

Harris Academy Orpington

Tintagel Road, Orpington, Kent BR5 4LG

Inspection dates

25–26 June 2019

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
16 to 19 study programmes	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Leaders, including trustees and governors, have not secured consistently good teaching, behaviour or outcomes for pupils.
- Teachers' use of assessment to match learning to pupils' differing needs is inconsistent. Consequently, in some lessons the work is too challenging and in others too easy.
- Teachers' questioning is not consistently effective in identifying whether all groups of pupils have understood the work set. Teachers' practice in using questioning to probe and deepen pupils' understanding is variable.
- Some pupils receive very little homework as part of their curriculum. Not enough pupils value or enjoy reading for pleasure.
- Teaching quality has been undermined by turbulence in staffing. Many pupils reported that their learning has been affected negatively by regular changes of staff.
- The strong outcomes achieved by Year 11 pupils in 2017 were not sustained last year. Progress in GCSE science and in the humanities was significantly below average. Attainment in these subjects was low.
- Too many pupils are temporarily excluded from the school, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The proportion of permanent exclusions, though reduced, remains higher than average.
- Some groups of pupils, including pupils with SEND and disadvantaged pupils, do not attend school regularly enough.
- Considerable numbers of parents have moved their children to other schools or chosen to educate their children at home. Leaders say these decisions were made without pressure from the school.

The school has the following strengths

- Leaders are determined to improve the life chances of the pupils the school serves. They have made clear improvements to the quality of education provided by the predecessor school. Year 11 pupils achieved well in the academy's first year of operation.
- Students in the sixth form are taught well and achieve well. Sixth formers speak very positively about the quality of education they receive.
- Leaders and staff work hard and effectively to ensure that pupils on roll are safe.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of leadership and management, by:
 - working more effectively with parents so that fewer pupils leave part-way through their education
 - strengthening partnership-working with the local authority to further develop initiatives to engage parents in the local community who are harder to reach
 - ensuring that governors hold leaders fully to account for patterns of pupil movement and exclusions, particularly exclusions for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND
 - sharing the best teaching practice in the school more widely so that pupils receive consistently good quality teaching.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning, assessment and outcomes for all groups of pupils, by:
 - strengthening teachers' use of assessment in lessons so that learning activities match, more consistently, the needs of all groups of pupils and that the pupils who need additional help receive timely support
 - strengthening teachers' use of questioning to probe and extend pupils' understanding more deeply
 - strengthening strategies to build pupils' love of reading
 - ensuring that homework is set consistently and is used effectively to consolidate pupils' learning and deepen their understanding.
- Improve pupils' personal development and behaviour by further developing strategies to boost their enjoyment of school, their love of learning and their understanding of the value of education, so that:
 - the proportion of pupils who are subject to fixed-term and permanent exclusions, particularly pupils who are disadvantaged and pupils with SEND, is reduced
 - the number of pupils who are sent to the behaviour zone is reduced
 - the attendance of pupils who are persistently absent from school, especially disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND, improves.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Despite their high aspirations for pupils, leaders have not yet secured consistently good quality teaching, learning, behaviour or attendance. The strong academic performance achieved by Year 11 pupils who left the school in 2017 was not sustained last year. Leaders were not quick enough in identifying that outcomes were likely to decline in some subjects, particularly science.
- Strategies to engage all groups of parents and pupils have not been effective enough. Although the number of pupils who leave the school part-way through secondary school is reducing, it remains too high and is much higher than typically seen. In the current academic year 18 pupils have left the school roll to be educated at home. The majority of these pupils are from the Gypsy, Roma, Traveller community.
- Leaders have recently begun to work with the local authority to find ways of working more effectively with members of the Gypsy, Roma, Traveller community. Leaders have begun to explore the findings of a recent House of Commons select committee report to see how this work can be developed further.
- Parents' views about the school are mixed. For example, of the 39 parents who completed the Ofsted questionnaire, Parent View, 69% said they would not recommend the school to another parent. Almost all of the 34 comments received from parents using the Ofsted free-text service were negative. The school's own surveys of parents' views are more positive.
- The recently appointed head of academy is beginning to have a positive impact in improving the attitudes of pupils in the school and their sense of being valued and listened to.
- Leaders have not managed to reduce fixed-term exclusions quickly enough. Too many pupils are excluded and too many of them are from disadvantaged backgrounds or are pupils with SEND. The proportion of pupils who are persistently absent is higher this year than last year. Disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND are represented disproportionately in these figures.
- Leaders have recognised that, in the past, their diagnosis of some vulnerable pupils' often complex needs has not been undertaken quickly enough. This year, they have used a range of funding, including special educational needs and pupil premium funding, to provide a plethora of support for the pupils who present the most challenging behaviour. This includes speech, communication and language therapy, support for mental health and specialist provision for pupils who have previously refused to come to school. These are promising initiatives and have resulted in some successes. The impact on pupils' behaviour and attendance remains mixed, however.
- Leaders' strong ambitions are reflected in the high proportion of pupils who pursue courses which contribute to the English Baccalaureate. Their strategies to improve the quality of teaching to match this aspirational curriculum have been hampered by difficulties in recruiting and retaining staff.
- Nevertheless, staff who met with inspectors and/or completed the Ofsted questionnaire value highly the quality of support and training they receive from leaders with the

school and from the trust.

