

Inspection of Harris Academy St John's Wood

Marlborough Hill, London NW8 0NL

Inspection dates: 19–20 November 2019

Overall effectiveness

Good

The quality of education

Good

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Sixth-form provision

Outstanding

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Not previously inspected

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils know that standards of behaviour are given a high priority in this school. Leaders expect nothing less than excellent and that is what they get. All staff, parents and carers are on board to ensure that this happens. It provides the right foundation for strong learning to take place. It also means that pupils feel very safe inside the school.

Leaders have a clear vision for pupils from the start of Year 7 to the end of Year 13. Whatever their background, pupils go on to achieve very well in GCSE examinations and in a wide range of courses in the sixth form. The wider opportunities provided in the sixth form are exceptional. Students know this, which is why so many choose to stay on after Year 11. In key stage 3, however, pupils do not study a broad enough range of subjects in depth. Leaders have suitable plans in place to change this for next year.

Pupils know a great deal about different types of bullying. They told us it is very rare for bullying to happen in the school. That is because it is dealt with swiftly and effectively on the rare occasions it does happen. Staff and parents agree.

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

Leaders, governors and trust directors have made a significant impact on all aspects of the school. They apply their values of 'dedication, determination and destiny' to all that they do. One of their biggest successes has been in developing pupils' attitudes to learning. All staff are well trained and supported in promoting pupils' impeccable behaviour. Teachers build pupils' knowledge and skills effectively. All pupils benefit, in particular those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Disadvantaged pupils achieve very well in the GCSE subjects they take, including English and mathematics.

The trust provides high-quality support for teachers and subject leaders. For example, subject consultants work across the federation to provide guidance for improving the quality of the curriculum. Teachers have strong subject knowledge and plan the teaching of concepts effectively. They know what it means for a pupil to do well in their subject. As a result, pupils build their knowledge and skills in a logical order. This is true for a range of subjects, including English, mathematics and science.

The school teaches the key stage 3 curriculum in Years 7 and 8. Pupils choose two options for Year 9 and, consequently, study fewer subjects in greater depth. There are pupils in Year 9 who do not study history, geography, art or music, for instance. Pupils in Year 9 are taught and assessed well in the subjects they choose. Most go on to achieve well in these subjects by the end of Year 11. Leaders have already started to plan changes to the arrangements for Years 7 to 9 through their 'Curriculum 2020' review. This aims to ensure that all pupils are taught a broad range of subjects in depth, as exemplified by the national curriculum.

Pupils prepare for adult life through a wide range of experiences in school. Additional music and drama activities, for instance, encourage pupils to develop their confidence and belief in themselves. Many take part in the annual school productions, such as 'Bugsy Malone' and 'School of Rock.' Pupils work hard to prepare for these productions, maintaining high attendance and good punctuality for rehearsals.

Sixth-form students are excellent role models for younger pupils and are rightly proud of their own achievements. They rise to the challenges staff set them. Students are taught concepts in a lot of depth and frequently think about the links between different ideas. This does not happen accidentally. In large, it is the result of a well-crafted curriculum. This is supported by teachers who have in-depth knowledge of their subjects. Unsurprisingly, almost all students go on to higher education, many to top universities, including disadvantaged students.

Morale in the school is high. Staff appreciate the actions that the trust has taken to manage workload better and improve their well-being. The partnership with parents is strong and they are highly supportive of the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders are very knowledgeable about the community they serve. Staff have regular training and updates so that they know what to do when a pupil may be at risk. They report concerns quickly. Staff know about the local risks, such as knife crime and the negative influence of gangs. Pupils know about these risks too and are taught how to keep themselves safe. The school works effectively with external agencies, including the local authority, to provide good care for vulnerable pupils.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In Years 7 to 9 some subjects are not taught in enough detail. Leaders, governors and trust directors have not ensured that all pupils in key stage 3 receive a broad and balanced curriculum that is as ambitious as the national curriculum. Leaders have reviewed their current offer and have suitable plans in place. These plans should be realised so that all pupils have universal access to the full 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'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	145126
Local authority	Westminster
Inspection number	10128890
Type of school	Other secondary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,301
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	328
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of trust	Daniel Moynihan
Principal	Graeme Smith
Website	www.harrisstjohnswood.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school is larger 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 uses the following alternative providers to educate a few of its pupils full-time: Westside School in Hammersmith and Fulham, and Kingsway College in Westminster.
- The current principal and executive principal have been in post since September 2019.

Information about this inspection

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

- We met with the principal, executive 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 five groups of teachers who teach different subjects.
- We held discussions with leaders of the Harris Federation, including the chief executive officer. 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 six groups of pupils across the school, including students in the sixth form.
- We considered English, mathematics, science, geography and performing arts (drama and music) in depth as part of this inspection. This entailed discussions with senior leaders, subject leaders, teachers and pupils. We also carried out lesson visits jointly with subject leaders. We scrutinised pupils' work to gain a view of how much they were knowing and remembering in the subjects chosen for inspection.
- We looked at further subjects on the second day of the inspection. These were history, art, design and technology, computing and religious education.

Inspection team

Nasim Butt, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Katerina Christodoulou	Ofsted Inspector
Bec Allott	Ofsted Inspector
Hayley Follett	Ofsted Inspector
Bruce Goddard	Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

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

© Crown copyright 2019