

Harris Academy Chafford Hundred

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	137549
Local Authority	N/A
Inspection number	386187
Inspection dates	7–8 November 2011
Reporting inspector	Roger Whittaker

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	983
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	89
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Tim Moore
Headteacher	Christopher Tomlinson (Executive headteacher)
Date of previous school inspection	N/A
School address	Chafford Hundred Campus Mayflower Road Grays RM16 6SA
Telephone number	01375 484580
Fax number	01375 484581
Email address	c.tomlinson@Harrischaffordhundred.org.uk

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by five additional inspectors, who observed 30 lessons and saw 30 teachers. They held meetings with staff, members of the governing body and groups of students. They observed the academy's work, and looked at the academy's improvement plan, reports to the governing body and monitoring data in relation to students' progress and the quality of teaching. They analysed 101 questionnaires from parents and carers, 154 from students and 47 from members of staff.

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

- How accurately does the academy judge the quality of teaching and how well do staff monitor the impact of the variation in teaching on individuals and groups of students?
- How successfully has the academy managed the new development of provision for sixth form education?

Information about the school

Harris Academy Chafford Hundred is an average sized secondary school, with a very recently opened sixth form. The proportion of boys is higher than that of girls throughout the academy, though the number of girls is increasing in the lower year groups. The number of students eligible for free school meals is below average. The proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is average. However, the proportion with a statement of special educational needs is well above average. The academy has specialisms in business and enterprise, applied learning and gifted and talented. In 2009 it was awarded high performance specialist status. The Academy manages a specially resourced provision for special educational needs. This provides for students with autism, and supports four students from each year group.

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

Harris Academy Chafford Hundred provides an outstanding education for all its students. The very strong leadership of the executive headteacher and the senior leaders is ensuring that exceptionally well thought-out strategies for improvement are having a very positive impact on provision and, in turn, on outcomes for students. The academy has a very strong ethos and culture of high achievement and of care for all its students. The outstanding curriculum and care, guidance and support ensure that the needs of every student are met exceptionally well. Improvements in the quality of teaching, which is now outstanding, is engaging students so that their behaviour, attitudes to learning and progress are outstanding. As a result attainment has improved significantly since 2009 and results for 2011 are well above average. Almost all students are working at levels consistently well above national averages, and are significantly exceeding national expectations. This is evident from lessons seen and the academy’s accurate tracking data. Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities including those with statements of educational need, work consistently at above average standards, demonstrating outstanding progress. This is also the case for a very small number of students who are supported through the externally funded provision for students with autism. Other outcomes for students have improved because of the academy’s ethos of developing the whole student as an individual. As a result they demonstrate outstanding personal skills which underpin their ability to contribute to their learning. They also make significant contributions to the life of the academy and the wider community.

The academy has outstanding capacity not only to sustain levels of performance, but also to improve even further. It has significantly improved provision, which has contributed to the rapid improvement in results over the past two years. The academy has outstanding monitoring and evaluation strategies, which ensure that all staff are held to account for their performance. Staff understand fully what the academy is wanting to achieve and are enthusiastically committed to working towards accomplishing these goals.

The academy’s self-evaluation system ensures that all staff continue their drive for on-going improvement. This is evident in the accurate evaluation of what the academy needs to do to improve even further. Leaders correctly identify that while teaching is overall excellent, the proportion of lessons that are outstanding is not yet high enough to ensure that all students are gaining passes at the highest grades.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that teaching in almost all lessons is outstanding by the end of this academic year by:
 - making sure that all students know what they can do and how to improve through verbal and written feedback
 - giving students more responsibility through the development and use of independent learning skills.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

From broadly average beginnings, almost all students leave the academy with attainment that is well above expected levels. The leadership team, led by the highly effective executive headteacher, introduced a target setting system, which is based on the attainment of individual students. Targets are very challenging and commit students to strive to achieve at the highest level. Excellent systems of personalised support are put in place and outstanding tracking systems ensure that all students know exactly where they are at any time. Consequently, the present Year 11 students are on track to exceed their very challenging targets. This will mean that almost all students will gain five or more A*-C grades at GCSE including English and mathematics, and so achieve well above the national average. Students with special educational needs and/or statements of educational needs make progress at the same rate as other groups. Students who are supported in the provision for autism make outstanding progress. There is successful integration with some mainstream classes where students with autism are able to learn how to build up relationships with their peers. The specialist status has made a considerable contribution to improvements through the development of strategies to help students at different levels to achieve as well as they can, for example extension activities for gifted and talented students.

