

The Harris Academy at Peckham

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	134225
Local Authority	N/A
Inspection number	381638
Inspection dates	19–20 September 2011
Reporting inspector	Martin Beale

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

Type of school	Academy
School category	Non-maintained
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	916
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	100
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Laura Manson-Smith
Executive Principal	Catharine Loxton
Date of previous school inspection	19–20 May 2009
School address	112 Peckham Road London SE15 5DZ
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by five additional inspectors. They visited 35 lessons, observing 35 teachers. They held meetings with staff, groups of students, members of the governing body and consultants from the Harris Federation. Inspectors observed the academy's work, and scrutinised assessment information, students' books, records of the students' progress and academy improvement plans. Inspectors analysed responses to questionnaires from 14 parents and carers, 150 pupils and 14 staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- How effectively does the school support the academic and personal development of its more vulnerable students?
- How effectively do teachers use learning objectives and lesson structure to support students' learning?
- What has been the impact of action to improve teaching and learning?

Information about the school

The Harris Academy at Peckham is average in size and has twice as many boys as girls. The majority of the students are known to be eligible for free school meals. Most students are from a range of minority ethnic backgrounds, with the largest groups being from families of Black African and Black Caribbean heritages. More than half of the students speak English as an additional language. This is a much higher proportion than usually found. The majority of students are identified with special educational needs and/or disabilities, which is also a much higher proportion than usual. Their needs are mostly associated with moderate learning difficulties, often related to literacy. The proportion of students with statements of special educational needs is below average. Considerably more pupils than in most schools join or leave other than at the usual times. The academy has recently received the Arts Mark Gold Award and the International Schools Award. It has dual specialisms in business and enterprise and the performing arts. The academy operates within the Harris Federation of 12 secondary schools and one primary school. The Executive Principal's main responsibility is with The Harris Academy at Peckham and it has its own governing body. The academy does not have any joint provision with other schools in the federation and was not inspected at the same time as other federation schools.

The Harris Academy at Peckham hosts a nursery which is run independently of the governing body and is subject to a separate inspection.

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?

2

The school’s capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

The Harris Academy at Peckham has been transformed into an effective and reflective organisation which provides a good quality of education. It has developed several outstanding features and is improving rapidly in other areas, including the sixth form. This is a result of the executive principal’s inspirational leadership, her high expectations of staff and students, and the careful targeting of support and resources so that the school’s challenging targets can be achieved.

Through exceptionally well-focused care, guidance and support, carefully planned learning programmes and the current proportion of good and better teaching, students make rapid progress from their low starting points. Attainment is rising strongly and is broadly average by the end of Year 11. This gives the students an increasingly secure base for their future success. Promoting equality of opportunity and tackling discrimination is central to the academy’s operation. Through a sharp understanding of the students’ needs, the academy is able to tailor its action so that potentially more vulnerable students, including those identified with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and those who speak English as an additional language, learn and make similarly excellent progress to others.

The executive principal is supported in the drive to improve teaching and learning by a highly effective senior team. A significant amount of teaching moves the students’ learning forward at a rapid pace. The recent focus on planning defined learning objectives and a clear structure to lessons is implemented successfully in most lessons. Consequently, students understand the purpose behind activities and their learning is developed systematically. However, in the few less effective lessons, questioning is not always used with skill to engage the students, assess their learning and extend their thinking. The academy uses its specialist status to broaden the students’ experiences and to provide wide-ranging opportunities for the development of business and enterprise skills. The key skills of literacy are promoted well, and programmes are effectively adapted to meet individual needs. However, students do not have systematically planned opportunities to apply their information and communication technology skills to support learning across subjects.

Students have complete faith that any problems or incidents will be dealt with calmly, promptly, fairly and effectively by staff. Students of all backgrounds feel safe, respected and comfortable in the academy. They are highly positive about changes in the academy, including improvements in behaviour, punctuality and attendance. According to one student, ‘life has become calmer since discipline has become

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tighter.' Attendance has risen to above average and a zero-tolerance of lateness has greatly improved punctuality at the start of the day.

The academy is positioned at the heart of the community. Highly productive partnerships with many outside organisations, including across the federation, broaden the students' experiences and have a direct impact on their achievement and well-being. The academy's work with parents and carers is highly effective in engaging them in their children's learning and providing them with information about their progress, attendance and behaviour.

