

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 1231  
[www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)



14 November 2019

Mrs Rebecca Iles-Smith  
Principal  
Harris Academy Bermondsey  
55 Southwark Park Road  
London  
SE16 3TZ

Dear Mrs Iles-Smith

### **No formal designation inspection of Harris Academy Bermondsey**

Following my visit with Helen Matthews, Her Majesty's Inspector, Mark Smith, Her Majesty's Inspector, and Bruce Goddard, Ofsted Inspector, to your school on 16–17 October 2019, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings.

This inspection was conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 and in accordance with Ofsted's published procedures for inspecting schools with no formal designation. The inspection was carried out because Her Majesty's Chief Inspector was concerned about the effectiveness of leadership and management in the school and in particular the number of pupils leaving the school from Years 10 and 11 between 2016 and 2018.

### **Evidence**

Inspectors scrutinised the single central record and other documents relating to safeguarding and child protection arrangements. We met with you and senior leaders, including the designated safeguarding lead and the special educational needs coordinator (SENCo). We also met with a representative of Harris Federation. I spoke on the telephone with the chair of governors. We considered information about pupils leaving the school, particularly in Year 10 and Year 11. Telephone conversations were held with the local authority and an inspector visited an alternative provision. We gathered evidence about four subjects in depth. These were English, mathematics, modern foreign languages and history. We also visited a range of other subjects. We talked to pupils throughout the inspection.

Having considered the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time:

Safeguarding is effective.

## **Context**

Harris Academy Bermondsey is a sponsor-led secondary academy for girls. There are 816 pupils on roll aged from 11 to 18, including a sixth form. Over 60% of pupils are eligible for pupil premium funding. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is just above the national average. You took up your post as principal in January 2018.

## **Leadership and management**

Leaders have detailed information about each pupil who has left the school through elective home education, permanent exclusion, re-location or to another provider such as alternative provision. There are systems in place to ensure that relevant evidence is sought before removing pupils from the school roll. Leaders' record keeping is comprehensive and well organised.

The number of pupils who leave through permanent exclusion is small. None of the pupils who left in recent years to be educated at home had a fixed-term exclusion. This is corroborated by inspection evidence. Pupils at the school say that very few pupils have left because of poor behaviour. Most have left because they re-located.

The school uses two alternative providers, Harris Aspire Academy and Phoenix Place. Leaders check the progress, attendance and behaviour of the pupils at these provisions diligently. Almost all pupils either return to the academy or move on to further education or apprenticeships at the end of Year 11.

The principal and senior leaders are committed to keeping pupils on roll whenever possible. They make sure that pupils get the right support to stay in school and study subjects successfully. Governors monitor pupil movement carefully. The local authority has no concerns about pupil movement off roll or the inappropriate use of alternative provision. Inspection evidence confirms that there are no current concerns about leadership and management and pupil movement.

Leaders ensure that all pupils have a high-quality education. The curriculum is highly ambitious for all pupils. This includes vulnerable pupils, disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND. Pupils across the ability range are highly motivated and enjoy learning.

Subject leaders plan the curriculum well. They build on pupils' prior knowledge and develop sequences of interesting lessons for pupils. These ensure that pupils consolidate what they know, develop their vocabulary and learn new content successfully.

Teachers put their professional training into practice. They plan carefully so as not to overload pupils with too much new work at once. Teachers use assessment to

design regular quizzes for their classes. These ensure pupils remember the work they have done.

Subject leaders, with the SENCo, ensure that the right support for pupils with SEND is in place. Teachers make effective use of information about pupils to adapt the work. They use teaching methods that suit the individual pupil and help them to progress in the subject.

The curriculum is also adapted for pupils in response to the school's context. Leaders place a high priority on reading and a focus on developing pupils' fluency in their number work before moving on to harder work. Subject leaders ensure that pupils improve their general knowledge of the world. For example, in modern foreign languages, pupils learn about the wider Spanish-speaking global community.

### **Safeguarding**

Pupils receive a range of information on how to stay safe through assemblies and the drop-down theme days. Pupils say that they can trust the staff who work with them and know what to do if they are concerned about themselves or a friend.

The members of the safeguarding team are knowledgeable and passionate about keeping pupils safe. They have a thorough understanding of the most common risks in the local community. The systems for keeping pupils safe are robust. There are clear protocols for sharing information and referring pupils so that they can access help quickly. The school can offer a range of help because there are professionals available who can support pupils' specific needs.

### **External support**

Leaders work closely with the local authority safeguarding and inclusion teams. Leaders also receive support and advice from Harris Federation.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body and the chief executive officer or equivalent of the multi-academy trust, the regional schools commissioner and the Director of Children's Services for Southwark. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Janet Hallett  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**