

# Harrogate High School

Address: Ainsty Road, Harrogate, North Yorkshire, HG1 4AP

Unique reference number (URN): 138190

## Inspection report: 3 February 2026

Exceptional	
Strong standard	
Expected standard	● ● ● ● ●
Needs attention	●
Urgent improvement	

### ✔ **Safeguarding standards met**

The safeguarding standards are met. This means that leaders and/or those responsible for governance and oversight fulfil their specific responsibilities and have established an open culture in which safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and concerns are actively identified, acted upon and managed. As a result, pupils are made safer and feel safe.

#### **How we evaluate safeguarding**

When we inspect schools for safeguarding, they can have the following outcomes:

- **Met:** The school has an open and positive culture of safeguarding. All legal requirements are met.
- **Not met:** The school has not created an open and positive culture of safeguarding. Not all legal requirements are met.

## Expected standard

### Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

Leaders monitor absence rigorously. They track patterns closely, including triggers for vulnerable pupils. This allows staff to intervene early. Leaders make effective use of a range of strategies to support positive attendance. Daily checks on attendance support engagement with families through personalised engagement and multi-agency work. Leaders' approach has focused on understanding barriers, distributing responsibility across staff and creating a culture of belonging. For example, pupils on part-time timetables are monitored closely and supported effectively through consistently reviewed next steps. Overall, attendance is improving. Persistent absence is declining, though the reduction is less pronounced for disadvantaged pupils. Leaders recognise that attendance remains a significant priority for the school.

Pupils behave well. They demonstrate positive attitudes to their learning. Leaders' strategic, stepped approach to improving behaviour has secured their high expectations around school. This means that lessons start promptly and corridors clear swiftly at transition times. Staff have a shared understanding of the school values and are more consistent with their application of both rewards and consequences. For those pupils who struggle, additional support is effective in helping them to meet these expectations. Leaders support this with preventative strategies, such as focused 'resets', to maintain clarity and consistency.

### Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Leaders have ensured that teaching has improved significantly since the last inspection. Teachers use their subject knowledge well and present subject matter clearly. They routinely check pupils' prior knowledge at the start of lessons to ensure they can access new learning. Questioning is used well to identify gaps in understanding and teachers intervene appropriately. In most lessons, teachers model new learning effectively to support learning, and pupils engage in meaningful practice. For example, in several subjects, pupils' accurate use of subject vocabulary is increasingly apparent in lessons.

Ambition is high across subjects. Leaders have maintained their focus on providing a high-quality, broad and balanced curriculum to all. Delivery of the curriculum is sequenced carefully to support pupils' understanding. Leaders take positive action to build key knowledge in reading and mathematics for those pupils with the greatest need to catch up. The use of targeted interventions and other strategies helps pupils to better access the curriculum.

Teachers demonstrate awareness of the needs of more vulnerable pupils. They adapt their teaching well to meet the needs of those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Leaders have rightly prioritised consistency in lessons. Teachers are making effective use of agreed approaches, such as the use of regular learning reviews. The support for disadvantaged pupils through sharing best practice and professional learning opportunities is having a positive effect on pupils' experiences in lessons.

## Inclusion

Expected standard 

Leaders have fostered an inclusive culture that threads through all areas of the school. Staff know pupils' barriers and how to help pupils in lessons. For example, leaders have ensured information for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is precisely focused on positive action. Leaders have put in place robust systems to communicate essential information and the identification of needs. This is supported by regular and detailed reviews of ongoing strategies. Staff's understanding is increasingly precise and supported by appropriate and well-matched training.

Pupils are well known by staff and leaders alike. Leaders have put in place provision to support pupils in a variety of ways. This includes impactful use of additional funding for disadvantaged pupils. Reasonable adjustments through actions, such as establishing the 'Bridge' and 'Hub', support pupils to reintegrate to the main school effectively. Leaders ensure that alternative provision is used in pupils' best interests.

Leaders take proactive approaches to reduce or remove obstacles experienced by pupils known to, or previously known to, children's social care. Leaders work well with external agencies to support pupils' needs. Pupils' progress is tracked carefully by leaders at all levels. For example, leaders work effectively with the virtual school so that personal education plans improve learning, attendance and a feeling of belonging.

## Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders have brought about effective change over time. Their inclusive approach to development has been central to these improvements. Leaders have created a positive school culture underpinned by clear values and expectations. They model these values in their calm, considered leadership. Leaders' relational approach supports their focus on communication to all involved with school. For example, this has led to improvements in attendance and strengthened connections with the wider community and businesses.

Staff feel well supported by leaders and value the training and learning opportunities provided. Leaders have made considerable improvements to the impact of the curriculum. For example, they have embedded an increasingly well-used school teaching toolkit. Leaders demonstrate a robust understanding of the school's context and the specific barriers faced by pupils. Leaders act in the best interests of pupils and use ongoing professional learning to ensure that their actions positively impact the school community. Staff and pupils alike appreciate changes that have happened. Leaders' engagement with staff wellbeing reflects a clear commitment to sustainable improvement. Disadvantaged pupils are now progressing well in many aspects of their studies.

