

The Harefield Academy

Northwood Way, Harefield, Uxbridge UB9 6ET

Inspection dates

26–27 September 2018

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
16 to 19 study programmes	Good
Overall experiences and progress of children and young people in the boarding provision	Good
How well children and young people are helped and protected in the boarding provision	Good
The effectiveness of leaders and managers in the boarding provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- There is variability in the quality of teaching. Pupils are not sufficiently challenged and supported to achieve their best.
- Pupils' attendance remains too low.
- The administration of staff recruitment information is not as efficient as it should be.
- The system for reviewing staff performance in the boarding provision is not formalised.
- Leaders' systems to develop teaching have not been in place long enough to have led to sustained improvements in pupils' achievement. Pupils' outcomes require improvement.

The school has the following strengths

- Strong and committed leadership has led to raised academic expectations and improvements in pupils' behaviour.
- Leaders liaise extensively with external organisations to ensure that pupils are alert to risks. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe.
- Sixth-form students are prepared well for their next steps.
- The boarding provision is a safe and caring environment where staff make a positive difference to pupils' lives.

Compliance with national minimum standards for boarding schools

- The school meets the requirements of the national minimum standards for boarding schools.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Embed strategies to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, including in the sixth form, so that:
 - pupils, including the most able, are motivated and challenged to make the progress of which they are capable
 - pupils' outcomes are good.
- Ensure that the school's work to improve pupils' attendance continues to be applied and extended systematically so that attendance swiftly improves.
- Formalise a system for monitoring and reviewing the performance of staff in the boarding provision.
- Ensure that the administration of staff files is well organised and easily accessible.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers in the boarding provision	Good
How well children and young people are protected in the boarding provision	Good

- Leaders have demonstrated drive, resilience and commitment so that the school is a stable, purposeful and cohesive learning community.
- The leadership team is deployed effectively. Directors of learning are a capable and collaborative middle-leadership team. They benefit from the close support and modelling from their line managers.
- Leaders have a clear picture of the strengths and areas for development in the school, including in the boarding provision. Leaders' improvement planning is appropriately targeted, detailing the actions needed to continue the recent trend of improvement.
- Leaders have a well-organised process for the monitoring of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Leaders use this to inform a training programme that prioritises teachers' areas for development, for example better provision for most-able pupils. There are improvements in the quality of teaching since the previous inspection, which have led to pupils making better progress. However, new and revised systems are not sufficiently embedded to have led to sustained improvement in outcomes across and between subjects.
- The curriculum offer enables pupils to study a range of subjects that lead to suitable education pathways and the careers to which they aspire. An increasing range of options is available to pupils who follow bespoke programmes to meet their individual needs.
- Leaders encourage pupils to be considerate of others and build knowledge and attitudes that prepare them well to be responsible citizens. Pupils receive strong messages and gain valuable experiences that promote their spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. Displays in the canteen prompt pupils' reflection on the origins of their food. The 'students as researchers' group, the 'STARS', proposed changes to the naming of the school's houses. Pupils nominated and voted for contemporary inspirational public figures after whom the houses are now named.
- Leaders model their expectations of staff and pupils. For example, in the boarding provision, leaders empower staff and boarders to participate in decision-making processes, and make strong contributions to the development of the boarding community.
- Leaders nurture pupils' ambition, self-esteem and pride in their work. Year 7 pupils rapidly acquire a mature attitude to their studies in secondary school, and are keen to do well because of leaders' encouragement and expectations.
- Leaders' refined systems of assessment across all year groups enable identification of individual pupils who need extra help to achieve as well as they can. Assessing pupils' attitudes to learning has been effective in improving pupils' levels of engagement with

their studies. Pupils receive targeted support in lessons, as well as in the wide range of additional sessions that run in different subjects at lunchtimes and after school.