Students' attitudes to learning and their ability to apply themselves in lessons are exceptional and this is reflected in the outstanding progress they make in lessons. Attendance is high and students are punctual to their lessons and other commitments. Students show an exceptionally good understanding of how to be safe. They are confident to ask a member of staff if they need help and say the 'there is always a member of staff around if a need occurs'. Students spoke at length about how they value the opportunities to contribute to the academy community. For example as members of an active school council or to lead physical activity sessions for other students as part of their aim of encouraging a healthy lifestyle. Most take advantage of opportunities to join extra-curricular clubs and societies. Students are developing as outstanding members of society and demonstrate a very high level of social skills in the different situations they find themselves during their time at the academy. The students make a significant contribution to the community cohesion within the academy.

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These are the grades for pupils’ outcomes

Pupils’ achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	1
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attainment ¹	1
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	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attendance ¹	1
The extent of pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

The outstanding relationships, which exist between teachers and students, contribute significantly to the high levels of progress made by students. Teachers are enthusiastic about their subjects and pass this on to the students through activities which excite and engage them in their learning. Students are clear about their targets and are actively involved in assessing their own and others’ work. For example, in an art lesson students were developing the skills of still life drawing by working on success criteria set by the teacher. They then worked in groups to assess one another’s drawings and to decide how peers could improve their drawing and so be working at a higher level. The teacher encouraged them to think for themselves and only use him as a resource when all else failed. Teachers set high expectations for learning in lessons and outcomes for students by the end of the lesson are always challenging. Teachers encourage a ‘can do’ philosophy that students respond to and so often work to higher levels. In the few lessons where teaching is not outstanding students are not always made aware of what they are capable and how to improve through written and verbal feedback and students are not given the opportunity to use their independent learning skills.

The curriculum has developed to ensure that the needs of all students are met in order for them to achieve as well as they can. The academy has built on opportunities within the specialist status and has developed the curriculum to enable students to be actively involved in their own learning, for example: in Years 7 and 8 an innovative programme of work enables students to develop strong skills for

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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learning. The curriculum is regularly reviewed to ensure that it remains personalised to individual needs. Students are very happy that the organised options enable them to take the courses that they require. While most of the curriculum is based on GCSE courses there are opportunities for students to work on vocational options such as hairdressing and motor mechanics. Students take advantage of a very wide extra-curricular programme.

The academy does everything it can to make sure that barriers to learning are overcome through exceptionally effective care, guidance and support provision. Transition arrangements into the academy for all students, but especially those who may be potentially vulnerable, are outstanding. The specialist staff, in the provision for students with autism, know their students really well and form excellent relationships with them. They are vigilant in making support available. Learning guidance is excellent; ensuring that all students have weekly opportunities to talk about their progress. Strong support systems are in place to meet all their needs. Students were enthusiastic to talk about the high level of support and care they receive at the academy.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	1
Taking into account:	
The use of assessment to support learning	1
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?

The drive and enthusiasm of the outstanding executive headteacher has focused the academy on setting very high standards and aspirations for all its stakeholders. Supported by his extremely effective senior leaders he has instilled an ethos of 'all students are entitled to achieve at the highest levels' within the academy. As a result staff understand the aims of the academy, are committed to them and are willing to work very hard to improve their practice. Roles and responsibilities are clearly defined and staff are held to account for their outcomes. Within this system the executive headteacher has built an 'everyone can achieve high' culture, which has resulted in staff supporting and helping each other. Self-evaluation is a strength of the academy and consequently leaders have identified the need to increase the proportion of outstanding lessons so that students receive the best teaching almost all of the time.

