

Harris City Academy Crystal Palace

Maberley Road, Upper Norwood, London, SE19 2JH

Inspection dates

16-17 October 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Sixth form provision		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- Students of all abilities make outstanding progress. They are set challenging targets and enjoy their learning.
- Students' performance in a wide range of subjects is excellent.
- The vision and ambition of the Principal, combined with the support and commitment of other leaders and teachers, are crucial elements to the academy's success.
- Students say how much they value the high quality teaching they receive and their teachers' willingness to give them extra help to prepare them for their examinations.
- Skilled managers at all levels in the school carefully track the progress of individual students and provide rapid support for students where required.
- The strong focus, throughout all the academy's work, on the promotion of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, enables students to develop leadership skills and teamwork and fosters their creativity.
- Students are considerate and respectful of each other and staff. They are exceptionally well behaved and know how to keep themselves safe.
- The sixth form is outstanding and prepares increasing numbers of students with opportunities to gain places at top universities.
- Disadvantaged students who are eligible for additional funding achieve higher standards and make better progress than students nationally.
- Teachers plan tasks very well so that students of all abilities, including the least and most able, are able to achieve success and enjoy their learning.
- The resources and support of the Harris Federation is ensuring that all students share high aspirations about progression into higher education and successful life in the world of work.
- There is an outstanding programme of continuous staff training and development, which includes strong collaborative working through the school's federation.
- The academy is significantly oversubscribed and parents are highly positive about the academy's work. This is shown by its own constant analysis and evaluation of parents' views.
- Governors are extremely knowledgeable about the academy's performance and are playing a highly effective role in shaping future strategic developments.
- The academy's curriculum is skilfully organised to provide a large range of subjects. It develops a strong commitment to learning and personal achievement.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 46 lessons, eight of which were observed jointly with members of the senior leadership team. Inspectors also made a number of further short visits to lessons.
- Meetings were held with students, parents, governors, staff, including subject leaders, and representatives from the academy federation.
- Inspectors also spoke to students informally at social times including lunchtimes and breaks.
- The inspectors observed the academy’s work and looked at policies, the academy’s self-evaluation and development planning, monitoring records, information about students’ progress, safeguarding documents, and samples of students’ work.
- The views of the 122 parents who responded to the online questionnaire (Parent View), the school’s own analysis of parents’ perceptions and 32 responses to the staff questionnaire were considered by the inspection team.

Inspection team

Chris King, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Michael Elson	Additional Inspector
Andrew Lyons	Additional Inspector
Maureen Hill	Additional Inspector
Diane Sherman	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is larger than the average-sized secondary school.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is lower than the national average. The proportion of students supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also below average.
- The numbers of students eligible for the pupil premium is below average. The pupil premium is additional funding for students known to be eligible for free school meals and those in local authority care.
- The proportion of students who speak English as an additional language is above the national average.
- Well over half of the students are from minority ethnic backgrounds. This is double the national average.
- The academy is part of the Harris Federation that provides support for its schools including school improvement services. The academy also contributes to the support of other schools in the federation.
- The academy is a nationally designated teaching school.
- No students attend off-site provision although some students in the sixth form study courses at other academies in the federation as part of a shared provision offer.
- The school meets the current government floor standards which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue to build on improvements to the quality of teaching by maximising the opportunities for students to give full, detailed verbal and written responses to the tasks they are assigned, in every subject.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are outstanding