- Leaders draw wisely on sources of external support to develop leadership and governance. Leaders' collaboration with a network of local schools provides helpful opportunities for training and sharing of good practice.
- Leaders have forged strong links with the local community. Most parents and carers who responded to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, or to surveys carried out by leaders, are positive about the school. Comments typically praise the improvements in pupils' behaviour, and the swift response of staff to any concerns and communications from parents.
- Leadership of the boarding provision is energetic and solution-focused so that the day-to-day management of the boarding provision is effective and efficient. Leaders have in-depth practical knowledge of the intricacies of boarding, and they discharge their duties to a high standard. The best interests of boarders are at the heart of all boarding practices. The vision of enabling boarders to fulfil their potential is embedded throughout the boarding provision.
- Clear processes are in place to encourage feedback about the quality of the service in the boarding provision, and suggestions for improvement. There is an effective procedure for dealing with formal complaints and informal expressions of dissatisfaction. Leaders take prompt and appropriate actions, which contribute to improving the service, for example by making improvements to the admissions procedure.
- Weekly team meetings and individual guidance and training opportunities facilitate the professional development of staff in the boarding section. Staff feel very well supported by leaders. However, the arrangements for individual supervision and reviews of staff performance have not been formalised.
- Records of the staff duty rosters demonstrate that boarding is resourced appropriately. Four staff members have accommodation at the boarding house, and robust arrangements are in place for night cover. Boarders said that they value the support of the boarding staff and would readily turn to them if there was a problem.

Governance of the school

- Governors have responded diligently to the review of governance since the previous inspection. They have broadened their skills and expertise with appropriate training and recruitment.
- Governors work closely with school leaders so that their visits to the school are purposeful and well informed. While supported well in their development by school leaders, they pursue independent guidance so that they are confident to ask the right questions and hold leaders to account for their work.
- Through working closely with the headteacher and focusing rightly on key priorities for the school, governors ensure that they have a strategic approach to all their statutory responsibilities.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Pupils engage in positive and safe behaviours.
- Leaders' oversight of safeguarding policy and practice is dedicated, proactive and rooted in care for each pupil. Leaders are alert to contemporary local risks to pupils. Staff instil sensitively and age-appropriately how pupils can keep safe and where to go to seek help.
- Safeguarding has a high profile across the school, including in the boarding provision. Pupils know who the designated safeguarding leads are for the school, and trust them. Strong risk management practices are in place, which secure pupils' safety and well-being.
- Leaders liaise persistently and productively with a wide range of outside agencies, including at times of exceptional circumstances, to provide the right support to all who need it. Leaders are mindful of the needs of the staff and wider community. A comprehensive framework of meetings enables appropriate implementation of jointly agreed safeguarding strategies. The school's regular contact with the safer schools officer has forged valuable and constructive relationships between staff, pupils and parents.
- Boarders are aware of the school's robust procedure for dealing with rare occasions when pupils are absent without authority. Boarders understand that the procedure is there to protect them. If they are late, they keep in telephone contact with staff members; they explain the reasons and give an estimated arrival time to the boarding house.
- Good maintenance arrangements and regular checks ensure that the physical environment of the school is safe, and health and safety legislation is adhered to.
- The school's single central register shows that all staff have been vetted appropriately. However, the administration of some staff files is not as organised as it should be. Improvements were made during the inspection.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement because developments made since the previous inspection are not embedded across the school. There is too much variation in how well teaching meets leaders' raised expectations. However, there are early indications of impact of the improvements made over the last two years. Pupils have made better progress over the last academic year.
- There is variability within and between subject areas regarding how well teachers use pupil performance information to plan their teaching. This means that some pupils, including the most able pupils, do not make enough progress because teachers do not provide them with the right levels of support and challenge.
- When teachers' expectations are too low, pupils are not able to fulfil their potential. Teachers do not enable pupils to apply their existing knowledge to develop their learning. Pupils are not able to embark productively on a task when their teachers'

explanations are not clear.

