

Harris Academy South Norwood

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	135249
Local Authority	Croydon
Inspection number	345498
Inspection dates	20-21 January 2010
Reporting inspector	Wiola Hola HMI

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Academy
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	11-19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1135
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	242
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Phillip Saunders
Principal	Carolyn English
Date of previous school inspection	N/A
School address	2 Cumberlow Avenue London SE25 6AE
Telephone number	020 8405 5134
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three additional inspectors. Inspectors spent the majority of their time looking at learning. They observed 39 lessons, saw 44 teachers in all working with students, and held meetings with groups of students, staff and two governors. They observed the academy's work, and looked at the academy's documentation, including: data on students' attainment and progress; papers relating to the way the teaching and learning are kept under review; academy improvement plans and evaluations of them; and some minutes of governing body meetings. Inspectors analysed 90 questionnaires completed by parents and carers, as well as 142 questionnaires from students and 60 from staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the academy's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- students' recent and current progress and learning, particularly in English
- the impact of the work of leaders and managers on raising the quality of teaching and learning
- the impact of the specialist status on outcomes for students
- the academy's procedures for safeguarding students.

Information about the school

The academy is slightly larger than the average secondary school. There are twice as many boys as there are girls. In the current academic year, the academy has only boys in Years 10 and 11 and both boys and girls in all other year groups. The proportion of students eligible for free school meals is well above average as is the proportion from minority ethnic groups. The proportion of students who speak English as an additional language is also well above average. The percentage of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is well above average and the percentage with a statement is above average. Of these students, most have either specific learning difficulties or behavioural, emotional and social difficulties.

The academy was opened in September 2007 in a new building on the site of the predecessor school which was a boys' school. Business and enterprise is a specialism. The Academy is part of the Harris Federation of South London Schools. Sixth form provision is federated with two other Harris Academies.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

This academy is outstanding. It enables students to achieve well because of an excellent curriculum, good teaching and exceptionally high levels of care, guidance and support. These good outcomes for students and high quality educational provision are underpinned by outstanding leadership and management. Students speak highly of the academy and with great appreciation for the way in which they are helped to develop. They enjoy their learning greatly and rise to the high expectations placed on them to work and succeed.

Standards are rising fast because the rates of students' progress have been speeded up tremendously in the short time since the academy opened. Students' learning and progress are outstanding overall. Examination results in 2009 showed that a very large majority of students gained five or more GCSE grades A* to C. A lower than average percentage, however, gained such grades including English and mathematics, although results in 2009 rose significantly from those in 2008. The academy is seeking to boost further the progress of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities whose progress is nevertheless still good. The academy is also highly successful in supporting students' personal development. Students grow in confidence and become increasingly resourceful as learners and contributors to the community because the ethos of the academy encourages this so well. Behaviour is good and attendance well above the national average. Students are motivated to learn, courteous to each other, staff and visitors. They have an excellent understanding of how to lead safe and healthy lives.

Much teaching is good and even outstanding and, where this is so, students learn with interest and excitement, echoing the teacher's passion for the subject. Some teaching, while satisfactory, is pedestrian or does not make the same good use of assessment as in the better lessons. Marking is not always fully effective. The focus placed over the last year or so on developing students' skills in speaking and writing is bearing fruit. Nevertheless, more remains to be done in this regard, given the low starting points of a significant number of students.

The reasons for such positive outcomes are many. One key factor is the outstanding way in which the academy keeps students' progress under review. Another highly instrumental factor is the impact of the academy's specialism in business and enterprise that is clearly visible in the way students learn and conduct themselves. This specialism is influencing positively the quality of teaching across all areas of the curriculum. Most importantly, leaders and managers at all levels are extremely clear

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about what is going well and what needs to be improved further. Self-evaluation and planning for improvement are excellent. Teamwork at all levels is a hallmark of this academy led by the highly skilled and effective principal and senior team. Through rapid improvements to the overall quality of educational provision and to outcomes for students, the academy has shown its outstanding capacity to improve further.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase further the proportion of students gaining five or more GCSE grades A* to C including English and mathematics; in particular, work further on developing students' skills in speaking and writing through all areas of the curriculum.
- Ensure that even more teaching is good or outstanding. Where necessary:
 - ensure that tasks set are more closely matched to students' diverse needs
 - include more opportunities for students to speak, pose questions, and explain their thinking and ideas
 - improve the quality of marking so that students are clearer about how to improve their work in relation to the subject content and also in terms of the accuracy of their writing.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

Learning takes place in a calm and orderly way and, in many lessons, also with great enthusiasm and enjoyment. The vast majority of students work diligently and achieve well. Disruptions or a lack of concentration are rare. Students develop well their power of independent study but more remains to be done to encourage this so that students routinely pose their own questions, and are engaged more fully in evaluating their own progress. Because the academy encourages resourcefulness, students have a 'can do' approach and are willing to tackle new challenges.

