

# Inspection of Harrogate Grammar School

Arthurs Avenue, Harrogate, North Yorkshire, HG2 0DZ

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Inspection dates: 9 and 10 March 2022

## **Overall effectiveness**

**Outstanding**

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The quality of education

**Outstanding**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Outstanding**

Personal development

**Outstanding**

Leadership and management

**Outstanding**

Sixth-form provision

**Outstanding**

Previous inspection grade

Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

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

Harrogate Grammar School is an extremely rewarding place to learn. Pupils benefit from an exceptional curriculum. They develop deep knowledge and understanding across many subjects. Effective teaching and assessment enable pupils to learn well. This depth of knowledge is sustained from key stage 3 to the sixth form. Pupils achieve extremely well across all subjects and year groups. Leaders ensure that pupils are well equipped for the opportunities that lie ahead.

Pupils' academic experiences are complemented by a strong personal development programme. Pupils learn about the importance of respect in relationships. Bullying and harassment are not tolerated by pupils or staff. Pupils behave extremely well. Teachers cultivate a kind and respectful environment. This helps pupils to learn effectively. The school is a safe place where pupils feel valued.

Pupils benefit from access to an extensive range of activities. Teachers encourage all pupils to take part. Teachers adapt activities to meet pupils' interests. Through sports, outdoor pursuits and performance opportunities, pupils develop their skills and self-confidence. Pupils are articulate and polite. They are keen to engage in discussion and debate. Teachers make sure that pupils' views are heard.

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

Leaders have built an ambitious curriculum. This provides academic challenge for all pupils. A high proportion of pupils follow the English Baccalaureate. At key stage 3, the overwhelming majority of pupils study two modern foreign languages. Curriculum leaders have mapped out what pupils need to learn. Each stage of the learning journey prepares pupils for their next steps. Effective teaching enables pupils to remember important knowledge.

Leaders place a strong emphasis on subject expertise. All teachers are subject specialists. Their knowledge is enriched by high-quality professional development. Teachers work with colleagues across the trust and its wider alliance to develop curriculum plans. Staff from Harrogate Grammar School lead on many subject working groups. Staff use the 'seven principles of teaching and learning' to enhance their practice. Leaders inform teaching with research on how all pupils can best retain knowledge. Pupils can explain how the curriculum creates meaningful links between topics.

Leaders help pupils to develop a clear sense of responsibility. Teachers create a supportive environment. Pupils are attentive to their teachers and to one another. They listen to different opinions and evaluate arguments. Pupils attend well and behave very well. Teachers build an atmosphere of courtesy and respect. Incidences of suspension from school for poor behaviour are low.

Pupils' personal development is as important as their academic progress. Through the 'Big Picture' programme, pupils are taught about equality and diversity. They learn about the importance of respect and consent in relationships. Teachers and pupils do not accept any form of prejudice or harassment. Pupils receive high-quality careers advice. They learn about higher education and apprenticeships. The overwhelming majority move on to further education and employment. An exceptional extra-curricular programme enriches pupils' wider experience.

Teachers support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) well. They adapt the curriculum to help pupils with SEND learn effectively. Leaders ensure that disadvantaged pupils access an ambitious curriculum. Teachers encourage all pupils to read. The library is used well. Staff support pupils who need to catch up with their reading.

The headteacher has built a very strong team of leaders at all levels. Leaders demonstrate clear moral purpose in their actions. They are open and responsive to the views of pupils and staff. Trust leaders and governors provide additional layers of strength. Parents and the wider community contribute to the life of the school. A group of parents reviewed the relationship policy before it went to wider consultation. Parents value the quality of education that their children receive. They appreciated the care and support their children received over the COVID-19 pandemic.

Leaders support staff well. This included support over the pandemic. Leaders have taken practical steps to manage staff workload. Exceptional professional development helps staff to do their jobs well. Staff form a highly motivated team and are proud to work at the school.

The sixth form curriculum is exceptional. Students access an extensive range of subjects. Over 80% of pupils progress to the sixth form. This includes a significant proportion of disadvantaged pupils. There is a strong academic focus. Leaders have introduced new courses to make the curriculum accessible for all. High levels of staff subject expertise carry through to the sixth form. Students talk with remarkable insight about their learning. Students are mature and articulate. These qualities are nurtured by the curriculum and the school's values. Students receive excellent guidance on their next steps. Students achieve highly in all subjects. A very high proportion of students progress to higher education. Pupils are very well prepared for future education and employment.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders maintain a constant focus on the safety and well-being of pupils. Safeguarding leaders are knowledgeable. They provide regular and thorough safeguarding training for all staff. Leaders teach pupils about safety and well-being through a well-designed curriculum. Pupils feel safe because of the supportive environment built by staff.

Leaders liaise with other professionals to check and support pupils' welfare. Leaders follow up any concerns on pupils' safety in a sensitive and prompt manner. They record the actions taken to keep children safe. Leaders carry out thorough checks on the suitability of adults working at school.

## **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>	136497
<b>Local authority</b>	North Yorkshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10211895
<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	2079
<b>Of which, number on roll in the sixth form</b>	646
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trustees</b>	Chris Tulley
<b>Chair of the local governing body</b>	Paul Cotton
<b>Headteacher</b>	Neil Renton
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.harrogategrammar.co.uk/">http://www.harrogategrammar.co.uk/</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- The school is part of The Red Kite Learning Trust, a multi-academy trust comprising 13 schools in the local area. The school is also part of the Red Kite Teaching School Alliance, a wider alliance of schools and partner institutions across the Yorkshire and Humber region.
- The school hosts a teaching school hub. The school is also the lead school for the regional mathematics hub and computing hub programmes.
- The school has significantly more pupils than at the time of its previous inspection.
- The school uses the alternative providers Springwell Harrogate, Strive for Education and Nudge for full-time provision for a very small proportion of pupils.

A number of pupils access alternative provision for parts of their curriculum in addition to their school based studies. These settings include Woodland Adventure, Country Classrooms, Farm Education, Leeds City College and work experience with the Youth Employability Service.

## 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 provider received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the provider and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the provider.
- The inspectors held several discussions with the headteacher, the associate headteacher and senior leaders.
- The inspectors talked to pupils to find out their views on behaviour, safety and relationships.
- The inspectors looked in detail into the curriculum in art and design, English, history, mathematics, modern foreign languages and physical education. The inspectors talked to leaders and teachers about their curriculum plans. The inspectors also talked to pupils about their learning and what they knew and remembered in these subjects and also looked at pupils' work.
- An inspector explored alternative provision. The inspector met pupils who had experienced alternative provision and held telephone conversations with providers.
- The lead inspector met the chief executive officer of the Red Kite Learning Trust. The lead inspector also met members of the board of trustees and members of the local governing body.
- The inspectors checked safeguarding arrangements. The inspectors looked at the school's work to make staff and pupils' aware of safeguarding issues. The inspectors also looked at safeguarding records to see how concerns over pupils' safety were recorded and followed up. The inspectors also explored how leaders checked the suitability of adults working on site.

## Inspection team

Malcolm Kirtley, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Steve Wren	Her Majesty's Inspector
Tim Johnson	Ofsted Inspector
Geoff Lumsdon	Ofsted Inspector
Richard Crane	Ofsted Inspector
Bernard Clark	Ofsted Inspector

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