

Harris Academy Morden

Lilleshall Road, Morden, Surrey SM4 6DU

Inspection dates

27–28 June 2018

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| Overall effectiveness | Outstanding |
| Effectiveness of leadership and management | Outstanding |
| Quality of teaching, learning and assessment | Outstanding |
| Personal development, behaviour and welfare | Outstanding |
| Outcomes for pupils | Outstanding |
| Overall effectiveness at previous inspection | Good |

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- The strong and determined leadership of the headteacher ensures excellent standards in all aspects of the school’s work.
- Pupils achieve exceptional outcomes in public examinations. Current pupils are making outstanding progress.
- Staff are enthusiastic about their teaching and support the school’s ethos of high aspirations for all. There is a low turnover of staff and their morale is high.
- Teachers use strong subject knowledge and skilful questioning to challenge their pupils effectively.
- Staff prepare pupils well for their examinations and for the next stage of education or employment. However, the school’s strategies to build pupils’ skills of independence are not fully embedded.
- Leaders have established an effective teaching and learning environment where pupils can achieve exceptionally well.
- A strong culture of safeguarding is at the heart of school life. Pupils feel safe and are well informed about risks and how these should be managed, both in and out of school.
- A wide range of extra-curricular activities enable pupils to develop a range of skills and interests.
- Pupils enjoy school and their attendance is high.
- Pupils demonstrate excellent standards of behaviour throughout the school.
- Governance is very effective. Governors are skilled and are committed to the success of the school.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Fully embed strategies to strengthen pupils' skills of independence.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- The headteacher's high aspirations for all pupils and his unwavering focus on sustained improvement are at the heart of the school's success. Clear systems understood by all and consistently applied are the hallmarks of his excellent leadership.
- Senior leaders have an excellent understanding of the school's priorities. These are shared by all staff, who are determined and committed to enabling all pupils to do their best and overcome any barriers to learning they may have.
- Middle leaders are knowledgeable, talented and reflective. They are accountable for pupils' outcomes and carry out their roles effectively.
- Staff relish the opportunities they have to improve their skills. Support for teachers is very strong. Leaders make excellent use of a range of professional development opportunities to continue to improve the quality of teaching. Training for teachers is targeted to individual need and of a high quality. This leads to outstanding outcomes for pupils. Newly qualified teachers feel well supported and cared for.
- Leaders work very hard to ensure that vulnerable pupils have access to appropriate support. When it is necessary to refer pupils to outside agencies, actions taken are swift, robust and effective.
- School leaders have put in place a well-designed curriculum with a strong focus on core subjects. Pupils follow subjects which provide opportunities to deepen their knowledge, skills and understanding. There is a range of additional teaching in place to support pupils who fall behind. In order to meet learners' needs, leaders continually review the curriculum. Hence, they have introduced a wider range of vocational options at GCSE. Strategies to build pupils' skills of independence are not fully embedded.
- A wider extra-curricular programme, including sports, cheerleading and visits to the theatre, provides excellent opportunities for pupils. The majority of pupils take part in at least one activity which enables them to boost their skills and take up new interests.
- Leaders use additional funding for disadvantaged pupils and for those in year 7 who need extra help to catch up with others very effectively. The impact of this funding is shown in the outstanding outcomes achieved by disadvantaged pupils. Year 7 pupils who join the school with low starting points are supported in reading, for example through the 'book buddy' breakfast sessions. As a result, they make strong progress in developing their literacy skills.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is carefully planned and promoted very strongly across a range of activities. Pupils learn about democracy, equal opportunities and tolerance. The very strong sense of community is evident throughout the school. As one pupil typically said, 'We all get along and our background does not matter.'

Governance of the school

- Those responsible for governance are ambitious and determined to ensure that all pupils achieve the best they can. They meet their statutory responsibilities.
- Governors understand their responsibility in relation to safeguarding pupils and have received appropriate training. Frequent reviews of safeguarding procedures reflect the fact that pupils' welfare is at the heart of the work of the school.
- Members of the governing body have a wide set of skills and experiences which are used effectively in carrying out their duties. They provide an effective level of challenge and support to senior leaders.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders ensure that there is a strong safeguarding culture in the school. Through clear policies and procedures, all staff know and understand their responsibilities to help keep pupils safe. Staff receive regular safeguarding training, including about the 'Prevent' duty and child exploitation.
- Leaders have trained staff well in recognising and reporting any concerns they have about pupils' welfare. Working relationships between staff who have specific safeguarding responsibilities and outside agencies are very strong in order to support vulnerable pupils.
- Pupils said that they feel safe and are confident that any concerns that they raise will be dealt with swiftly. They spoke with maturity about the many ways that they are taught to keep safe, for example how to manage risk in difficult situations.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Outstanding

- Pupils enjoy their classes, are attentive and are keen to learn. The vast majority take pride in their work. Pupils are extremely positive about their teachers and the high quality of education they receive. As one pupil said, 'Teachers teach well, and poor behaviour is not tolerated.'
- Teachers have very strong subject knowledge and enthusiasm for their subjects. They have high aspirations of what pupils can achieve and set them challenging targets. Pupils who spoke with inspectors were clear about what they have to do to make their work better and said that this helps them improve.
- Leaders make effective use of the academy trust's assessment procedures to ensure that they know how pupils are progressing. They intervene when pupils need help. Teachers use assessment information very effectively to plan lessons with precision in order to meet the needs of all pupils, including the most able and those who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities.
- Teachers provide pupils with an array of opportunities to regularly explore and practise examination-style questions. This helps explain their high achievement by the end of key stage 4.