- Leaders regularly review the curriculum as they endeavour to strengthen pupils' achievement quickly but sustainably. Most decisions are well merited. For example, leaders have increased provision for modern foreign languages (MFL) in key stage 3 to give pupils more time to develop their knowledge, understanding and skills.
- Leaders have also made changes to the humanities curriculum by ensuring that younger pupils now receive discrete teaching in history, geography and religious education (RE). These changes are beginning to have an impact though have not had time to improve outcomes in the humanities subjects by the end of key stage 4. Leaders have extended the school day on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays for older pupils to help raise their achievement.
- Last year, however, virtually all pupils in Year 11 were entered for an English language qualification marketed clearly as a qualification for pupils or adults who speak English as an additional language. This was despite the fact 95% of the cohort spoke English as their first language. Year 12 students who took the qualification last year said they did not know why they were entered and received little teaching in preparation. Current leaders acknowledge that the mass-entry to this qualification, initiated by leaders who have left since the academy, was inappropriate. Governors have ensured that this practice has stopped.
- Leaders have clear plans in place to ensure that pupils follow the key stage 3 curriculum for the full three years from September 2019. The current two-year key stage 3 curriculum does not allow sufficient time for teachers to fully embed pupils' basic skills and their subject-specific understanding before they embark on GCSE courses.
- Leaders promote fundamental British values effectively through a personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum which has improved this year because it is delivered through discrete teaching. Good provision for enrichment contributes to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Governance of the school

- Governors and trustees share leaders' determination to improve the life chances of children from the local community. Trustees have a strong track record in quickly improving schools which previously have failed pupils.
- Governors monitor the impact of most aspects of the school's provision well. They challenge leaders effectively about the information they are given, for example regarding pupils' achievement. Governors make regular visits to the school to support their monitoring of leaders' work.
- Governors now ensure that pupils are entered for qualifications that are genuinely in pupils' best interests.
- Governors have not challenged leaders stringently enough about the impact of the school's behaviour policy on pupils with SEND or the reasons why considerable numbers of pupils have left the school part way through their education.
- The school benefits from wide-ranging expertise and support from the trust. Teachers have benefited from the support of subject-specialist employees of the trust in

developing the curriculum. Middle leaders receive good-quality training provided by the trust.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders and staff are vigilant in identifying children who are potentially at risk of harm. They work closely with external agencies, including social care and the police, to ensure that the school's safeguarding practice responds to emerging local risks or incidents which occur in the local community.
- Higher proportions of staff than is usually seen have received the enhanced training provided for leaders of safeguarding. This reflects leaders' acute awareness of the risks faced by some members of the school community.
- Leaders ensure that pupils are well informed about how to manage risk. Pupils are able to articulate the characteristics of healthy relationships, the dangers of drugs misuse and the importance of staying safe and behaving responsibly and within the law when using social media or electronic devices.
- All the necessary checks on staff are carried out in line with statutory requirements.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- There is good teaching in the school but, overall, the quality of teaching is not consistent enough to ensure that the needs of all groups of pupils are met.
- Where teaching is most effective, for example in English, drama, geography and MFL, lessons are carefully scaffolded and sequenced to enable pupils to tackle increasingly difficult work. In these lessons, pupils respond well to teachers' high expectations and express their ideas using subject-specific vocabulary and demonstrate increasingly nuanced understanding.
- Similarly, where teaching is stronger, teachers quickly identify which pupils need additional help and adapt their teaching accordingly.
- Teachers' use of questioning to ensure that all groups of pupils have understood the content being learned is too variable. In some lessons, teachers move the learning on without realising that not all pupils have understood the previous task securely.
- Questioning is often quick-fire and superficial and does not allow pupils time to really consider their answers and develop their thinking deeply.
- Lessons are not consistently pitched at the right level. For example, in some of the mathematics lessons observed, the work set for the most able groups was too easy. In others the work was too difficult. In some lessons, pupils spend too long copying information from text books, information sheets or the whiteboard.
- Pupils reported that their learning has been affected in a number of subjects by frequent changes to staffing. They appreciate the school's very recent reorganisation of the curriculum, now that Year 11 pupils have left, to ensure that permanent staff are more equitably deployed.
- Some teachers are skilled at developing pupils' confidence, enjoyment and speaking

and listening skills. They do this through well-structured opportunities for discussion, for example in Spanish and English. This practice is not consistent, however. Some of the pupils who find learning more difficult told inspectors they do not enjoy lessons in some subjects because they are expected to work independently and in silence for extended periods of time.

