

# Inspection of Horbury Academy

Wakefield Road, Horbury, Wakefield, West Yorkshire WF4 5HE

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Inspection dates: 5 and 6 October 2021

**Overall effectiveness** **Good**

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The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Previous inspection grade Good

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Leaders have high expectations of pupils at Horbury Academy. The curriculum is ambitious for all and builds pupils' confidence. There is a culture that every pupil will succeed. Pupils feel well supported to achieve success. They enjoy coming to school. Pupils say that teachers challenge and help them to do their best.

Most pupils concentrate well in lessons. There is little disruption to learning. Pupils move between lessons calmly. They respect social spaces. Staff use the behaviour and consequences system consistently. As a result, behaviour has improved.

Pupils told inspectors that they feel safe at school. There are clear processes for pupils to report any concerns they have to staff. Pupils are confident that bullying is rare and that teachers act promptly to sort out any concerns. However, some pupils hear hurtful comments from their peers. This can include inappropriate language.

Pupils benefit from a variety of extra-curricular opportunities. There is a range of sports clubs available after school, as well other activities, including music and drama. Year 11 prefects support the pupil council and meet regularly with school leaders, including the principal. Pupils know that their voice is heard by leaders.

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

Leaders have developed an ambitious curriculum for all pupils. Curriculum plans identify the precise knowledge that is most important for pupils to learn and remember. Teachers follow curriculum plans closely. In most subjects, the curriculum is carefully delivered to help pupils remember what they have learned. Teachers skilfully build pupils' knowledge over time. In some subjects in Years 7 to 9, the subject knowledge in curriculum plans is not consistently well organised. This limits the extent to which pupils can build on their prior learning.

Teachers know that some pupils need extra help to learn the curriculum. There are clear support plans for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Teachers and teaching assistants use these plans effectively. Pupils with SEND are supported to work independently alongside their peers.

When pupils join the school, staff check how well they can read. Leaders use this information to quickly identify the pupils who have specific reading difficulties or who are at the early stages of reading. They ensure that pupils get the help they need in order to become confident and fluent readers.

Leaders are firmly focused on ensuring that all pupils move on to ambitious next steps when they finish school. There is a strong careers programme, which starts in Year 7. The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships. Pupils experience the world of work

through a range of activities. Year 11 pupils value the careers advice they have received. They say that the school has prepared them well for their next steps.

The curriculum for pupils' personal development is well planned. Form teachers deliver this effectively, well supported by the leader for personal, social, citizenship and health education. Pupils cover a range of topics, including how to keep themselves healthy and the dangers of inappropriate use of mobile technology. Pupils value these lessons. Some would like to return to key issues, such as domestic abuse, in more depth.

Pupils behave well in lessons. There is a safe, calm and orderly environment that supports learning. A few pupils consider some of the rules to be unjust. However, they understand why the rules are in place. They say that behaviour has improved.

Pupils understand the need to behave respectfully towards others who may be different from them. Most pupils do behave in this way. However, some pupils hear inappropriate language from a few others. Pupils do not consistently report this to staff because they are not confident that it would be addressed.

Despite leaders' focus on improving attendance, too many pupils are persistently absent from school. This is particularly the case for disadvantaged pupils. Senior staff and other leaders work together to support these pupils. Although the COVID-19 pandemic has undoubtedly undermined their efforts, more needs to be done to ensure that these pupils attend school more regularly.

Staff are overwhelmingly positive about the support they have from leaders. They are proud to work at the school. Leaders listen to staff. They have made changes to better manage staff's workload and to support their well-being. The trust's subject directors also teach at the school, and curriculum leaders value the support they give.

Governors are knowledgeable and experienced. Recent training on the curriculum has helped them to support and challenge subject leaders more effectively.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding. Staff, including leaders, are well trained. They know what to do if they have concerns about a child. Staff receive regular safeguarding updates so that they are aware of any emerging risks for pupils, either within or beyond the local area. The safeguarding team works closely with pastoral staff. The school's resource base is used well to support vulnerable pupils. Pupils benefit from a curriculum that enables them to understand what they can do to help to keep themselves safe.

## What does the school need to do to improve?

### (Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects at key stage 3, leaders have not ensured that subject knowledge is well sequenced in the curriculum. This makes it more challenging for pupils to build on their prior knowledge so that they learn and remember more of the curriculum. Leaders should review the curriculum at key stage 3 so that subject knowledge is consistently organised in a way that enables pupils to build on their prior learning.
- A few members of staff do not consistently address pupils' use of inappropriate language. Consequently, some pupils do not always feel confident to make a report when they experience this. Leaders should ensure that systems help pupils to raise concerns and give them faith that issues will be followed up so that inappropriate language is eradicated.
- Too many disadvantaged pupils do not attend school regularly enough. As a result, they miss out on the opportunity to study the full curriculum. Leaders should ensure that their work with these pupils and their families reduces persistent absence.

## 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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	138707
<b>Local authority</b>	Wakefield
<b>Inspection number</b>	10199588
<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1,028
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	John Leam
<b>Principal</b>	Nicola Walker
<b>Website</b>	<a href="https://horbury.accordmat.org/">https://horbury.accordmat.org/</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	20 January 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- Since the previous inspection, there have been significant changes to the membership of the governing body.
- The senior leadership team has been restructured. A new principal is in post. New leaders have been recruited to add further capacity.
- The school is part of Accord Multi-Academy Trust.

## Information about this inspection

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

This was the first routine inspection the school had received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders, and have taken this into account in their evaluation.

- Inspectors met with senior leaders, including the trust's chief executive officer, secondary executive leader and trust subject directors, and a range of staff, including subject leaders, support staff and pastoral staff.

- The lead inspector met with the chair of trustees and three governors, including the vice-chair. Meetings were held with the school's designated safeguarding lead and leaders responsible for behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, mathematics, science and history. They met with subject leaders about their curriculum plans. Inspectors talked with pupils about what they knew and remembered in these subjects. Inspectors looked at pupils' work, visited lessons and talked with teachers.
- Inspectors checked safeguarding arrangements. They looked at safeguarding records to determine how concerns are recorded and followed up. They looked at how leaders ensure that all staff are suitable to work at the school. Inspectors spoke to a number of staff about the training they have received to keep pupils safe. The school's single central record was reviewed.
- The inspection team considered 77 responses to the Ofsted's pupil questionnaire, 38 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire and 84 responses to Ofsted's Parent View questionnaire, including 59 free-text responses. The lead inspector also reviewed an email received from a parent and followed this up with a telephone discussion.

## Inspection team

Eleanor Belfield, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Janet Sheriff

Ofsted Inspector

Garry Stout

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