

# Harris Church of England Academy

Harris Drive, Overslade Lane, Rugby, Warwickshire CV22 6EA

## Inspection dates

29–30 November 2016

Overall effectiveness	Inadequate
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Inadequate</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected as an academy

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is an inadequate school

- Disadvantaged pupils make very slow progress. By the end of Year 11, they underachieve in most subjects.
- Lower- and middle-ability pupils, especially boys, make slow progress in several subjects.
- Teachers' assessments of pupils' attainment are not accurate. It is too soon to know whether leaders' efforts to remedy this issue have been successful.
- Leaders do not always use assessment and other information well enough to judge the success of actions they are taking.
- The key stage 4 curriculum is overcrowded. It hinders the development of some pupils' depth of understanding and therefore their progress.
- Middle leaders, although improving, lack the expertise to lead improvement in their areas.
- There is too much variability in the quality of teaching across the school, especially in teachers' planning, questioning and the checks they make on pupils' progress in lessons. Pupils' numeracy skills are not developed consistently.
- Some pupils do not behave well in lessons. Too many lessons, especially in key stage 3, are disrupted by poor behaviour.

### The school has the following strengths

- This is now an improving school. Stronger senior leadership, since the current headteacher's arrival, has improved behaviour, attendance and the quality of teaching.
- Governance is strong. Governors have played a full part in the school's improvement.
- The most able pupils make good progress in most subjects.
- The school's staff are united and committed to seeing the school continue to improve. Morale is high.
- Pupils feel safe, and are safe, in school. They like and trust their teachers and other adults who work in the school.
- Pupils are confident, articulate and proud to belong to their school.

## Full report

In accordance with section 44(2) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than it might in all the circumstances reasonably be expected to perform.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that all groups of pupils, especially disadvantaged pupils and lower- and middle-ability pupils, make good progress by ensuring that all teachers:
  - know what they expect pupils to learn in a lesson or sequence of lessons
  - plan activities that are well matched to what pupils already understand, know and can do
  - check on pupils' understanding during lessons and adjust their teaching accordingly
  - consistently challenge low-level disruption and use the school's behaviour policy.
- Improve leadership by ensuring that:
  - leaders carefully check the impact that improvement strategies, including those funded by the pupil premium, are having
  - leaders, at all levels, are trained to understand and interpret data so they can use it to identify key issues and trends
  - teachers' assessments of pupils' attainment are reliable
  - the key stage 4 curriculum effectively supports the progress of all pupils
  - middle leaders have the expertise and confidence to lead improvement in their areas
  - there is a whole-school strategy to improve pupils' numeracy.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken to assess how this aspect of leadership might be improved.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Requires improvement

- Standards at the end of Year 11 have been low for the last two years. Although anticipating weak outcomes in 2016, leaders and governors did not foresee some particularly weak results, especially for disadvantaged pupils and lower- and middle-ability pupils. This was because teachers' forecasts of pupils' results were inaccurate and overgenerous. Recent energetic work to remedy this problem has yet to yield compelling evidence of improvement.
- Leaders do not always check well enough on the impact that actions designed to bring about improvement are having. They tend to check that actions have happened, rather than the difference they have made. For example, leaders accurately identify weakness in teaching. They then provide appropriate training designed to remedy the weakness. However, they then do not always check that the training has had the desired effect. Similarly, leaders provide a wide range of well-targeted, pupil premium-funded activities designed to accelerate the progress of disadvantaged pupils. Leaders then carefully track the progress of individual pupils. However, they do not carefully evaluate the impact of these strategies, some of which command considerable sums of money, as a whole. Consequently, leaders do not know which strategies are being most effective and which need to be revised or discarded.
- The design of key stage 4 curriculum means that some pupils take too many examination courses and they achieve less well than they should as a result. In some subjects, for example science, the wide array of examined courses results in insufficient curriculum time to develop pupils' deep understanding of their work. Leaders have made changes for some pupils and are currently reviewing the entire key stage 4 curriculum.
- The key stage 3 curriculum provides an appropriate range of subjects for pupils. Additional basic skills lessons for pupils in Years 7 and 8 are helping to improve pupils' literacy, because they are well supported in other subjects and by a whole-school focus on reading. They are far less effective in improving pupils' numeracy because pupils do not routinely use number skills outside of basic skills and mathematics lessons.
- Despite its weaknesses, the curriculum, supported by a wide range of enrichment visits and activities, effectively contributes to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. A thorough and well-planned personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme helps pupils to learn about topics including British democracy, the criminal justice system and diversity in Britain. For example, inspectors observed pupils explaining the nine protected characteristics of the Equality Act 2010 and others debating the pros and cons of capital punishment.
- Although the school is now rich in data about pupils' attainment, attendance and behaviour, leaders do not always make good use of this information to identify trends or to spot issues. The sheer volume of data confuses some leaders because they lack the expertise to pick out what is important and ignore what is not. For example, although the school's assessment information indicates that groups of pupils in some years are making slower progress than others, some middle leaders are unaware that this is an issue in their area of responsibility.

