

Inspection of an outstanding school: Harris Academy Morden

Lilleshall Road, Morden, Surrey SM4 6DU

Inspection dates: 17 and 18 April 2024

Outcome

Harris Academy Morden continues to be an outstanding school.

The principal of this school is Julian Sparks. This school is part of the 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 Dan Moynihan, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Lord Harris of Peckham.

What is it like to attend this school?

Harris Academy Morden is a high-achieving, happy school. Pupils value the care and rigour staff provide. They appreciate the school's high expectations and respond well, living up to the motto 'Courage, challenge and success'. The school's approach to education is holistic and designed to expand pupils' horizons. Pupils develop as confident and articulate citizens, willing to speak up, including against injustice and discrimination.

Pupils learn to be tenacious, persevering in their learning, even when it is difficult. They behave well and are keen to learn. Pupils treat all members of the school community with respect. Bullying is rare. If it does happen, it is dealt with quickly and effectively. As a result, pupils enjoy coming to school and attend regularly. Pupils trust staff. They understand the school's policies and procedures and know they are implemented systematically, consistently and fairly. This ensures pupils feel safe and are kept safe at school.

Pupils learn an ambitious curriculum. They work hard and produce work of high quality. They develop a deep body of knowledge in different subjects. Pupils achieve highly and are exceptionally well prepared for the next stage of their education, employment or training.

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

The curriculum is ambitious, broad and exceptionally well designed. In each subject, the knowledge and skills that pupils are expected to secure have been clearly identified and sequenced. Learning builds cumulatively so that pupils are well placed to apply what they have learned to new and more complex ideas. For example, in science, pupils learn subject-specific terminology, such as 'ions', 'electron shells' and 'attraction'. This helps

them to produce increasingly precise explanations. Similarly, in Spanish, pupils quickly secure a range of vocabulary and grammatical structures. This supports them to speak and write about a range of topics, such as how they spend their leisure time. The curriculum has been designed to build on pupils' own contexts and experiences. For example, in geography, map work is introduced through studying the diverse countries pupils come from or have visited.

The curriculum is consistently well implemented. Pupils quickly grasp new content and are given ample opportunity to apply their knowledge. They demonstrate their depth of understanding through high-quality work and are confident to share what they have learned. Teachers use assessment very effectively to check pupils' understanding. This helps to ensure that any gaps or misconceptions are addressed quickly. As a result, pupils secure deep knowledge and understanding across the curriculum and achieve highly.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are swiftly and accurately identified. Staff are well trained to provide appropriate support and to make necessary adaptations. As a result, pupils access the same ambitious curriculum, wherever this is possible, and achieve well.

The school prioritises pupils' reading, literacy and oracy. Teachers ensure that all pupils, including those learning to read, become competent and fluent readers. For example, the library is organised to help ensure that all pupils borrow age-appropriate books. Pupils who speak English as an additional language are very well supported. They quickly become competent in speaking, reading and writing in English.

Pupils' attendance is strong. This is because the school has a number of effective systems in place to ensure pupils attend regularly and on time. Pupils have positive attitudes to their education. They take pride in their work, which is of a high standard. Pupils are respectful and polite. They help create an environment where bullying, harassment and violence are never tolerated. Pupils' conduct in the playground and around the building is calm.

Harris Morden prioritises developing pupils as active, responsible, confident citizens. For example, they learn about healthy relationships and how to keep themselves safe. The curriculum helps pupils to discover art, music and culture through activities such as visits to galleries or being a member of the school orchestra. Pupils can nurture their talents and interests through a wide range of additional activities, including dodgeball, dance, table tennis, Chinese and Korean. There is a comprehensive programme of educational visits that enrich the curriculum. These include seeing a theatre performance of Macbeth, visiting the Belgian battlefields and catering at the Royal Albert Hall.

Staff enjoy working at this school. They feel well supported and recognise that leaders are sensitive to their workload and consider their well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Background

When we have judged a school to be outstanding, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains outstanding. 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 first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be outstanding in June 2018.

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	138495
Local authority	Merton
Inspection number	10323385
Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	868
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Lord Harris of Peckham
CEO of the trust	Sir Dan Moynihan
Principal	Julian Sparks
Website	www.harrismorden.org.uk
Dates of previous inspection	27 and 28 June 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This school currently makes use of five registered 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

- 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 met with the principal, the two vice-principals and four assistant principals. Discussions were also held with executive officers of the Harris Federation and with the chair of the local governing body.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in science, art and design, design and technology, and modern foreign languages. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of their work.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors 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.
- The views of pupils, parents and staff were gathered through both discussions and their responses to Ofsted's online surveys.

Inspection team

Anne Hudson, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Philippa Nunn

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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