

Harborne Academy

Harborne Road, Edgbaston, Birmingham, West Midlands B15 3JL

Inspection dates

20–21 June 2017

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
16 to 19 study programmes	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Inadequate

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The sponsor and governors have acted swiftly and decisively since the last inspection. They are well informed and are effectively driving improvement.
- The newly appointed headteacher and her senior team have made rapid changes to the school. These have quickly improved the quality of teaching and outcomes for pupils.
- Leaders have established well-thought out systems for monitoring and developing a range of features, such as behaviour, safeguarding, the quality of teaching and attendance.
- Pupils in Years 8 and 9 have limited access to effective careers guidance.
- In lessons, teachers consistently set work that is well matched to pupils' abilities. This means that work is both accessible and suitably challenging.
- Behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. Teachers and pupils agree that it has improved, and that lessons are rarely disrupted by poor behaviour.
- Progress, destinations and work experience for vocational students in the sixth form are very strong.
- Students in the sixth form do not participate regularly in extra-curricular activities because opportunities for this are limited. In key stage 3 science, the curriculum is weak. It does not allow pupils to develop the skills and knowledge that they need for GCSE.

Full report

In accordance with section 13(4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve key stage 3 pupils' progress in science by:
 - revising the curriculum to make sure that pupils have sufficient time to develop their knowledge and understanding of one topic effectively before they move on to the next
 - clarifying how achievement is measured in science at key stage 3, so that teachers, pupils and parents have a secure understanding of how well pupils are progressing.
- Develop a stronger careers information, advice and guidance programme for pupils in Years 8 and 9 so that pupils in key stage 3 have the same high-quality support for their next steps in education and employment as those in key stage 4 and 5.
- Strengthen post-16 study programmes by developing a wider range of extra-curricular activities so that sixth-form pupils have a richer programme outside their formal studies.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The newly appointed headteacher has accurately identified the school's weaknesses and taken swift, effective action to address them. Her vision is clear, and action plans are simple and easy for leaders to follow. Leaders, staff and pupils are galvanised to improve the school in all areas.
- Leaders have developed the 'Harborne quality mark'. This is a set of non-negotiable practices, which contribute to strong pupil progress. The quality mark gives a clear vision and allows leaders to produce sharp, accurate self-evaluation that pinpoints the next steps that need to be taken for the school to improve.
- Leaders have implemented new policies and systems in many areas of the school, for example in teaching and learning, reporting, assessment, behaviour and attendance. These systems have been quickly embedded and enable leaders to see clearly, when their actions are effective.
- Information on pupils' progress is managed well. The school's tracking system, while comprehensive, is simple and easy to understand. It helps leaders to pinpoint pupils and groups of pupils who are falling behind and to intervene to help them catch up. It focuses leaders' attention on all year groups.
- Leaders have reviewed the curriculum and it now meets pupils' needs. They have made changes so that different groups of pupils have a curriculum that suits them. For example, key stage 3 pupils now study subjects other than English, mathematics and science more regularly so that they can gain a more secure understanding of the subjects prior to choosing their GCSE options. Pupils no longer complete GCSEs in humanities subjects within an academic year, as leaders found that this was not effective. Some pupils who speak English as an additional language repeat a year before their GCSEs to make sure that they are fully prepared for their examination courses.
- Teachers offer a range of extra-curricular activities, which pupils said that they enjoy. For example, pupils can join a choir, a variety of sports clubs or the debating club. Pupils said that these clubs help to build their confidence and skills.
- Leaders monitor teachers' practice closely by observing lessons, analysing pupils' outcomes and evaluating the work that pupils do in lessons. This gives them a well-rounded view of the quality of teachers' practice. Where teaching does not meet the standard required, teachers are given support to improve it. This means that weaker teaching is swiftly addressed and pupils' progress is improved.
- The curriculum for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is well matched to these pupils' needs. Leaders balance the requirement for breadth and qualifications for next steps with pupils' individual starting points and the extra help that they will need to be successful. As a result of improvements in tracking, teaching and the investigation of pupils' absence from school, this group's attendance and progress is improving swiftly. The extra funds provided for these pupils are well targeted.
- Leaders ensure that they actively promote fundamental British values. This is done

through the assemblies, 'thought for the day' and the form-time programme. Teachers use thought for the day to discuss issues such as personal criticism, excuses, attitudes, friendship, tolerance and respect. As a result, pupils have ample opportunities to develop their understanding of important values.

- Leaders have planned the spending of the pupil premium and the Year 7 literacy and numeracy catch-up funding carefully. They have identified the key barriers to disadvantaged pupils' progress as being low standards of literacy and numeracy. Extra tuition and academic mentors for disadvantaged pupils are diminishing the difference between the progress made by disadvantaged pupils and those with weak literacy and numeracy skills and that made by their peers nationally with similar starting points.

