

Harris Girls' Academy East Dulwich

Inspection report

Unique reference number	132711
Local authority	Not Applicable
Inspection number	381467
Inspection dates	14–15 March 2012
Lead inspector	Angela Corbett HMI

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Academy sponsor-led
School category	Non-maintained
Age range of pupils	11-18
Gender of pupils	Girls
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	693
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	95
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mary Atkinson
Headteacher	Jane Fletcher
Date of previous school inspection	12–13 November 2008
School address	Homestall Road London SE22 0NR
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Introduction

Inspection team

Angela Corbett

Her Majesty's Inspector

Isobel Randall

Additional inspector

Rosemary Barnfield

Additional inspector

Terence Payne

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed 34 part lessons, taught by 33 teachers, observing seven lessons jointly with senior leaders. They also made several shorter visits to lessons, coaching groups and a reading recovery group. Inspectors looked at students' work and talked with them about it. Meetings were held with groups of students, school leaders, the Chair of Governors and the Harris Federation Chief Executive Officer. In addition, inspectors looked at school documentation, including safeguarding and attendance records, monitoring files and self-evaluation and planning documents. They scrutinised a recent internal survey completed by a large majority of parents and carers, met or spoke over the telephone with a few parents and carers and analysed 15 questionnaire completed by parents and carers and 116 completed by students. Inspectors looked at the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) but no responses were recorded.

Information about the school

The academy is part of the Harris Federation, opened in September 2006 and is smaller than most secondary schools. The sixth form is part of a federation of Harris academies' sixth form provision. The academy serves a disadvantaged area and the proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is more than twice the national average. Around 85% of students are from minority-ethnic groups, with the largest groups having Black Caribbean or Black African heritages. Almost half speak English as an additional language, though very few are at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of disabled students and those with special educational needs is above average. A broadly average proportion have a statement of special educational needs, most of these students have moderate learning or behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. The academy shares its governing body with Harris Boys' Academy East Dulwich. The government's floor standards for minimum levels of attainment and progress have been met since the last inspection, there have been new buildings and extensive refurbishments as well as considerable staff changes, including most of the senior leadership team. The academy's specialisms are sport and fitness, enterprise, and health sciences.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness	1
Achievement of pupils	1
Quality of teaching	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils	1
Leadership and management	1

Key findings

- This is an outstanding academy. Central to this is the relentless pursuit of excellence by leaders and managers and the highest aspirations for every student. The academy is constantly reviewing its performance, expanding and refining the opportunities on offer to provide students with outstanding educational experiences. The leadership of teaching is exceptional with rigorous management of performance underpinned by excellent staff development both within the academy and across the federation. Remarkable and sustained progress has been made since the last inspection.
- Students, including those who are disabled or who have special educational needs, achieve exceptionally well. Students have very positive attitudes to learning. Highly successful attention is given to improving the literacy of all students. The outstanding curriculum is flexible, adapted to meet different students' needs, build confidence and self-esteem and enables them to achieve the qualifications needed for the next stage of their lives.
- The quality of teaching is outstanding. Teachers structure and facilitate learning exceptionally well. Students find lessons well-pitched and engaging so they make rapid and sustained progress. They are guided well on how to improve through effective marking. However, they do not routinely respond to teachers' helpful comments. Student's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding.
- Behaviour and safety are outstanding. Parents, carers, staff and students all agree that behaviour has significantly improved. A calm atmosphere pervades the academy. Students overwhelmingly agree that the academy is a safe place to be; inspection evidence supports this view. They say bullying is rare and are actively involved in improving how it is understood and tackled, for example through the work of the behaviour council.
- The sixth form is outstanding. Students' are extremely well-supported and

