

Inspection of Harry Watts Academy

Ramillies Road, Sunderland, Tyne and Wear SR5 5JA

Inspection dates: 13 and 14 July 2023

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

The quality of education

Outstanding

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Previous inspection grade

Not previously inspected under section 5
of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

Harry Watts Academy is a school of immense warmth and care. It is a family school.

Leaders, staff and the trust have a limitless ambition for what pupils can achieve. This is more than just words or an optimistic vision. It is backed up by a very carefully-thought-out and effective curriculum, which is implemented exceedingly well across both the Redhouse and Harraton sites. The school's attitude to what pupils can achieve is best summed up by what one parent told inspectors: 'Here my son is defined by what he can do, not by what he can't.'

Pupils are happy in school. Inspectors found no evidence of bullying. Pupils are safe and staff will deal with any problems diligently and with expertise. Pupils know that they are to be kind towards one another. As a result, Harry Watts Academy is a school of respect, tolerance and understanding.

Everyone at the school is totally committed to ensuring that pupils receive the best education and the best opportunities as a right. Pupils' special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are not seen as a barrier to achieving this. School, parents and carers work in partnership, through effective communication about pupils' needs, to make sure that pupils at Harry Watts Academy get what they are entitled to.

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

Leaders have put in place a high-quality curriculum. It is ambitious in its scope. The 'Engage', 'Explore' and 'Discover' curriculum pathways are structured, so that pupils learn the right content at the right time. Within each pathway, staff are adept at making any necessary adaptations to the curriculum, so that pupils do not get left behind.

Absolutely central to the highly effective and skilled teaching of the curriculum is the use of pupils' education, health and care (EHC) plans. The provision, targets and outcomes as described in EHC plans are translated with fidelity into individual pupils' 'learning maps'. The learning maps are used by staff as the precise route for what pupils must be able to achieve. As a result of the clear line of sight from curriculum plans, to EHC plans, to learning maps, to classrooms, pupils achieve very strong outcomes indeed.

Reflective of the school's ambition for pupils is its exemplary approach to reading. All pupils are taught to read using a phonics-based scheme. Reading is prioritised across the school, with many opportunities during each day for pupils to read and to be read to.

Pupils' behaviour is a strength of the school. The foundation stone for this is high-quality, strong relationships between pupils and staff. Staff know their pupils very

well and work ceaselessly to keep pupils on track with their learning. Strong, well-understood routines help pupils to self-regulate. When pupils become dysregulated, as an expression of their SEND, staff are skilful in guiding and supporting them back into learning.

The school's personal development provision is rich, deep and broad. Leaders have ensured that pupils' preparation for adulthood runs through the personal development curriculum like a seam. Aspects of relationships and sex education, together with health education, which can be difficult for some pupils with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) to understand and manage, are front and centre of the curriculum. Provision for careers education is similarly strong and begins with pupils in the primary phase of the school. The school has ensured that pupils are exposed to a wide range of careers, on- and off-site, including the uniformed services. A breadth of partnerships with post-16 education and training providers has been established as the school grows towards having pupils in year 11.

The ways in which the school sets about developing pupils' character, to ready them for adult life, is highly impressive. There is a plethora of opportunities for pupils to build their confidence, independence and their social and life skills. Such opportunities include learning about other faiths, cultures and traditions; the summer fairs; numerous lunchtime clubs such as 'Eco Gardening' and visits out of school into the community and beyond. This provision is carefully planned, so that pupils' character development happens by design, not chance.

Leadership of the school is strong. Trust leaders, including trustees, and the governors of the local advisory committee (LAC) have a thorough understanding of the school and use their respective powers with clarity. To a very high degree indeed, staff feel supported in their work by leaders.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Across the school, there is a strong understanding of the particular safeguarding vulnerabilities of pupils with ASD. Staff are knowledgeable about these risks and are vigilant in keeping an eye out for them. Staff know their pupils well and are alert to the tell-tale signs that there might be a concern. They know what to do should they be worried about a pupil. When necessary, the staff with designated safeguarding responsibilities take swift and appropriate action to ensure that pupils receive the support they need, including liaison with relevant external agencies, such as the local authority's children's social care team.

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	147841
Local authority	Sunderland
Inspection number	10255588
Type of school	Special
School category	Academy free school
Age range of pupils	5 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	141
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Joanne Clifford Swan
Headteacher	Derek Cogle
Website	www.harrywattsacademy.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school operates over two sites. The Redhouse site is for pupils on the Engage and Explore curriculum pathways. The Harraton site is for pupils on the Discover pathway.
- The headteacher is due to retire at the end of the summer term 2023. The current deputy headteacher has been appointed as headteacher from September 2023.
- All pupils have an EHC plan. In all cases, this is for ASD.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 7 to 13 with information and engagement 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.
- Inspectors met the headteacher, deputy headteacher and other senior leaders. They also met the chief executive officer, chair of trustees and other trustees of the Prosper Learning Trust. An inspector met members of the LAC, including the chair.
- An inspector met a representative of Sunderland local authority, who also sits on the LAC.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: communication and interaction, reading, English, mathematics and PSHE. Deep dive activities included inspectors discussing the curriculum with subject leaders, visiting a sample of lessons, speaking to teachers, speaking to some pupils about their learning and looking at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also reviewed documentation about the curriculum in some other subjects.
- To inspect safeguarding, inspectors talked with pupils and staff. An inspector met the leaders with particular responsibility for safeguarding and reviewed a sample of safeguarding case files. An inspector discussed with leaders their actions in these cases and their rationale for taking the action they did. An inspector scrutinised the school's records of the required checks on adults employed at the school.

Inspection team

Steve Shaw, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

David Milligan

His Majesty's Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2023