

Inspection of Harton Academy

Lisle Road, South Shields, Tyne and Wear NE34 6DL

Inspection dates: 6 and 7 February 2024

Overall effectiveness

Good

The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Outstanding
Sixth-form provision	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Good
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

The principal of this school is Jon Skurr. This school is part of The Illuminare Multi Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Sir Ken Gibson, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Scott Duffy.

What is it like to attend this school?

Standards of education and behaviour are high at Harton Academy. Pupils have respectful relationships with teachers and support staff. Behaviour in lessons is calm. Established routines are well embedded throughout school. Pupils thoroughly enjoy attending school.

Pupils access a broad and ambitious curriculum. They are taught by subject specialists who deliver lessons with knowledge and enthusiasm. Lessons are interesting and well structured. Pupils are encouraged to use important vocabulary and reflect on their learning. Pupils remember much of what they have been taught and can connect new knowledge to that taught previously.

The quality of the school's personal development offer is exceptional. A well-organised and committed pastoral team provide effective wider support for pupils. Staff show care and compassion towards pupils. Pupils appreciate the many adults that they can go to should they need help. Most pupils are not aware of bullying at school, although a small number have experienced this.

The school has an extremely successful sixth-form provision. Students in the sixth form thrive. The opportunities available for sixth-form students to develop into well-rounded young adults are exemplary.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

The entire staff team at Harton Academy have worked together to take effective action to address the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection. Importantly, leaders have prioritised strengthening the culture of safeguarding at the school. Staff training has improved. Where incidents arise, there are strong internal systems and processes for recording concerns and actions taken. Checks made during this inspection confirmed that leaders now take decisive and effective action when staff or pupils raise concerns.

Leaders are currently steering the school through a period of change. A new headteacher has recently been appointed. Aspects of the curriculum in individual subjects have improved. The school is currently making changes to the behaviour policy. It is clear that leaders have had the best interests of pupils in mind when making these changes.

All pupils study a wide range of subjects. Within individual subjects, leaders have carefully considered what content needs to be taught and when it is best to do so. They have identified the most important knowledge and vocabulary within each unit of work. Staff focus on these aspects throughout their lessons, recapping and re-teaching where necessary. This supports pupils to grasp new learning before moving on. Although much of this work is successful, there are some inconsistencies in lessons. When this happens, some groups of pupils do not remember the important

information that they need. This is particularly the case for disadvantaged pupils. Leaders are aware of this.

In most lessons, connections are made to prior learning to help pupils to contextualise and embed new knowledge. In geography, for example, pupils' understanding of pressure builds across key stages 3, 4 and 5. Work covered in Year 7 on the relationship between pressure and rainfall is revisited in Year 9 when pupils are taught about typhoons and hurricanes. This work is revisited again in both key stages 4 and 5.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) achieve well. They access additional intervention sessions, where appropriate, to support them with their individual needs. Teachers receive helpful information on the needs of pupils with SEND and use these strategies in their lessons. Appropriate support is in place to help pupils who are less confident with reading. In the sixth form, students with SEND are fully immersed in school life.

Behaviour throughout school is calm and orderly. Pupils are courteous, responsible, polite and well behaved. Suspensions and exclusions are low. The school's internal provision for supporting pupils who have misbehaved is effective. Leaders have recognised a change in some pupils' attitudes towards education. Leaders are reviewing the school's behaviour policy in response to this.

The wider provision to develop pupils' character and prepare them for life in modern Britain is exemplary. Leaders have acted swiftly and decisively to address the area of improvement identified at the previous inspection. The personal, social, health and economic education curriculum is exceptionally well sequenced from Years 7 to 13. Pupils are articulate and confident about what they have learned in these sessions.

The school has recently widened the programme of events to broaden pupils' cultural capital. The school currently offers an extraordinary range of activities and extra-curricular clubs for pupils. In physical education, for example, pupils have access to an in-house climbing wall, a swimming pool and two gymnasiums. In music, all pupils have access to peripatetic lessons. A wide range of performances are made available to the community. Local, national and international trips are available. The proportion of pupils taking part in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award is very high. Pupils are encouraged to volunteer in the school and in the community. The progress that the school has made in this wider offer, since the time of the previous inspection, is impressive.

The support for pupils at points of transition, including when joining the school in Year 7, and when considering next steps in Years 11 and 13, is highly valued by pupils and parents.

The sixth-form provision is outstanding. Leaders have made important changes to the personal, social, health and economic education curriculum, following the previous inspection. This work is now fully embedded. Sixth-form students are exceptionally proud to attend here. Their lessons are consistently well delivered.

They perform highly in external examinations. The enrichment offer in the sixth form is equally as impressive as in the main school. Every sixth-form student accesses extra courses, such as British Sign Language qualifications and first-aid training.

Staff are positive about working at the school. They recognise the improvements at the school over the last two years. They are excited about some of the new changes being made to internal systems. Trustees, known locally as trust directors, have a wealth of knowledge and experience. They work effectively, in conjunction with a local governing body, to support school leaders with school improvement priorities.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have introduced changes to the curriculum in key stages 3 and 4. In some subjects, there is currently inconsistency in the delivery of lessons. Leaders should implement the changes they have planned to ensure that all pupils in Years 7 to 11, including those who are disadvantaged, are fully supported to make the progress that they are capable of.
- Leaders are making several well-judged changes to internal systems and procedures throughout school, including recently, to safeguarding arrangements. Many leaders have new roles and responsibilities and, as such, further changes throughout school are planned. Trustees and leaders should continue to review current systems, and ensure that they quality assure any changes, to make sure they further improve standards in all aspects of school life.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a

social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	144204
Local authority	South Tyneside
Inspection number	10310256
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1631
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Scott Duffy
Principal	Jon Skurr
Website	www.harton-tc.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	1 and 2 March 2022 under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Harton Academy is the single school in The Illuminare Multi Academy Trust.
- The school hosts a resourced provision to support pupils with speech, language and communication needs. These pupils also access a range of mainstream lessons and bespoke intervention sessions.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.

- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other senior leaders over the course of the inspection.
- The lead inspector met with the chief executive officer and held a meeting with the chair of the board of trustees and several trustees. The lead inspector reviewed documentation relating to governance, including minutes from trust board meetings.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in the following subjects: information technology, mathematics, English, geography and science. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also visited a sample of lessons in other curriculum areas, including art, music and physical education.
- An inspector met with the leader responsible for the sixth form.
- An inspector met with the special educational needs coordinator. All inspectors visited a sample of lessons to look at the support given to pupils with SEND.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors met with many groups of pupils and students formally throughout the inspection and spoke with them informally at social times and in lessons.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation.
- Inspectors considered the views of pupils, parents and staff gathered through Ofsted's questionnaires.

Inspection team

James Duncan, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Julian Appleyard	Ofsted inspector
Moira Banks	Ofsted Inspector
Bernard Clark	Ofsted Inspector
Karen Gammack	Ofsted Inspector
Julie McGrane	Ofsted Inspector
John Lucas	His Majesty's Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

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