

Inspection of Harris Aspire Academy

11 Oliver Grove, South Norwood, London SE25 6EJ

Inspection dates: 8 and 9 November 2023

Overall effectiveness	Outstanding
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The quality of education	Outstanding
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Outstanding
Previous inspection grade	Good

The principal of this school is Andrew Barr. This school is part of Harris Federation, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Sir Daniel Moynihan, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Lord Philip Harris. There is also a secondary director, Rebecca Hickey, who is responsible for this school and 30 others. An assistant director, Lee Mallin, is responsible for this school and eight others.

What is it like to attend this school?

Everyone involved in the running of this school has high aspirations for what the pupils can achieve. All staff are committed to nurturing positive outcomes in the short while pupils are at the school. Pupils feel safe and trust that staff will help them to resolve any issues that may occur.

From the time pupils join the school, they are helped to understand their own challenges, talents and interests. The school's strong social and emotional support strategies help pupils to identify what might help them to make the next steps in their learning. For example, pupils work with life coaches who support their personal development. Pupils are encouraged to reflect on their behaviour and understand their emotions. They are taught strategies to help build their self-esteem, regulate their feelings and make informed choices. The impact of this is reflected in pupils' positive behaviour inside and outside the classroom.

Pupils' development is further enriched through a range of experiences, such as boxing, bicycle motocross and meditation. Pupils have opportunities to take on roles and responsibility, for example through the school council and a Breaking Barriers leadership programme. Citizenship, respect and character building underpin the culture of the school.

The school's curriculum is suitably broad to meet the needs of pupils on short-term placements. Pupils who remain at the school until the end of Year 11 take a range of courses designed to capture their interest and prepare them for their next steps in education or employment.

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

The school has in place an ambitious curriculum that all pupils access, including all those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The curriculum is designed to ensure that pupils strengthen and practise what they know and can do, as well as deepen their understanding further.

The school identifies where pupils have gaps in their knowledge, using assessments and information provided by pupils' mainstream schools. This includes understanding pupils' reading skills. For weaker readers, the school takes action to ensure pupils are helped to catch up.

Subject curriculums are coherently sequenced. Teachers deliver content following the order of the curriculum. They adapt their teaching to ensure that pupils have a secure understanding of key concepts before moving on to new learning. Teachers identify and address misconceptions effectively. This helps pupils to increase their confidence and resilience in learning new knowledge and skills.

The school prioritises staff development. Teachers have strong subject knowledge. They utilise the trust's consultants to provide staff with training, such as training on

developing pupils' communication skills. This supports pupils in asking for help when they need it, as well as being able to articulate their thoughts and feelings.

Pupils with SEND are included in all that the school has to offer. Leaders identify the needs of pupils with SEND quickly and work with outside professionals to develop personalised targeted support that staff deliver and enables pupils to access the full curriculum.

Any incidents of unsettled or disruptive behaviour are dealt with effectively by leaders and staff. These incidents reduce over time as pupils respond positively to the school's expectations for behaviour and the support put in place. Pupils are encouraged to reflect on their conduct and to understand the impact of their actions.

Typically, pupils' attendance was not regular at their mainstream school. The school makes it its business to know the reasons why pupils did not previously attend school regularly. The school works collaboratively with pupils and their families to find solutions to increase attendance rates. Attendance rates, and consequently pupils' engagement, improve over time.

Pupils are supported to set themselves ambitious goals for their future and to prepare them for adulthood. They receive careers information that supports their next steps, including further study and the world of work. This is further reinforced by a carefully planned and sequenced personal, social and health education curriculum. Pupils are taught to stay physically and mentally healthy. They learn to keep themselves safe in a wide variety of contexts.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a

social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	139829
Local authority	Croydon
Inspection number	10240231
Type of school	Alternative provision
School category	Academy free school
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	31
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Philip Harris
CEO of the trust	Daniel Moynihan
Principal	Andrew Barr
Website	www.harrisaspire.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	16 and 17 November 2021, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This school provides full-time placements for pupils in Years 10 and 11 who typically have experienced disruption to their previous schooling. Pupils typically attend for a short, time-limited period.
- The school also provides short-term respite placements for pupils in Years 7 to 11 for up to three weeks.
- This school shares the site with a vocational sixth form which is also part of the same trust. The principal of Harris Aspire is also the principal of the sixth-form college.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.
- The school does not make use of any alternative providers.

Information about this inspection

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

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, mathematics, and citizenship. To do this, they met with subject leaders to discuss the curriculum, had discussions with staff and pupils, visited lessons and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also considered the curriculum in other subjects as part of this inspection.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documents, including leaders' evaluation of the school and priorities for improvement.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors reviewed the single central record of pre-employment checks; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors met with senior leaders, teachers and wider school team.
- Inspectors met with representatives from the trust. Inspectors also met with the chair of the governing body.
- Inspectors also considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey for staff and pupils.

Inspection team

Kieran Bird, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Joanna Tarrant

Ofsted Inspector

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