

Inspection of Harris Academy Riverside

London Road, Purfleet, Essex RM19 1QY

Inspection dates: 22 and 23 February 2022

Overall effectiveness

Good

The quality of education

Good

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Good

Sixth-form provision

Good

Previous inspection grade

Not previously inspected under section 5
of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils feel safe and well cared for at this school. They display exceptional, self-regulated behaviour in lessons and at other times. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Bullying is extremely rare and when it does happen teachers resolve it quickly. Pupils arrive at their lessons quickly and are ready to learn.

Pupils develop strong studying habits. This is because there is an expectation that pupils prepare ahead of time for their lessons. They do this with the help of their teachers.

All pupils attend a range of different activities. This includes over 70 different clubs. They feel well informed about issues that are relevant to them and feel that the school is very welcoming and inclusive. They receive strong pastoral support to help them make the right choices.

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

Leaders have designed a broad and ambitious curriculum. Pupils are helped by teachers to be ready for their subject lessons through independent 'prep' activities and additional lessons. These give pupils the prior knowledge they need to be successful. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) study the full curriculum. Through the design of the curriculum and the quality of teaching, pupils with SEND make good progress.

The curriculum is usually taught effectively. Teachers regularly check pupils' understanding and revisit prior content to ensure pupils remember it. Sometimes, however, teachers do not ensure pupils have the knowledge they need before moving on. This leaves some gaps in what pupils know and can do with the knowledge they do have.

Pupils demonstrate extremely positive behaviour in lessons, at breaktimes and at lunch. Leaders have an expectation of 'calm starts' to lessons. Classical music plays in the corridors between lessons. This contributes to the calm atmosphere as pupils move quickly and quietly to their classrooms. Teachers have high expectations of how pupils should behave in lessons. This is supported by clear and established routines. Pupils' attitudes maximise learning time in lessons. These strong behavioural habits extend to the sixth form. Students demonstrate extremely positive attitudes to their learning.

On the occasions when pupils do not meet the high expectations of teachers, the pastoral team works with them to reflect on and improve their behaviour. The number of incidents of negative behaviour is low and decreases as pupils move through the school.

Leaders have planned a comprehensive programme to contribute to pupils' personal development. Leaders place great emphasis on the programme. Specialist teachers

teach personal, social and health education and relationships and sex education in an age-appropriate way. They do not shy away from difficult issues, such as how to develop and maintain healthy relationships. Pupils value what they learn. They demonstrate excellent knowledge of the wider world and of issues that affect them. They know how to keep safe in the local area and online.

Pupils treat each other with care and respect. They are extremely proud of the diverse nature of their school.

The school has an impressive array of clubs and opportunities available for pupils to participate in. Provision beyond the classroom is generally very well attended, including by pupils with SEND. Leaders monitor the attendance of pupils with SEND at extra-curricular provision. They make sure all pupils with SEND participate. What the school offers is tailored well to the community the school serves and meets its needs well.

Finance and budgeting are part of the personal development programme for every year group. The clear programme of careers education supports pupils from Years 7 to 13 well. Pupils have regular opportunities to engage with employers, as well as with academic and vocational institutions. The school ensures pupils are ready for the next steps in their education. Many pupils who leave school go on to attend highly regarded higher educational institutions.

Leaders, including the local governing body and multi-academy trust (MAT), have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They use resources from within the MAT to improve the quality of education that pupils receive, such as by using subject consultants to work with subject leaders and other staff to implement the curriculum. Despite these positives, some parents do not feel that the school keeps them well informed about aspects of their child's education.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have a very clear understanding of local risks that pupils might experience. Through the personal, social, health and economic curriculum, and a wide range of other opportunities, pupils develop a strong understanding of how to stay safe.

Leaders maintain detailed records of safeguarding incidents. They take swift and appropriate actions when safeguarding incidents occur. Staff are well trained in safeguarding and have a clear understanding of their responsibilities to safeguard pupils.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Teachers do not always check well enough what pupils know before moving on to more complex ideas or activities. This means that pupils have some gaps in their knowledge, making it more difficult to learn new things. Leaders should ensure that teachers check what pupils know more consistently.
- Leaders do not always ensure that there is effective communication with families. As a result, some families do not feel well informed about aspects of their child's education. Leaders should improve the quality of communication that families receive.

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

Unique reference number	144750
Local authority	Thurrock
Inspection number	10212067
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy free school
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	950
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	160
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Philip Harris
Principal	Andrew Betts
Website	www.harrisriverside.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not use alternative provision.

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 received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- During the inspection, inspectors held meetings with senior leaders, subject leaders, teachers, the chair of the governing body and a representative from the MAT.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, science, mathematics, music, physical education and history. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors looked at the single central record of recruitment and vetting checks, a sample of safeguarding records and documents relating to behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors considered 44 responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View, including 44 written responses from parents. They considered survey responses from 35 members of staff.

Inspection team

Marc White, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Jason Carey	Ofsted Inspector
Karen Kerridge	Ofsted Inspector
David Piercy	Ofsted Inspector

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