

Harris Academy Upper Norwood

Spurgeon Road, Upper Norwood, London, SE19 3UG

Inspection dates

24–25 June 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- Students made rapid progress in the academy's first year, particularly in English and mathematics. Over half of the Year 11 students attained five good GCSE grades, including these two subjects.
- Students now achieve extremely well; their reading has improved significantly and they confidently and successfully write at length.
- Teaching has moved into a higher gear since the academy opened. Students' learning is often outstanding. Many teachers are skilful at asking questions which make students think and justify their answers.
- With increasingly effective marking, students learn how to improve their work. They also receive excellent one-to-one advice during lessons and revision sessions.
- Students behave very sensibly around the academy. They are polite and considerate. They get on very well together and enjoy life at the academy.
- Practically all students work hard and are keen to learn. A small minority find it hard to concentrate in lessons and have yet to enjoy and be enthusiastic about learning. The number of exclusions, whilst declining fast, reflects why behaviour is not outstanding.
- Students' safety has a high profile. Students feel safe and secure and confident that adults will help them with any problems or issues.
- When the academy opened, Harris federation and academy leaders, managers, staff and governors made improving teaching and achievement their top priority. They were extremely successful.
- Senior leaders continue to develop outstanding teaching by overseeing high quality training and development. They accurately assess the particularly effective teaching strategies and steer the sharing of such practice between staff.
- The experienced Principal tackles all priorities firmly and with wisdom. All middle leaders encourage students to aim high, to be ambitious and to be confident that they can achieve great things!
- Students' personal development is outstanding. They are thoughtfully prepared for their future lives and to understand British values, and styles of life and religious beliefs different to their own.
- Social, moral, spiritual and cultural elements of academy life have an outstanding impact on broadening students' aspirations and knowledge.
- The amalgamation with Harris Academy South Norwood has been managed sensitively and successfully. Both academies, to become fully one in two years, have benefited from sharing expertise.
- The governing body carries out its duties thoroughly and has a clear insight into the academy's future development. It is supporting leaders extremely well during the evolving amalgamation.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed students' learning in 28 part-lessons. A few of these observations were carried out with senior leaders. Inspectors also observed tutor sessions and an assembly. No Year 11 lessons were seen as these students had completed their GCSE examinations and were off site.
- Inspectors spoke to many students informally as well as meeting representatives from all years. Year 11 students attended the academy on the second day of the inspection to discuss their sixth form options and the lead inspector met some of them.
- Inspectors held meetings with the Principal, senior leaders and staff with responsibility for subjects and other aspects of the school's work.
- The lead inspector met the Chair of the Governing Body, three other governors and the Harris Federation Chief Executive Officer and Director of Secondary Improvement.
- Inspectors discussed their observations with teaching staff and examined a range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation, development plan and monitoring records. They also scrutinised information about progress, standards, exclusions, attendance and behaviour.
- Inspectors looked at a range of students' work in lessons.
- Inspectors took into account 16 questionnaires completed by members of staff. There were too few responses to Ofsted's online Parent View questionnaire for them to be considered.