- Homework is set inconsistently. Some pupils report that they get lots of homework but others that they receive barely any, including pupils in Years 9 and 10.
- Strategies have been developed to promote reading across the school, particularly through the use of form time. These have not had sufficient impact in ensuring that pupils develop a love of reading or value books as a source of learning and personal enrichment.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- While some pupils enjoy school most of the time, including around half of the pupils who completed the Ofsted questionnaire, others do not. Many of the pupils who spoke with inspectors were very negative about school. These pupils were critical of the quality of teaching and the management of behaviour. Some these pupils found it hard to identify something they liked about school.
- Leaders' high expectations with regard to pupils' behaviour have led to initiatives which have caused resentment and a sense of injustice among some pupils. Some expressed frustration that they are isolated from their normal lessons for what they consider to be minor breaches of the school's uniform policy. Many pupils are resentful about the restrictions placed on their access to toilets. Leaders acknowledge that they need to do more to ensure that pupils understand the reasons for these policies and the intended benefits to their learning and well-being.
- Pupils do not think that the school's behaviour policy is always applied fairly or consistently by their teachers.
- Pupils report that they feel safe in school and know who to approach if they have any concerns.
- Pupils are well informed about how to manage potential risks to their safety and well-being. They receive good provision for sex and relationship education, which includes teaching about the characteristics of healthy relationships.
- Pupils also understand the importance of respecting people regardless of any differences, including those relating to religious beliefs and sexual orientation. Although the number of recorded racist incidents is low, some pupils reported that disputes between different pupils can sometimes lead to divisions between different groups of pupils along ethnic lines.
- Pupils benefit from good provision for independent careers advice. Leaders promote their own sixth form but ensure that pupils are very well informed about alternative

options for post-16 education and training.

- The most able pupils receive excellent opportunities to enhance their personal development through the 'Harris experience'. Recently, some of these pupils visited 10 Downing Street. Others have visited prestigious universities. Pupils value these opportunities very much.
- Other pupils benefit from an appropriate range of extra-curricular provision in sports and the arts.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Although the number of exclusions has reduced each year since the academy opened, too many pupils continue to be excluded from school. Similarly, while the proportion of pupils removed from lessons for poor behaviour has reduced it remains too high.
- Pupils told inspectors that behaviour can be very poor when lessons are taught by temporary staff.
- During the inspection, most pupils behaved well, followed their teachers' instructions and worked productively.
- Pupils bring the correct equipment to school and start working quickly in lessons to complete the 'do now' activities set by their teachers.
- Very high levels of supervision are required, however, to ensure that pupils move quickly and sensibly between lessons.
- Overall attendance is currently lower than last year. This is because the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent from school has increased. This is particularly the case for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND.
- Strategies to improve the attendance of pupils who are particularly reluctant to come to school have had some impact but not enough. Leaders continue to work tenaciously to try to tackle this problem.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Leaders had an immediate impact in improving outcomes for Year 11 pupils who left the academy at the end of its first year of operation. These pupils achieved well across a range of subjects, including in English, mathematics and science.
- Performance information for these pupils showed they achieved well in their options subjects. However, the figures reflect the very high entry levels into a computing skills qualification where, both in the school and nationally, pupils gain grades far in excess of those they are able to achieve in other subjects. These qualifications were not counted in the government's performance tables after 2017. None of the school's pupils have been entered for this qualification since 2017.
- The strong progress seen by the end of Year 11 in 2017 was not sustained last year. Pupils' achievement in English and mathematics was broadly average. This resulted in a dip in attainment in mathematics in particular. As a result, the proportion of pupils

attaining a standard pass in both English and mathematics declined from being close to average to being 9% below.