Trustees and governors have a secure understanding of the school's position and the progress it has made since the previous inspection. They are knowledgeable about the school's safeguarding culture. Trustees ensure appropriate support and challenge are in place. Their oversight helps sustain momentum and ensures leaders are well supported. Leaders at all levels, including staff across the trust, are contributing to the lived vision and values in the caring community of Harrogate High School.

## Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

Pupils' wider personal development is planned coherently across the school. The personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) curriculum has been significantly strengthened. It is carefully sequenced from Year 7 to Year 11. Leaders have ensured coherence and progression in pupils' learning throughout their time in school. Core themes run through all year groups, with learning increasing in depth and complexity as pupils move through the school.

Staff confidence has been strengthened through a regular professional learning programme and a stable specialist teaching team. Assessment is embedded throughout. Safeguarding and PSHE staff work closely to ensure that the curriculum is both proactive and reactive to safeguarding intelligence. Recent adaptations have addressed emerging themes, such as body image pressures and harmful online trends.

Pupils' learning from PSHE is reinforced through assemblies, form-time themes and purposeful community partnerships. Pupils demonstrate a secure understanding across a range of important topics. These include healthy relationships, consent and online safety. Pupils also have a secure understanding of fundamental British Values.

Leaders have increased the capacity of pastoral support to pupils to enhance the school's inclusive culture. Pupils value inclusive provision, such as the LGBTQ+ club. They also recognise the contribution of pastoral staff in supporting their wellbeing. Pupils feel confident they can access help when needed.

Pupils benefit from a wide range of opportunities to develop their talents and interests. A broad range of clubs covers areas such as Spanish, gaming and fitness. Community projects and trips help to broaden their horizons. Pupil leadership opportunities are a notable strength, enabling pupils to have meaningful experiences of influencing and improving their school.

Leaders have developed a well-constructed careers programme. Pupils receive independent, impartial advice to support informed choices. They also appreciate opportunities to explore post-16 pathways, including apprenticeships. Other carefully targeted activities are used to raise pupils' aspirations, for example 'The Brilliant Club' and trips to local careers conferences about science and hospitality.

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## Needs attention

### Achievement

Needs attention 

Over the last few years, pupils have not achieved in line with national tests at key stage 4. However, improvements that have been made are having a positive effect, with pupil attainment getting better. For example, the performance of disadvantaged pupils at key stage 4 in 2025 has improved considerably. The gap between disadvantaged pupils and their non-disadvantaged peers has continued to narrow. Leaders have taken careful steps to monitor pupils' progress and ensure that timely help is provided when needed. Despite this,

there is still work to be done to improve achievement across subjects at the end of key stage 4.

Typically, pupils build up suitable knowledge of the subjects that they study as they progress through the curriculum. Leaders have ensured help for pupils missing any foundational knowledge is more effective. For example, pupils who are struggling to read receive targeted support, which enables them to catch up quickly. Generally, pupils' written work is of increasingly high-quality across all year groups. Pupil destinations reflect that they are supported to access their next steps into education, employment or training.

## **What it's like to be a pupil at this school**

Care, compassion and commitment are characteristic of pupils' experience at Harrogate High School. Pupils appreciate the support they receive from staff who know them well. Pupils learn how to stay safe and build positive relationships. They feel confident that bullying is dealt with if it happens and know who to go to if they have concerns.

Older pupils appreciate the improvements in behaviour that leaders have brought about in recent years. Lessons are calm and orderly. Pupils understand the behaviour system and find it fair and consistent. This has been built on the respectful relationships that exist. Leaders and staff effectively model to pupils what it means to be part of this welcoming and inclusive environment. Pupils regularly demonstrate a secure understanding of the school's 'CARES' values.

Pupils are attending more often and they enjoy their learning. They benefit from clear structures for learning and adjustments in their lessons. Pupils who require support benefit from appropriately targeted help. This is both proactive and responsive to need.

Achievement at the end of key stage 4 over time has not been as high as it needs to be. However, this has improved recently. Currently in lessons, teaching builds thoughtfully on what pupils know and helps them to understand more difficult ideas. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, build firm foundations to enable them to access the ambitious curriculum. Leaders keep a close eye on pupils who may be more vulnerable, act quickly and review this support regularly.

Pupils are respectful of each other. They speak knowledgeably about equality and fundamental British Values. Pupils appreciate the broad range of clubs, enrichment opportunities and careers support. Highlights include the regular performing arts events and engaging employer encounters. Leadership opportunities, such as the school council and 'Purple Press' sharing school news, allow pupils to contribute meaningfully to school life.

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## **Next steps**

- Leaders should intensify actions to further develop pupils' knowledge and understanding to improve outcomes in national assessments, so that more pupils achieve well.

- Leaders should continue to develop their work to improve pupils' attendance, including for disadvantaged pupils.
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## About this inspection

This school is part of Northern Star 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 (CEO), Jenn Plews, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Helen Murphy.

Inspectors carried out this full inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Following our renewed inspection framework, all inspections are now led by His Majesty's Inspectors (HMIs) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMIs.

Inspectors spoke with the head of the academy, the deputy headteacher, assistant headteachers, trustees (including the chair), the CEO, the chief education director, the chair of the local governing body, parents, carers and pupils during the inspection.