- Excellent leadership from the Principal, supported by the newly appointed senior leadership team, has driven forward the academy's desire to maximise the potential for every student. The very highest expectations are now in place for all students, no matter what their starting points.
 - There is a very strong focus on securing further improvement. Both senior leaders and those in charge of subjects rigorously monitor all aspects of the academy's work and identify where teachers' performance or students' outcomes could be further improved.
 - Students' progress towards ambitious targets is tracked very closely and leaders have worked extensively with teachers to ensure assessments of students' attainment are accurate. Class teachers are fully accountable for securing rapid student progress. Action to accelerate progress where an individual student may be at risk of not meeting their target is swift and effective. The students themselves talk highly of the additional support they receive after lessons to help them gain the grades they need.
 - Senior leaders' expectations of staff are high and the management of staff performance is rigorous. Extensive and effective induction for new staff helps to sustain high levels of consistency in the academy's routines and protocols. Ongoing training is very carefully tailored to meet teachers' personal development needs. The academy makes excellent use of the skills of its own staff as well as expertise across the Harris Federation and beyond to enhance staff competence. Staff respond very positively to feedback, training and support. As a result, the overall quality of teaching is outstanding and is continuing to improve.
 - The outstanding curriculum helps to ensure that students achieve highly and rapidly develop the personal skills and qualities needed for success in the next stage of their education and in the world of work. Additional study sessions enable students to maximise their potential in academic subjects. The academy promotes the development of students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural values extremely well through its values, routines, the taught curriculum and the many enrichment opportunities that they are able to access. As a result students are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
 - Students have the benefit of individual, independent advice and guidance from a team of careers advisors working across the Harris Federation. This helps them make informed choices about subjects and qualifications and allows them to experience opportunities in the world of work. The school promotes equality of opportunity, fosters good relationships and behaviour and tackles discrimination exceptionally well.
 - The academy makes very good use of partnerships to support students' academic progress, personal development and their health and well-being. For example, links with universities and business are used to raise students' aspirations.
 - The academy works closely with parents from the outset to ensure they understand and fully support the academy's values and high expectations. Information about how well their child is doing is detailed and regular and the academy is already briefing parents on the changes it has implemented as a result of national changes to assessment and levels of attainment. Documents available to parents via the academy's website are extensive and informative. The academy actively seeks their views.
 - The Harris Federation has been instrumental in establishing and supporting development at the academy. For example, a team of consultants has worked and continues to work with the academy to raise achievement levels even further in core subjects and provide valuable links to other schools in the partnership.
 - The academy's arrangements for safeguarding students meet statutory requirements.
- **The governance of the school:**
- Governors have a very clear understanding of the academy's strengths and improvement plans. They are well informed regarding the work of the academy and understand how to hold to account senior leaders. Governors are aware of how well different groups of students are achieving, and of the use and impact of additional funding across the academy. Governors understand where teaching is at its best and those areas the school has worked on to improve in the past. They access training to enhance their skills further and they understand their role in ensuring rigorous performance management, including that of the Principal. Governors ensure that all aspects of safeguarding meet statutory regulations.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding**Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Students consistently show great pleasure and a very strong commitment to their learning across all year groups. They cooperate well with other students in lessons and help each other. Students are very positive about behaviour and can explain how effectively the staff foster excellent attitudes.
- Exclusions are well below the national average.
- Attendance in the academy is excellent. Students not only arrive on time but they also attend after the official end to the day to further their own studies or take part in extra-curricular interests. The academy's strategies for improving and maintaining high attendance have been excellent.
- Behaviour around the academy is calm. Litter is rare and students respect the artwork and notices displayed around the building. Staff questionnaires and parents' perceptions support this view. The excellent behaviour of students supports the strong culture of respect and achievement within the academy.
- Incidents of bullying are rare and students say that there is always someone they can go to if they are unhappy. Students told inspectors of the academy's high expectations of them all in ensuring zero tolerance for racist or homophobic comments.
- Students enjoy contributing to the academy community, taking responsible roles and developing leadership skills. For example, the elections for Head Boy and Girl take on an extremely high profile in the academy with many events arranged for students to contribute to and become involved in.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding.
- Much care is taken to ensure that the site is safe and that rigorous checks are carried out on all staff and visitors.
- Students say they feel extremely safe and well cared for. Parents' views state they are confident their children are safe.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

- The primary strengths of teaching are the strong subject knowledge, skilful questioning and additional time that teachers put into extra study support.
- Activities in lessons allow students to make rapid progress at an appropriate level of challenge. The needs of the most and least able are specifically identified and included in planning.
- Teaching is closely matched to provide individual challenge to all students. High expectations from teachers ensure that no students are left behind. This is particularly evident in mathematics.
- Teachers and classroom assistants model a love of learning through their expertise and commitment to their subject. That passion is infectious; students can see how much teachers enjoy their subject and also what excellence in that subject looks like. There is no reticence among teachers or students for celebrating high academic and practical standards. This includes developing all the core skills in literacy and mathematics.
- Students' work shows teachers' very high degree of skill in dealing with the different age groups. There are excellent working relationships across the year groups, which in turn play a key part in enhancing the personal development of the students.
- Homework supports learning well. Teachers enhance this further through a wide range of after-school clubs and study support that students value highly.
- Marking is thorough, consistent across all subjects and usually gives the students clear diagnostic feedback. It includes praise for work well done and directs the students to additional tasks that will further improve their work, followed by checks to confirm the improvement.
- The school knows that to improve teaching even further, small inconsistencies need to be removed. On a few occasions in some subjects, teachers do not provide students with enough opportunities to give full, detailed verbal and written responses to the tasks they are assigned.
- Teachers' marking of students' work includes detail of what they have done well and clearly identifies next steps. Almost all marking and written feedback are of a very high quality. Time is given for students to take action in response to teachers' feedback and this improves the quality of their work and moves their learning on.