- Progress in science and in the humanities subjects was significantly below average last year and attainment in double science, geography, history and RE was well below the national average. Leaders attribute these weaknesses to staffing difficulties during the year which, inevitably, have impacted on other year groups, as was reported to inspectors by some of the pupils they met. The small minority of high-attaining pupils who took qualifications in the three separate sciences made better progress in science overall than the other pupils.
- Real improvements have been made in MFL, resulting in outcomes by the end of Year 11 being broadly average last year, having been significantly below average. This includes the disadvantaged pupils.
- Disadvantaged pupils' achievement overall declined last year. In 2017, disadvantaged pupils generally achieved in line with non-disadvantaged pupils nationally. In 2018, they achieved significantly less well than non-disadvantaged pupils nationally overall, in mathematics, in science and in humanities.
- The school's internal performance information suggests that current pupils are achieving better and their projections for current Year 11 pupils are more positive. Minutes from meetings of the local governing body show, however, that they queried the 2018 GCSE results because they were lower than had been predicted.
- Observations in lessons, which included scrutiny of pupils' work, show that outcomes for current pupils remain variable. While some pupils are achieving well over time, including for example in English, physical education and MFL, progress across the school is not consistent enough.
- This year, strategies have been introduced to increase pupils' exposure to reading. These have not yet resulted in pupils electing to read widely or often.

16 to 19 study programmes

Good

- Students' achievement in the sixth form is good. Last year, for example, students made progress in line with other students nationally in the overwhelming majority of subjects. Progress in mathematics was strong.
- Sixth-form students have received more consistent teaching over time than other pupils in the school. They report that staffing has been stable and that their learning benefits from their teachers' strong subject knowledge.
- Sixth formers reported very positively on their teachers' willingness to provide extra help when they need it. They appreciate the good combination of support they are given but also how teaching helps develop their independence.
- At the time of the inspection, a large proportion of sixth formers had already completed their accredited qualifications in vocational subjects with considerable success.
- Students who retake GCSE qualifications in English and/or mathematics achieve well because they are taught well, given sufficient curriculum time and motivated to gain these important qualifications. Achievement in Level 2 in English and mathematics is

much better than seen nationally.

- The sixth form is well led. Leaders monitor students' achievement and attendance very closely and intervene when students need additional support. They also monitor the quality of teaching and use performance information to identify priorities. For example, leaders noted that the most able students achieved less well than others in 2018. As a result, they have ensured that this group is prioritised in their monitoring and evaluation and in the training provided for sixth-form teachers.
- Students' experiences are enhanced by a good range of non-qualification activity, including the Duke of Edinburgh's Award and weekly opportunities to coach primary school pupils in sports. Good provision for PSHE is also provided in the sixth form and is valued by the students.
- Sixth formers benefit from meaningful work experience which is well-matched to the qualifications they are taking and their career aspirations. Leaders ensure that sixth formers are very well informed about the options available to them when they leave school, including through visits to universities and talks from local apprenticeship providers.

School details

Unique reference number	143427
Local authority	Bromley
Inspection number	10088864

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

Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
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	863
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	115
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of the local governing body	Beverley Johnston
Executive Principal	David Astin
Telephone number	01689 819219
Website	http://www.harrisorpington.org.uk
Email address	info@harrisorpington.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Harris Academy Orpington opened in September 2016. The predecessor school was previously inspected in March 2016 and found to be inadequate.
- The school is part of the Harris Federation, a large multi-academy trust which includes 47 primary and secondary academies. Responsibility for the governance of the school sits with the board of trustees. The board delegates considerable power to a local committee, known as the local governing body, including oversight of the school's leadership and management.
- The school is slightly smaller than the average secondary school. The school is non-selective in an area of selective education. While there are high-prior-attaining pupils

on roll, pupils' attainment on entry is well below average overall.

- The large majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds. A wide range of minority ethnic groups make up around one quarter of the school population. This includes pupils of Gypsy Roma heritage.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is much higher than average, as is the proportion of pupils entitled to SEND support. The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan decreased last year and is now broadly average.
- A very small number of pupils attend alternative provision. This includes Harris Aspire and Bromley Trust Academy.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning across a wide range of subjects in Years 7 to 10. They also observed a very small proportion of teaching in Year 12. Most of the observations were carried out with members of the school’s leadership team.
- At the time of the inspection, no Year 11 pupils or Year 13 students were in school as these pupils had completed their public examinations. Year 12 students were on study leave preparing for internal examinations.
- Inspectors met formally with a wide range of pupils, including those they selected for interview and pupils chosen by the school. They also spoke to pupils in lessons and at lunchtime.
- Inspectors held meetings with senior leaders and other staff, representatives from the multi-academy trust, including the chief executive officer and the chair of the local governing body. They also spoke to representatives from the local authority.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation, including leaders’ evaluation of the school’s effectiveness, minutes of meetings of the local governing body and information about pupils’ attendance, behaviour, attainment and progress. Inspectors also scrutinised the school’s records of pupils who have been taken off roll, including those whose parents have chosen to home educate their children.
- Inspectors considered the responses of the 39 parents, 52 pupils and 58 members of staff who completed Ofsted online questionnaires. They also considered the 34 responses from parents using the Ofsted free-text service.

Inspection team

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Sunday Ellis	Ofsted Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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