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taught so they that they achieve exceptionally well. All proceed into employment, training or higher education.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Develop a system so that students routinely respond to the comments and guidance given by teachers when they mark their work.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Students enter the academy with well-below-average attainment and, for many, particularly weak literacy skills. Almost all students, including those who are disabled and those with special educational needs, make rapid and sustained progress in most subjects so that, by the end of Key stage 4, attainment is significantly above average. The gap has been successfully narrowed for disadvantaged students, whose attainment and progress are now significantly above their peers nationally. Diligent monitoring of the progress of individuals and groups ensures that any performance that does not match the challenging targets set for attainment is identified and rapidly addressed. For example, it was recognised that, while students who are disabled or have special educational needs made significant progress, those with moderate learning difficulties did better than those with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. New strategies to support these few students are proving very effective in closing the small gap. Systematic development of students' communication skills in every lesson is significantly improving their confidence and proficiency; a view supported by students. In one lesson, a teacher skilfully developed listening and reading skills as well as subject vocabulary, giving variety to learning and supporting students' comprehension of the topic. Students are extremely keen to achieve. They engage rapidly in lessons, maintain high levels of attention and concentration thus acquiring skills and knowledge securely. This, together with the high expectations set by teachers, well-targeted support and highly positive attitudes are key contributory factors in students' outstanding progress over time. Parents and carers are rightly very positive about the progress that their children are making and students with one voice said that they leave the academy better off than when they joined. The progress of students in the sixth form, many of whom join from outside, is outstanding. Almost all achieve the challenging targets set for them so that their attainment, particularly in the BTEC courses, is above average. Most now proceed to university and the rest into employment, training or further education.

Quality of teaching

Teaching across the academy is outstanding. The extremely high expectations for its quality, set by the academy, ensure it is consistently good with much that is excellent. Any rare lower-quality teaching is tackled rigorously. Almost all parents

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and carers rightly agree that teaching is consistently good, a view supported by students as well. Teachers plan lessons that meet students' different academic and personal development needs. In almost all lessons, learning is very well structured, resources carefully designed and topics taught from relevant and interesting perspectives, with excellent use of information and communication technology. Lessons, including the daily coaching-group sessions, move at brisk pace and are broken down into different activities and approaches which include an excellent balance of group tasks, individual work and time to reflect and consolidate learning. Teachers often act as facilitators so that students work independently or collaboratively, actively seeking knowledge and taking responsibility for their learning. In the very best lessons, no opportunity is missed to extend learning further through challenging questioning. In a well-differentiated lesson on food additives, students not only acquired scientific knowledge securely, they also reflected on their own diets and gave some very well-reasoned observations about the ethical issues and potential government intervention. This typically reflected students' confidence to respond to teachers' questioning, share answers or express their views in the very safe and secure learning environments as well as the excellent relationships between students and staff.

Assessment of students' learning is highly developed. Teachers check students' learning in lessons and skilfully adapt their teaching to ensure all make secure progress. Students confidently assess their own work and that of others, helping them to improve further. Marking is regular, however, students do not always respond to the helpful advice on how to improve made by teachers, thus missing some opportunities to deepen their learning. The well-designed curriculum helps students to achieve so well. Students' speaking, listening, reading and writing skills are developed within every lesson. This is giving students better access to the curriculum and enabling them to achieve higher grades, as for example in answering the new extended writing questions in science. However, the promotion of numeracy skills, while good, is less well developed. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding because all teachers seamlessly incorporate this into their lessons.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Students' well-being, health and safety are at the heart of the academy's work and underpinned by robust policies and safeguarding systems, including for the recruitment of staff. Exceptional effort is made to ensure that students develop an excellent understanding of potential dangers, such as knife crime and drug abuse, as well as different types of bullying such as cyber-bullying. Bullying is rare and students say that when incidents do occur they are dealt with quickly and very effectively. Highly committed and well-trained staff plus provision such as the 'Health Hut' and the on-site Police Liaison Officer also ensure that students always have someone to turn to for help and advice. Consequently, parents and carers are rightly overwhelmingly confident that their children are safe at all times. None reported any concerns about bullying. Excellent knowledge of students, close work with their

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families and extensive links with agencies mean that concerns and issues that arise, both within and outside the academy, are often tackled at an early stage. Students get on well with each other, both in lessons and around the academy. This was particularly noticeable in lessons, when much collaborative work was observed. High levels of respect were shown as students listened attentively to their peers, responding to questions or expressing their views. Behaviour has significantly improved as a result of the highly effective and consistent management systems. Students, including those in the sixth form, have very positive attitudes which contribute significantly to the successful learning seen in lessons. Records show minimal incidents and disruption to learning. In most lessons observed, inspectors found students' behaviour to be good and frequently excellent, with almost no off-task behaviour seen. Virtually no concerns were raised by parents and carers about behaviour. Students arrive punctually at lessons and are rightly proud of the many opportunities offered by the academy. Attendance has improved and is now above average, and persistent absence has declined.