GCSE results in mathematics are average; in English, they are below average. In other subjects, GCSE results are mostly broadly average. Results, including those in vocational courses, represent outstanding progress, given students' generally very low standards when they entered Year 7. There are no great differences in the performance of various sub-groups of students. However, some students with special educational needs and/or disabilities have not yet made quite the same progress as most other students, and this is linked to a variability in the quality of teaching. The academy is working well to narrow the remaining gaps in attainment and progress.

Students feel their views are listened to and valued. There is a prevailing atmosphere of mutual respect amongst students and staff. Students readily take on responsibility and some, especially those in the sixth form, would welcome the opportunity to take on more. Racial harmony and religious tolerance are clear to see. As one student said, 'Celebrating diversity helps us to embrace who we are and where we have come from.' Enterprise skills are routinely and effectively put into practice but literacy

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skills and their accurate application are not as well developed. Students' eager participation in events such as 'Diversity Day', residential trips and cultural exchanges contributes to their good spiritual and cultural development.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	1
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

The 'spirit of enterprise' is tangible in all elements of educational provision. It supports students greatly in raising their aspirations and broadening horizons. Students enjoy enormously the fortnightly 'Flexible Fridays' when they spend a whole day working within one faculty area on innovative learning projects. Another major strength of provision is the breadth of the curriculum that offers considerable flexibility through a range of courses, intervention programmes and learning pathways to suit students' individual needs. The curriculum is planned, organised and resourced extremely well. It has had a very positive impact on improving students' motivation and attendance, and hence also on raising their achievement. Arrangements for keeping a check on students' attainment and progress are excellent so that any underachievement is spotted and addressed very quickly.

Good classroom management, positive relationships and well-structured lessons secure purposeful learning at a good pace in most cases. Teachers have good subject knowledge and generally ask probing questions that challenge and guide students well. In the more effective lessons, tasks set are very engaging and relevant to students' lives and interests, and teachers often require students to research for themselves, share ideas through formal presentations, and evaluate their own and

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

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others' work. Lesson planning mostly takes good account of students' prior knowledge and builds on it well. In some lessons, tasks are not sufficiently varied to meet students' different needs or teachers talk for too long so that students' active participation is then limited. The quality of marking is variable. Some is very good, but it does not consistently identify how students can improve nor does it always pay enough attention to correcting basic errors in writing.

The academy has an extensive and highly effective range of strategies to ensure students are given the best possible care, guidance and support. Students whose circumstances make them vulnerable, or those at risk of exclusion, are given perceptive, tailored support that has a clearly discernible impact. The inclusion unit is a good resource that enables those few students who need it to develop skills to re-integrate without the need for exclusion. Systems to promote good attendance are outstanding, with clear and robust procedures to ensure that parents and carers are highly aware of the academy's expectations.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

A passion for learning and a drive to raise aspirations and achievement for all members of the academy are palpable. Targets relating to students' outcomes are ambitious but achievable. The principal leads exceptionally well in a perceptive, calm, determined and highly efficient way. She is supported by a strong senior leadership team, even though some members are relatively new or in acting roles. Clear lines of accountability through the faculty structure have fostered a strong team culture centred on securing high quality teaching and learning. The academy benefits from an outstanding governing body and from the Harris Federation of South London Schools; both bodies offer challenge and support of great worth. Staff praise the opportunities they have to share good practice and develop their skills. The many newly-qualified teachers who joined the academy this year, as well as other teachers, are supported extremely well in developing their expertise, through the 'outstanding teacher programme' or in other ways.