Inspection team

Clare Gillies, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Taj Bhambra	Additional Inspector
James Waite	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Sponsored by the Harris Federation, the academy opened in September 2013. It is much smaller than the average-sized secondary school because the predecessor school had falling rolls in the past and because it now has no students in Year 7. The academy is amalgamated with Harris Academy South Norwood and Year 7 students are enrolled there.
- In September 2015, present Year 8 students will join with those at South Norwood and they will all start their GCSE courses at that site. Only Years 11 and 10, along with Year 10 students from South Norwood, will remain at Upper Norwood in September 2015.
- Students who took their GCSEs at Upper Norwood in 2013 and 2014 have joined and are registered with the sixth formers from South Norwood. The sixth form is based at the Upper Norwood site.
- At present, the two academies have separate identities but by the end of August 2017, the name Harris Academy Upper Norwood will no longer be used – it will continue to be one of two sites within Harris Academy South Norwood.
- The fabric of the academy has been extensively refurbished in the last two years, for example with new science facilities and improved health and safety features.
- Over 90% of students are from minority ethnic backgrounds, dominantly Black African, Black Caribbean and Asian. Only a small percentage of students are White British.
- An above average proportion of students speak English as an additional language, of whom only a very few are at an early stage of learning English.
- The proportion of students who receive support through the pupil premium is high. This is additional government funding for disadvantaged, specific groups, including students known to be eligible for free school meals and looked after children.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs is below average.
- No students attend any off-site educational provision.
- In 2014, the academy met the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the progress students make by every teacher:
 - following the behaviour policy and procedures meticulously
 - checking, during lessons, that all students understand the work
 - developing and supporting an enthusiasm for learning for the few students who find it hard to concentrate
 - making sure that all students respond to the advice they are given about how to improve their work.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The Harris Academy Federation inherited a school that needed to move rapidly into a higher gear. This was achieved within months by the Principal, senior leadership team, teachers and staff working together, with valuable federation support. Achievement, teaching and learning were outstanding by the end of the academy's first year; they have continued to develop.
- The Principal combines his leadership experience with energy and enthusiasm. These are seen in his success in giving all students equal opportunities to achieve their best in an environment that promotes outstanding teaching, good behaviour and excellent relationships. Any discrimination is not acceptable.
- Leaders evaluate and prioritise the areas to be tackled astutely and implement effective action. Careful analysis of what students needed to learn fast, particularly those in Year 11 last year, generated a curriculum focus on English and mathematics and rapid progress in these subjects. At the same time, each student's combination of subjects was adjusted so they could achieve as well as possible.
- Trips, visits, innovation weeks and cultural days, a key element of the curriculum, all broaden students' horizons and contribute to their excellent preparation for life in modern Britain. A good number of enrichment activities are on offer and participation is encouraged but is not yet high enough.
- With a large number of eligible students, the use of pupil premium funds is considered carefully. Over the last two years, the main expenditure has been, successfully, on mentoring and behaviour intervention, reading, raising attendance, special educational needs support, and residentials and trips for students.
- Careers advice is timely, realistic and well organised. All the Year 11 students met during the inspection had chosen to stay on into the sixth form. The academy supports those who choose to move into work, apprenticeships or sixth form colleges equally well.
- Despite many new staff when the academy opened, the lack of specialist teachers in a few subjects, especially science, could not be resolved fully until its second year. Harris Federation and other consultants provided intensive, valuable support at this stage. From then on, expertise and subject specialists were shared with the amalgamated academy so that gaps were filled and underachievement addressed.
- The Harris Federation website refers to drive and ambition, which are tangible in the academy's atmosphere. Many students display these attributes, as do all those working at the academy. Members of staff who completed the inspection questionnaire were very positive in their responses; particularly about the quality of training they received to strengthen their teaching skills.
- The Harris Federation opened a Teaching School in 2011. Staff have access to excellent Harris programmes and internal support. Whether new to the profession or very experienced middle leaders, staff rate their professional development as 'pretty incredible' and 'limitless'. One observed that a Harris conference 'motivated me for the year'.
- A parent forum means that the Principal can glean parents' perceptions of how the academy is moving forward; he also meets a student leadership team to hear their views.
- Leadership and management of teaching and learning are outstanding. Many staff are trained to evaluate the qualities of learning. Senior leaders are skilful at providing accurate and supportive feedback. Staff appreciate that their performance affects their salaries but have confidence that their reviews are well balanced and constructive.
- The middle level of leadership is extensive and highly effective, with much sharing of good practice. Innovation leaders generate imaginative ideas to focus on a particular skill or style of learning. The leadership of additional education support is equally outstanding, efficient and effective. With no special needs coordinator in the past, the present incumbent worked fast to ascertain students' individual needs.
- Practically all teachers apply the academy's behaviour strategies meticulously, though many do not need to use them at all. The very few teachers who let students chatter too much are known to senior leaders and receive support to ensure consistency and quick impact.
- One of the academy's first actions was tightening the safety of the site and improving facilities related to students' and staff's health. Safeguarding and child protection are outstanding, with all policies and procedures fully in place. Vetting of staff and visitors is tight and referral to agencies is prompt, for example if concerns are raised about female genital mutilation or extremism.
- Students described numerous assemblies and tutor sessions on topics related to British values. These ranged from terrorism to the rule of law, democracy to child labour or human rights day to Holocaust Remembrance Day. At least once a week, students discuss the news, often viewing well-chosen, related video clips.
- **The governance of the school:**