Decisive leadership and a clear vision for the development of the academy have been instrumental in its recent progress. The relentless focus on identifying and planning the action needed to improve performance is based on systematic, rigorous and very accurate self-evaluation. The improving sixth form is an example of where the drive from its leadership is significantly benefiting the quality of provision and outcomes for the students. The governing body is highly effective. Members fulfil their responsibilities in a rigorous and exemplary manner, particularly in relation to safeguarding the students and supporting greater community cohesion. The continual pursuit of excellence and the rapid rate of improvement give the academy an outstanding capacity for sustained improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve the quality of teaching so that all lessons are good or better, through coaching and modelling best practice that focuses on:
 - the use of questioning to engage the students, extend their understanding and assess their learning
 - strengthening students' use of information and communication technology to support and extend their learning across subjects.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Students are keen to do well. They generally apply themselves diligently in lessons and respond quickly to their teachers' expectations. There are many examples where supporting each other and discussing their ideas add greatly to the students' learning and progress. They enjoy the challenge presented in the most effective lessons and contribute keenly by answering questions and becoming immersed in practical activities. When learning is less productive, students become passive and lose interest when they are not engaged by their teachers.

GCSE results are improving fast and many measures are getting closer to national averages. The proportion of students gaining five or more A*-C grades including English and mathematics has almost doubled in the last two years, and is now only slightly below average. Assessment data indicate that this improvement is continuing in the current Year 11 where students are on track to meet their challenging targets. Any differences in results by ethnicity are minimal or closing following the focus on

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raising the achievement of White British and Black Caribbean students.

Students have developed a wide range of strategies to keep themselves safe. They have an excellent understanding of what could constitute an unsafe situation while at work, in the community or through the internet. The students’ behaviour, relationships and attitudes in lessons demonstrate they have the personal qualities to live and work harmoniously together. However, on a few occasions the unchecked behaviour of a small minority of students can slow their learning and that of others in their classes. Most are respectful of others’ cultural and religious backgrounds but they do not always show that they reassess their values in the light of experience. Students can explain what action to take to adopt a healthy lifestyle. A high proportion of students participate in organised sporting activities but not all make the best choices about their diet. Students have a voice in the academy’s development and are consulted about their learning experiences and other things that matter to them. They are positive role models within the local community and are developing a greater understanding of the lives of others through links with Thailand and Uganda, although they have more limited experience of other parts of the United Kingdom.

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	1
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils’ behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
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	2
The extent of pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Lessons are structured well to move learning forward and build on what has gone before. The most effective teaching is lively and engaging with brisk questioning that keeps the students’ attention. Teachers skilfully assess the learning taking place and adapt their methods and responses accordingly. Reference is made to individual

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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targets so that students know what they are aiming for. Opportunities for students to assess their own work and that of others are used to engage and motivate them. Good use of assessment information in the planning of lessons ensures work for most students matches their needs, but this is not consistent in all lessons. Students are mostly aware of the steps they need to take to move towards their longer-term targets, particularly when they are encouraged to assess their own progress.

The curriculum focuses sharply on developing basic skills and is enriched by a wide range of popular clubs that are often based on the academy’s specialist areas, or with a sporting theme. Its promotion of the performing arts has been recognised by a national award. Programmes are adapted carefully to meet students’ needs, although the academy has identified that it could extend gifted and talented students further. Targeted support within lessons or focused sessions for mid-year entrants to Key Stage 4 help to meet the specific needs of students speaking English as an additional language. Additional literacy sessions in Years 7 and 8 and intensive literacy support during Key Stage 4 support the learning of students identified with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The international dimension to the curriculum is another area that has been recognised by a national award.

The committed staff team ensures that each student’s needs are addressed. Students report that they feel valued and are treated as individuals. They speak very highly about the support they receive, whether for academic or pastoral matters, and particularly for the help they receive in the ‘Space’ centre. Students new to Year 7 feel very welcomed both by staff and older students, and those in Year 9 praised the guidance they received in choosing their options. The potentially more vulnerable students are given exceptional support, including through comprehensive links with external agencies.

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	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The executive principal provides the academy with a very clear direction based on her high ambitions for everyone. She is building capacity to sustain the recent improvements among leaders at all levels through carefully planned professional development. Teaching is improving as a result of identifying and sharing good practice, and providing extensive opportunities for staff to work alongside or observe others with particular expertise. Working with staff from across the federation has been instrumental in supporting many of the improvements in teaching and

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leadership. The strong commitment to equal opportunities is shown by the rigorous evaluation of the progress of different groups of students so that intervention strategies can be carefully targeted to prevent underachievement. As a result, variations in the performance of different groups are now minimal and extinguishing.

