

Bailey Street Alternative Provision Academy

Address: 1A Bailey Street, Stafford, ST17 4BG

Unique reference number (URN): 148235

Inspection report: 6 May 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.

Strong standard ●

Attendance and behaviour

Strong standard ●

Leaders prioritise pupils' attendance and have secured continuous improvement in this from very low starting points. Around three-quarters of pupils have improved their attendance during their time at the school. Improvement is consistent for groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are disadvantaged. Leaders have improved attendance rates by creating a safe environment, where pupils want to attend and learn. Staff know each family well. Statutory action is used when needed, alongside continued family support.

Behaviour is calm and purposeful across the school. Leaders have built a culture based on reflection and learning from mistakes. Pupils have a trusted adult to turn to when they feel agitated. All staff know pupils extremely well. They notice early signs of pupils becoming upset or anxious and step in to help. This means that most of the time, any potential negative behaviour is avoided. Pupils know the routines and accept and understand the reasons for them, for example daily procedures to help keep pupils safe from harm. Bullying is rare and taken seriously when it does occur. Any derogatory language is challenged. Suspensions and physical interventions have fallen sharply. Lesson-by-lesson behaviour shows improvement across all groups. Pupils' attitudes to learning are very positive.

Inclusion

Strong standard ●

Inclusion sits at the core of the school's purpose. Leaders identify pupils' needs precisely and accurately on entry through assessments and through careful liaison with families, previous settings and other agencies. Pupils' profiles, including those for pupils with education, health and care plans, those known to social care and those in receipt of additional funding, shape their day-to-day curriculum and support wellbeing decisions. Pupils are taught bespoke curriculum pathways matched to their individual needs. As soon as gaps in understanding are identified, staff swiftly address and close them through targeted teaching. Weekly briefings and interventions also inform this support for pupils across the school.

Additional funding is targeted carefully. Academic support, breakfast access and wider opportunities, such as trips to London, the seaside and museums, are provided. The 'Growth' provision for female pupils offers a calm, single-sex space where pupils build confidence and re-engage with the wider school at a pace that suits them. Leaders track the impact of such funding closely. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and pupils who face other barriers to their learning or wellbeing, make demonstrable progress through the curriculum from their starting points. Where pupils attend alternative provision, leaders ensure this is in pupils' best interests. Visits, documentation and weekly contact with families and partner agencies underpin this oversight.

Leadership and governance

Strong standard ●

Leaders know every pupil in detail. This depth of knowledge is mirrored across the staff team. Leaders have addressed the areas identified at the previous inspection with pace and

purpose. The curriculum has been refined, reading provision has been reshaped, behaviour is now calm and attendance has risen sharply. Leaders evaluate their work honestly and prioritise actions in the best interests of pupils. Pupils sit at the absolute centre of every decision leaders take. Leaders continue to pursue improvement with persistence at every level. Governance is rigorous. A federated board across the trust's alternative provision settings provides a sharp challenge. This is supported by trust-level monitoring, trustee scrutiny and work with an external school improvement partner. Those responsible for governance meet their statutory duties and understand the school's strengths and priorities.

Staff are proud to work at the school. They feel well supported by leaders and benefit from substantial trust-level wellbeing provision, including counselling. Leaders spot staff's strengths and develop these, including through the trust's emerging leaders programme. Professional learning is tailored and responsive to pupils' needs, with subject hubs, leadership development and external partnerships further extending staff expertise.

Leaders engage positively with parents, carers, partner schools, the local authority, health and care professionals and the local community. These productive partnerships inform the provision for pupils, including support for pupils attending alternative provision. The school is outward-facing, providing outreach to local schools and contributing to a wider network that extends its reach beyond its own pupils.

Personal development and wellbeing

Strong standard 

Personal development is a key strength of the school. Leaders have built a coherent programme that responds to pupils' disrupted experiences and prepares them well for adult life. Relationships, sex and health education is suitable and well taught, with input from sexual health professionals, mental health practitioners and external speakers. Pupils learn to recognise online and offline risks, including child criminal exploitation, knife crime and substance misuse. They speak maturely about consent, healthy relationships and diverse family structures, including same-sex parenting. Pupils work towards awards in relationships, sex and health education. Last year, all Year 11 pupils achieved Level 2 in this.

Pupils' understanding of cultural difference and social and moral development is woven through assemblies, daily tutor time, visitors and visits. This is carefully tracked across subjects through a whole-school framework. Pupils develop their understanding of fundamental British values, citing the school council as an example of democracy in action. They listen respectfully to views that differ from their own and apply what they learn to their lives, both within and beyond school.

Support for pupils' social and emotional needs is highly individualised. Pupils have safe adults to turn to and access weekly mental health drop-in sessions. They take on responsibilities through the school council, gardening, dining-room duties and by being members of the football team. Visits to places of worship, museums and the local community broaden pupils' horizons. Pupils embrace these experiences, including those who have rarely left their immediate area, and they speak about them with pride.