Governance of the school

- The governance of the school is good.
- The sponsor and the governing body have taken decisive and effective action since the last inspection. They have appointed governors who have a keen understanding of educational leadership. These governors are well placed to hold school leaders to account because they have a strong understanding of what is happening in the school and information about pupils' performance.
- In the past, governors relied too heavily on the limited information that leaders provided. A programme of link governor visits means that governors have first-hand knowledge, for example, of pupils' views and standards of behaviour. This enables governors to support and challenge leaders from a well-informed position.
- Governors have a good understanding of safeguarding. Meeting notes show that leaders now give comprehensive information about safeguarding to governors, so that governors can be assured that the school's work to keep pupils safe is effective.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- All records on safeguarding are fit for purpose and of high quality. Leaders have recently reviewed all of the documents and made sure that they are easy to understand and are comprehensive. This means that others can hold them to account and check on safeguarding concerns more thoroughly.
- Leaders in charge of safeguarding liaise appropriately with parents, carers and external agencies when necessary.
- Teachers are well trained and have regular updates to their training. Leaders have identified the most pertinent safeguarding issues and provided extra training on these. They have also identified where staff have misconceptions about the reporting of issues, and given specific guidance on this.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Leaders have developed a consistent approach to lessons. As a result, pupils know

what to expect, teachers know what is expected of them and lesson time is used productively. For example, at the start of each lesson there is a 'do it now' activity. This focuses and engages pupils from the moment they arrive in the classroom.

- The relationships between pupils and their teachers are good. Pupils feel confident to answer teachers' questions and they respond well when they are challenged to improve their work. For example, in one mathematics lesson, pupils shared the different ways in which they had reached a correct answer and their teacher challenged their methods.
- Teachers make sure that they use information about pupils' progress and starting points to plan tasks which are accessible but challenging. Pupils said that they value the fact that each lesson has three levels of challenge. They are encouraged to stretch themselves and often move on to the higher-level tasks. This practice also means that higher-ability pupils are suitably challenged in the majority of their lessons.
- In the vast majority of cases, pupils take a pride in their work. This is the case across subjects. Inspectors scrutinised samples of work from across year groups and subjects and identified a high level of consistency in how teachers use the school's marking policy, and how pupils respond to the feedback that teachers give to them.
- Teachers use high-quality questioning to enable pupils to think deeply about their work. Teachers emphasise literacy skills frequently. They often remind pupils to answer in full sentences and to use technical terms competently. As a result, pupils work hard to express themselves with accuracy and detail.
- Leaders have recently improved the way in which they communicate assessment information to parents. The new system is clearer and gives parents more detail of their child's progress and areas for improvement.
- Homework is used well to improve pupils' progress. It is regular and teachers follow it up when it is not completed. Pupils said that homework has improved recently; it is now more purposeful and related clearly to their class learning.
- The teaching of science at key stage 3 is weaker than it is in other areas of the school. This is because the curriculum moves from one topic to the next too quickly and does not allow pupils to understand their work fully. The system that teachers are using to assess pupils is not yet well developed.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are overwhelmingly proud of their school. Pupils in all year groups explained to inspectors that their school had changed dramatically since the new headteacher arrived. They are proud of this change and were able to articulate it in detail.
- Through the personal, social and health education programme, assemblies and form time, pupils learn about a wide range of aspects of their safety, for example e-safety, road safety, and healthy relationships. These activities are well planned, and so pupils remember them and have absorbed the key messages about them.
- Pupils said that bullying is very rare in the school. They know whom to speak to if it

does happen and are confident that it would be well dealt with if they reported it. Pupils said that they feel safe in all areas of the school, and as they arrive and leave, because teachers are on duty in all areas of the school to help keep them safe.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- The strong routines and relationships between staff and pupils have led to high levels of respect between everyone at the school. Pupils speak to each other and their teachers courteously and in most lessons get on with their work diligently.
- Leaders have made their high expectations of corridor behaviour very clear to pupils, and teachers spend time speaking to pupils in corridors. As a result, pupils' behaviour around the school has improved considerably. Pupils and teachers said that corridors are now much calmer. Inspectors' observations support this.
- The school's records show a recent increase in reported incidents of low-level poor behaviour because leaders have taken a zero-tolerance approach and are now recording meticulously. Pupils said that there are now very few disruptions to their lessons because of poor behaviour. They have respect for the sanctions system because they feel that it is fair and clear.
- Attendance has improved and is now broadly in line with the national average. Some groups had very high levels of persistent absence in the past. These pupils' persistent absence has improved considerably and is now below the national average.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils across subjects and year groups are making stronger progress than in the past. This is because assessment is more accurate, teaching is more consistently effective, attendance is better and pupils' behaviour has improved.
- Pupils' progress in mathematics is very strong. Teaching in this subject encourages pupils to think carefully about mathematical concepts and apply their knowledge to a variety of situations. Pupils' progress in English has improved.
- A significant number of pupils join the school with no prior assessment information. Leaders ensure that each of these pupils has a baseline assessment and that their progress is tracked closely. The majority of these pupils are making good progress from their starting points.
- The difference between higher-ability pupils' progress and that of pupils nationally with similar starting points is diminishing. This is because each lesson contains appropriate challenge for these pupils. The most able disadvantaged pupils are also catching up because they are responding well to activities which stretch them.
- The difference between disadvantaged pupils' progress and that of other pupils nationally with similar starting points is diminishing. Leaders have designed effective interventions to support these pupils. As a result, for example, the majority of disadvantaged pupils targeted in a recent intervention are now on track to gain higher grades in both English and mathematics at GCSE level.

- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress from their starting points. They have a tailored curriculum that allows them to focus on the qualifications they need for their next steps.
- Key stage 4 pupils have effective advice and guidance to prepare them for their next steps. Published figures are not available for 2016, but the school's records show that the proportion of pupils going on to employment, education and training has risen to be in line with the national average. Year 11 pupils said that they have been thoroughly prepared for the next stage in their education or training.
- While careers information, advice and guidance is strong for key stage 4 pupils, for key stage 3 pupils it is limited to advice on GCSE courses. This means that pupils do not reflect early enough on their aspirations and next steps.
- The proportion of pupils gaining the English Baccalaureate (EBacc) is well below the national average. This is because, historically, pupils have not studied a combination of subjects that could lead to the EBacc. It will take some time for this to change, because some year groups have already chosen the combination of subjects in which they will take their examinations.
- Progress in science at key stage 3 is weaker than in other areas. Leaders are aware of this, but actions to increase the rate of progress have yet to prove effective.

16 to 19 study programmes

Good

- Leaders of the sixth form are effective and well informed. They have a good grasp of how students are progressing and support their personal development effectively.
- All students have effective work experience, many in the medical field, so that they have a deeper understanding of the profession they seek to enter. Students have good careers advice and support to make their applications to higher education.
- In 2016, the 16–18 minimum standards were not met for academic qualifications. Students' progress and attainment in academic subjects were weak. However, the school has now closed all of its academic courses and focuses only on vocational subjects. Progress in these courses is very strong and was well above the national average in 2016. The school's tracking information shows that current students are likely to make similarly strong progress in 2017.
- There is no published information on sustained destinations for sixth-form students. The school's tracking shows that in 2016 the vast majority went on to a range of higher education or employment placements. Similarly, in 2017, the vast majority have offers of places on medical and related courses.
- A small number of students join the sixth form without having secured a higher grade in English or mathematics GCSE. These pupils have timetabled lessons to help them to gain these qualifications, and some pass them at a higher grade. The numbers are too small to draw comparisons with national figures.
- Students are very positive about their time in the sixth form. They have good relationships with their teachers and their teachers are always available when they need extra help. Their lessons are stimulating and enable them to make good progress.
- Students benefit from a range of activities that help them to keep themselves safe. For

example, recently, they have had advice on sexual health and healthy relationships.

- Leaders have developed study programmes which meet requirements and are well designed to help pupils to reach their chosen destination. For most students, this is the medical and related professions. Almost all students complete their study programmes. However, study programmes have limited opportunities for students to take part in extra-curricular activities unrelated to their studies. While these activities are available, they are not widely accessed by sixth-form students.

School details

Unique reference number	136213
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	10026571

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	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	617
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	51
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr A Dennant
Headteacher	Mrs J Elbaz
Telephone number	0121 464 2737
Website	http://www.harborneacademy.co.uk/
Email address	enquiry@harborneacademy.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	24–25 May 2016

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.

- Harborne Academy is a smaller than average-sized secondary school with a small sixth form. The majority of pupils who attend the school live outside of its catchment area.
- The academy is sponsored by Birmingham Metropolitan College.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for pupil premium funding is well above the national average. Deprivation is in the highest 20% of schools nationally.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is higher than the national average.
- The sixth form is a medical academy and specialises in helping students to gain the qualifications and skills needed to go on to a range of medical professions.
- Since the last full inspection, a new headteacher and deputy headteacher have been appointed.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for attainment and progress.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors met with the headteacher and the senior leadership team. They also met with teachers, subject leaders and governors. The lead inspector spoke with a representative of the sponsor by telephone.
- Inspectors spoke formally to groups of pupils in all year groups and informally at lunch and breaktimes and in lessons. They observed pupils' behaviour in lessons, in the school and around the school site.
- The quality of learning was evaluated through visits to parts of lessons and a scrutiny of pupils' work across year groups and subjects. Inspectors also analysed the school's records of training and performance management.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation, tracking information, attendance information and records relating to behaviour and sanctions.
- There were too few responses to Parent View to evaluate these.

Inspection team

Dan Owen, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Natasha Lloyd

Ofsted Inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making a complaint about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

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.

You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/ofsted.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2017