- Learning time is never wasted. Teachers expect students to start work promptly and they do. Poor-quality student work or anything less than 100% effort is not accepted during lessons. This makes a significant contribution to students' outstanding achievement.
- Well-chosen resources, including the use of new technologies and a diverse variety of teaching strategies, promote high levels of student engagement so that they make outstanding progress over time.

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- The attainment of students when they arrive in Year 7 is above the national average. The attainment of students at the end of Year 11 has been consistently well above average in all measures and for all groups of students. For example, 77% of students achieved five or more GCSE passes at grades A* to C including English and mathematics in 2014 and 55% gained the 'Ebacc' mix of qualifications, which also includes good grades in science, history or geography and a modern foreign language. Both these figures are well above the 2013 national average.
- All groups of students, including those from minority ethnic backgrounds and those from below, average and above average starting points make much better than the expected progress.
- The achievement of the most able students is outstanding because they are consistently given challenging and demanding work. As a result of a programme of support and intervention aimed at raising performance at the highest level, in 2014 the proportion of students gaining the very highest A*/A grades in English and mathematics was very high. The academy's data show that this is set to rise further.
- The performance of students in mathematics is excellent. The academy continues to use its own analysis of students' performance carefully to ensure that each student achieves to their highest level. The school is aware of small inconsistencies in their performance of some subjects and is working efficiently to remove these.
- Disadvantaged students eligible for support through additional funding achieve exceptionally well, gaining higher standards and making more rapid progress than all groups of students nationally. Compared to national figures for all students, disadvantaged students achieved a grade higher in GCSE mathematics and a third of a grade higher in GCSE English. In 2013, the in-school gap between this group and their classmates at Harris City Academy Crystal Palace halved from the previous year having been a third of a grade behind in English and two thirds of a grade behind in mathematics.
- Students, particularly those who speak English as an additional language and from minority ethnic groups, are consistently challenged with demanding activities and the academy is working hard to enhance their literacy skills so that all students can more clearly communicate their higher-level understanding. This includes a variety of strategies in lessons including extended writing practice, insisting on full sentences in verbal responses, regular reading opportunities and a very good whole-school literacy plan that supports teachers in their work in the classroom.
- Where students take examinations early it does not impact on their achievement.
- Disabled students and those with special educational needs make outstanding progress across a full range of subjects. Students are extremely well supported in lessons by teachers and support staff.

The sixth form provision

is outstanding

- Leadership in the sixth form is outstanding. Leaders track progress and the quality of teaching closely and are able to spot any potential underachievement early and put in appropriate support.
- Students are able to access a wide range of subjects in the sixth form. Those students that want to follow courses not available at the academy are able to choose from more options across the Harris Federation and all make rapid progress.
- Any students who do not complete their courses are well catered for. The academy ensures they receive the support they need to start new courses and continue their studies.
- The behaviour of students in the sixth form is outstanding and their attendance rates are very high. They contribute very effectively to academy life, for example through supporting younger students with their studies.
- Teaching in the sixth form is outstanding. Students are immersed in high quality learning experiences that develop their knowledge and skills and they receive excellent preparation for further study in higher education.
- Achievement in the sixth form is outstanding. Attainment is high and students make excellent progress

across a wide range of subjects that enables them to be well prepared for further studies, including at top universities.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	135311
Local authority	Croydon
Inspection number	449433

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11-18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1290
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	328
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Angela Kail
Headteacher	Dr Hilary Macaulay
Date of previous school inspection	7-8 October 2009
Telephone number	020 87712261
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