

Inspection of a good school: Haberdashers' Knights Academy

Launcelot Road, Bromley, Kent BR1 5EB

Inspection dates:

25 and 26 January 2023

Outcome

Haberdashers' Knights Academy continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Staff have high expectations of pupils' learning. Pupils want to learn and are motivated to do so. They are eager to discuss new ideas with their peers and teachers alike. Pupils are well supported to build up their knowledge and skills over time. This is because lessons are typically purposeful. The sixth form has grown in recent years and students appreciate the range of opportunities on offer, both within and beyond the curriculum.

Pupils are safe and feel well supported. They appreciate being able to talk with pastoral staff about any worries that they have. Pupils are clear that bullying is handled swiftly if it does occur. They value the diversity of the school and participate in opportunities which encourage respect for others, such as 'Culture Day' and 'Feminist Club'. Pupils typically behave well because they understand the systems that are in place.

Pupils take part in an extensive range of additional activities and visits, including 'The Open Minds Club' and 'Combined Cadet Force'. All pupils are encouraged to work towards the 'Knights Shield', which recognises pupils' participation in visits, work experience and community events.

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

Leaders have designed an ambitious curriculum that matches what is expected nationally. The important knowledge that pupils need to learn has been identified and logically sequenced so that pupils' learning develops cumulatively from the primary phase. This supports pupils to build their understanding effectively over time. For example, in mathematics, younger pupils learn about key concepts such as prime numbers and factors. This supports them to understand and solve more complex algebraic equations in key stage 4 and 5. Similarly, in art, pupils study different artistic movements. As a result, pupils engage in more complex dialogue and debate about what influences the work of artists. This helps pupils to identify next steps in the development of their own artwork.

Teachers have strong subject knowledge and use this effectively to present ideas. They routinely check pupils' understanding of what they are learning. This ensures that any misconceptions are swiftly identified and corrected. As a result, pupils are typically well placed to tackle more challenging concepts because they have practised and embedded simpler ideas. However, on occasion, the activities that pupils complete are not well matched to the ambition of the planned curriculum. In these instances, teaching does not focus on the most important ideas and pupils are less well prepared to learn and remember important subject content.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) access the same curriculum as their peers. Leaders consider the needs of these pupils when designing the curriculum. As a result, pupils with SEND are well supported to build up their knowledge over time. Leaders have prioritised pupils' reading. Pupils who need more support with their reading are quickly identified. They receive the help they need to access the curriculum, including phonics. Leaders regularly check what pupils learn through this extra support. This enables the support to be tailored to meet the needs of these pupils.

Leaders have high expectations of behaviour. Any instances of low-level disruption in lessons are managed swiftly. During the inspection, a small number of concerns were shared about discriminatory remarks between pupils. Leaders are aware of this and are taking steps to ensure their expectations continue to be consistently met by all pupils.

The curriculum supporting pupils' personal development is ambitious. Careful sequencing aims to support pupils to deepen their knowledge of important issues such as physical health and emotional well-being. Pupils are taught to respect others, including those who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender. Pupils appreciate the wide range of information they receive about further education, employment and training.

School and trust leaders work together closely to review the school's effectiveness. As a result, they have a clear sense of what is working well and have identified appropriate areas for further development.

Staff at all levels are positive about working at the school. They appreciate the opportunities they have for professional development. The majority of staff feel that their workload is well considered.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders are clear that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Regular training takes place for staff. As a result, any concerns that arise are reported in a timely way. The safeguarding team responds appropriately, making referrals to external agencies where necessary. Leaders analyse key trends in safeguarding to adapt what pupils are taught about staying safe. For example, pupils are helped to understand healthy relationships and the importance of addressing misogyny.

The school carries out thorough checks when recruiting new staff. Leaders regularly review their safeguarding practices. Governors receive regular training and play a key role in these reviews.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, the activities pupils complete do not match the ambition of the planned curriculum. As a result, pupils do not consistently secure the knowledge and understanding they need to tackle more challenging ideas. Leaders should ensure that the ambitious goals of the curriculum are consistently implemented so that pupils are able to learn and remember more.

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

Unique reference number	135070
Local authority	Lewisham
Inspection number	10255441
Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School category	Academy sponsor-led
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	1294
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	291
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Nick Scarles
Principal	Dr Tesca Bennett (Executive Principal)
Website	www.habsknights.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	27 and 28 June 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Leaders make use of eight registered alternative providers.
- 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.

- During the inspection, inspectors held meetings with the principal and other senior leaders. Inspectors met with representatives from the local governing body and staff from the Haberdashers' Academies Trust South, including the chief executive officer.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in mathematics, science, art and modern foreign languages. They met with subject leaders to discuss the curriculum, visited lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with pupils and looked at samples of their work.
- The curriculum in other subjects was also considered as part of the inspection.
- To evaluate safeguarding, inspectors checked procedures for recruiting new members of staff. They also met with leaders to discuss how they put safeguarding policies into practice.
- Inspectors gathered the views of pupils and staff through both discussions and responses to Ofsted's online surveys. There were no responses from parents and carers to the online survey.

Inspection team

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