- The headteacher, ably supported by senior leaders and governors, has successfully established a shared vision and ethos for the school. He commands the confidence of pupils, parents and staff. Pupils are vocal in their praise for the changes that he has brought to the school. Almost all staff and an overwhelming majority of parents who responded to inspection questionnaires believe that the school is now well led and managed. One parent who wrote a comment in Parent View summed up the views of many when they wrote, 'Since the headteacher has led Harris Academy the leadership has improved significantly. Senior leaders are always easily accessible and react quickly to both parents' and children's concerns. There is an expectation that children will be able to learn and make good or outstanding progress.'
- Middle leaders form a hard-working and united group who share the headteacher's commitment to improving the school. However, they are currently highly dependent upon senior leaders for support and advice. They do not have sufficient experience or confidence to lead improvement in their areas autonomously.
- Staff share the headteacher's determination to provide a good education for the school's pupils. Despite difficult times in recent years, morale is high and teacher absence has reduced considerably in the past 18 months. Teachers value the training that leaders provide. All staff who responded to the inspection questionnaire said they understand the school's goals and almost all said that they are proud to work at the school. The school is fully staffed with specialist teachers. Nine newly qualified teachers joined the school in September 2016. They appreciate the effective support that leaders provide.
- Senior leaders and governors know the school well, including its strengths and weaknesses. They tackle weaknesses with vigour. The school has improved considerably over the past two years because of stronger leadership, especially in the areas of attendance, behaviour and teaching. However, senior leaders and governors know that there remains plenty of room for further improvement in each of these areas.
- Senior leaders and governors are making increasingly effective use of carefully selected external support to accelerate improvement in areas that require it. Haybridge School is providing support for some middle leaders and the mathematics department. Other middle leaders are receiving training from the Griffin Alliance. Provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is being supported by Brooke Special School and external moderation of teachers' assessments is planned to occur imminently, with the Sidney Stringer Academy, King Charles I School and Southam College.
- The Diocese of Coventry Multi Academy Trust supports the school well. It ensures that the governing body has the knowledge and expertise to support and challenge leaders effectively.

### **Governance of the school**

- Governors know the school well. The governing body possesses considerable expertise, for example in the areas of safeguarding and finance, which it uses well to support and challenge school leaders.
- In areas where it lacks direct expertise, the governing body brings in external support, for example in analysing outcomes data and managing teachers' performance.

Consequently, governors are effective in holding leaders to account for the school's performance. They have played an important part in the school's recent improvement.

- Statutory duties are carried out with diligence. Governors ensure that performance management is well focused on improving teaching and raising standards. They regularly check that safeguarding arrangements meet requirements and are fit for purpose. They carefully monitor the use of additional funding, including the pupil premium. Prior to the inspection, governors had already identified the need to evaluate the impact of pupil premium-funded activities more rigorously.

### **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The leadership of this area is meticulous. All policies and procedures are in place, fit for purpose and well understood by staff. Staff are knowledgeable and vigilant to potential dangers because they receive very regular training and updates. Several leaders have been trained to a high level in safeguarding practice.
- Staff are confident to pass on any concerns they might have, knowing that they will be taken seriously and that appropriate action will be taken. Leaders keep well-organised and secure records. They seek external advice when they need it and are prepared to challenge local authority children's services when they believe that a pupil is not receiving appropriate care. Procedures to recruit staff safely are in place and used well.
- All members of staff who responded to the online inspection questionnaire said that pupils are safe in school, as did all pupils who spoke to inspectors during the inspection. Almost all parents and pupils who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire 'Parent View' and the pupils' online survey, also confirmed that pupils feel safe in school.

