

# Inspection of a good school: Harriers Banbury Academy

Harriers View, Bloxham Road, Banbury, Oxfordshire OX16 9JW

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Inspection dates: 19 and 20 March 2024

## **Outcome**

Harriers Banbury Academy continues to be a good school.

The principal of this school is Stephanie Coley. This school is part of Aspirations Academies Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Steve Kenning, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by James Pomeroy.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

This is a friendly and inclusive school where pupils are responsible, respectful and safe. They enjoy the leadership roles available as part of the 'Harriers Parliament' councils, which teach pupils how to organise events and lead others, such as running assemblies or charity fundraising. Pupils make a real difference in the school through their work on the environment, safety and storytelling to name just a few.

The school is determined to give pupils all the enriching opportunities that it can. Any barriers to learning are sensitively removed so that all children in the school, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), benefit from a wide range of experiences. These include, for example, theatre trips, cooking in local restaurants and visits to the beach. Vulnerable pupils are provided with excellent support and care, which help them to thrive and develop broader interests.

Pupils are expected to achieve well and to participate fully in school life. The school has refined some key areas of the curriculum to enable pupils to achieve better. In key stage 1, pupils are now learning and remembering more. Pupils enjoy learning, sharing ideas and being challenged.

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

The school has an ambitious and well-sequenced curriculum starting from the early years. It is designed to ensure that pupils develop their knowledge and skills, with opportunities to revisit learning. Important recent adaptations to the curriculum mean that vocabulary is a focus in all subjects. This ensures that all pupils are better able to talk about and explain what they know with precision. Pupils are developing this skill with the

encouragement of staff. A focus on training means that staff have secure subject knowledge. Teachers explain learning clearly and model the use of language and vocabulary well. However, pupils' misconceptions or gaps in knowledge are not always identified as early as they could be. This means that some pupils do not connect knowledge as securely as they could.

Pupils, including those with SEND, tend to achieve well in key stage 2, ready for their next steps. The school has rightly identified that pupils' achievement in key stage 1 could be better. The school has improved the structure of the curriculum and ensured that staff are trained well to teach with precision. This means, for example, that pupils are now learning to read sooner and more accurately. The school provides abundant opportunities to read, celebrate authors and explore a range of literature. Children develop curiosity and a love of reading in the early years, where phonics is taught from the beginning. Staff share their own favourite books with pupils, instilling a culture of reading for joy.

Pupils are friendly, polite and calm. They know that staff expect all pupils to be respectful and behave responsibly. Therefore, pupils' learning is rarely disrupted. The school responds quickly where pupils struggle to behave well, working swiftly to put effective support in place. Pupils benefit from warm and kind relationships with staff, which mean that they know that they are safe and supported. Although pupils behave well, some do not demonstrate high levels of concentration consistently, which means they do not make the most of the learning opportunities on offer. The school is already working with staff to embed a culture of active engagement and sustained learning in all lessons. Pupils' attendance to school is improving through deliberate and focused work with families and external agencies. The school is continuing to prioritise this to ensure that all pupils attend school as often as possible.

The school ensures that there is a wide range of clubs and enrichment for pupils to explore and discover new talents. Pupils, especially those who are most vulnerable, are sensitively encouraged to make the most of the extensive wider offer, with adaptations and support in place for pupils if they need it. Trips within the local community and beyond teach pupils important skills like water and road safety. Pupils, therefore, develop into highly responsible individuals who learn to think independently, with a deep sense of what is right and wrong. Trustees and those responsible for governance are well informed about the school's priorities. They provide valuable support to help drive forward further improvements. The leadership has carefully balanced important staff training and curriculum work with managing staff well-being. Staff feel valued and know that the work undertaken has already positively impacted pupils' learning.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

## What does the school need to do to improve?

### (Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some staff do not always check pupils' understanding as effectively as they could. This means that pupils sometimes do not understand instructions or do not have the knowledge that they need to learn and use new information. Therefore, pupils do not always connect new knowledge to what they were taught before. At times, some pupils also become distracted because they are not sure what to do. The school should ensure that staff check pupils' knowledge and understanding so that pupils develop a deeper understanding of subjects and consistently high levels of engagement.

## 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 second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in November 2014.

## 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

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| <b>Unique reference number</b>             | 139298   |
| <b>Local authority</b>                     | Oxfordshire  |
| <b>Inspection number</b>                   | 10321965   |
| <b>Type of school</b>                      | Primary  |
| <b>School category</b>                     | Academy converter  |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                 | 3 to 11  |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                    | Mixed  |
| <b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b> | 433  |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>               | Board of trustees  |
| <b>Chair of trust</b>                      | James Pomeroy  |
| <b>CEO of trust</b>                        | Steve Kenning  |
| <b>Principal</b>                           | Stephanie Coley  |
| <b>Website</b>                             | <a href="http://www.harriers-aspirations.org">www.harriers-aspirations.org</a> |
| <b>Date of previous inspection</b>         | 30 October 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005                     |

## Information about this school

- The headteacher has been in post since September 2022.
- The school runs a nursery on the school site.
- The school provides breakfast and after-school wraparound care and clubs on site.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

## Information about this inspection

- 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. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and physical education. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with

subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke with pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- The inspector met with a range of pupils to discuss their views about the school and talked to pupils during playtimes and in lessons.
- The inspector met with school and trust leaders. This included the national director of education and standards, and the regional chief executive for Aspirations Academies Trust. The inspector also met with a member of the governing body and the chair of trustees.
- Responses to Ofsted Parent View, Ofsted's online survey for parents, including parents' free-text comments, were considered. The inspector also considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey for staff and pupils.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector: reviewed the single central record; 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.

### **Inspection team**

Ally Aldridge-Gibbons, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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