- Pupils are confident and eager to share their learning with their teachers and their peers.
- Teachers' skilful questioning probes and deepens pupils' understanding and leads to very strong progress. Inspectors saw evidence of exceptional teaching in English, mathematics, science and history. Highly effective teaching is complemented by the use of homework to embed pupils' knowledge.
- Pupils routinely are given time and opportunities to correct mistakes in order to improve their work, which leads to better understanding.
- A culture of reading is being 'championed' by the headteacher and all pupils have reading time in morning registration. This is having an extremely positive impact on the development of literary skills, which inspectors saw when they looked at pupils' written work.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils get on extremely well with each other. They value and respect individual and cultural differences.
- Pupils say they feel safe in school and are given information about how to keep safe. They are very clear about who they would go to in school if they had a problem. Through assemblies and 'drop down' days, age-appropriate themes are discussed, which give pupils extensive opportunities to explore safety issues and learn how to manage potential risks.
- Parental surveys show that the vast majority of parents and carers feel their child is happy and safe at school. As one parent said, 'What has been achieved here is no mean feat.'
- The careers advice and guidance that pupils receive, including from speakers and through visits, prepare pupils for the next stage of their education or employment very effectively. Pupils spoke very positively about the information and guidance they receive when choosing their GCSE options.
- All pupils who left the school last year went on to further education or to an apprenticeship. The school has developed highly effective systems for monitoring and tracking academic progress.
- Through the school council, pupils develop leadership skills and have an important say in the development of the school, for example the improvement of the sports facilities.
- Student-led 'commissions' enable pupils to undertake action research which directly contributes to improving teaching and learning. This typifies their high levels of maturity, confidence and commitment to their school and to learning.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.

- Leaders have put effective systems in place to help teachers manage the behaviour of pupils effectively and to make sure that the behaviour policy is implemented consistently. Pupils are clear about the school's expectations of their conduct when in school and, as a result, low-level disruption to learning is infrequent and rates of exclusion are extremely low. However, a few pupils think the policy is too strict.
- Pupils are very polite, courteous and respectful when speaking to staff and visitors to the school.
- Pupils who attend alternative provision behave well and attend regularly.
- Whole-school attendance is above the national average. Staff work tirelessly to support pupils, and strategies to secure good attendance are effective because the proportion of pupils who are regularly absent from school is low.

Outcomes for pupils

Outstanding

- In 2017 at the end of key stage 4, pupils made exceptional progress overall. Their results put them in the top 1% of schools nationally.
- Published examination results in 2017 accounted for the progress of approximately 90% of the Year 11 cohort because there was no published information about their prior attainment in key stage 2. However, those pupils not covered by the data made very strong progress overall.
- Overall, pupils attained on average half a grade higher than the national averages across eight subjects at GCSE.
- Inspectors looked at current pupils' work, including in English, mathematics, science, Spanish, history and geography. In the vast majority of cases, pupils were shown to be making very strong progress. On a very few occasions, lower prior-attaining pupils were not making as strong progress as their peers in mathematics.
- Disadvantaged pupils make excellent progress when compared nationally with pupils with similar Year 6 test results. They achieve exceptionally well in English, mathematics and science. Most-able pupils and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities who have an education, health and care plan make outstanding progress.
- In key stage 3 overall, pupils make excellent progress across all subjects.
- The school sets clear and challenging targets for pupils to achieve. Strong assessment practices effectively measure progress and enable those falling behind to receive additional support.

School details

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| Unique reference number | 138495 |
| Local authority | Merton |
| Inspection number | 10052751 |

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

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| Type of school | Secondary comprehensive |
| School category | Academy sponsor-led |
| Age range of pupils | 11 to 16 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 747 |
| Appropriate authority | Board of trustees |
| Chair | Anthony Bayon |
| Headteacher | Lee Mallin |
| Telephone number | 020 8687 1157 |
| Website | www.harrismorden.org.uk/ |
| Email address | l.mallin@harrismorden.org.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | 27 March 2018 |

Information about this school

- Harris Morden is a sponsor-led academy in the London Borough of Merton.
- The school opened in March 2013. It is part of Harris Federation Multi-Academy Trust.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is above average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is below the national average.
- The school uses two alternative providers, Just Learn and Smart Centre. There are currently a few pupils at alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in a range of subjects throughout the school. Inspectors reviewed pupils' work. They observed pupils' behaviour during break and lunchtimes, at lesson changeover times and during registration.
- Documentation, policies and the school's practice were considered, with particular regard given to behaviour, bullying, safeguarding, welfare and health and safety.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, members of the trust and several members of the school staff.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils informally and formally, including during visits to classrooms.
- The inspection considered the views of 20 parents who replied to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey.
- Inspectors considered the views of 17 staff who completed Ofsted's online surveys.

Inspection team

| | |
|------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Sarah Parker, lead inspector | Her Majesty's Inspector |
| David Booth | Ofsted Inspector |
| Andy Webster | Ofsted Inspector |
| Aruna Sharma | Ofsted Inspector |

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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