

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Harris Academy Falconwood

The Green, Welling, Kent DA16 2PE

Inspection dates:

25 and 26 March 2025

Outcome

Evidence gathered during this ungraded (section 8) inspection suggests that the school's work may have improved significantly across all areas since the previous inspection. The school's next inspection will be a graded inspection.

The headteacher of this school is Tom Street. The school is part of the Harris Federation, which means other people in the trust have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Sir Daniel Moynihan, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Lord Philip Harris of Peckham. 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 and students receive a very strong education at Harris Academy Falconwood. They achieve highly. Important improvements since the last inspection give pupils a wide range of experiences that prepare them effectively for the future. A carefully designed, ambitious curriculum promotes pupils' academic and personal achievements extremely well. The many opportunities for pupils to explore and extend their interests add considerably to the breadth of their experiences.

The school's focus on pupils' personal and academic development is a key factor in its success. Both are promoted equally strongly as part of a coherent approach. Each contributes to the other. This helps create the school's very positive climate and promotes pupils' commitment to their learning. Pupils are especially well behaved in classes and across the school. Learning is rarely disturbed by pupils' behaviour.

Work to promote pupils' wider development and prepare them for the next phase of their lives is especially strong. Topics such as relationships, equality and understanding global issues are woven through subjects so pupils' awareness is promoted effectively. The school's agility in dealing with any bullying and discrimination helps ensure incidents are infrequent and resolved promptly.

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

Two important factors contribute to the school's excellence: improvements to the taught curriculum and a broadening of the provision for pupils' personal development. Clarity of vision and purpose makes this work especially potent in promoting high-quality education. For example, the focus on reading at the start of the day promotes pupils' confidence and fluency as readers and broadens their appreciation of literature. The school has made clear and sustainable improvements to pupils' academic and personal achievements, including in the sixth form. Outcomes are now strong.

Work to improve and develop the curriculum has been highly effective. Staff have gone back to the drawing board to identify what they want pupils to have learned by the end of Year 9, Year 11 and Year 13. They have carefully considered the important subject knowledge and how learning this is organised to give pupils a wide range of relevant experiences. As a result, the curriculum throughout the school is carefully structured and provides a well-sequenced, logical journey through each subject. The end points for these journeys are clear. As a result, current pupils achieve very well across subjects.

The broad and ambitious curriculum is implemented very effectively, including in the sixth form. Ongoing training helps keep staff up to date with current approaches to teaching and learning. Relevant research underpins teaching strategies effectively. Staff adapt their teaching carefully. This meets pupils' individual needs well. Pupils' learning is also checked rigorously. This pinpoints gaps in pupils' knowledge and allows staff to gauge whether pupils are ready to move on to new work. The strengths in how the curriculum is taught have a very positive impact on pupils' achievements.

Teachers exercise their professional judgement about how to secure the best possible outcomes for pupils. For instance, subject staff decide how and when to assess pupils' learning. This helps to ensure the timescales are realistic and manageable. Staff confirmed that the school takes their well-being and workload seriously.

The needs of disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are identified and met well. Teaching focuses on giving all pupils the same high-quality experiences. Where necessary, work is adapted to support pupils' learning. Additional support is also carefully targeted to meet pupils' needs. For example, teaching assistants are well deployed and work in conjunction with class teachers to help pupils develop their independence. As a result, pupils with SEND achieve well.

Improvements to pupils' personal development are central to the school's work to develop the academic curriculum. Many pupils attend the wide range of after-school activities. The Monday afternoon 'Enrichment Exchange' sessions focus on areas such as building pupils' character and broadening their horizons. The range of activities and experiences is impressive and includes trips to museums, visiting speakers and work on citizenship and healthy relationships. Careers education has also been extended significantly. Work experience is a central part of the programme in Year 10 and Year 12. Sixth-form students visit universities as part of the school's work to raise their ambitions. This has a positive impact on pupils' outcomes and next steps.

Governors carry out their delegated responsibilities with commitment and expertise. They are supported very effectively by the trust. The trust does much to support the school's improvement work, providing additional expertise where needed.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024, graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged to be good for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. 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's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection 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 good for overall effectiveness in October 2019.

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	135677
Local authority	Bexley
Inspection number	10345909
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy sponsor-led
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	1,301
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	308
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Lord Philip Harris of Peckham
CEO of the trust	Sir Daniel Moynihan
Headteacher	Tom Street
Website	www.harrisfalconwood.org.uk
Dates of previous inspection	16 and 17 October 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Information about this school

- Harris Academy Falconwood converted to become an academy in September 2008.
- The school is part of the Harris Federation.
- The school uses two registered alternative provisions.
- The current headteacher took up the post in January 2020.
- 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 evaluation 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 inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, 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.
- Inspectors visited a sample of lessons, spoke to pupils about their learning where appropriate and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the assistant headteachers and heads of department. Inspectors also met with teachers and support staff.
- Inspectors met with the chair of the local governing board, trustees and the trust's director of secondary schools.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the written comments. They also considered the responses to Ofsted's pupil and staff surveys.

Inspection team

Brian Oppenheim, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Shaun Dodds	Ofsted Inspector
Jonathan Newby	Ofsted Inspector

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