- The governing body, which includes Harris federation representatives, is the same for both Harris Norwood academies. It is hard working and supportive. Its members bring much relevant professional experience to their work, for example in education, finance and creative arts.
- The Principal and governors are determined to address some Upper Norwood parents' concerns about 'losing an identity'. They are focused on the academy flourishing even more as the amalgamation evolves towards completion.
- Governors know about the quality of teaching and how well students' achievement has improved in the academy's first two years. They back the firm actions which have been taken to improve the quality of teaching, tackle underperformance and acknowledge excellence when teachers' salaries are up for review. They review the pupil premium spending, visit the academy and meet students regularly. Combined with detailed reports provided by the Principal and senior leaders, governors know exactly what is happening at the academy so they can ask probing questions about future plans.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They enjoy coming to school and, in discussion, said how much academy life had improved over the last two years. With maturity, Year 9 students noted that the academy is still on a journey and that they feel confident things will continue to improve.
- Students are punctual and their attendance has improved significantly since the academy opened; the number of persistent absentees has dropped. Students' concentration and focus on learning are exemplary in the great majority of lessons.
- A small number of students do not find it easy to stay focused or do not immediately respond to a request to listen or tackle a written task. Fixed term and internal exclusions have fallen over the last two years but present figures reflect why behaviour is not quite outstanding, but moving towards being so.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Students rightly described the academy as a place where tolerance and respect for all are core features. They have a clear understanding of what is right or wrong, in terms of behaviour and language, for example.
- The academy's work to educate students about living safely is excellent. Students are adamant that bullying is rare and tackled firmly and promptly. FLICKS tutor sessions (Faith, Lifestyle, Inclusion, Culture, Knowledge and Society) and assemblies tackle sensitive issues. These include topics such as homophobic bullying, cyber bullying and e-safety, different lifestyles, radicalisation or personal health issues, topics which are also covered in assemblies.
- The school has evaluated all subjects' contribution to students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, and see this as an integral part of learning. Students consider different faiths in religious education, the impact of propaganda in history and world hunger in catering, to name but a few examples.

The quality of teaching

is outstanding

- Many new teachers joined the academy in its first year when Harris and other external consultants supported staff to improve standards rapidly. Following the amalgamation with South Norwood, teaching expertise was shared and consistently good and often outstanding learning emerged.
- English lessons are particularly effective at making students enjoy working hard:
 - applying 'Straight to Stretch' and 'Never Finished' strategies so that all students, particularly the most able, are fully challenged
 - demonstrating the meaning of words by physical actions, or learning assistants skilfully helping students who need support so that they understand the work.
- Other examples of outstanding learning include:
 - adapting the rules of rounders to generate intensive running as well as essential game skills
 - developing the ability to evaluate, reflect, accept and respond to criticism in drama
 - students discussing sensitive topics with great maturity in religion and philosophy lessons
 - teachers' passion for creative subjects inspiring students to produce even better work
 - students organising themselves rapidly into groups and enthusiastically discussing 'setting in schools',