The academy works hard at reaching all parents and carers. Excellent systems exist to enable engagement with parents and carers; they respond with enthusiasm and feel that the academy listens to their views and acts upon them. A full range of partnerships with business and outside agencies are in place; these greatly enhance

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the learning experience of all students. The academy tackles any discrimination rigorously and ensures that students whose circumstances make them potentially vulnerable are not disadvantaged. The academy’s approach to community cohesion is outstanding with many opportunities for students to engage with communities with different social and cultural contexts. The outstanding governing body, very well led by the very effective chair, has played a significant role in improvements that have taken place at the academy. They are exceptionally supportive of the head teacher and his staff. They are active in the academy and have very effective systems of accountability so that staff are held to account for their performance and that of the students. The school adopts recommended good practice for safeguarding of students across all aspects of its work. Students have a strong understanding of safety and safeguarding so that they understand how to keep themselves safe.

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	2
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’ attainment is well above national averages in almost all lessons seen. The sixth form benefits from being able to build on secure practice, which is common in the main school. Excellent tracking data indicate that students will achieve well above national averages by the end of Year 12. Highly effective teaching engages students in their learning. It promotes problem solving and helps students to think for themselves. As a result students learning and progress is outstanding. The curriculum meets the needs of all students exceptionally well. It builds on the high aspirations developed during time in the main school.

Students demonstrate maturity in their attitudes to the sixth form experience. They cooperate well and are willing to contribute to activities both in the sixth form and also in the main school, for example: leading health related activities in the fitness

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room as part of their promotion of adopting healthy lifestyles. Students receive high quality academic and pastoral support, which enables them to enjoy their learning and helps them to achieve outstanding results. The leadership and management of the sixth form is outstanding. Monitoring and evaluation is rigorous and is assisting the school to quickly identify how well students are adapting to life in this new sixth form. The views of students are regularly used to inform development planning.

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 parents and carers who responded to the inspection questionnaires were extremely positive about the academy. Their views were in line with the judgements made by inspectors; particularly in relation to how effectively the academy is led and managed and how much their children enjoy attending. A very small minority felt that the academy is not helping their children to have a healthy lifestyle. The inspectors found that the academy was making every effort to do this and was having success especially in students' physical health through an extensive range of physical activities.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Harris Academy Chafford Hundred 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 101 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 983 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	53	52	45	45	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	67	66	33	33	1	1	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	58	57	37	37	3	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	51	50	48	48	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	53	52	47	47	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	48	48	48	48	3	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	25	25	69	68	7	7	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)	50	50	46	46	1	1	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	51	50	44	44	4	4	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	65	64	32	32	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	46	46	44	44	3	3	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	68	67	31	31	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	71	70	30	30	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

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 school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



9 November 2011

Dear Students

Inspection of Harris Academy Chafford Hundred, Grays, RM16 6SA

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave the inspection team when we visited your academy recently. We enjoyed being in your lessons and were impressed with the maturity with which you told us your views. We have decided that it is an outstanding academy.

These are some of the academy's strengths.

- You now make outstanding progress so that standards you reach by the end of Year 11 are well above national averages. Coupled with your high levels of attendance, this means that you are very well prepared to move on to further education or training.
- You contribute exceptionally well to your academy, especially when taking responsibility on the student council or contributing to discussions about developments in the academy.
- The teaching is outstanding overall and you are regularly given opportunities to be involved in interesting activities.
- Staff take outstanding care to ensure you are looked after well and supported during your time at the academy.
- Your executive headteacher and senior staff are enthusiastic and committed to ensuring that you achieve at the highest levels

In order to help the academy to continue to improve even further, we have asked leaders to ensure that the quality of teaching in almost all lessons is outstanding. They should do this by making sure that you always know what you can do and how to improve in lessons and that you are given even more opportunities to use your independent learning skills.

You can help the teachers by continuing to work really hard in all lessons. We wish you well in your future at Harris Academy Chafford Hundred.

Yours sincerely

Roger Whittaker
Lead inspector

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