A knowledgeable, committed and supportive governing body holds the academy closely to account for its actions. It is swift to challenge underperformance at all levels and to deal with it rigorously. The governing body is fully involved in the academy’s self-evaluation and strategic planning. It also ensures that procedures for safeguarding the students are robust, and their impact is frequently monitored, reviewed and updated to reflect changing conditions and requirements.

The academy is a cohesive, safe and amicable environment. This emphasis on cohesiveness extends to its work with the local and wider community. Carefully planned and evaluated actions are based on a detailed knowledge of the academy’s context. It is highly responsive to local issues and has created strong community links that have helped to promote security and harmony following recent tensions. The academy systematically takes account of the views of parents and carers to inform its policies and procedures and to improve its systems for their engagement. It has successfully involved some of its harder-to-reach families, as shown by the high attendance at options meetings and academic monitoring days.

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	2

Sixth form

Decisive action by the academy’s leadership has not only led to significant improvements to the sixth form, but also given it the capacity for these to be sustained. Prior to the last academic year, sixth form provision was not leading to

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suitable outcomes for the students. Up to then, they had made, at best, satisfactory progress and attainment was low. Furthermore, retention rates had been low as many students were on inappropriate courses. Following a review of provision by the new leadership, major changes were made to provide a more appropriate range of courses to meet more closely the students’ aspirations and their attainment on entry to the sixth form. A consequence has been that Year 13 results, particularly in BTEC courses, rose in 2011. However, there is insufficient evidence at present to show that this improvement is fully embedded.

Teaching observed during the inspection was broadly satisfactory with some that was good. Students are positive about their teachers and the efforts they put in to helping them to succeed. Programmes currently provided are focused on a narrow range of vocational subjects, although membership of the federation broadens the opportunities available for the students. The academy recognises that the lack of academic courses will not be suitable to attract students or meet their needs in the future, as they start to leave Year 11 with higher GCSE results. Students value the close monitoring of their attendance and the support they receive to help them meet their personal goals. This has resulted in the number continuing their studies after leaving the academy to increase.

These are the grades for the sixth form

Overall effectiveness of the sixth form	3
Taking into account:	3
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	2
The quality of provision in the sixth form	2
Leadership and management of the sixth form	2

Views of parents and carers

The proportion of questionnaires returned by parents and carers was exceptionally low (1.5%) and does not provide significant data in relation to the number of students registered at the school. The academy has surveyed parents’ and carers’ views and received a higher return rate. Responses to this survey were positive about all aspects of provision, and inspection evidence and the inspection questionnaire returns support these views.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at The Harris Academy at Peckham 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 14 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 916 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	7	50	6	43	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	6	43	7	50	1	7	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	5	36	8	57	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	6	43	5	36	0	0	1	7
The teaching is good at this school	6	43	7	50	1	7	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	5	36	8	57	0	0	1	7
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	6	43	7	50	0	0	1	7
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)	6	43	6	43	0	0	1	7
The school meets my child’s particular needs	5	36	8	57	0	0	1	7
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	7	50	6	43	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	5	36	7	50	0	0	1	7
The school is led and managed effectively	6	43	7	50	0	0	1	7
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	8	57	5	36	0	0	1	7

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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 are for the period 1 September 2010 to 08 April 2011 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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.

This letter is provided for the academy, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their academy.



21 September 2011

Dear Students

Inspection of The Harris Academy at Peckham, London, SE15 5DZ

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave the inspection team when we visited your school recently. We know that you enjoy attending the academy and saw that you work hard. Inspectors were particularly impressed by your confident answers to their questions. There are a number of things that we particularly liked.

- The Harris Academy at Peckham is providing you with a good education because the staff and governors do their utmost to help you all to succeed.
- Exemplary care, guidance and support aid your good achievement and considerably improved behaviour.
- Your positive attitudes to learning and much improved attendance levels and punctuality contribute significantly to your progress.
- Those of you who find learning difficult are given excellent support so that you can make the same rapid progress as others in your classes.
- The academy works exceptionally well in partnership with others to support your learning and has formed strong links with your parents and carers.
- Teaching is good and in most cases, but not all, effective use is made of assessment data to support your learning and progress.
- You develop an excellent understanding of how to adopt a safe lifestyle.

We have asked the academy to ensure that teachers use questions more effectively to involve everyone in class, make you think more deeply and assess how well you are progressing. We have also asked them to provide more planned opportunities for you to use your information and communication technology skills to support your learning across subjects.

We ask you to continue to work hard and be appreciative of the efforts the academy is making to help you to be successful.

Yours sincerely

Martin Beale
Lead inspector

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