

Harris Academy Falconwood

The Green, Welling, DA16 2PE

Inspection dates 26–27 November 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Sixth form provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- All students between the ages of 11 and 16 make outstanding progress, in a wide range of subjects, including English and mathematics.
- Students in the sixth form currently make good progress in all subjects. In vocational subjects, their progress is above national averages. Their progress in academic subjects is improving rapidly and is now very close to national averages.
- Students quickly develop a wide range of skills, including literacy and numeracy. This helps them to make outstanding progress in their learning.
- Teachers and teaching assistants have very high expectations of all students. They help them to develop high levels of self confidence and to be enthusiastic about their learning.
- Teachers gauge the quality of students' work very well and set appropriate but challenging academic targets.
- Students' behaviour in lessons and around the school is outstanding. They work hard and concentrate very well in lessons.
- Students' safety is a very high priority for all staff. They work exceptionally well to make sure that all students are safe and secure.
- The sixth form provision is good and improving rapidly. The leadership of the sixth form is very strong. Leaders are ambitious and have clearly identified plans to develop an outstanding provision in the very near future.
- The curriculum is outstanding. It promotes and sustains students' academic achievement. It prepares students extremely well for life in modern Britain.
- The academy encourages excellence beyond the classroom. It provides a very wide range of extra-curricular activities, enrichment opportunities, trips and visits.
- Students' spiritual, moral, cultural and social development is promoted exceptionally well. As a result, they mature into considerate and thoughtful young adults who have a very good understanding of life in modern Britain.
- Leadership at all levels, including that of the principal and governors, is outstanding. Leaders provide a very successful drive and ambition to keep improving the quality of teaching and students' achievement.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 33 lessons, five of which were undertaken jointly with a member of the senior leadership team. Inspectors observed an assembly and tutor periods.
- Inspectors held meetings with several groups of students, members of the senior leadership team, and leaders in charge of subjects and other aspects of the academy’s work. Inspectors also met with teachers new to the academy and to the profession.
- The lead inspector met with members of the academy’s governing body and the chief executive of the federation.
- Inspectors discussed lessons they had seen with teaching staff. They examined a range of documents, including the academy’s review of its own performance, its plans for improvement and student progress information.
- Inspectors evaluated the academy’s own information about exclusions, attendance and behaviour. They also considered evidence of how effectively students who receive their education in other settings are monitored by the academy staff.
- Inspectors also considered evidence of how effectively it spends additional funding (the pupil premium and Year 7 catch-up funding).
- Inspectors looked at a range of students’ work in lessons and as part of a focused review of their progress.
- Inspectors took into account 77 responses to Ofsted’s Parent View questionnaire and two phone calls received from parents. The lead inspector held one telephone conversation with a parent.
- The inspection team considered questionnaires completed by 30 members of staff.

Inspection team

Jackie Jones, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
John Edgar	Additional Inspector
Gillian Keevill	Additional Inspector
Jill Thomas	Additional Inspector