- Where teaching is strongest, teachers apply their specialist subject knowledge to motivate pupils. They use questions thoughtfully to extend pupils' thinking and refine their use of technical vocabulary.
- When teachers manage class discussions well, pupils are willing to share ideas and support each other's learning. They are eager to show how much they know and want to learn more. There are positive relationships between pupils and their teachers, which helps to build pupils' confidence and perseverance.
- Teachers draw well on pupils' existing knowledge and apply subjects to current issues to reinforce and deepen pupils' learning of new topics. Teachers address sensitive and controversial topics skilfully and this prompts pupils to debate and reflect.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- A full programme of personal, social, health, and economic education, tutor times and assemblies enable pupils to cover a wide range of themes related to their health and well-being. Leaders are responsive to local incidents and issues. They ensure that themes such as child sexual exploitation, e-safety and cyber bullying are addressed responsibly in assemblies and other activities, often involving outside specialists. These opportunities help pupils to be alert to risks to their welfare and alleviate any concerns they may have.
- The school provides a range of extra-curricular opportunities. All teachers contribute to activities that enable pupils to boost their studies and catch up in areas they find difficult. Pupils are appreciative of these opportunities.
- The newly introduced integrated learning centre is becoming established as a positive working environment where pupils receive intensive support with individual programmes of study. Leaders determine the optimum curriculum and timetable to suit pupils' needs and to help them achieve well.
- Pupils interact well with each other and are very accepting of each other's faiths and beliefs. They say they feel safe in school and know that they have a member of staff to turn to if they have any worries.
- The school maintains regular contact with alternative provision to organise and review programmes, when needed, to help individual pupils to improve their engagement with their learning.
- Pupils reported that they feel safe in school, including in the boarding provision. Parents who responded to Parent View, and to surveys carried out by the school, expressed their confidence that their children are kept safe in school.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are confident, welcoming and appreciative of their education and all that the staff do for them.
- Pupils are familiar with the behaviour policy. They speak highly of helpful initiatives, such as the class charts and reward systems that have led to improved behaviour.
- Pupils told inspectors about ways in which behaviour has improved because everyone has an awareness of what is expected. They said there is a more settled and friendly atmosphere. Leaders' records show that previous trends in negative behaviour have reduced substantially due to the new systems and promotion of pupils' can-do attitudes to learning.
- Leaders' analysis of pupils' attendance has led to a range of targeted interventions for individuals and groups of pupils who are absent too often. The school provides intensive support for some pupils who have particular challenges to their learning. Leaders' actions have been successful in helping some pupils to improve their attendance. However, overall, attendance is not improving swiftly enough.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Leaders' strategies to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment are beginning to translate into improved outcomes for pupils. There is clear capacity for further improvement; however, currently pupils do not make sustained progress across the school and their outcomes require improvement.
- In recent years, achievement at the end of key stage 4 for all subjects and groups of pupils has been significantly below average. Higher-quality teaching and intensive additional interventions have led to some improvement in pupils' outcomes in most subjects at the end of the academic year 2017/18.
- The school's accurate assessments and the work in pupils' books indicate a similar trend of improvement across the school.
- Pupils from most starting points and in most subjects, including English and mathematics, make better progress than previously. Most-able pupils do not attain as well as they should when their work is too easy and they are not challenged to achieve their best.
- Leaders provide appropriate support to pupils who have barriers to their learning, including those who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities. Leaders carefully consider individual pupils' needs to enable them to make progress and be well prepared for their next steps in education and/or employment.
- Boarders receive individualised support to help remove and overcome any difficulties that hinder their educational attainment. Pupils who attend the boarding provision generally achieve slightly better than their peers.

16 to 19 study programmes

Good

- Leaders monitor all aspects of the sixth-form provision well. They ensure that teachers receive the right support to develop their work in the sixth form, and facilitate links with other post-16 provision to share good practice.
- Leaders have ensured that teachers hone the skills associated with sixth-form teaching. Teachers build on their subject specialisms to guide students through more-demanding areas of the curriculum, and model ways in which students' responses are assessed. Students' confidence and ability to apply their knowledge grow over time.
- In the majority of academic and vocational courses, and from students' different starting points, achievement has improved over the last year. Students performed especially well in mathematics, English literature and history.
- Students appreciate the close community of the sixth form and the school, as a whole. Their tutors and teachers provide valuable one-to-one guidance with specific aspects of their studies, as identified through regular assessments. Students collaborate well, discussing and helping each other with their work. They demonstrate a high level of engagement and commitment to their studies.
- Students receive helpful guidance on how to manage their time, with the allocation of 'orange hours'. This is extra time devoted to subjects in which students are falling behind. They respond well to the incentive of extra privileges as their self-organisation improves.
- Leaders work hard to maximise the curriculum offer. The school links with other schools to enable students to study subjects of their choosing, and relevant to their interests and career aspirations.
- Students appreciate the experiences of the additional responsibilities that come with joining the sixth form. The student leadership team helps to run school events and advocates being 'THA proud'. They model good examples of qualities, such as regard for your peers, yourself and your environment.
- All sixth-form students are involved in supporting the learning of younger pupils, sharing their skills and knowledge in different subjects, and are strong role models. These opportunities, alongside a rich programme of careers education and work experience, mean that increasing numbers of students make successful applications for the courses and careers of their choice.