Systems for keeping students' progress under review, identifying any barriers to learning, and putting into place the necessary adjustments or support to overcome them, are outstanding. Staff work in highly effective partnership with parents, carers and external agencies, as necessary, to secure students' attendance and well-being. Parents feel strongly that the academy takes account of their suggestions and

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concerns. The parent council group is a strong and motive force. This council has worked closely with the academy to influence decisions in areas such as communication and students’ homework. Excellent links with industry, local and international companies and businesses contribute substantially to students’ educational experiences. Actions to understand diversity, tackle discrimination and promote community cohesion, including at a local, national and global level, are extremely carefully planned and evaluated to ensure they are having an impact. Arrangements for safeguarding students are outstanding.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	1
The effectiveness of the school’s engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Sixth form

Students receive high quality advice and guidance and access courses that are entirely suitable for their needs. The curriculum is broad and can accommodate an extremely wide range of interests and at different levels because the federation across three Harris academies allows for this. In addition, a good enrichment programme extends students’ educational opportunities and experiences. In 2009, results in examinations were above average overall and showed students’ outstanding progress. Boys did better than girls, however. Retention rates for the two-year courses are above the national average. Attendance is excellent. Students develop a wide range of skills that equip them well for higher education and employment. Last year, a very high proportion of students obtained their first choice place for higher education. Students are well informed about how to lead safe and healthy lives and take much responsibility for themselves as young adults and citizens. They have a few opportunities to make a contribution to the academy as a whole; some students would like to have more. Outstanding leadership and management exist within the academy and across the federation, with excellent

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systems for communication. Staff are highly motivated, inspire students and are committed to ensuring the success of each one. Learning is very well planned, supported and assessed although students could be more involved in determining and analysing their own progress than they are at present. Resources for learning are excellent with high quality equipment and materials, and very good access to study facilities, including a virtual learning environment.

These are the grades for the sixth form

Overall effectiveness of the sixth form	1
Taking into account:	1
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	1
The quality of provision in the sixth form	1
Leadership and management of the sixth form	1

Views of parents and carers

The proportion of questionnaires returned was lower than is typical. Of the 90 questionnaires received, all entries were responded to positively with very few exceptions. Only a few questionnaires included written comments but those too were all generally positive. Praise was given to staff for their support to students, for the rich curriculum, the good information about students' progress and in newsletters, and for the progress being made. No major concerns were raised but a few suggestions were made about possible improvements to uniform rules and to provision for students with special educational needs. Inspectors concur with the overwhelmingly positive response from parents.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Harris Academy South Norwood to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 90 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1135 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	51	57	38	42	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	48	53	42	47	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	53	59	37	41	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	51	57	39	43	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	48	53	42	47	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	48	54	40	45	1	1	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	36	40	50	56	4	4	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	47	53	42	47	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	54	60	36	40	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	48	53	40	44	2	2	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	42	47	48	53	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	55	61	35	39	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	59	66	31	34	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.



22 January 2010

Dear Students

Inspection of Harris Academy South Norwood, London SE25 6AE

Thank you for your welcome when inspectors visited the academy recently. We valued the conversations we had with many of you in lessons, break times and in planned meetings. I write to let you know our findings.

The academy is outstanding. It has only been in existence for just over two years and in that short time it has speeded up your rates of progress so that standards are rising rapidly. Your learning and progress are excellent. In 2009, a very large majority of Year 11 students got five or more good GCSE grades (A* to C). The proportion getting good grades including English and mathematics, however, was below the national average. Outcomes for students in the sixth form were excellent. Your attendance is well above average and you clearly enjoy greatly being at this academy. Moreover, you are respectful and courteous to each other, staff and visitors. You work hard in lessons and behave well. You are keen to have a go when faced with unfamiliar tasks. Some of you pose your own questions when exploring ideas in lessons and perhaps you could do more of this, or ask when you are not entirely sure about a piece of work. Inspectors saw some of you presenting ideas well in front of the class. Your written work is of variable quality and, in some cases, you need to pay a little more attention to its technical accuracy. We have asked teachers to support you more in this.

The academy provides you with good teaching and an outstanding curriculum. Many of you told us how much you enjoy the 'Flexible Fridays.' You are also provided with extremely high levels of care, support and guidance. Teachers and other staff are praised by you, and your parents and carers, for all that they do to support your learning; and inspectors praise them too. Inspectors also view very highly the work of leaders and managers, in this academy and across the federation of Harris Academies, for the exceptional way that outcomes have been improved. We have asked them to raise further standards, especially in speaking and writing, and to make even more lessons as good as the best.

I wish you all the very best in your learning in the academy and in the future.

Yours sincerely

Wiola Hola
Her Majesty's Inspector

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