Leadership and management

The principal, very ably supported by the senior leadership team, is uncompromising in her pursuit of excellence in all aspects of the academy's work and in successfully striving for the best possible achievement for all pupils. In her view, the job is never done and expectations can always be even higher. Self-evaluation is ongoing, rigorous and accurate and leads to highly strategic and effective improvement planning. It also enables leaders to identify very early any aspects that may be slipping, which they address through rapid action. Middle leaders are fully held to account for the achievement of students they are responsible for. Equality of opportunity is exceptionally well promoted. Sophisticated use of performance data, both in relation to students and the quality of teaching, also ensures that any discrimination is tackled rapidly. The academy makes every effort to work with parents and carers, and excellent work with external agencies further supports students, in particular those whose circumstances make them vulnerable. The governing body is fully involved and provides an excellent balance of rigorous challenge and knowledgeable support. It, together with senior leaders, ensures safeguarding is of a high quality.

The curriculum is outstanding. It provides a superb range of opportunities, both in and out of the classroom, to provide memorable experiences, broaden horizons, motivate students, raise aspirations, help them to achieve and improve their well-being. Many of these are based on the academy's specialisms, such as the Hope project to develop enterprise skills. The curriculum is refined each year, in response to comments from the Student Commissioners and to ensure that it meets students' needs. Key Stage 4 is studied over three years and data is used rigorously to ensure that students are placed on courses to match their current stage of development. The Key Stage 3 curriculum has also been improved, for example the 'My World' lessons help younger students become independent and resilient learners. Developing literacy is paramount and is delivered across the curriculum, in reading recovery interventions and the 'Renaissance programme' for improving

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comprehension. These, together with the wide ranging enrichment opportunities and the daily coaching programme support students' outstanding personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and equip them well for future education and employment. The sixth form curriculum provides an excellent balance of A-level and BTEC courses, within the academy and across the federation, to meet the individual needs and interests of all students. Partnerships have been successfully extended and significantly enhance the learning opportunities. Enrichment opportunities are extensive. Leadership of the sixth form is excellent.

Excellent professional development begins with a high quality induction programme and continues with frequent strategically-planned in-house training. Full use is made of the federation to support staff, which includes subject leader networks, consultant advice and leadership training. Accountability, the careful development of staff and the outstanding achievement demonstrate that the academy has excellent capacity to continue to improve.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.

16 March 2012

Dear students



Inspection of Harris Girls' Academy East Dulwich, London SE22 0NR

On behalf of the inspection team, I would like to let you know that we enjoyed the time we spent with you on our recent visit. Thank you for being so courteous and welcoming, and for sharing your experiences with us in meetings, lessons and around the school. The academy, including the sixth form, is outstanding.

Your achievement, regardless of your background, ability and special educational needs, is outstanding. Teaching is outstanding because teachers structure your learning extremely well. As a result, you make excellent progress so that your attainment by the end of Key Stage 4 is above the national average. Students in the sixth form also achieve exceptionally well. Well done! Across the academy, the curriculum is outstanding. As you said, it provides you with memorable and wide-ranging experiences both within and outside the classroom. The academy benefits from being part of the Harris Federation, such as for the sixth form.

We also agree with you that behaviour has improved significantly since the last inspection. Your expectations for learning and behaviour are very high, although a few of you in Key Stage 4 said behaviour in a very few lessons could be even better. Nonetheless, it is typically excellent both in lessons and around school. All of you said you feel safe and feel well cared for. You particularly commented on the help and support you receive from staff in the 'Health Hut'. Well done, your attendance has improved and is now above average. Your confidence and self-esteem improves significantly.

Leadership and management of the academy and the sixth form are outstanding because your principal, the senior leadership team, subject leaders and staff work tirelessly to provide you with the best educational experiences possible. They are always looking for ways to make the academy even better. To help them with this, we have said that senior leaders should develop a system so that you routinely respond to the comments and helpful guidance given to you by teachers when they mark your work.

You can help by continuing to attend well, being active and independent learners, and making the most of the wide-ranging opportunities offered to you.

Yours sincerely
Angela Corbett
Her Majesty's Inspector

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