### **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

### **Requires improvement**

- Teachers are not always clear about what they intend pupils to learn in a lesson or sequence of lessons. When this is the case, teachers tend to plan activities that occupy pupils rather than help them to learn. For example, inspectors observed several examples where the teacher shared complicated or confusing 'learning objectives' with pupils, designed to specify what they would learn in the lesson. The teacher then directed pupils to complete tasks that bore little or no relation to these stated objectives.
- Teachers do not consistently plan activities that are well matched to pupils' ability. Typically, activities are too hard for middle- and especially lower-ability pupils, particularly in Years 7 to 9. Consequently, these pupils struggle to begin tasks and do little work while they wait for their teacher's help. Some pupils become distracted, chat and misbehave at these times. Activities tend to be better pitched for the most able pupils. They understand what they have to do; they work hard and make good progress as a result.
- Teachers do not check carefully enough on pupils' progress during lessons. For example, inspectors observed lessons where teachers did not spot that pupils were confused, struggling or completely unable to tackle the work set. The teacher then proceeded to move the class on to the next activity, so that several pupils were left

with gaps in their learning. When this is the case, the teacher believes that a topic has been taught, but is unaware that it has not been learned.

- Some teachers do not ask pupils questions that help to deepen their understanding of the topic they are studying. When this is the case, questions tend to be closed or invite brief, cursory answers from pupils. Teachers then expand on the pupil's answer, instead of encouraging the pupils to think hard and develop the answer themselves.
- Nonetheless, teaching is improving and pupils who have attended the school for several years are very clear about this. There is some effective teaching in all subjects and much effective practice in some. For example, inspectors observed particularly skilful questioning in a mathematics lesson that focused on the presentation of data. Consequently, pupils thought hard, answered enthusiastically and at length, and developed a deep understanding of the concepts they were learning about.
- Relationships are strong across the school. Teachers and other adults care for their pupils and are committed to helping them do well. Pupils told inspectors that they like their teachers and they appreciate the support that teachers and others provide. One pupil summed up the views of many who spoke to inspectors, when they described teachers as 'strict, but calm and kind'.
- Teaching assistants provide high-quality support in lessons, and at other times, for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Well-planned extra support is helping these pupils to make increasingly good progress, despite the variable quality of teaching in the school.
- Leaders have introduced a number of 'teaching non-negotiables' in an attempt to secure a basic level of practice across the school. These include expectations of lesson planning and the regularity, and format, of feedback that teachers give to pupils. Teachers have embraced these 'non-negotiables' enthusiastically and they apply them consistently. However, variability in teachers' expertise currently means that the impact on the quality of teaching across the school is also variable.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

## Requires improvement

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils feel safe, and are safe, in school. They understand how to keep themselves safe from a range of potential dangers, including those associated with using the internet. Half-termly 'e-safety lessons' ensure that pupils are aware of online threats. Pupils confidently told inspectors that you should not share personal information online and you should never assume that people are who they claim to be.
- Pupils told inspectors that bullying is rare in school and that they have confidence in their teachers and other adults in school to deal with any bullying, or other problems that might arise.
- Pupils, especially those in older year groups, are typically confident, mature and articulate. They are proud of their school and extremely keen to share the many ways in which it has improved in recent years. Pupils confidently relate the 'Harris values':

harmonious, aspirational, responsible, respectful, inspirational and sociable. Additionally, they cite examples of how they are living out these values.

- The school's careers education programme is well planned throughout Years 7 to 11. It includes taught lessons within the weekly PSHE programme, visiting speakers, outside visits to colleges and universities and individual interviews with an independent careers advisor. Anticipating weak GCSE outcomes in 2016, leaders worked closely with local colleges and sixth forms in order to secure pupils' places in September. As a result, almost all pupils secured a place in a sixth form or college, or with a training provider.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- The behaviour of a minority of pupils is poor in too many lessons. Most often, but not exclusively, this is the case in lower-ability teaching sets in Years 7 to 9 and when teaching is weaker. Inspectors observed poor behaviour in several subjects where, typically, pupils talked over the teacher, shouted out and did not pay attention to the teacher's explanations and instructions. In these lessons, teachers did not make effective use of the school's behaviour policy.
- Pupils' behaviour at breaktime and lunchtime and as they move around the school between lessons is good. At these times, pupils are polite and courteous to each other and to adults.
- Pupils told inspectors that behaviour has improved considerably since the current headteacher's arrival at the school. For example, pupils in Year 11 told inspectors that their lessons are now very rarely disrupted, in stark contrast to the picture when they were in Year 9. The number of exclusions has fallen considerably over the past 18 months because there are now far fewer incidents of serious misbehaviour.
- Attendance, which was low, improved sharply during the last academic year to close to the national average for secondary schools. The attendance of disadvantaged pupils improved by far more than that of other pupils, as did that of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. The improving trend in attendance, for all and for groups of pupils, has continued this year.
- The small numbers of pupils who study for all or part of the week away from the school attend regularly and behave well. School staff check their attendance and behaviour each day and they follow up any non-attendance or problems immediately with parents.

