

Inspection of Harris Academy Orpington

Tintagel Road, Orpington, Kent BR5 4LG

Inspection dates: 24 and 25 May 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Good
Sixth-form provision	Outstanding
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders have established a culture in the school that embodies the school's motto, 'Together, we can'. Pupils develop a strong sense of community. Staff know pupils extremely well and, as a result, pupils are safe and happy. Leaders have developed a broad curriculum. They encourage pupils to respect people from different backgrounds and to challenge stereotypes.

Leaders have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. Pupils are safe, happy and well cared for by staff. They take on many leadership roles in the school, including membership of several student committees. These make a positive difference in the school. For example, pupils contribute to the success of the school's personal development programme.

Typically, pupils are well behaved in lessons and around the school site. In the sixth form, leaders provide students with excellent academic and pastoral support.

Pupils have access to an exceptionally large range of wider opportunities, which most pupils in the school take part in. These include a range of sports and music activities, an environmental group and a cooking club. Students in the sixth form all participate in enrichment activities each week. This includes the Duke of Edinburgh Award and the extended project qualification.

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

Leaders have constructed a curriculum that is ambitious for all. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

In all subjects, leaders design the curriculum so that it builds up important knowledge progressively over time. For example, in geography, pupils in Year 7 learn about geology and how it affects landscapes. In Year 8, pupils build on this through studying plate tectonics and the formation of different types of rocks. Teachers ensure that students in the sixth form deepen their knowledge and understanding very well. In the sixth form, students produce work of a consistently high quality.

Teachers have strong subject knowledge and present information clearly. Sometimes, teachers do not check pupils' understanding and address misconceptions routinely. This means that on these occasions, pupils do not have a firm understanding of content before moving on to new learning.

Leaders identify pupils with SEND effectively. They ensure that specific support is in place for each pupil with SEND to enable them to access the full curriculum.

Leaders place a high priority on reading. They identify any pupils who are at the early stages of reading. Leaders ensure that support for these pupils in reading is effective. This helps pupils to learn to read fluently and with confidence. Pupils read books every week during tutor periods. All pupils in the school visit the library in

small groups to choose books each week. Teachers ensure that pupils select a wide variety of books appropriate to their reading age.

Leaders have high expectations for pupils' behaviour. Should low-level disruption occasionally happen, it is generally addressed swiftly. On occasion, staff's expectations of pupils' behaviour, including their attention in lessons, are not as high. As a result, some pupils do not show a consistently positive attitude to their work.

Leaders have developed an exceptionally high-quality personal development programme, including in the sixth form. They have considered the needs of pupils carefully when designing the curriculum. This means that teachers help pupils to understand how to stay safe and look after their physical and mental health.

Pupils enjoy a wide range of extra-curricular opportunities, including outings to museums, galleries and the opera, and visitors to the school. Many students in the sixth form volunteer widely around the school, including helping readers in Year 7, mentoring younger pupils and supporting pupils' learning in lessons.

Leaders have developed an extensive careers programme. Teachers support students in the sixth form extremely well to make choices about their future education and employment. All students access a range of opportunities, including visiting universities and talks from apprenticeship providers. Leaders make sure that students receive personal mentoring to help with applications to university courses.

Leaders help to look after the health and welfare of staff. They explore strategies where possible to minimise staff's workload. Staff are supported well with their professional development. Leaders have built extremely strong relationships with parents, carers and members of the local community. The governing body has a firm understanding of the strengths and priorities of the school. It ensures there is a clear strategic vision and provides challenge and support to leaders.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have developed an extremely strong culture of safeguarding in the school. They have built strong relationships with parents and carers to provide bespoke support. Leaders work effectively with various external agencies to provide specialist support for pupils.

Staff are well trained and understand how to identify and report any concerns. Leaders are highly alert to any emerging local safeguarding risks. Leaders take swift actions to any concerns raised.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Sometimes, teaching does not check pupils' understanding and identify misconceptions. This means that pupils are not fully ready to learn new content. The school should develop the expertise of all teachers so that they identify and address any gaps in pupils' understanding consistently.
- On occasion, staff's expectations of pupils' attitudes to learning, including their attention in lessons, lack ambition. As a result, some pupils do not demonstrate a consistently positive attitude to their work. Leaders should ensure that all staff have consistently high standards for the quality of work produced and support pupils to concentrate during lessons.

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 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	143427
Local authority	Bromley
Inspection number	10268253
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	603
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	121
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Lord Harris of Peckham
Executive Principal	David Astin
Website	www.harrisorpington.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	25 and 26 June 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 7 to 13 with information about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.
- The school uses one registered alternative provider.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first 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 principal, school leaders, pupils and a range of staff. They also met with the chair of the local governing body and members of the trust.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in the following subjects: English, geography, art and science. For each deep dive, inspectors spoke to subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, discussed with pupils about their learning, and considered samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also considered the curriculum in other subjects.
- To inspect safeguarding, inspectors spoke with the designated safeguarding leads, along with pupils and staff. Inspectors reviewed the record of pre-employment checks and other relevant documentation.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents, pupils and staff, including through responses to Ofsted's online surveys.

Inspection team

Simon Conway, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Vikram Gukhool	Ofsted Inspector
Olivia Page	Ofsted Inspector
John Blaney	Ofsted Inspector

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