Careers education is ambitious and personalised. Leaders accompany pupils to college open evenings, support applications and tailor work experience to pupils' aspirations, including bespoke placements with local employers. Independent guidance, labour market

information and a growing employer network give pupils a clear sense of their next steps. This supports most pupils to secure a positive destination when they leave the school.

Expected standard

Achievement

Expected standard 

Pupils achieve well from low starting points. Last year, all Year 11 pupils gained a qualification in mathematics and English. Pupils progress through pathways that reflect their starting points and aspirations, including GCSE entries, entry-level certificates in English, mathematics and science, BTEC national diploma and other technical and vocational qualifications. Foundational knowledge in reading and mathematics is built carefully so that pupils are able to close gaps in their learning over time.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, disadvantaged pupils and those known to social care make demonstrable progress through the curriculum. By the end of Year 11, pupils are well prepared for their next steps. Almost all pupils move on to destinations such as college courses, apprenticeships, mainstream secondary placements and specialist provision. The proportion of leavers who are not in education, employment or training is well below the national figure for similar settings.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Leaders have built an ambitious, personalised curriculum that responds to the disrupted prior learning many pupils have experienced. Pathways range from entry-level qualifications to GCSEs in English, mathematics and science, alongside vocational routes including BTEC national diploma and technical and employability awards. Leaders have refined the order in which knowledge is taught. This supports teachers to identify and address pupils' gaps in knowledge systematically. On entry, baseline assessments in mathematics and reading inform a bespoke programme for each pupil.

Professional learning for staff is a priority. The impact of this training is clear. Teaching is purposeful and matched to pupils' needs. Typically, teachers explain new ideas succinctly and check carefully what pupils already know. They adjust their approach when pupils have not yet secured prior content. Specialist environments for science, mechanics, food, physical education and reading support pupils in applying their learning.

Leaders have further raised expectations so that all current Year 11 pupils are entered for GCSE English. Writing and handwriting are taught with care, through daily writing across subjects. Reading is a priority. Pupils who arrive with phonics or fluency gaps receive daily, age-appropriate intervention. However, some staff are not trained in the school's chosen phonics programmes. This limits the consistency with which pupils' early reading skills are developed across the curriculum.

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

Pupils experience an environment where they feel safe, known and valued. Routines and clear expectations mean that they know what to expect. Pupils are given a genuine chance to succeed at the school. The majority of pupils have been permanently excluded from previous settings. Many have moved between 2 or more secondary settings before arriving at the school. They settle quickly into a calm, predictable day that begins with a warm welcome at the gate, established searching routines and a free breakfast. New arrivals follow these routines with confidence. Staff sit with pupils as they ease into the day. Pupils who find the dining room overwhelming are quietly and sensitively supported to experience this positive start in less busy areas of school. Pupils describe Bailey Street as their 'only chance' of an education.

Relationships are at the heart of pupils' experiences. They trust staff, who anticipate when pupils need help to regulate their emotions and support them calmly. Pupils describe staff as 'world class'. They are taught to articulate stress, disappointment and disagreement openly rather than acting on these feelings. For pupils whose previous behaviours reached the threshold of permanent exclusion, this is a meaningful shift. Pupils feel safe. Bullying is rare and dealt with seriously when it does occur. Attendance is rising sharply from low starting points.

Pupils enjoy their learning and take pride in what they achieve. They read with growing confidence and talk maturely about democracy, consent and healthy relationships. They access purposeful lessons in well-equipped subject rooms. Most pupils leave the school with a mathematics and English qualification and move on to destinations that they aspire to. Pupils also take part in trips that broaden their horizons, including a recent visit to 10 Downing Street and the Houses of Parliament. Pupils feel listened to and are well supported in moving forward academically, socially and personally.

Next steps

- Leaders should strengthen the subject knowledge of all teaching staff in the delivery of the phonics programme so that staff are able to consistently support pupils who need to develop their early reading skills in order to access the full curriculum.
 - Leaders should continue to prioritise attendance and punctuality by building on the school's embedded, personalised approach, with an ongoing focus on further improving pupils' attendance from their individual starting points.
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About this inspection

This school is part of Manor Hall Academy 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), Philip Harrison, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by John Fitchett.

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, school leaders, the CEO, the deputy CEO, trust leaders, trustees and governors as well as representatives of the local authority during the inspection. They also spoke with members of staff and pupils.

This is an alternative provision that serves pupils aged 11 to 16 who have been excluded from mainstream education or require support for social, emotional and mental health needs.

The school currently makes use of 3 alternative provisions, including 2 that are unregistered.

Headteacher: Sonia Lockett

Lead inspector:

Aliki Constantopoulou, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspector:

Pamela Matty, Ofsted Inspector

Facts and figures used on inspection

The data was used by the inspector(s) during the inspection. More recent data may have been published since the inspection took place.

 This data is from 6 May 2026

School and pupil context

School capacity

55

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.

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
2022 leavers (revised)	14%	93%	Not available
2021 leavers (revised)	72%	94%	Not available

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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