

Inspection of Harrogate High School

Ainsty Road, Harrogate, North Yorkshire HG1 4AP

Inspection dates: 25 and 26 April 2023

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

The quality of education at Harrogate High School has declined since the previous school inspection. New school leaders are taking action to try to address this. Leaders have prioritised improving the curriculum. Leaders have changed the subjects pupils study at key stage 4 to offer a more broad and balanced curriculum. However, the academic experiences that pupils receive continue to be mixed.

Most pupils feel safe in school. Others worry about the behaviour of pupils in lessons and at social times. Some staff and parents who responded to Ofsted's surveys expressed concerns about pupils' behaviour. Leaders have implemented new behaviour systems, but these are not used consistently by staff.

The school offers a range of extra-curricular activities for pupils to enjoy. These range from sport to pupil leadership. However, the wider development of pupils needs to be a sharper focus for leaders.

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

Leaders have developed an ambitious curriculum, including for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Leaders have identified the important knowledge that they want pupils to know and remember. When designing the curriculum, leaders have ensured that new content connects to what pupils already know.

The implementation of the new curriculum, however, is not benefiting all pupils. The activities that teachers use to deliver the curriculum do not routinely emphasise or secure the most important knowledge. Teachers do not consistently check if pupils know or understand what has been taught. As a result, misconceptions are not always identified and addressed. In particular, older pupils, who have not benefited from improvements in the curriculum, do not achieve well in external examinations.

Some parents expressed concern about the support for pupils with SEND. However, pupils with additional needs are supported well in lessons. Teachers are given clear guidance on how to meet pupils' needs. Pupils study the same curriculum, and teachers adapt their teaching to meet the needs of pupils.

The culture of reading is developing across the school. Changes to the school day mean that younger pupils read more often. Leaders have ensured that pupils who need help with reading receive the support they need.

Leaders recognise the need to improve behaviour across the school. They are working with external support to implement new systems to tackle poor behaviour. However, the school's behaviour policy is not implemented consistently by all teachers. This means that pupils who display poorer attitudes to their learning are not challenged quickly enough. Some pupils truant from lessons, are disrespectful to

staff and cause disruption. Some pupils do not attend school regularly enough and miss out on valuable learning.

The curriculum plan to deliver personal, social and health education (PSHE) does not identify the most important knowledge pupils need to be taught. Leaders do not monitor the quality of these lessons closely enough. As a result, the delivery of the PSHE lessons varies in quality. This has an impact on how well pupils are prepared for life in modern Britain.

Leaders have established a programme of careers education, information, advice and guidance. All pupils receive independent advice and guidance.

There have been many changes in leadership since the last inspection. This has led to delays in addressing some of the weaknesses in the school. Leaders have an accurate view of the school. They know it needs to improve. Steps have been taken to strengthen governance and appoint new school leaders. The actions that leaders have taken have secured improvements in the quality of education, but there is much more work to do.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that staff are well trained in safeguarding. It is seen as everyone's responsibility. Staff know how to report concerns. Leaders have a strong awareness of the local context and safeguarding issues. The necessary checks on adults who work at the school are carried out diligently.

Leaders have ensured that pastoral, attendance and safeguarding staff in the school communicate effectively to keep pupils safe. Leaders keep accurate records of the actions they have taken to support the most vulnerable pupils.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The implementation of the curriculum in some subjects is not as effective as it is in others. Subject matter is not routinely presented clearly enough, and teaching does not consistently support pupils to build a deep body of knowledge. Leaders should support teachers to choose the most appropriate and effective methods to help pupils learn the curriculum.
- Some staff do not use the school behaviour policy consistently. This means that poor behaviour is not challenged quickly enough. Leaders need to ensure that there is a consistent approach to tackling poor behaviour that is understood and applied by all staff.
- The planning of the personal development curriculum is not done to the same level as subject curriculum planning. The most important content that pupils need

to learn has not been identified. Leaders should review this curriculum and ensure that it is carefully sequenced, so that pupils are prepared well for life after school.

- Leaders do not consistently communicate effectively with stakeholders. As a result, some parents, staff and pupils lack confidence in the school. Leaders need to systematically seek the views of stakeholders, act swiftly in response to their concerns and communicate improvements across the school more effectively.

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](#)' 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.

School details

Unique reference number	138190
Local authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	10255662
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	693
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Helen Flynn
Headteacher	Sukhraj Gill
Website	http://www.harrogatehighschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	15 November 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The current headteacher is the third headteacher since the previous inspection.
- The school joined the Northern Star Academies Trust in April 2015.
- The school uses one registered alternative provider of education.
- The school has closed the sixth-form provision since the previous inspection.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 7 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

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

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in mathematics, English, geography and design and technology. As part of the deep dives, inspectors visited lessons, reviewed curriculum plans and spoke with curriculum leaders and teachers. They also talked to pupils about their learning and looked at the work they have completed.
- Inspectors met with the special educational needs and disabilities coordinator, reviewed education, health and care plans and support plans for pupils with SEND, and visited lessons to see how pupils with SEND are supported to learn.
- Inspectors met with the leader responsible for reading to discuss how reading is promoted in the school.
- Members of the inspection team met with the designated safeguarding leads and reviewed a range of documentation, including safeguarding records and policies.
- Inspectors considered the views of pupils, parents and staff through Ofsted surveys, as well as additional communication from parents during the inspection.
- The inspection team scrutinised the school's records of bullying, reviewed the actions leaders take when bullying occurs and spoke to several groups of pupils, including some single-gender groups, to understand their experience of school.
- Inspectors met leaders to discuss pupils' behaviour and reviewed the school's data on suspensions and internal suspensions.
- Inspectors met with representatives from the multi-academy trust and from the local governing body.
- Inspectors scrutinised records relating to attendance and records of pupils who have joined or left the school roll.

Inspection team

Stuart Voyce, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Chris Fletcher	Ofsted Inspector
Shelley Heseltine	Ofsted Inspector
Michelle Farr	Ofsted Inspector

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