

Inspection of Harris Academy Ockendon

Erriff Drive, South Ockendon, RM15 5AY

Inspection dates: 27 and 28 February 2024

Overall effectiveness	Outstanding
The quality of education	Outstanding
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Outstanding
Sixth-form provision	Outstanding
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

The principal of this school is Jo Rainey. 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 an executive principal, George McMillan, who is responsible for this school and three others.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils benefit hugely from attending this remarkable school. Staff and leaders' sky-high expectations are immediately evident in pupils' scholarly demeanour. Pupils are attentive and work hard in lessons.

Pupils help each other to secure this impressive educational environment. For example, older pupils mentor younger ones to help them stay on track. Sixth-form students help younger pupils learn to read well. The school parliament knows its role in supporting leaders to maintain a community where pupils' voices count.

The wide range of enrichment activities includes, for example, trips, the school parliament, 'making memories weeks' and a huge range of clubs. These add greatly to pupils' experiences. Pupils appreciate the teaching and opportunities the school provides.

Pupils' strong attitudes to learning sit alongside expert curriculum design and delivery. The school's unwavering ambition and belief in its pupils leads it to enter almost all pupils for the entire suite of GCSEs which make up the English Baccalaureate. Pupils' achievements are very high, and still improving. The school and trust have created a centre of true excellence. Pupils experience an extraordinary education at Harris Academy Ockendon.

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

The school has achieved a remarkably high quality of curriculum design, which is evident throughout the school. In subject after subject, from Year 7 to Year 13, the school has worked out what pupils need to know by the end of each key stage. It has then set out, in detail and in order, exactly what pupils need to learn to get there and, often, beyond.

Every teacher follows the school's pedagogical approach, such as by starting lessons with the 'Silent Do Now' task. The school describes 'interrupting the forgetting curve' and 'making it stick'. It does this incredibly well, revisiting and revising pupils' prior learning. Staff quickly identify when gaps arise in pupils' knowledge. Teachers address these. Pupils, and students in the sixth form, learn extremely well.

Underlying this excellence is the huge focus school leaders and the trust have on training staff. They have empowered staff to be expert curriculum leaders and first-rate teachers. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) learn as well as their peers. This is partly because the curriculum is really clear about what pupils need to know. It is also because teachers are so skilled at adapting their teaching so that no pupil falls behind.

The school makes sure pupils learn to read well. They check pupils' reading abilities and determine what help pupils need. If, for example, pupils need to learn to decode text, staff teach them to do so. The school makes sure pupils get the support they

need so that they can read fluently. Pupils who previously struggled to read now read for pleasure.

Pupils take responsibility for their learning. They listen respectfully to their teachers and their peers. They concentrate and work consistently hard. Between lessons, pupils are calm and respectful, making corridors a safe and pleasant place to be. Pupils follow well the school's clear routines. On the rare occasion pupils do misbehave, the school responds quickly and appropriately. Pupils learn from this and rarely repeat the same mistakes. This all combines to create a comfortable environment which enables and encourages pupils' education.

The school goes far beyond the norm in developing pupils' understanding of the wider world. There is a comprehensive programme of careers education, information, advice and guidance. All pupils benefit from this. There is additional and bespoke support for pupils with SEND and others if they need it. The personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum shares the same notable strengths as other aspects of the curriculum. It goes the extra mile in helping pupils understand what it means to be a citizen in modern Britain. Pupils learn, for example, not only that they should not discriminate but that, if they identify it, they need to challenge discrimination.

Staff are strongly supportive of leaders, making many positive comments in their responses to Ofsted's survey of their views. These are well summed up by one: 'Hats off to the leadership at our school. The journey we've been on with them has transformed our school and community. Lots of us have been here for many years and couldn't be happier.'

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	147537
Local authority	Thurrock
Inspection number	10295122
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
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	1,441
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	240
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Sir Daniel Moynihan
Principal	Jo Rainey
Website	www.harrisockendon.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Harris Academy Ockendon replaced The Ockendon Academy. When The Ockendon Academy was inspected by Ofsted on 9 and 10 October 2018 it was graded inadequate overall. Harris Federation became responsible for the academy on 1 September 2019.
- The school makes use of two registered, and no unregistered, alternative providers.
- 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.

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.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors spoke with the executive principal, the principal and other members of the senior and middle leadership teams. They spoke with the director of secondary for the trust and the chair of the local governing body.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, science, modern foreign languages, business studies, geography and mathematics. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also discussed the curriculum in design technology.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors: reviewed the single central record of recruitment 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 considered the views of staff, parents and pupils through Ofsted's surveys of their views. They also spoke with pupils and staff, and reviewed correspondence from parents sent directly to Ofsted.

Inspection team

Andrew Hemmings, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
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Diana Fletcher	Ofsted Inspector

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