

# Inspection of a good school: Harborne Academy

Harborne Road, Edgbaston, Birmingham, West Midlands B15 3JL

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Inspection dates:

15 and 16 November 2022

## **Outcome**

Harborne Academy continues to be a good school.

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

'Aspire, Believe, Achieve' is at the heart of Harborne Academy. Aspirational words and images surround pupils in corridors and classrooms. Pupils welcome these. Pupils and staff share positive and respectful relationships. Pupils value the support staff give them. This motivates pupils to achieve well, and they do. Pupils are happy and safe at school.

There is a purposeful atmosphere around school. Learning is rarely disrupted by inappropriate behaviour. Teachers act quickly and efficiently to address any behaviour issues. During social times, pupils behave very well. Pupils report few instances of bullying. If bullying occurs, leaders deal with it swiftly and effectively.

Leaders have made recent changes to their ambitious curriculum, especially in key stage 3. In many subjects, teachers ensure that pupils learn and remember key knowledge to help them learn new things.

Pupils regularly take part in a range of clubs. For example, sports clubs run alongside board games in the atrium every lunchtime. The 'coding club' supports pupils interested in computer science. Year 9 pupils lead a well-used library every breaktime and lunchtime. Pupils respect this space. They revise, read for pleasure and research information to support their learning.

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

Senior and curriculum leaders work together to discuss and evaluate the curriculum. This helps them to continue to develop and improve it. For example, to promote an English Baccalaureate curriculum in line with the government's ambition, leaders introduced Spanish into the Year 7 curriculum. All pupils follow the same ambitious and broad curriculum. Leaders' actions to improve the curriculum have led to improved pupils' outcomes by the end of key stage 4.

Curriculum leaders have identified the key knowledge that pupils need to learn. The order of knowledge is also clearly set out. For example, in Year 11 religious education, pupils use their previous knowledge of different faiths to develop arguments around their current work on healthy relationships. However, some teachers do not consistently use accurate subject-specific language. When this happens, pupils do not learn the correct knowledge.

Most teachers check what pupils have remembered through targeted questioning. They use this information to identify and address any gaps in pupils' knowledge quickly. This helps pupils to know and remember more over time. However, some teachers do not check what pupils know and remember well enough. This means that any gaps in pupils' knowledge persist and makes it harder for them to learn new things.

Leaders identify and support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) effectively. Leaders ensure that all pupils access the same, ambitious curriculum. Teachers are clear about how to support pupils with SEND. They adapt the curriculum to meet their needs. This means that pupils with SEND can successfully access learning and achieve well.

Leaders prioritise reading effectively through tutorial sessions and whole class reading texts. They identify pupils who need extra support with their reading. Additional support includes teaching pupils phonics. This helps pupils to become confident and fluent readers. Leaders are now prioritising pupils' wider reading outside the school day.

Pupils' personal development is exceptionally well supported. Leaders have a well-planned programme of personal, social, health and economic education. Pupils learn about topics such as healthy relationships, fundamental British values and online safety. This helps pupils to feel safe and well prepared for the wider world. A comprehensive careers programme is in place. Pupils have opportunities to discuss careers, university aspirations and apprenticeships. Pupils in Year 10 value the opportunity to complete work experience. This prepares pupils well for the next stages of their education, employment or training.

Governors have a clear and precise understanding of the school and its priorities. They promote an honest and transparent relationship with leaders. Governors provide effective challenge and support to leaders. This helps to ensure the school continues to improve.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders say that safeguarding 'never stops'. Safeguarding leaders are visible in person and on displays around the school. Safeguarding is embedded in the culture where all staff are urged to report any concerns. Staff receive extensive training which is updated throughout the year. Leaders are quick to identify any pupils at risk of harm. External agencies are contacted quickly when early help is required.

Pupils know who to talk to and how they can report any concerns they have. Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe, including online.

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

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

- Not all teachers use the correct subject-specific vocabulary consistently. This means that pupils develop misunderstandings and misconceptions on some occasions. Leaders should ensure that all teachers use accurate subject-specific vocabulary to ensure that pupils do not learn incorrect subject knowledge.
- Some teachers do not use assessments effectively to check what pupils know and can remember in a few subjects. Therefore, some pupils have gaps in their learning which makes it harder for them to learn new things. Leaders should ensure that all teachers regularly check what pupils have learned so that any gaps in learning are identified and addressed quickly.

## Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in June 2017.

## 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.

## 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>	136213
<b>Local authority</b>	Birmingham
<b>Inspection number</b>	10240678
<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Academy sponsor-led
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	606
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Susan Woodward
<b>Headteacher</b>	Sarah Ross
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.harborneacademy.co.uk/">www.harborneacademy.co.uk/</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	20 and 21 June 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The headteacher was appointed in July 2021 and was previously the deputy headteacher.
- Leaders do not make use of any alternative provision.
- 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.

## Information about this inspection

- 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 focused on the following deep dives: English, mathematics, modern foreign languages and religious education. Inspectors examined leaders' curriculum planning, visited lessons, looked at pupils' work and talked with pupils about the way these subjects are taught. They also looked at other subjects to check how they are planned and taught.

- Inspectors reviewed a range of school documents. These included information about behaviour, attendance, the school’s curriculum and improvement planning. The school website was also checked.
- Inspectors talked to staff and leaders about safeguarding arrangements. They examined how leaders make employment checks on staff and scrutinised further safeguarding records. They also asked how incidents reported by pupils are recorded and analysed.
- Inspectors observed informal times of the day to evaluate safeguarding and pupils’ behaviour.
- Inspectors held meetings with governors, the headteacher, senior leaders, lead professionals, teachers and pupils. They also talked informally to pupils and staff to gather information about school life.
- Inspectors considered responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, and free-text comments. Inspectors also considered Ofsted’s staff survey and pupil survey.

### **Inspection team**

Stuart Clarkson, lead inspector

His Majesty’s Inspector

Steve Byatt

Ofsted Inspector

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