

# Inspection of school: Harris Invictus Academy Croydon

88 London Road, Croydon CR0 2TB

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Inspection dates:

18 and 19 January 2023

## Outcome

Harris Invictus Academy Croydon continues to be an outstanding school.

## What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils, teachers and leaders appreciate and celebrate the diversity of their community. They described the school as being like a family. Leaders and teachers have high expectations of all pupils. This helps to ensure that pupils have these for themselves.

The learning of all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), is supported and extended by the demanding curriculum. Pupils build very successfully on their learning from previous lessons and previous years. Leaders have given meticulous thought to how pupils should develop knowledge and remember it in the long term. Pupils spoke positively about how well they have been prepared for their next steps.

Leaders ensure that there are plentiful extra-curricular and leadership activities on offer. All pupils are proud to fundraise for charity. Younger pupils raise money for the local community and sixth-form students support the work of international organisations. A sense of community is fostered through the school's house system. This forms part of leaders' high-quality programme to promote pupils' wider personal development.

Pupils show excellent attitudes in lessons. They readily offer their answers to questions posed by teachers and ask for further clarification when needed. Bullying or misbehaviour are both rare. If they do occur, staff respond quickly and effectively. Pupils know that staff are ready and available to help them when they need it. Pupils are kept safe.

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

The curriculum is highly ambitious for all pupils at the school, including for those in the sixth form. It is planned with great thought to support each pupil, irrespective of their needs, to acquire and remember detailed knowledge. The English curriculum provides a good example of this. The sequencing of subject content enables pupils to revisit and consolidate key knowledge. For example, pupils begin to understand the language and themes of Shakespeare's work by studying sonnets in Year 7. Their understanding is

extended further in Year 8 through the study of *Much Ado About Nothing*, where pupils explore themes related to honour, marriage and patriarchy. This means that pupils are well prepared to deepen their understanding of these themes when they read *Romeo and Juliet* in Year 9. Activities which enable pupils to recall what they have been taught, both recently and in previous years, are woven seamlessly into teaching. Because of this, pupils are supported to remember their learning deeply and securely.

Leaders continually seek to make the curriculum even better. In the music curriculum, for example, they have introduced musical tuition in the trumpet and violin for all pupils in Years 7 and 8. This means that pupils develop the knowledge that they need to successfully tackle more complex subject content, including musical composition.

Assessment is used effectively to help pupils to learn well. Teachers are skilled in making adaptations to ensure that pupils master subject content. This is supplemented, when needed, by personalised extra help from staff.

Leaders and teachers work together to ensure that pupils with SEND progress successfully through the curriculum. Pupils' additional needs are identified as soon as they start at the school. Individual plans are created for pupils and these identify the key adaptations and support that need to be used. Teachers follow this guidance consistently.

Weaker readers are also quickly identified when they join the school. These pupils receive an appropriate phonics programme to support them to catch up. Leaders work actively to ensure that pupils develop a life-long love of reading.

Leaders have high expectations of behaviour. Teachers and pupils understand these and the behaviour system. This leads to calm and appropriate behaviour throughout the school.

From Year 7 through to the sixth form, pupils receive a thoroughly planned and carefully implemented personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme. Teachers receive specific training to ensure that they can deliver the programme effectively. Other aspects of leaders' work to promote pupils' wider development are also of high quality. Pupils have many opportunities to take on leadership roles, whether in their tutor group, house or on a whole-school level. Pupils take part in a wide range of clubs. Basketball is a particularly popular option. Pupils also play in musical ensembles and participate in enrichment activities linked to their academic study.

From Year 7, leaders ensure that all pupils have meaningful encounters with employers. Impartial guidance, including from external professionals, enables pupils to make informed choices about their future.

Leaders, including governors, are unrelenting in ensuring that pupils at this school get the very best opportunities for success. Part of their work in doing this has been to set ambitious goals for the number of pupils who will be taking the English Baccalaureate qualification. High-quality professional development is available for all members of staff. Leaders also take account of staff workload and well-being.

## Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders understand the local context, and this is well communicated to staff. Leaders ensure that appropriate training is delivered and that the effectiveness of it is reviewed regularly. All members of staff fully understand their safeguarding role and how to correctly follow the safeguarding policy and associated procedures. Leaders and staff are rigorous in their approach to keeping pupils' safe and promoting their welfare.

Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe. This happens throughout the wider personal development programme and, in particular, through their PSHE lessons.

## Background

When we have judged a school to be outstanding, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains outstanding. 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 outstanding in September 2016.

## 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>	140952
<b>Local authority</b>	Croydon
<b>Inspection number</b>	10240551
<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Academy free school
<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>	1026
<b>Of which, number on roll in the sixth form</b>	117
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Alan Palmer
<b>Executive principal</b>	Lisa Kattenhorn
<b>Head of school</b>	Dougal Scott
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.harrisinvictus.org.uk">www.harrisinvictus.org.uk</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	29 and 30 September 2016, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- Since the previous inspection, a new executive principal has been appointed.
- The school makes use of two alternative providers, both of which are registered as schools.

## Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this ungraded inspection under section 8 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 met with the executive principal and senior leaders. They also met with the chair of the governing body and trustees.
- The inspection team carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, languages and music. Inspectors discussed the curriculum with leaders, visited lessons, reviewed pupils' work, met with pupils to discuss their learning, and met with subject leaders and teachers.
- Inspectors also visited lessons and reviewed pupils' work in some other subjects.
- Through discussions with leaders, governors, pupils and staff, inspectors considered how effectively pupils are safeguarded. Inspectors also looked at records relating to safeguarding, including records of checks carried out before staff are appointed.
- Inspectors met with pupils to discuss aspects of safeguarding. They spoke to pupils during lesson visits. Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and at breaktimes and lunchtimes. The inspection team spoke to staff about behaviour and about their workload in the school.
- Inspectors considered responses to the parent and carer, pupil and staff surveys.

### **Inspection team**

Luke Stubbles, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Simon Conway

His Majesty's Inspector

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