

Inspection of Harper Green School

Harper Green Road, Farnworth, Bolton, Lancashire BL4 0DH

Inspection dates: 10 and 11 January 2023

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Previous inspection grade Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are proud to attend this school. They describe it to inspectors as being a safe and friendly place. Pupils value staff at the school and appreciate how well they know them each individually. Pupils and staff told inspectors that the school's values underpin all aspects of school life. The values to 'take part, work hard and do the right thing' were seen in action during the inspection.

Leaders have set out high expectations for both behaviour and learning. Pupils understand what is required from them. Pupils focus well on their work in lessons. They engage with their activities in lessons. Incidents of bullying or discrimination are taken seriously by leaders and sanctioned appropriately.

Around the school site, pupils are polite and well mannered. They ensure that they look out for each other and for staff with a caring attitude. Pupils told inspectors that they enjoy a range of opportunities to contribute to their community. They take up chances to widen their skills through new activities that are available to them during and after school.

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

Leaders have thought carefully about the curriculum that they want their pupils to learn. They have created a well-organised and ambitious curriculum for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Leaders have focused on making sure that they have clearly identified what pupils need to know at each stage of their learning before they move on to the next stage.

Leaders have designed an effective process to assess pupils' learning. This means that any gaps in learning are usually identified quickly. Leaders adapt the curriculum to ensure that pupils know all they need to successfully move on to future learning. Pupils achieve well in most subjects. However, in a few subjects, some pupils do not achieve as well as they should. This is because the training for staff that has been provided to support specific pupils is not always consistently applied.

Leaders have created effective processes to make sure that pupils with SEND are identified and well supported. This includes for pupils who may join the school mid-year. All teachers have had training to support them to adapt their teaching to ensure that all pupils can access the ambitious goals for learning set by leaders.

Leaders have developed a clear programme to support pupils who find reading difficult. Staff are trained to be able to deliver systematic synthetic phonics support to those pupils who need it. For other pupils, a range of well-developed support ensures that pupils' reading is improving. Leaders have prioritised reading across the school. Opportunities are built into the curriculum across all subjects to encourage pupils to see the benefits of reading both fiction and non-fiction books and articles.

Leaders have reviewed their curriculum to encourage an increase in uptake of the English Baccalaureate suite of subjects. There has been a particular focus on the provision in modern foreign languages to enthuse pupils to carry on studying this subject in key stage 4.

There is a positive and welcoming atmosphere around the school. Pupils behave well in both lessons and around the site. They treat each other and adults with respect. The small minority of pupils who do not make the right choices are supported by staff to improve their decisions and behaviour for the future.

Leaders have thought carefully about the opportunities that pupils need to encounter to develop their character. Trips and visits are organised to a wide range of places. The recent introduction of house activities has ensured that all pupils get the chance to try new things. Some aspects of the relationships and sex education (RSE) and health education programmes are not as well thought out as they could be.

Leaders have designed a coherent programme of opportunities to help pupils to make decisions about their future career choices. Pupils are provided with a wide range of information about their options post-16 and post-18.

Leaders, including governors and trustees, have a strong understanding of the priorities for the school. They know the school well. Leaders have thought carefully about the impact of their decisions on the workload of staff. They have created a reflective culture among the staff to be as ambitious for their development as they are for pupils.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have created a strong culture of safeguarding. They have a well-trained team of staff, who specialise in areas of safeguarding that are key to supporting their local community. Leaders understand the risks for their pupils. They have created a programme of support to make sure that pupils can learn how to keep themselves safe.

Leaders have created effective links with a wide range of agencies to ensure that they can support pupils and their families with any needs. Information is recorded effectively and consistently due to clear protocols that leaders have put in place.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The training that staff have received, to meet the learning needs of some pupils, is not applied equally well across subjects. While pupils achieve well overall, the curriculum does not enable some pupils to develop their subject knowledge to the same depth as other pupils. Leaders should ensure that the training staff have received to meet all pupils' learning needs is consistently applied across the full range of subjects.
- Some aspects of the RSE programme are not addressed as well as they could be. This means that some pupils do not always have as strong an understanding of sexual health and relationships as would be age appropriate. Leaders should ensure that they attend to the elements of learning that are required to provide a coherent learning experience for pupils.

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

Unique reference number	143772
Local authority	Bolton
Inspection number	10257097
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1225
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Sarah Horan
Headteacher	Sally Heppenstall
Website	www.harper-green.bolton.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	4 and 5 February 2020, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school has been a member of the Leverhulme Academy Church of England and Community Trust since March 2017.
- Leaders use two registered and two unregistered providers of alternative provision for a small number of pupils.
- The headteacher (head of school) is new in post since the last inspection.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 11 with information about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded 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.
- As part of this inspection, inspectors carried out deep dives in mathematics, history, English, science, art and design and modern foreign languages. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited some lessons, spoke with pupils and teachers, and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, other senior leaders, the special educational needs team, subject leaders and teachers. The lead inspector also spoke with representatives from the trust and the local authority.
- The lead inspector met with governors and talked to the chair of the trust on the telephone.
- Inspectors checked safeguarding procedures, including the recruitment checks made on staff. Inspectors met with the designated safeguarding lead, staff and pupils to discuss wider aspects of safeguarding. They scrutinised a range of documentation in relation to safeguarding.
- Inspectors considered a range of documentation, including that relating to the curriculum, pupils' behaviour, improvement plans and leaders' self-evaluation.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in a range of situations, including in corridors, at breaktimes, at lunchtimes and in lessons. They also spoke with pupils about behaviour and bullying.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils about their programme of wider personal development.
- Inspectors considered the responses from parents and carers to Ofsted Parent View. This includes the comments submitted via the free-text facility.
- Inspectors also considered the responses to Ofsted's staff surveys.
- There were no responses to Ofsted's pupil survey.

Inspection team

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