Information about this school

- Harris Academy Falconwood is an 11 to 18 school and is part of the Harris Federation. It is slightly larger than the average-sized secondary school. It has specialisms in enterprise and sport.
- The executive principal is a national leader of education, who has been supporting the academy since September 2014 through the federation.
- The majority of students are from White British backgrounds and the rest of the students come from a variety of minority ethnic groups, including African and Indian. The proportion of students who speak English as an additional language is significantly below the national average.
- The proportion of students eligible for the pupil premium (additional funding for students eligible for free school meals and those in the care of the local authority) is just below the national average.
- There are 30 students eligible for Year 7 catch-up funding. This is funding for students who did not achieve Level 4 (the nationally expected level) in English and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs is about one-tenth of school roll, which is below the national average.
- Three students receive their education from Harris Aspire, which is a pupil referral unit run by the Harris Federation. Two students attend Pathways, which is a short-stay school, one student attends Bexley College and another student attends Break Through, which is a specialist school for students with medical problems.
- The academy holds the Judicium School Safety Award.
- There have been a number of staff changes since the last inspection.
- The academy met the government's current floor standards in 2014, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve achievement in the sixth form by:
 - developing the offer of academic qualifications available for students in the sixth form.
 - ensuring that teachers receive the appropriate training to successfully deliver these new qualifications.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The outstanding leadership of the executive principal and principal has been fundamental in continuing the very successful drive for improvements in achievement, quality of teaching, behaviour and safety and the sixth form since the last inspection.
- The academy is very effectively supported by the Harris Federation in making and sustaining improvement since the last inspection.
- All staff are highly ambitious for the students. As a result, all students have high aspirations for their future academic achievements and personal development.
- The academy's view about its own performance is robust and accurate. It informs an outstanding plan to bring about improvements that have measurable outcomes. This is leading to high quality provision for all students.
- The management of teaching and its impact on learning are outstanding. Academy leaders' judgements on the quality of teaching are accurate. They are informed by extremely rigorous checks by senior and middle leaders. These checks are verified through a robust quality assurance programme involving staff from the federation, as well as very experienced senior leaders within the academy.
- Middle leaders have an outstanding understanding of how to improve the learning opportunities for students. They very effectively review the performance of their subject areas to ensure the quality of provision remains high for all students.
- Training for staff is highly personalised and based on an accurate analysis of need. All staff spoke very highly about the quality of the training provided by the academy and federation. The training is tailored to the stage that staff are at in their career development. For example, middle leaders are able to participate in both middle leader and senior leader development training. Staff are also supported in gaining additional academic qualifications such as a masters degree in leadership and management.
- Systems for managing staff performance are extremely rigorous. They relate fully to the Teachers' Standards. Salary progression only occurs when merited by good performance.
- Senior leaders have taken very robust action to challenge underperformance. All staff within the academy share the view, expressed by a middle leader, that 'every child matters here'. Therefore, all staff are expected to stretch, nurture and encourage all students to aim high.
- The curriculum is outstanding. It is broad and balanced, providing a wide range of academic and work-related courses. When making their option choices in Year 9, students are increasingly choosing subjects that stretch and challenge them, which is enabling them to realistically aspire to higher education after they leave the academy.
- There is an outstanding range of opportunities for students beyond the classroom, including a variety of sports, arts, drama and visits. An example of visits that encourage the students to aspire to achieve exceptionally well is one to Cambridge University. Students are also provided with the opportunity to work closely with graduates undertaking their doctorates, once again very successfully raising aspirations.
- Students very effectively take on a variety of leadership roles within the academy, for example as prefects and anti-bullying ambassadors. Students also have the opportunity to support younger students in improving their literacy through a one-to-one mentoring programme.
- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a real strength of the academy. It is deeply embedded throughout all aspects of the academy's work. As a result, students develop an outstanding understanding of life in modern Britain. For example, every assembly includes the Harris Homily, which incorporates the values of all faiths followed by people living in Britain. Inspectors were very impressed at the deep and meaningful way both staff and students reflected on this.
- The school leadership very effectively ensures that there is no discrimination and that all students, including disadvantaged students, disabled students and those who have special educational needs, are able to participate in all activities provided by the school. The academy ensures that all students are able to fully participate in careers advice, leadership opportunities through the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme and having access to computer equipment. These actions ensure that disadvantaged students do not miss out on opportunities to support their learning in line with other students. As a result, these students make outstanding progress academically and socially.
- The academy very effectively monitors the performance and well-being of those students who receive their education in other settings.
- Behaviour is outstanding, as a result of actions taken by academy leaders. Consequently, the number of exclusions has continued to decline and is significantly below the national average.
- Safeguarding meets statutory requirements. The academy has highly effective safeguarding processes and

procedures. The academy makes extremely effective use of outside agencies to provide excellent support for students when it is needed.