using specialist sociology words

- linking the development of students' social skills with key concepts in health and social care
 - students elaborating or justifying their answers to questions in history, such as 'Have you changed your mind about your hypothesis?'
- Teachers have all contributed to students' increasingly competent writing by including practice in most lessons along with clear guidance on how to structure quality writing. This whole-academy focus has been very effective. If students do not respond to questions in full and correct sentences, they are reminded about the essential features of formal speech. Teachers expect students to read aloud, which also improves their confidence to speak clearly.
 - Intensive, effective, reading programmes, introduced in the academy's first year, helped many students, particularly those speaking English as an additional language, to gain confidence and fluency rapidly. Teachers are very good at reinforcing subject-specific words but, on occasions, they do not strengthen students' vocabulary by exploring alternative meanings or similar words.
 - With improving standards in mathematics, students' competence in basic numeracy is more secure. In a very successful science lesson, students sketched graphs quickly. Their addition of statistics in a different lesson was not so convincing.
 - Marking is predominantly thorough, constructive and conducive to learning with 'subject-specific improvement points' to which students respond increasingly well. Whilst excellent in most, such high quality marking practice has yet to permeate all lessons and subjects.
 - Other elements of outstanding learning, absent in a small minority of lessons are: checking during lessons that all students had understood the work; linking work to students' lives as well as to examination grades; encouraging the small minority who do not automatically feel inclined to work hard and to enjoy learning.

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- In 2014, the percentage of students attaining five good GCSE grades including English and mathematics was in line with the national average. Students attained over 60% A*-C grades in at least ten subjects and exceeded the national percentage of A*/A grades in a few of them.
- Students who took English literature, French, Spanish and sports studies in 2014 attained outstanding results. Following significant changes to staffing, teaching has greatly improved in poor performing subjects such as history, geography and catering.
- By the end of Year 11 in 2014, from well below average starting points, students had made outstanding progress overall and in English, mathematics, science and modern foreign languages. These students made particularly rapid progress in their final year – the first year of the academy. No students took any GCSE examinations early.
- The same rapid progress continued through the present academic year and was evident in lessons and books during the inspection. It was particularly noted in subjects which had relatively lower GCSE results in 2014. Combined with externally verified data, this level of progress confirms the academy's predictions for higher GCSE results in 2015 and 2016.
- In both English and mathematics, disadvantaged students made more progress than others nationally and some students made slightly more progress than others in the school in mathematics. The results gap between disadvantaged students and others in the school in 2014 was just over half a GCSE grade in English and less than one-sixth of a GCSE grade in mathematics. The gap with others nationally was just under one-third of a GCSE grade in both subjects. With widespread outstanding progress, these students are set to achieve almost the same results as others in 2015 and the gap should disappear by 2016.
- In its first year, leaders wisely made sure that students did as well as possible in English and mathematics. Most minority ethnic students, particularly Black African and Asian, made more progress in these subjects than expected nationally, as did those who speak English as an additional language. Assessment data confirm that Black Caribbean and White British students, who did not match national progress in 2014, are on course to achieve standards comparable with other students this year.
- Academy leaders are fully aware that some students did much better in English than mathematics or vice versa in 2014. Many of these students entered the English education system later than others and needed intensive support for one or both subjects. Having received high quality teaching in Year 10, they are set to achieve well in both subjects in 2015.
- Disabled students and those who have special needs are making outstanding progress, this year with many of them making more than the expected progress in both English and mathematics. A very small number of them in 2014 had not made good progress in the past but academy staff now make sure that

the education they receive fully meets their needs.

- In 2014, the most able students made outstanding progress, attaining very close to the average of five good GCEs including English and mathematics; all of them attained A*-C grades in English and mathematics. A well above average percentage of them attained the EBacc qualification. Most of them passed the three separate sciences but only a few of them attained A*/A grades.

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	139906
Local authority	Croydon
Inspection number	450303

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11–19
Gender of pupils	Girls
Number of pupils on the school roll	346
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Phil Saunders
Principal	Sam Hainey
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
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