

Short inspection of Harris Westminster Sixth Form

Inspection dates:

18 and 19 September 2024

Outcome

Harris Westminster Sixth Form continues to be an outstanding provider.

Information about this provider

Harris Westminster Sixth Form is a selective free school for students aged 16 to 19. It is part of the Harris Federation. The sixth form prioritises places for students from disadvantaged backgrounds. At the time of the inspection, there were 625 students, of whom 306 were in their second year of study. All students enrol on an academic study programme made up of four A levels or equivalent.

What is it like to be a learner with this provider?

Students are highly satisfied with the excellent quality of education they receive. They thrive due to the challenging and stimulating teaching they experience. Students, through the support and guidance given by staff, develop their confidence in their own abilities rapidly. They are ambitious for their futures and strive to achieve their absolute best in all circumstances.

Students develop their knowledge of the subjects they learn extremely well. They gain mastery of the knowledge and skills required to be highly successful in their final examinations. Nearly all students move on to study at universities that have demanding entry requirements.

Students have extensive opportunities to broaden their knowledge and experience beyond the A-level subjects they study. They benefit hugely from talks by guest speakers, frequent employer engagement activities, thought-provoking trips, and participating in the sixth form's societies. Through participating in these activities, students are able to apply critical thinking to a range of topics and have deep understanding of each other's cultural perspectives.

Students feel safe. They have a thorough understanding of the extensive range of actions which leaders take to keep them safe. Students have a well-developed understanding of the need to keep themselves both physically and mentally healthy. For example, they can explain with remarkable depth the benefits of and necessity for healthy sleep patterns.

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

Leaders have high expectations for students in both the quality of the work they produce and the personal behaviours they display. Students demonstrate these behaviours superbly and produce work of exceptional quality.

Leaders ensure that teachers plan and teach their subjects skilfully. Teachers revisit important underpinning concepts frequently, each time deepening the complexity of the taught material. For example, physics teachers ensure that students revisit the fundamental principles of electricity before they teach them how to apply these to specific complex electrical topics, such as modelling electric fields and predicting the behaviour of capacitors. Students build upon their prior understanding very well over time and they have in-depth knowledge of their subjects. They can recall what they know quickly and with remarkable precision.

Teachers check students' understanding frequently and thoroughly. Modern foreign language teachers use probing questions that make students think hard and consider deeply the topics taught. Teachers act quickly when students have any misconceptions in their understanding, and ensure that students use the appropriate subject or technical language with accuracy and fluency in response to questions. Students use their excellent developed academic skills to produce work of a very high standard.

Teachers provide students with plenty of opportunities to develop further and practise their skills. Mathematics students, for example, through frequent practice, can differentiate logarithmic functions rapidly, with fluency and consistency.

Teachers ensure that students develop a wide range of skills that prepare them thoroughly for university study. For example, political science teachers teach students to debate current economic contexts excellently. Students can explain and discuss concepts such as gross domestic product and fiscal drag from different perspectives.

Leaders give students high-quality careers education, information, advice and guidance. Students receive advice from personal mentors who help them select university courses that match closely to both their high ambitions and future careers. Through the advice they receive, students are fully aware of the range of opportunities available after their studies, including the alternatives to studying at university.

Leaders monitor the quality of the education they offer robustly. They quickly identify their areas of strength and those that require further development. Where needed, leaders take swift and effective actions that result in clear and sustained improvements in the quality of education that students receive.

Governors provide highly effective support to leaders to maintain consistently high and exacting standards. The governing board contains very experienced

practitioners with a wide range of expertise. Governors closely scrutinise the actions which leaders take and ensure that they hold them fully accountable.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Provider details

Unique reference number	140939
Address	Steel House, 11 Tothill Street Westminster London SW1H 9LH
Contact number	02037724555
Website	www.harriswestminstersixthform.org.uk
Principal, CEO or equivalent	James Handscombe Claire Scott
Provider type	Free school 16 to 19
Date of previous inspection	4 to 6 October 2016

Information about this inspection

The inspection was the first short inspection carried out since Harris Westminster Sixth Form was judged to be outstanding in October 2016.

The inspection team was assisted by the head of school, as nominee. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. The inspection was carried out using the [further education and skills inspection handbook](#) and took into account all relevant provision at the provider. Inspectors collected a wide range of evidence to inform judgements, including visiting learning sessions, scrutinising learners' work, seeking the views of learners, staff and other stakeholders, and examining the provider's documentation and records.

Inspection team

Mark Parton, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Paul McGivern	Ofsted Inspector
Ramin Narimani	His Majesty's Inspector

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