

Harris Rainham Sixth Form

Monitoring visit report

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Name of lead inspector:	Claudia Harrison, His Majesty's Inspector
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Type of provider:	16-19 free school
Address:	217 Wennington Road Rainham RM13 9XA

Monitoring visit: main findings

Context and focus of visit

Ofsted undertakes to carry out monitoring visits to all newly directly funded providers of education programmes for young people within the further education and skills sector. This monitoring visit was undertaken as part of those arrangements and as outlined in the 'Further education and skills inspection handbook', especially the sections entitled 'Monitoring visits' and 'Monitoring visits to providers that are newly directly publicly funded'. The focus of these visits is on the themes set out below.

Harris Rainham Sixth form is a 16-19 free school that opened in September 2023. It is part of the Harris Federation. At the time of the monitoring visit, there were 240 students.

A high proportion of students study A levels, choosing from a range of subjects that includes sciences, mathematics, social sciences, geography, history, English literature, product design and art. The sixth form also offers vocational qualifications in business, health and social care and sport. Around a third of students study vocational subjects at level 3, typically combined with A level courses. Around 20 students choose to take an Extended Project Qualification (EPQ) alongside their main programme of study. A very small number of students study mathematics or English GCSE resit programmes alongside their level 3 study programme.

Themes

How much progress have leaders and managers made in designing and delivering relevant education programmes that have a clearly defined purpose? Significant progress

Leaders and managers have firmly established the purpose and ethos of the sixth form. They quickly implemented a coherent curriculum that carefully combines A level and vocational qualifications with extensive academic enrichment. This challenging programme offers the knowledge, skills and qualifications that give young learners from an area of educational deprivation rich choices about their next steps.

Leaders and managers plan and review the curriculum offer very effectively. This reduces overlap with other provision and meets local needs. Each subject has a well-planned curriculum from the start of the two-year course that contains carefully integrated assessment points and challenging content.

Leaders and managers assure themselves of the quality of teaching extremely well using a range of methods such as lesson visits and monitoring students' work.

Subject consultants from the Harris Federation frequently visit to support the evaluation and development of teachers. Teachers rightly feel very well supported by leaders, who help them to improve their subject knowledge and teaching practice through frequent, targeted professional development.

Leaders and careers staff have designed a well-planned careers curriculum that meets the needs of students at different stages of their sixth form journey. There is a logical balance of university, apprenticeship and careers guidance that includes events such as careers fairs, CV writing, interview preparation and impartial individual careers advice given by a qualified adviser. Students interested in a medical pathway visit hospitals and gain insights from paediatric nurses and neurosurgeons. Students are well informed about their next steps.

Governors and leaders have a strong understanding of the strategic direction and areas for development of the sixth form. For example, as the sixth form grows, governors and leaders have clear plans to maintain the high quality of education and positive culture already in place. They are clear on the challenges of new sixth form provision and work together well to plan their next steps.

How much progress have leaders and managers made to ensure that learners benefit from high-quality education programmes for young people that prepare them well for their intended job role, career aim and/or personal goals? Significant progress

Managers and teachers evaluate accurately what students already know before they start their courses. They use the information well to adapt their teaching so that students catch up on any gaps in their knowledge. Teachers assess students frequently. This helps to reinforce students' knowledge and understanding and gives them valuable examination practice. Students are well prepared for external examinations and achieve well. In the few instances that students need to retake mathematics or English GCSE they improve their grades.

Teachers are well-trained subject experts who convey subject specialist knowledge to their students well. Students complete preparation work before each lesson. Teachers then help them to recap and extend their knowledge during lessons. This approach provides students with some initial information before starting each topic, and results in their being curious and interested in lessons and able to pick up new concepts quickly.

Teachers give students timely and useful feedback to improve their work. For example, in A-level chemistry and biology, teachers give detailed guidance that students use to improve their written answers and calculations. Students' work is coherent and well-presented. In the few cases where feedback has not resulted in improved work, teachers offer additional workshops that help students at risk of

falling behind to keep up with their peers.

Staff plan exceptionally useful opportunities for students to develop skills that will help them apply for, and be successful in, their next steps. All students choose from a range of additional elective courses such as sports coaching, engineering, theatre and EPQ. In the theatre elective, students learn to project their voices, and enhance their clarity of speaking. In engineering, they explore how mathematics can be used to model physical behaviours. Students gain valuable skills and knowledge that prepares them well for the competitive pathways to which they aspire.

How much progress have leaders and managers made in ensuring that effective safeguarding arrangements are in place? Significant progress

Leaders foster a strong culture of safeguarding. Leaders and managers have produced a comprehensive set of safeguarding policies that include 'Prevent' duty action plans. Staff safeguarding training is thorough and frequent. It covers local risks and relevant issues that affect young people exceptionally well.

Leaders and recruitment staff take great care to ensure that staff are suitable to work with young people. They undertake and record the outcomes of recruitment processes such as online background checks meticulously.

Staff teach students about the risks of being drawn into dangerous ideologies. Leaders help protect students from dangerous content using robust online monitoring.

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