

Inspection of Harris Professional Skills Sixth Form

Inspection dates: 3 to 5 May 2022

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Education programmes for young people	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this provider

Harris Professional Skills Sixth Form is a new 16 to 19 academy set up to provide vocational education to prepare students for work or transition to further or higher education. There are 186 students on education programmes for young people. The academy is part of the Harris Federation, which runs academies across London.

The academy offers a varied range of programmes designed to meet local employment needs, including in areas such as construction, manufacturing, business and health and social care. Students are also offered the opportunity to take, or resit, GCSE qualifications that they may need to progress further.

What is it like to be a learner with this provider?

Students trust that staff and the safeguarding team are there to take care of them. Staff provide a very nurturing environment and provide effective pastoral care. As a result, students feel comfortable turning to staff for support if they have worries or concerns. Students feel safe and secure at the academy.

Students appreciate the way that staff care about their academic progress. Staff provide students with good individual support as well as helping them in small groups. For example, staff teach revision preparation sessions ahead of examinations as well as additional literacy workshops. This support helps students to make good progress.

Students benefit from excellent specialist support for their welfare and well-being. Students are offered the chance to attend therapeutic sessions. For example, they are able to meet with counsellors and life coaches, which helps students to maintain or improve their emotional well-being.

Students have the chance to take up activities to develop their wider interests, such as football, cookery and basketball. However, students say that they would like to see this offer expanded so it covers a wider range of activities, including more subject-related trips and visits.

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

Leaders and managers have carefully considered the curriculum on offer. They ensure that the curriculum reflects local skills shortages and job opportunities. Leaders have designed the curriculum to be suited to students who have not achieved as well as they hoped in secondary school, and who need alternative routes to succeed. The vast majority of students move on to positive next steps at the end of their courses. For example, a very high proportion of students progress to study at a higher level.

Teachers accurately assess what students know and can do at the start of their programmes. They then use this information well to plan teaching and adjust individual learning plans. Consequently, teachers know which areas to focus on when teaching individual students.

Teachers have good subject expertise and knowledge of employment in their respective sectors. They use this to explain topics clearly, give good practical skills demonstrations and use work scenarios so students know how what they learn is applied in real situations. In taking students through scenarios, they also teach students the problem-solving and communication skills they need. For example, in construction, when plastering, teachers question learners on how they would correct a mistake on a new-build property and whom they would report the mistake to.

Leaders and teachers sequence curriculum plans logically. For example, in level 3 business, teachers start by teaching key foundation concepts, such as the different departments of a business, including marketing and finance. They then move on to more complex topics in Year 13, such as project management. As a result, students are able to draw upon their understanding of theories and concepts from earlier on in their programme to help them to plan their own projects.

In lessons, most teachers question students skilfully to assess what they know and can do. Teachers break questions down to help students to build up their answers if they struggle. Teachers also ask follow-up questions to check how well students understand topics. As a result, teachers check effectively that students understand fully what they have been taught.

Most teachers use effective teaching techniques in lessons to help students to understand and remember what they have been taught. For example, teachers use recap tasks at the start of lessons to check what students have remembered from previous lessons. For example, health and social care students remember what they have learned about healthy eating and sexual health from earlier on in the course and can draw upon this knowledge to develop health campaigns.

Most teachers provide constructive feedback on assignments and classwork. As a result, students' work improves over time and is at or above the standard of the qualification level. For example, in health and social care, students make good use of subject terminology, and they are able to expand upon their written work as the course progresses.

Leaders and tutors place a strong focus on attendance. Tutors follow up absences thoroughly, placing students on report if their attendance falls below the academy target. Tutors also hold improvement meetings and invite parents or carers to attend. As a result, attendance is good and is improving.

Teachers help students to develop their confidence. For example, through working on presentations and practical activities, students are encouraged to present and demonstrate their skills in front of the whole class. They also provide one another with feedback about how they can improve their skills further. This helps students to develop the confidence they may need for work or their next steps in education.

Most students benefit from careers advice and guidance. For example, level 3 students receive support with university applications and personal statements. However, while leaders put in place sessions to develop students' understanding of other routes, such as apprenticeships or employment, students' knowledge about these options is more superficial. As a result, some students are unclear about the full range of possibilities available to them once they complete their course.

Teachers do not ensure that level 1 construction students are developing their writing skills sufficiently. For example, there are few opportunities for students to practise writing in paragraphs. Teachers do not highlight spelling, punctuation and

grammar errors in students' work. As a result, students do not develop the writing skills they will need to study at a higher level, or for work.

Leaders promote fundamental British values through the academy's personal, social and health curriculum, as well as in themed assemblies. However, at level 3, tutors do not repeat this content sufficiently. Consequently, too few level 3 students can remember what they have been taught about British values and how these apply to their lives.

Governors and leaders do not take a comprehensive enough approach to self-evaluation. For example, subject leaders are not trained to evaluate the quality of education in their own subject areas. As such, leaders struggle to identify the specific areas of the provision requiring development. This prevents further improvement.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Designated safeguarding leads (DSLs) are appropriately trained for their roles. They provide annual training to all staff to update their knowledge of safeguarding and the 'Prevent' duty, as well as sharing recent developments. Leaders work closely with partner organisations, such as the local police and local authority, to tailor their training to reflect the risks to students in the local community.

DSLs have a good awareness of the range of issues that their students may face in their lives, such as criminal and sexual exploitation and the risks of gang affiliation. DSLs ensure the safeguarding curriculum reflects the issues that students commonly face, using safeguarding records to prioritise topics.

Staff teach students about harmful sexual behaviour through the sex and relationships curriculum. However, the content does not always match the age and developmental stage of students. Consequently, it does not prepare students adequately for situations they may face.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Leaders need to ensure that they develop the curriculum for fundamental British values, so that level 3 students remember what they have been taught and understand how these values apply in their lives.
- Leaders and teachers of construction need to ensure that students have more opportunities to develop their writing skills, so that students are better prepared for their next stage of education, or for work.
- Governors and leaders need to ensure that they take a more thorough approach to self-evaluation, to have a clearer understanding of the areas of the provision that require further development, so they can improve the provision further.

Provider details

Unique reference number	145197
Address	11 Oliver Grove London SE25 6EJ
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Website	www.harrisps6f.org.uk
Principal/CEO	Andrew Barr
Provider type	16-19 academy
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
Main subcontractors	Not applicable

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the principal, as nominee. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. The inspection was carried out using the [further education and skills inspection handbook](#) and took into account all relevant provision at the provider. Inspectors collected a wide range of evidence to inform judgements, including visiting learning sessions, scrutinising learners' work, seeking the views of learners, staff and other stakeholders, and examining the provider's documentation and records.

Inspection team

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