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people in the boarding provision

Good

- Boarders have positive experiences of boarding. They told inspectors that they enjoyed boarding and were happy at the boarding house. Boarders typically commented: 'I could not be in a better place. I have the support I need and my own space.'
- A sensitively developed induction procedure enables new boarders to settle in ease. Boarders said that they felt very welcomed. Leaders' organisation of a trip to a white-water centre provided a good opportunity for new pupils to get to know each other.
- Good arrangements are in place for boarders to keep in touch with their parents or carers, and to spend time with their families or guardians at weekends, with a prior arrangement. The communication between boarding staff and parents is strong and

positive. This facilitates boarders' sense of safety and security.

- Boarders feel listened to and know that their views count. They enjoy positive relationships with staff members. They said that they felt that staff care for them and are there to support them with anything that they need. This helps their positive engagement and self-esteem.
- Boarders have positive attitudes towards learning. They benefit from having easy access to additional tuition at the school, and receive help with their studies at the boarding house.
- The boarding house has an inclusive atmosphere. Boarders enjoy being in the multicultural environment and learning from each other about different ways of life. They are respectful and caring individuals.
- Boarders have active and healthy lifestyles. They benefit from being able to use the school's extensive sporting facilities in the evenings and at weekends. Staff support boarders' fitness, competitive spirit and high achievements, without placing unreasonably heavy demands on them.
- Boarders develop their social skills and friendships with their peers. Engaging in recreational and sporting activities together fosters an atmosphere of camaraderie and companionship. They enjoy returning to the boarding house to socialise and relax, where there is always somebody to talk to, so they do not feel alone.
- Staff mindfully support boarders' emotional well-being, development and positive attitudes towards themselves and each other. The reinforcement of the message that each person is valued simply for who they are has a positive impact on boarders' confidence. Boarders value the opportunity to speak to a qualified counsellor, if they choose, on a regular basis.
- The boarding house is spacious, comfortable and clean. Staff support boarders to develop independent living skills and teach them how to cook and care for their environment and possessions. The boarders appreciate the opportunities that exist for them in the boarding provision, and make the most of them.

School details

Unique reference number	135004
Social care unique reference number	SC459411
Local authority	Hillingdon
Inspection number	10048499

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection of boarding provision was carried out under the Children Act 1989, as amended by the Care Standards Act 2000, having regard to the national minimum standards for boarding schools.

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	494
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	81
Number of boarders on roll	22
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	John Wilcox
Headteacher	Tash Moriarty
Telephone number	01895 827852
Website	http://www.theharefieldacademy.org
Email address	headteacher@theharefieldacademy.org
Date of previous inspection	June 2017

Information about this school

- The Harefield Academy is smaller than the average-sized secondary school. It includes a boarding provision that can accommodate up to 46 pupils.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is less than

average.

- Approximately two thirds of pupils represent White British heritage. Overall, pupils represent a wide range of ethnic backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils who receive support with SEN and/or disabilities is close to the national average, while slightly more than average have an education, health and care plan.
- An average proportion of pupils is eligible for support from the pupil premium funding.
- The school makes use of some alternative provision for pupils at The Jubilee Academy, 73–77 Lowlands Road, Harrow, HA1 3AW.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors held meetings with: senior leaders; the chair of the governing body and a staff governor; the safer schools officer; members of staff; and groups of pupils. Inspectors also held telephone conversations with a representative of the local authority, an external adviser, and a senior leader at alternative provision used by the school.
- Inspectors visited classrooms in all year groups and most subjects to observe learning, often accompanied by school leaders. Samples of pupils' work were looked at in lessons and separately. Inspectors visited classrooms during tutor time and attended an assembly.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour around the school, including at breaktimes and lunchtimes, and the boarders' dinnertime and evening activities. Inspectors held informal conversations with pupils and staff.
- A wide range of the school's documentation was evaluated, including: the self-evaluation and improvement planning; minutes of meetings of the governing body; records relating to the safeguarding of pupils, including the checks made of staff; achievement information; and records and case studies relating to pupils' attendance and behaviour.
- Nineteen responses to Parent View, the Ofsted online survey, and the findings of surveys carried out by the school were considered. One inspector held telephone conversations with parents at their request. The 32 responses to the staff survey and 88 responses to the pupil survey were also considered.

Inspection team

Amanda Carter-Fraser, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Jennifer Bax	Ofsted Inspector
Aruna Sharma	Ofsted Inspector
Ian Morris	Ofsted Inspector
Seka Graovac	Social Care Regulatory Inspector
Kate Malleson	Her Majesty's Inspector

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Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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