

Inspection of Harton Academy

Lisle Road, South Shields, Tyne and Wear NE34 6DL

Inspection dates: 1 and 2 March 2022

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Requires improvement
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?

Leaders are compassionate and caring about the pupils in their charge. However, over time, leaders have not maintained close enough oversight of safeguarding systems. This means that there is a risk that all staff do not have accurate information about vulnerable pupils. Although individual staff members act diligently to keep pupils safe, gaps in record-keeping mean that supervision of this area needs to be further strengthened.

A positive and respectful culture is evident in the day-to-day activity of the school. Pupils interact with each other maturely. Pupils are polite and many are positive about their experience of school. Staff know pupils well and pupils reported that they have trusted adults in school. During the COVID-19 pandemic, leaders have identified pupils' mental health as a priority. Consequently, they recently appointed well-being mentors to work with the increasing number of pupils who need this support. Staff feel well supported by leaders, and are proud to be members of this school community.

Leaders and staff share high expectations for pupils' behaviour and academic achievements. Pupils recognise this aspiration and rise to the challenge. Their positive attitudes to learning reflect this ambition.

The majority of pupils and parents feel that bullying does not happen, or is dealt with effectively by staff. However, a minority of pupils feel that bullying is not managed well. Bullying logs show that school takes action when bullying is reported. However, a number of pupils said that they do not report bullying. This means that leaders do not have a clear overview of the situation across the school.

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

Leaders have thought carefully about how to organise their curriculum to make sure that pupils' knowledge builds logically. Leaders have mapped out what pupils should know, and by when. This has been done more precisely in some subject areas than in others. Leaders have considered how to best prepare pupils to succeed academically. They plan links between curriculum subjects so that pupils understand the relevance of what they have learned. For example, science and maths leaders work closely to ensure that pupils make links between physics and maths. Leaders have designed the curriculum in the sixth form to offer a wide range of academic courses to meet students' interests and aspirations, including criminology, economics, sociology and psychology.

Throughout the school, teachers use retrieval practice and careful questioning to help all pupils remember what they have learned. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well supported to access the same curriculum as their peers. Pupils with SEND receive targeted, additional support for reading and mathematics to help them achieve their potential. Struggling readers are identified

early and supported effectively. Leaders also ensure that pupils with SEND receive support to understand and manage their emotions.

Pupils' conduct in lessons and around school is impressive. Staff and pupils treat each other with courtesy. Staff forge positive relationships with pupils and a respectful culture is evident around school. Leaders have consistently high expectations for pupils' behaviour. On occasions where pupils do not meet these high expectations, staff report being well supported by leaders. However, for the small minority of pupils who misbehave more often, there is not a clear system in place to help them make better choices. Leaders have plans in place to address this.

Leaders had identified the personal development of pupils as a priority for the school, and prioritised developing pupils' character. In Years 7 to 9, pupils work towards a personal development award focused around volunteering, physical challenge and learning new skills. At key stages 4 and 5, pupils benefit from a range of opportunities, such as youth parliament, the Duke of Edinburgh's Award and the National Citizenship Service. In the past, these schemes have included expeditions to Nepal and Cambodia. There are also a wide range of extra-curricular opportunities on offer, including debating, drama, music and choir. Pupils talk with enthusiasm about the wide range of extra-curricular sports. Leaders are not monitoring the attendance of these to ensure that all pupils, including disadvantaged and vulnerable pupils, take advantage of this provision.

There is a new curriculum in place for personal, social and health education (PSHE). This is in its early stages, but is planned to ensure that pupils will learn a range of important messages, including around healthy relationships, diversity and mental health. As the curriculum is new, pupils talk with varying levels of confidence about some of these topics. For example, pupils talk confidently about mental health and online safety, but less confidently around equality and relationships. This provision is not currently in place for all sixth-form pupils.

Leaders have ensured that careers provision is a strength of the school. Pupils are well prepared for their next steps. They receive independent and personalised advice to help them make the right choices. Pupils receive information that is relevant to their local area, including higher education routes, apprenticeships and employment. Students in sixth form are well supported through the application process for university.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. However, there are issues in record-keeping which leaders must address. Pupils are kept safe by the actions of staff, but these actions are not always accurately logged. The current system relies too much on the actions of individual members of staff, rather than robust record-keeping.

Leaders take action to keep vulnerable pupils safe and involve external agencies where necessary. However, the accuracy with which these actions have been logged

over time is inconsistent. Leaders have not ensured that these records are meticulously kept. Leaders have recently appointed a non-teaching safeguarding support manager to increase the capacity of the safeguarding team.

Staff are clear about the procedures they should follow if they are concerned about a child. Pupils feel safe in the school. Leaders and staff understand the risks that pupils face in the local area.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have not ensured that accurate records are kept of actions that staff have taken to keep pupils safe. This means that there is a risk that staff will not all have accurate information about vulnerable pupils. Lack of consistently robust records means that leaders cannot assure themselves of how effectively pupils have been supported. Leaders should ensure that more systematic record-keeping around safeguarding is implemented swiftly.
- The PSHE curriculum is not embedded for all year groups. This means that some pupils have not learned about important topics that will prepare them for life in modern Britain. Leaders should ensure that all pupils benefit from the scope of the new 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 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	144204
Local authority	South Tyneside
Inspection number	10212568
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy converter
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	1654
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	303
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Scott Duffy
Headteacher	Sir Ken Gibson
Website	www.harton-tc.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school does not use any 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.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in the following subjects: mathematics, science, history, modern foreign languages and art. Here, they met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum planning, visited a sample of lessons, talked to pupils, looked at samples of pupils' work and met with teaching staff.

- Inspectors held meetings with a range of leaders, including members of the trust and the local governing body. They met with leaders responsible for careers, reading, sixth-form provision and curriculum. They also met with the special educational needs and/or disabilities coordinator and the subject leader of social and cultural studies.
- Inspectors looked at pupils’ punctuality, behaviour and conduct across the school day. An inspector spoke to pupils who had received sanctions in the past. Inspectors spoke to staff about how well pupils conduct themselves.
- Inspectors spoke to leaders in charge of safeguarding arrangements. An inspector checked the single central record. Inspectors looked at records of the actions taken by leaders to protect pupils who are at risk. Inspectors spoke to staff about safeguarding procedures in school. Inspectors spoke with pupils about how safe they felt in school.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documents, including the school improvement plan, the school’s self-evaluation, wider curriculum plans, minutes of governors’ meetings, fire-drill documentation and external reviews.
- Inspectors took account of the 531 responses to the pupil survey and the 157 responses to the staff survey. They also considered the 123 responses to Ofsted’s online survey, Parent View, including 119 free-text responses.

Inspection team

Katherine Spurr, lead inspector	Her Majesty’s Inspector
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John Linkins	Her Majesty’s Inspector
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Steve Wren	Her Majesty’s Inspector
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