The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 11 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school makes use of 2 alternative provisions, both of which are registered.

Head of Academy: Mr Sukhraj Gill

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### Lead inspector:

Richard Wakefield, His Majesty's Inspector

### Team inspectors:

Angela White, Ofsted Inspector

Gemma Dixon, His Majesty's Inspector

Malcolm Kirtley, Ofsted Inspector

## Facts and figures used on inspection

The data was used by the inspector(s) during the inspection. More recent data may have been published since the inspection took place.

 This data is from 3 February 2026

# School and pupil context

## Total pupils

**672**

Below average

### What does this mean?

The total number of pupils currently at this school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 1,067

## School capacity

**750**

Well below average

### What does this mean?

The total number of pupils who can attend the school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 1,153

## Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

**32.44%**

Close to average

### What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years.

National average: 28.9%

## Pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan

**3.87%**

Close to average

### What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan. This covers pupils with more support than is available through special educational needs support.

National average: 3.09%

### **Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support**

**19.79%**

Well above average

#### **What does this mean?**

The proportion of pupils with reported special educational support needs at the school.

National average: 13.4%

### **Location deprivation**

**Above average**

#### **What does this mean?**

Based on the English Indices of Deprivation (2019) and the school's location, we have calculated whether the school is located in a more or less deprived area.

### **Resourced Provision or SEND Unit (if applicable)**

**No resourced provision**

#### **What does this mean?**

Whether school has Resourced Provision or SEND unit (if applicable).

### **All pupils' performance**

#### **English and maths GCSE**

Percentage of pupils who achieved grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

<b>Year</b>	<b>This school</b>	<b>National average</b>	<b>Compared with national average</b>
<b>2024/25 (provisional)</b>	31.3%	45.2%	Below

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	25.9%	45.9%	Below
2022/23 (final)	23.8%	45.3%	Below

### Attainment 8

A measure of pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (provisional)	39.0	45.9	Below
2023/24 (final)	36.1	45.9	Below
2022/23 (final)	34.5	46.3	Below

### Progress 8

How much progress pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	-0.46	-0.03	Below
2022/23 (final)	-0.67	-0.03	Below

### Disadvantaged pupils' performance

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after.

#### Disadvantaged pupils' English and maths GCSE grade 5 or above

Percentage of disadvantaged pupils achieving grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (provisional)	17.1%	25.6%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	10.5%	25.8%	Below
2022/23 (final)	8.3%	25.2%	Below

### Disadvantaged pupils' Attainment 8

A measure of disadvantaged pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (provisional)	32.5	34.9	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	22.7	34.6	Below
2022/23 (final)	27.3	35.0	Below

### Disadvantaged pupils' Progress 8

How much progress disadvantaged pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	-1.31	-0.57	Below
2022/23 (final)	-0.93	-0.57	Below

### Disadvantaged pupils' performance gap

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after. The school disadvantage gap is the difference between the performance of the school's disadvantaged pupils compared to the performance of all non-disadvantaged pupils nationally.

## Disadvantaged pupils' English and maths GCSE grade 5 or above

Percentage of disadvantaged pupils who achieved grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2024/25 (provisional)	17.1%	52.8%	-35.8 pp
2023/24 (final)	10.5%	53.1%	-42.6 pp
2022/23 (final)	8.3%	52.4%	-44.1 pp

## Disadvantaged pupils' Attainment 8

A measure of disadvantaged pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2024/25 (provisional)	32.5	50.3	-17.8
2023/24 (final)	22.7	50.0	-27.3
2022/23 (final)	27.3	50.3	-23.0

## Disadvantaged pupils' Progress 8

How much progress disadvantaged pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2023/24 (final)	-1.31	0.16	-1.48

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2022/23 (final)	-0.93	0.17	-1.10

## Destinations after 16

### Destinations after 16

Percentage of pupils staying in education or employment for at least 2 terms after the end of secondary school (key stage 4).

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023 leavers (provisional)	90%	91%	Average
2022 leavers (revised)	91%	93%	Average
2021 leavers (revised)	94%	94%	Average

## Absence

### Overall absence

The percentage of all possible mornings and afternoons missed due to absence from school (for whatever reason, whether authorised or unauthorised) across all pupils.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (2 term)	10.8%	8.1%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	12.3%	8.9%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	12.6%	9.0%	Above

### Persistent absence

The percentage of pupils missing 10% or more of their possible mornings and afternoons.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (2 term)	29.7%	21.9%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	36.7%	25.6%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	36.7%	26.5%	Above

## Our grades explained

### Exceptional

Practice is exceptional: of the highest standard nationally. Other schools can learn from it.

### Strong standard

The school reaches a strong standard. Leaders are working above the standard expected of them.

### Expected standard

The school is fulfilling the expected standard of education and/or care. This means they are following the standard set out in statutory and non-statutory legislation and the professional standards expected of them.

### Needs attention

The expected standards are not met but leaders are likely able to make the necessary improvements.

### Urgent improvement

The school needs to make urgent improvements to provide the expected standard of education and/or care.

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