessly to build trust and effective relationships with the local community. They have established positive relationships with primary schools and external organisations. Communication with families is improving through regular contact and school

events. While some parents and carers have concerns about the school, others highlight how 'PHAntastic' the school is.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

Leaders have developed a coherent approach to pupils' personal development, careers education and pastoral support. Teachers receive training and detailed resources to teach the planned personal development curriculum. This ensures that it is delivered in an age-appropriate way and allows for topics to be revisited. Staff ensure that adaptations are in place so that the personal development curriculum is accessible to all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Through specific personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) lessons and drop-down days, such as 'Belonging Day', pupils develop an understanding of protected characteristics and fundamental British values. Typically, pupils highlight how PSHE lessons ensure they know about risks relating to mobile phone use, screen time, AI and the importance of healthy relationships. However, the knowledge and understanding of previously taught topics is not embedded for all pupils.

Pupils speak positively about the pastoral care they receive. They say that staff care about them and want them to do well. The school fully understands the context and therein resulting challenges in which it operates. Form tutors and heads of year are integral components in rewarding those pupils who meet the school's expectations and in ensuring the wellbeing of all pupils.

There is a range of enrichment opportunities open to all pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND, and participation in these is tracked and monitored by leaders. Pupils can experience a variety of clubs and local and international trips, and the school's bi-annual performances are a highlight of the school calendar and wider community.

Careers education is effective and impartial. Pupil voice is used to identify pupils' specific careers interests and aspirations. The programme provides appropriate advice and guidance that typically benefits most pupils. Leaders are implementing a revised careers programme and are making progress towards meeting careers benchmarks. Pupils are prepared for further education, employment or training.

Post-16 provision

Expected standard 

Leaders have ensured that there is a suitable post-16 programme of study that offers students a range of academic and vocational qualifications. Sixth-form lessons are effective, built on positive relationships between staff and students. Teachers explain complex concepts clearly and have high expectations of students' responses to questions. Students with barriers to learning access the same curriculum as their peers. Students are confident in 'owning' their learning. For example, in performing arts, students demonstrate real depth to their knowledge, with minimal teacher guidance. Assessment is used to identify misconceptions and secure understanding. Achievement in lessons is clear in students' work. However, this is not reflected in national examinations for all students. Published outcomes highlight that students completing vocational courses achieve in line with their peers nationally.

Students in the sixth form epitomise what it is to be part of the 'PHAmily'. Students are polite and courteous and act as exemplary role models for younger pupils. They are ambassadors for the school and value the opportunities and experiences the school offers them. Students take an active role in the school enrichment programme, supporting pupils with literacy and mentoring. Careers education is effective. Students receive guidance about future opportunities and choices.

Needs attention

Achievement

Needs attention 

Leaders recognise that the curriculum and teaching have not had the impact on pupil achievement they expect over time. Published outcomes for pupil attainment and progress at the end of key stage 4 are below national averages. Pupils perform below their peers in national examinations for a range of subjects. Historically, this has impacted on how well some pupils and sixth-form students are prepared for future education, employment and training.

Improvements in the delivery of the curriculum in lessons are having a positive impact on pupils' learning. Pupils, including those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and disadvantaged pupils, are making increasingly secure progress. Most pupils have developed secure subject knowledge and can link their prior learning. Targeted support helps pupils develop foundational skills and catch up with their peers. However, while these improvements are evident in most pupils' work, they are not secure for all pupils, and this limits their potential in successfully achieving their future career ambitions.

What it's like to be a pupil at this school

Pupils at Pool Hayes experience a school that is committed to its values of aspiration, respect, excellence and resilience. Pupils are welcomed daily into the school by staff who care about their learning and wellbeing. Staff know pupils well, and this knowledge creates a clear sense of belonging.

Pupils typically experience lessons that are structured to allow learning to take place. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and disadvantaged pupils receive appropriate support and are fully included in lessons and school life. Specialist provision and targeted interventions help pupils overcome any barriers. However, pupils' achievement in lessons and national examinations does not currently reflect recent improvements in teaching.

Pupils are safe at the school. They know they have a trusted adult to talk to about a concern and that staff will act on these concerns. Pupils know that bullying is not tolerated. Most pupils conduct themselves in a calm and orderly manner. They are polite and respectful to visitors and each other during social times. Classrooms are generally purposeful. Disruptions do interrupt some lessons, but for these pupils, staff and support are on hand to

help them reflect and alter their behaviour. Pupils' attendance at school is improving because of the provision and opportunities the school has put into place.

Pupils benefit from a broad range of enrichment opportunities, including educational visits to Spain, chess club, dance club and the Duke of Edinburgh's Award. Pupils can also participate in a range of charity and local community events. These opportunities help broaden pupils' horizons and raise aspirations. Careers provision supports pupils in raising aspirations and prepares them to engage with employers, colleges and post-16 providers. Sixth-form students are an asset to the school. They embody the school's values and contribute positively to the wider school family.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that staff consistently teach the curriculum well so that all pupils receive a high-quality education and raise achievement.
 - Leaders should ensure that their analysis of behaviour data is refined and embedded effectively to further improve behaviour across the school.
 - Leaders should embed the delivery of the personal development curriculum, including careers, to support all pupils' future education, employment and training.
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About this inspection

This school is part of Academy Transformation 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), Mark McCourt, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Patricia Beanland.

Inspectors carried out this full inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Following our renewed inspection framework, all inspections are now led by His Majesty's Inspectors (HMIs) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMIs.

