

Inspection of Hollis Academy

Saltersgill Avenue, Middlesbrough TS4 3JS

Inspection dates: 24–25 September 2019

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Not previously inspected

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders aim to provide pupils with the learning and experiences they need to lead independent and fulfilling lives. The school is getting better at making this a reality. Staff focus on pupils' safety and health in lessons. Teachers tell pupils how important it is to attend school. This helps pupils to understand how school can help them to get good jobs or college places when they leave. Year on year, pupils leave Year 11 with more qualifications. Most pupils move on to college or a job when they leave.

The behaviour of pupils is much better now than in the past. There are still some pupils that do not always behave well. Some pupils do not move sensibly in corridors when changing lesson or returning from breaktime. Pupils told inspectors that there is some bullying but that teachers always try to sort this out. Some pupils said that this is not always successful. Systems are in place to keep pupils safe. These work well. Most pupils feel safe and receive the social and emotional support that they need. This helps them to concentrate on their learning.

Pupils' personal development is a priority. For example, leaders make sure that there is a focus on skills that will help pupils get a job. Some changes in personal, social and health education (PSHE) are new. Leaders are aware that there is still more to do but improvements are under way.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

The standards that pupils reach are rising. In the past, teachers did not clearly map out what pupils should learn, step by step. Teachers did not make sure that pupils grasped the basics before moving on. They did not go over key information enough to make sure that pupils did not forget it. Some pupils are therefore working at a lower standard than they should be across a range of subjects. This is particularly the case in mathematics.

In other subjects, curriculum leaders are at the top of their game. In food technology, teachers make sure that pupils think hard and work hard. Staff plug gaps in pupils' knowledge and build on their understanding one step at a time. The curriculum aims high for pupils. Pupils like this. They concentrate and achieve well. This is not the case in all subjects. Curriculum plans are very new in some subjects. These include history, geography, religious education (RE) and PSHE.

Leaders have made sure that pupils leave school with more qualifications. In 2019, pupils left with a wider range of qualifications than they did in 2018. This included GCSEs. However, many of these qualifications were too basic for some pupils. Leaders expect more from pupils now. Things are moving in the right direction.

Careers education has a high priority. This is a strength of the school. Leaders work well with businesses and local employers. This helps pupils to understand the world of work. Leaders ensure that pupils receive helpful advice about their next steps. Parents and carers are invited to join in activities about possible careers for their

children. This helps them to support their children as they prepare to leave school after Year 11.

School leaders have improved pupils' behaviour and attitudes. Leaders are making sure that everyone expects better behaviour from pupils. This is working but there is still a way to go. Some pupils still do not behave well. Too many are disrespectful towards each other and members of staff. This sometimes includes swearing. The attendance of some pupils needs to improve.

Fewer pupils now work with employers and businesses as part of the curriculum. A greater proportion of pupils study academic subjects, as well as developing practical workplace skills. This is helping to raise standards overall.

There is a focus on 'our local heritage' in different subjects, often through outdoor education. This helps to motivate pupils and to involve them in their local community. For example, pupils have the opportunity to take part in kayaking and gorge walking. Teachers use the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme to make sure that pupils contribute to their local community. Activities such as art, games and football help to develop pupils' resilience and independence.

The trust's support has been crucial in helping leaders and staff to improve. The school is still on a journey. There is much more to do. Nonetheless, strong leadership from the very top is transforming the school for the better.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Systems and procedures to keep pupils safe are tight. Leaders check that members of staff are suitable to work with children. Staff are aware of their responsibilities in keeping children safe. Staff pass on any concerns to the appropriate person or external agency.

Programmes are in place to help pupils to manage their feelings and emotions. Staff understand pupils' social, emotional and mental health needs. Pupils have access to counselling, nurses and other external support agencies. The 'personal learning centre' is a warm and comforting space which helps pupils to stay calm if they are finding things very difficult.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The way in which curriculum leaders map out what pupils should learn, step by step, is strong in some subjects, such as food technology. This is not the case in all subjects. Curriculum leaders should ensure that the knowledge and skills that pupils need to acquire at each stage are understood by teachers. Teachers should ensure that pupils grasp the basics in each subject. They should revisit crucial knowledge and ensure that it is securely understood by pupils before moving on.
- Leaders have changed curriculum plans for some subjects, including history, geography and RE. These changes have only been in place for a few weeks. Leaders should check how effective these changes are. Leaders need to ensure that these changes lead to higher standards than in the past. Changes to PSHE are also new. Leaders need to ensure that this subject has a positive impact on pupils' personal development.
- Leaders are increasingly ambitious for their pupils. The number and range of qualifications achieved by Year 11 pupils have been increasing year on year. However, some have been at too low a level. Leaders should make sure that the qualifications achieved by pupils reflect their abilities more closely.
- Leaders have ensured that the behaviour of pupils has improved. They should further improve pupils' behaviour at unstructured times and reduce the prevalence of bad language. Leaders should ensure that pupils are more respectful to each other and to members of staff.
- Some teachers choose teaching strategies with the knowledge of the particular needs of their pupils at the forefront of their mind. Pupils concentrate on their work, feel safe and regulate their behaviour more successfully as a result. Leaders should ensure that this becomes the norm in all classrooms.
- When pupils move to Hollis Academy, their attendance often increases compared to that at their previous school. Leaders should continue to encourage strong attendance and work with individual families to encourage non-attenders back into school.
- Subject leadership is underdeveloped. Leaders should ensure that teachers in all subjects are helped to develop their knowledge and expertise so that everyone can contribute effectively to curriculum design and delivery.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you're not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

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.

School details

Unique reference number	143519
Local authority	Middlesbrough
Inspection number	10110542
Type of school	Special
School category	Academy special sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	73
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Maurice Jones
Principal	Karl Fenton
Website	www.horizonstrust.org.uk/our-academies/hollis-academy
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Hollis Academy meets the needs of pupils with social, emotional and mental health issues, all of whom have an education, health and care plan. Pupils travel from across the Tees Valley and North Yorkshire to attend the school.
- The predecessor school closed in September 2016. The school then reopened as a sponsor-led special academy, under the leadership of Horizons Specialist Academy Trust.
- The school works with outside providers as part of the curriculum offer for pupils. At the time of the inspection, these were Phoenix, Nacro, Right Trax and Redcar and Cleveland College.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspectors met with the executive principal, the principal and members of the senior leadership team. They spoke to the chief executive officer, trustees and members of the academy council.
- Inspectors looked at English, mathematics, art and food technology in detail.

Inspectors talked to leaders and teachers about their curriculum plans. They also talked to pupils about what they knew and remembered in these subjects.

Inspectors looked at pupils' work and discussed this with them.

- Inspectors met with the principal, who is also the designated safeguarding lead. Inspectors also spoke to a colleague with responsibility for safeguarding across the trust. Inspectors looked at a range of documentation relating to safeguarding, including: child protection policies and procedures; absence data; documentation about the use of restrictive physical intervention; and exclusions data.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils across the course of the inspection and asked them about aspects of behaviour and safety. An inspector contacted alternative providers used by the school and checked safeguarding arrangements between the providers and the school.
- Inspectors held meetings with those responsible for pupils' personal development.

Inspection team

Michael Wardle, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Jen Cave

Ofsted Inspector

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