- The advice given to students at all stages about their next steps in education or employment is outstanding. As a result, all students go into education, training or employment on leaving the academy.
- The academy works very well with parents and carers. For example, the special needs department arranges coffee mornings, so that parents and carers of children who are disabled or have special educational needs can discuss their child's progress in a relaxed setting. As a result, they become more confident at giving their child effective support at home, which results in at least good progress.
- The large majority of parents and carers who responded to Parent View agreed that the academy responded well to concerns and provided valuable information about their child's progress.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governance of the academy is outstanding. Governors very effectively support and challenge the academy.
 - Governors are fully involved in reviewing students' performance and setting the academy's priorities through discussion of the academy's view about how well it is doing and its plans for improvement.
 - Governors are extremely well equipped to carry out their statutory duties, which they do very effectively. They have an outstanding view of the academy's strengths and areas for improvement. They have a comprehensive understanding of the ways student performance is measured.
 - Governors manage the academy's finances extremely well and ensure that spending is linked to improving students' learning. They are very knowledgeable about the ways additional funding is used to support disadvantaged students and those who are disabled or have special educational needs.
 - Governors are very knowledgeable about the quality of teaching and are keenly aware of what is being done to reward good and outstanding performance. They are also fully aware about how underperformance is addressed by academy leaders.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. In lessons, regardless of the subject or year group, students' attitudes to learning are extremely positive. This is a significant factor contributing to their outstanding academic and personal development.
- Students work in a very positive way with both teachers and teaching assistants. As a result, staff and students develop exceptionally positive relationships and a high degree of trust, which enables students to make outstanding progress. In a Year 10 climbing lesson, students demonstrated very high levels of trust in their teacher and each other as they were challenged to overcome a fear of heights and negotiate new routes on the climbing wall.
- Students arrive to lessons on time, with the correct equipment and ready to learn. They take enormous pride in their school, wearing their uniform exceptionally well. There was no graffiti and very little litter around the academy.
- Students are exceptionally polite to visitors. They are very willing to engage visitors in conversation and to show them around the site.
- Students very much appreciated the impact of the federation and the academy's senior leaders in improving behaviour around the school. There are very clear expectations about conduct, which students fully appreciate as it has enabled them to make outstanding progress in lessons.
- The behaviour of students attending off-site provision is closely monitored by the school. This ensures that these students continue to make at least good progress in their learning.
- Staff and parents commented exceptionally favourably on behaviour at the academy and the way it is managed consistently.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. All students said they feel safe, which is confirmed by both staff and students.
- Students know how to keep themselves safe in a variety of situations. They know how the academy monitors visitors to the site through the use of different coloured lanyards. All students could explain how they would ensure visitors were appropriately supervised according to the coloured lanyard being worn.
- Through the very effective use of curriculum time, students know how to keep themselves safe in a wide

variety of situations and how to avoid the risks associated with extremism. They are fully aware of the risks connected with the internet.

- Students reported that any incidents of bullying are dealt with very quickly and firmly. There is a little racist and homophobic bullying, but students stated that this was dealt with very effectively through a variety of strategies. The use of student anti-bullying ambassadors is highly effective and welcomed by the students.
- Attendance is significantly above the national average. The academy has very effective systems to monitor the attendance of students who receive their education at other settings.
- Exclusions have reduced significantly and are well below the national average. This is the result of highly effective strategies put in place by the academy's leaders and consistently applied by all staff.
- The academy's outstanding practice in keeping students safe has been recognised as it has received the Judicium School Safety Award

The quality of teaching

is outstanding

- The quality of teaching has significantly improved since the last inspection. As a result, students' achievement is outstanding.
- A significant feature of the outstanding teaching at the academy is the excellent relationships between staff and students. Students work exceptionally well in lessons to improve their learning. In a Year 11 drama lesson, students collaborated and cooperated in an outstanding manner to create an opening scene. They then very maturely reflected on their own and each other's performance. This ensured progress was outstanding.
- Teachers have very clear expectations of the standard of work and behaviour expected from all students. As a result, students willingly participate in all learning tasks and therefore make outstanding progress.
- Teachers use their very good subject knowledge to highly effectively extend students' knowledge and understanding. In sixth form lessons seen during the inspection, students were challenged very significantly in developing their philosophical and political reasoning through the use of texts and questioning.
- Support for disabled students and those with special educational needs is very good. Teaching assistants are used very well in lessons to support students in their learning. They work closely with the class teacher in agreeing how they will support these students. As a result, these students make at least good progress. Frequently, they also make outstanding progress.
- The academy has a highly effective reading, literacy and numeracy programme. Students whose literacy and numeracy skills are below expected standards are very ably supported through specialised lessons and one-to-one mentoring. As a result, they make very rapid improvement.
- The academy has very well developed systems to ensure that marking and assessment help students make very good progress. Lessons frequently start with the sharing of feedback and time is given for students to respond to comments made on how to improve their learning. As a result, progress is outstanding.
- The academy has a very clearly defined homework policy, which is consistently put into practice by all staff. As a result, all students develop the ability to work on their own to extend their knowledge, understanding and skills in a very wide variety of subjects.
- The very large majority of parents and carers who responded to Parent View felt that their child was taught well.

