

Inspection of Harper Green School

Harper Green Road, Farnworth, Bolton, Lancashire BL4 0DH

Inspection dates: 4–5 February 2020

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Good

Previous inspection grade

Not previously inspected under section 5
of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy coming to school. The pupils that we spoke with said that they feel safe in school. Staff and parents and carers agree with this view. Pupils wear their uniform with pride. They are typically polite and courteous to adults and to each other.

Most pupils behave well. Sometimes, there is disruption to learning, but pupils said that staff deal with poor behaviour and incidents of bullying consistently and fairly.

Pupils are benefiting from an improved quality of education. In most subjects, teachers and leaders have high expectations of pupils. That said, pupils cannot achieve as well as they should because some subjects are not well planned or delivered.

Pupils are very appreciative of the pastoral support they receive. They particularly value the highly effective careers information, advice and guidance that they receive. They said that this motivates them to work hard so that they can realise their dreams.

Pupils enjoy attending a wide range of activities on a broad range of themes, such as astronomy, geography, fishing, badminton and music. Pupils are encouraged to try an activity that they have not done before through the 'Commitments' programme.

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

Staff are proud to work at the school and pupils are proud to be all things 'Harper'. The trust has supported leaders well. Members of the local governing body understand the strengths and weaknesses of the school. For example, they have ensured that school finances are balanced while continuing to invest in high-quality training and leadership development. Staff feel that their workload is well managed and that the trust looks after their well-being.

Leaders have invested heavily in improving and developing the quality of middle leadership. This has had a positive impact upon the curriculum planning and delivery of many subjects, including mathematics, modern foreign languages and English.

Many pupils find reading difficult when they enter the school. Leaders have adapted the curriculum well to help pupils become successful and confident readers. For example, in many lessons, pupils are supported to learn new words, understand their meaning and use them in their writing. Special programmes are in place to help pupils who struggle to read fluently. A love of reading is promoted well. This is exemplified by the excellently resourced library which pupils, particularly those in key stage 3, take advantage of. In English and modern foreign languages, leaders have made sure that pupils read a wide range of literature that helps them to find out about the world around them.

The English curriculum is well ordered. Teachers follow this carefully so that pupils build on their knowledge as they move through the school. Pupils achieve well in this subject. Pupils write interestingly and extensively with a focus on technical accuracy. In some other subjects, such as science and humanities, the curriculum is not designed or implemented as effectively. Leaders of these subjects have high aspirations for pupils. However, they have not had the opportunity to put their ambitious plans into place because many of them are new to their role.

Pupils' personal development is built on strong values known as 'We are Harper'. These core values give pupils a clear sense of belonging. This contributes to their positive attitudes to learning. Pupils are keen to be ambassadors for the school. The school council leads many initiatives to improve the lives of others. It spearheaded a campaign to build a new school in Uganda and is rightly proud of its success. Mock interviews, careers fairs and work experience are just some of the activities that support pupils' high-quality careers information, advice and guidance.

Most pupils behave well. Often, the curriculum on offer captures their imagination and they readily absorb new knowledge. Occasionally, in those subjects where the curriculum is less well organised, some pupils lose interest in their learning and they become distracted from their work.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) benefit from targeted support that meets their needs. Their achievement matches that of other pupils. When they are taught a well-planned curriculum, they do well. Pupils in the nurture group benefit from a tailored curriculum that is implemented well. Consequently, these pupils have grown in confidence and ability.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders access training from the local authority and engage well with a range of agencies to support pupils who need early help and those whose families require complex support. The single central record meets requirements. Staff are suitably trained to identify and support those pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Pupils' achievement varies across a range of subjects. The intent and implementation of the curriculum are not consistently well developed across all subjects. This is limiting pupils' knowledge and understanding. Leaders should ensure that the curriculum design is coherent and that it is implemented consistently well across all subjects.

- The quality of curriculum leadership is inconsistent. A number of subject leaders are new to post. Their role is still developing. Consequently, pupils do not achieve as well in these subjects as in others. Leaders should continue to support and develop those leaders who are new to post so that they can contribute more fully to the development and implementation of the curriculum.

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 the school and 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	143772
Local authority	Bolton
Inspection number	10121916
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,319
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of governing body	Anne Quigley
Headteacher	Stephen Gribbon
Website	www.harper-green.bolton.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Harper Green School is part of the Leverhulme Academy Trust.
- A few pupils attend alternative provision part time. The school uses two alternative providers to contribute to pupils' education: Red Box Learning and Tailored Education.

Information about this inspection

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

- We met with members of the senior leadership team, members of the governing body, the chief executive officer and representatives from the trust.
- We did deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, science, modern foreign languages and history. In these subjects, we met with subject leaders, scrutinised curriculum planning, made visits to lessons and spoke with teachers whose lessons were visited, and met with a selection of pupils.
- To make a judgement about safeguarding, we checked the single central record and scrutinised child protection records. We spoke with a broad range of pupils across all key stages and had a discussion with a representative from the local

authority. We scrutinised records of staff safeguarding training, a sample of staff personnel files and other documentation pertaining to safeguarding.

- The views of 36 parents who completed Parent View, Ofsted’s online survey, were considered. This included the 21 free-text responses that were made by parents during the inspection. We took account of 71 responses to the staff questionnaire and 30 responses to the pupil questionnaire.
- We also looked at a range of documentation, including records pertaining to self-evaluation and school improvement. We also considered records and documentation relating to attendance, bullying and behaviour. We took account of a range of curriculum planning, including that related to British values and pupils’ personal development.

Inspection team

Sally Kenyon, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Sharon Asquith	Ofsted Inspector
David Hermit	Ofsted Inspector
Dympna Woods	Ofsted Inspector
Vicky Atherton	Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

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