Inspectors spoke with the headteacher, leaders from the school and from the trust, governors, members of teaching and non-teaching staff and several groups of pupils during the inspection. An inspector spoke with the CEO of the trust.

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.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school has specially resourced provision for 8 pupils.

The school makes use of 3 alternative provisions.

The headteacher commenced their post in September 2025.

Head of Academy: Lisa Macey

Lead inspector:

Andrew Washbourne, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Deborah James, Ofsted Inspector

Bianka Zemke, His Majesty's Inspector

Jonathan Leonard, His Majesty's Inspector

Sue Morris-King, Ofsted Inspector

Facts and figures used on inspection

This was the data available at the time of the full inspection, taken from [different sources](#). More recent data may have been published since the full inspection took place.

 The inspector(s) used this data during the full inspection on 9 September 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

1,162

Close to average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils currently at this school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 1,063

School capacity

1,084

Close to average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils who can attend the school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 1,154

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

45.12%

Above average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals at any point in the last 6 years.

National average: 30.4%

Pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan

3.44%

Close to average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan. This covers pupils with more support than is available through special educational needs support.

National average: 3.53%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

14.97%

Close to average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with reported special educational needs support at the school.

National average: 14.0%

Location deprivation

Below average

What does this mean?

Based on the English indices of deprivation (2019) and the school's location, we have calculated whether the school is located in a more or less deprived area.

Resourced provision or SEND Unit (if applicable)

No resourced provision

What does this mean?

Whether school has Resourced provision or SEND unit (if applicable).

All pupils' performance

English and maths GCSE

Percentage of pupils who achieved grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (final)	30.4%	45.4%	Below
2023/24 (final)	22.2%	45.9%	Below
2022/23 (final)	31.1%	45.3%	Below

Attainment 8

A measure of pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (final)	37.7	46.1	Below
2023/24 (final)	37.2	45.9	Below
2022/23 (final)	40.2	46.3	Below

Progress 8

How much progress pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	-0.43	-0.03	Below
2022/23 (final)	-0.38	-0.03	Below
2021/22 (final)	-0.30	-0.03	Below

Disadvantaged pupils' performance

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after.

Disadvantaged pupils' English and maths GCSE grade 5 or above

Percentage of disadvantaged pupils achieving grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (final)	21.1%	25.8%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	15.0%	25.8%	Below
2022/23 (final)	17.6%	25.2%	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils' Attainment 8

A measure of disadvantaged pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (final)	32.2	34.9	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	31.1	34.6	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	32.4	35.0	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils' Progress 8

How much progress disadvantaged pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	-0.94	-0.57	Below
2022/23 (final)	-0.82	-0.57	Close to average
2021/22 (final)	-0.43	-0.55	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils' performance gap

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after. The school disadvantage gap is the difference between the performance of the school's disadvantaged pupils compared to the performance of all non-disadvantaged pupils nationally.

Disadvantaged pupils' English and maths GCSE grade 5 or above

Percentage of disadvantaged pupils who achieved grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2024/25 (final)	21.1%	53.1%	-32.1 pp
2023/24 (final)	15.0%	53.1%	-38.1 pp
2022/23 (final)	17.6%	52.4%	-34.8 pp

Disadvantaged pupils' Attainment 8

A measure of disadvantaged pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2024/25 (final)	32.2	50.4	-18.2

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2023/24 (final)	31.1	50.0	-18.9
2022/23 (final)	32.4	50.3	-17.9

Disadvantaged pupils' Progress 8

How much progress disadvantaged pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2023/24 (final)	-0.94	0.16	-1.11
2022/23 (final)	-0.82	0.17	-0.99
2021/22 (final)	-0.43	0.15	-0.59

Destinations after 16

Destinations after 16

Percentage of pupils staying in education or employment for at least 2 terms after the end of secondary school (key stage 4).

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023 leavers (revised)	89%	92%	Average
2022 leavers (revised)	91%	93%	Average
2021 leavers (revised)	89%	94%	Below

16 to 18 performance

A-level average point score

The average points that students achieved per A-level entry.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (final)	23.77	35.00	Below
2023/24 (final)	28.89	34.38	Below
2022/23 (final)	26.60	34.16	Below

A-level value added

A score showing students' progress between the end of key stage 4 and the end of their academic qualification studies.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (final)	-0.6	0.0	Below
2023/24 (revised)	-0.4	0.0	Below

Absence

Overall absence

The percentage of all possible mornings and afternoons missed due to absence from school (for whatever reason, whether authorised or unauthorised) across all pupils.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (3 term)	9.3%	8.4%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	11.3%	8.9%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	9.5%	9.0%	Close to average

Persistent absence

The percentage of pupils missing 10% or more of their possible mornings and afternoons.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (3 term)	28.4%	23.4%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	32.9%	25.6%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	30.2%	26.5%	Close to average

Our grades explained

Exceptional

Practice is exceptional: of the highest standard nationally. Other schools can learn from it.

Strong standard

The school reaches a strong standard. Leaders are working above the standard expected of them.

Expected standard

The school is fulfilling the expected standard of education and/or care. This means they are following the standard set out in statutory and non-statutory legislation and the professional standards expected of them.

Needs attention

The expected standards are not met but leaders are likely able to make the necessary improvements.

Urgent improvement

The school needs to make urgent improvements to provide the expected standard of education and/or care.

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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