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- Students enter the academy with levels of attainment that are about average. The proportion of students who attain five or more GCSEs at grades A* to C, including English and mathematics, is significantly above the government's current minimum standards.
- Year 11 students in 2014 achieved very well in a number of GCSE subjects, including English, drama, information and communication technology, physics, biology and chemistry.
- The number of students making at least expected progress in English and mathematics is significantly above the national average.
- African and Indian students make outstanding progress between Key Stage 2 and the end of Key Stage 4

and achieve above the national average for expected progress.

- Disabled students and those with special educational needs make at least good progress and often it is outstanding. Their achievement is, therefore, rapidly improving and is close to that of others in the school and that of students nationally. This is because of the highly effective support they receive.
- Students who are eligible for extra funding have previously achieved less well than others. However, the gap has closed as the result of the highly effective support they receive. In 2014, there was no gap in achievement for English or mathematics: indeed, they achieved better than other students in the academy by a quarter of a grade in English. In mathematics, they achieved in line with other students.
- The school very effectively uses Year 7 catch-up funding to improve students' achievement in English and mathematics. The additional funding is used to provide small-group lessons in English and mathematics as well as individual support to improve reading. As a result, students rapidly make progress so that they catch up with other students in the academy.
- Higher attaining students' achievement is very rapidly improving. This is the result of the very high aspirations established by leaders in the academy and of classes where they are continually and successfully challenged to make outstanding progress.
- The achievement of students who receive some or all of their education at other settings is closely monitored by the academy. As a result, they achieve both academic and work-related qualifications in line with their expected progress.
- The academy has entered students early in GCSE English and mathematics. This is was carefully monitored and students were expected to achieve their target grade and not settle for one that was lower. Early entry has not affected students' achievement, which is outstanding.

The sixth form provision

is good

- The sixth form provision is good. Students entered the sixth form in 2013 with attainment that was around the national average. However, achievement has now significantly improved at the end of Key Stage 4 so the attainment of students entering the sixth form is rising. Externally recruited students are entering the sixth form with attainment that is around the national average.
- Attainment has risen consistently so that it now is just above national averages for vocational qualifications and just below for academic qualifications.
- Gaps in the attainment of students needing additional help are closing rapidly. In 2014, there was no gap in average points scores between disadvantaged students and others. This is the result of better teaching and higher expectations from teachers. However, the progress of more able students is not yet as good as that of those students nationally.
- Teaching in the sixth form is good. In many lessons, students are regularly challenged to achieve very well as a result of the use of high quality resources and questioning by teachers. It is not yet outstanding because not all teachers challenge students sufficiently. This, in some cases, is due to an unfamiliarity with the demands of A level teaching. The leadership of the sixth form and the academy recognise this and have clear plans for improvement.
- Inspectors observed sixth form students working well on their own throughout the course of the inspection in study periods.
- The majority of students complete their courses. Where there had been significant drop-out from courses, the leadership of the academy and sixth form swiftly took action to remedy the situation by improving the quality of provision for those courses.
- Students welcome the opportunities for leadership within the school. They are effective leaders of the student body through taking on the roles of prefects, head boy and head girl.
- The behaviour and safety of students in the sixth form are outstanding. They have no concerns about poor behaviour affecting their learning. They model appropriate standards of behaviour and dress smartly, which sets an excellent example to younger students. It also inspires younger students to want to join the sixth form.
- The curriculum in the sixth form had been largely work-related. However, more academic qualifications are being offered by the academy as student achievement and aspiration significantly increase. The leadership of the academy and sixth form have ambitious but realistic plans to increase the offer of academic courses available to students.
- The curriculum prepares students well for the next stage of their education, employment or training. Students are increasingly leaving the academy and entering higher education. Many of these students are the first in their families to go into higher education. Students are aspiring to study at the top universities

in Britain. This is a realistic prospect and illustrates the impressive work the academy has done in raising their aspirations.

- All students follow the 16 to 19 study programme. All students benefit from work experience. Students who did not achieve a GCSE C grade in English or mathematics follow a course of study to achieve this alongside their other subjects.
- Attendance in the sixth form is good.
- Students receive good careers advice and guidance. They have a wide variety of events provided by the academy, such as visits to universities.
- The leadership of the sixth form is good. There is a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses as well as how the sixth form provision can continue to improve.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	135677
Local authority	Bexley
Inspection number	449431

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1069
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	192
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Geoff Payne
Headteacher	Terrie Askew
Date of previous school inspection	30–31 March 2011
Telephone number	0208 304 4916
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