## Outcomes for pupils

### Inadequate

- GCSE results in 2015 and 2016 show that the great majority of disadvantaged pupils underachieve across most subjects. Better teaching and well-targeted use of the pupil premium is beginning to see an acceleration in the progress made by current disadvantaged pupils, but the improvement is patchy.
- Differences between the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and others remain, and are not diminishing consistently or rapidly.
- Pupils' attainment, at the end of year 11, has declined in recent years. Weak teaching over time has led to slow progress, especially for low- and middle-ability boys. Pupils

make slow progress across many subjects, including English, mathematics and science. Stronger leadership and better teaching is now resulting in current pupils, including lower- and middle-ability boys, making much better progress. However, this has yet to manifest itself in improved external examination outcomes.

- The small number of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities have also, historically, made slower progress than they should across several subjects, including English and mathematics. However, this picture is improving rapidly. Well-planned, individualised support is accelerating these pupils' progress.
- Leaders' effort to improve pupils' literacy is beginning to yield results, especially in Years 7 and 8. Weekly basic skills lessons and the promotion of reading and literacy development in other subjects are proving effective. Pupils who enter the school with below-expected reading skills are making rapid gains. However, pupils' numeracy skills are not well developed in lessons other than mathematics and basic skills.
- The most able pupils consistently make progress comparable to that group of pupils nationally. Their progress is much stronger than other pupils in the school. Historically, these pupils have been less affected by weak teaching. Currently, the most able pupils are in teaching groups where teaching tends to be stronger and behaviour is good.
- The small number of pupils who study for all or part of their week away from the school have individualised programmes and receive high-quality support. Given that each of these pupils was at risk of failing to complete their compulsory education, their generally positive engagement with education and destinations when they leave school represent considerable success.



## School details

Unique reference number	140371
Local authority	Warwickshire
Inspection number	10019982

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 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	652
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Hilary Lower
Headteacher	Michael Stoppard
Telephone number	01788 812549
Website	<a href="http://www.harriscofeacademy.co.uk">www.harriscofeacademy.co.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:office@harriscofeacademy.co.uk">office@harriscofeacademy.co.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected as an academy

## Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.
- The school is a smaller-than-average secondary school.
- The school became an academy school in 2014. It is part of the Diocese of Coventry Multi Academy Trust. The current headteacher joined the school at this time.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average.
- The school has an average proportion of disadvantaged pupils.
- Most pupils are from a White British background. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is average.

- A small number of pupils in Years 10 and 11 attend one of three alternative providers for part or all of their education. These providers are Warwickshire College, North Warwickshire and Hinckley College and Unique Learning.
- The school meets the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in lessons, and some of these observations were conducted jointly with senior leaders.
- Inspectors talked to pupils about their learning and their attitudes to, and opinions about, school. They met with four focus groups of pupils. Inspectors observed pupils at morning break and lunchtime and as they moved around the school.
- Inspectors heard pupils read and talked to them about the books they enjoy.
- Inspectors considered 62 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and one letter from a parent. They also considered 79 responses to an online staff questionnaire and 16 responses to an online pupil questionnaire.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior leaders, other leaders, newly qualified teachers, two governors and a representative of the sponsor, the Diocese of Coventry Multi Academy Trust.
- Inspectors scrutinised several documents, including the school's self-evaluation, its improvement plan, minutes of governing body meetings and the school's records about pupils' behaviour, attendance, attainment and safety.

## Inspection team

Alun Williams, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Graham Tyrer	Ofsted Inspector
Elaine Haskins	Ofsted Inspector
Thomas Walton	Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)

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