

Inspection of a good school: Harris Academy Peckham

112 Peckham Road, London SE15 5DZ

Inspection dates:

11–12 December 2019

Outcome

Harris Academy Peckham continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils have noticed the improvements that have taken place in the school over the last two years. In particular, behaviour has improved, and most pupils now achieve well in a wide range of subjects at GCSE.

Staff give much thought to how pupils learn. This has resulted in a whole-school approach to teaching that enables pupils to learn more and make stronger progress through the curriculum. However, some teachers require further support to implement the curriculum to the high standards that leaders have rightly set.

Pupils behave well in school and say that they are able to learn. They like the many opportunities that the school offers them. For instance, a wide range of activities is offered after school, ranging from technology activities to sports. These are very popular. Music is a big strength of the school's curriculum. All pupils in Year 7 and the majority of Year 8 learn to play a musical instrument. They also learn about famous composers in depth.

Pupils appreciate the work staff do to keep them safe. They told us that bullying is uncommon, but if it does occur it is quickly dealt with by the teachers. The school's approach is to work with the family to solve any problems. This ensures that the solutions agreed have a positive impact in the longer term.

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

Leaders, governors and trust directors are ambitious to provide a high-quality education to all pupils. Leadership, enquiry, aspiration and perseverance (LEAP) are the school's values. These are known by staff and pupils, and underpin all aspects of the school's work. For example, leaders demonstrate aspiration by ensuring that pupils are well prepared for further education. More pupils are now studying humanities and a modern foreign language. This has increased considerably the number of pupils achieving the English Baccalaureate.

Pupils achieve well in most subjects due to a well-planned curriculum and effective teaching. Disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities also do well. This is because staff really care and give them the right extra help. As a result, pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning continue to improve. Everyone is, and feels, a part of the school community. This makes a considerable difference.

Historically, pupils' achievement in English has been more secure than in mathematics. Leaders have evaluated why this is the case and have clear plans to address this. The actions taken are already beginning to help pupils. They now have more time dedicated to practising and embedding their learning in mathematics.

Pupils in Years 7 and 8 study the full range of national curriculum subjects and will continue doing so in Year 9. Current Year 9 pupils only studied the full national curriculum subjects for two years before starting GCSE options. Leaders' decision to make changes has led to current Year 7 and 8 pupils being able to study all subjects at greater depth and for longer. Leaders have endeavoured to compensate for any gaps in Year 9 pupils' wider knowledge through the 'depth and discovery' programme.

Across all subjects, teachers have thought hard about the important knowledge pupils need to know. Most plan lessons carefully and use thoughtful ways to recap and review knowledge. For example, in history, teachers ask planned questions at the start of a lesson to help pupils recall important knowledge. This helps pupils know and remember more. However, some teachers do not spend enough time giving pupils the background knowledge they need to learn a topic well. This means that, in these instances, pupils do not have enough context about what they are learning. As a result, some pupils find it hard to connect new knowledge with their previous learning and hence do not develop deeper understanding.

The school's commitment to everyone being 'aspirational and persevering' has transformed how pupils view themselves and their learning. The school has active groups that raise awareness about a range of issues, including the environment. Pupils are very accepting of differences and so are confident to express their views. Pupil leadership is strong, whether that is on the sports field or in the classroom. Pupils are prepared well for their next steps in education and given clear impartial advice to support their career choices.

Trust directors and governors play a very important part in driving the school forward. Governors are well informed and hold the principal and leaders to account. They visit the school, talk to pupils, and survey staff. They use the information to inform their strategy and plans for the school.

Staff are very positive and passionate about their work. Leaders and governors are considerate of teachers' workload. They try to think of ways to reduce unnecessary tasks. Teachers appreciate, for instance, assessment points in the year being reduced without this affecting pupils' learning.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders make sure all members of staff are vigilant and know what to do if they have a concern. Pupils said they are confident to talk to staff if they are worried or unhappy. Leaders consult parents and refer cases to social care or the police, when necessary. Records show leaders pursue cases doggedly until they are resolved. Staff work well with a wide range of agencies to give vulnerable pupils excellent help and support. The curriculum includes lessons about safety, so pupils know about risks when online or about threats such as gangs and county lines.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Programmes of study have been planned well. Leaders have provided training to help teachers implement the curriculum. However, the impact of this training has not been fully effective. This is because some teachers do not spend enough time teaching pupils the background knowledge they need. Some pupils find it hard to connect new knowledge with their previous learning. Leaders should review the training they provide to all teachers in all subjects. They should make sure that teachers get the professional support to improve how they implement the curriculum in a way that enables pupils' deeper understanding across all subjects.
- Historically, the impact of the mathematics curriculum has not been as strong as in English. Leaders have analysed the issues well and formulated a clear plan. This focuses on getting the basics right by ensuring that pupils become fluent in the basic operations of mathematics. They should now implement this plan effectively to secure even better outcomes in mathematics.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good school or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the school could now be better than good or that standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged Harris Academy Peckham to be good in September 2015.

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 are 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	134225
Local authority	Southwark
Inspection number	10110413
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	568
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Philip Harris
Principal	Rebecca Hickey (Executive Principal)
Website	www.harrispeckham.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	30 September 2015

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized secondary school. It is part of the Harris Federation, a large multi-academy trust made up of over 40 schools in England.
- The trust delegates important educational functions to a local governing body which holds the school's leaders to account.
- The school makes use of the trust's own off-site provision, Harris Aspire.
- The executive principal is also the acting principal and has been in post since September 2017.

Information about this inspection

- We met with the principal and senior leaders to discuss the quality of education provided by the school. We also met with a wide range of subject leaders, and two groups of teachers who teach different subjects.
- We held discussions with the chief executive officer of the Harris Federation. We also met with four governors, including the chair of the local governing body.
- We held discussions with the designated leader for safeguarding, looked at records, and scrutinised the school's safeguarding practice.

- We observed pupils' behaviour throughout the school day and spoke to staff about pupils' wider development. We also met formally with two groups of pupils across the school and talked to many pupils informally.
- We did deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, languages and history. This entailed discussions with senior leaders, subject leaders, teachers and pupils. We also carried out lesson visits jointly with senior leaders. We scrutinised pupils' work to gain a view about how much they were knowing and remembering in the subjects chosen for inspection.

Inspection team

Nasim Butt, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

John Blaney

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