

Harris Academy Riverside

Address: London Road, Purfleet, Essex, RM19 1QY

Unique reference number (URN): 144750

Inspection report: 28 April 2026

Exceptional	
Strong standard	
Expected standard	
Needs attention	
Urgent improvement	

Safeguarding standards met

The safeguarding standards are met. This means that leaders and/or those responsible for governance and oversight fulfil their specific responsibilities and have established an open culture in which safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and concerns are actively identified, acted upon and managed. As a result, pupils are made safer and feel safe.

How we evaluate safeguarding

When we inspect schools for safeguarding, they can have the following outcomes:

- **Met:** The school has an open and positive culture of safeguarding. All legal requirements are met.
- **Not met:** The school has not created an open and positive culture of safeguarding. Not all legal requirements are met.

Strong standard ●

Attendance and behaviour

Strong standard ●

Pupils want to attend this warm, welcoming and supportive school. Pupils' attendance is high and above national comparators, including for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those from disadvantaged backgrounds. Leaders have a forensic oversight of attendance. They enact effective intervention strategies. This means that pupils who require support with their attendance are identified early and helped. Leaders' graduated approach ensures that attendance is a high priority for all pupils and staff.

Routines and expectations are made clear in a friendly way from the outset of each school day. This helps to promote a collegiate and community atmosphere across the school. The school's ethos of 'be kind, work hard and take responsibility' is a key part of all aspects of school life. Pupils behave consistently well in lessons. This creates a purposeful and productive learning environment.

Leaders establish robust systems for behaviour expectations and analysis. Staff value this clarity and the support they receive from leaders. This results in effective teaching without disruption to learning. Pupils understand and live up to the high expectations, which reflect the school's culture. Key features include values-based rewards and warm relationships. Pupils are motivated to attend school and behave well.

Inclusion

Strong standard ●

There is an inclusive culture of care at this school. Leaders have a clear understanding of pupils' barriers to learning and how to overcome them. Leaders monitor effectively the progress of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and those from disadvantaged backgrounds. This ensures that they progress through the curriculum and attend well. Teachers are effective at addressing misconceptions in learning and skilful at adapting their practice when needed.

The calm and consistent approach of staff particularly benefits pupils with SEND and those from disadvantaged backgrounds. This approach helps them to process complex information and ideas well. Pupils' learning passports are communicated succinctly to teachers. This means that pupils feel confident to participate in their lessons due to effective and systematic adaptations. Leaders work effectively with external partners to secure well-tailored support that improves pupils' outcomes and experiences.

The school's pupil premium strategy is comprehensive and suited to the needs of the school's context. Leaders use innovative methods to ensure that disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND progress well through all aspects of school life. Interventions for pupils who need additional support are well considered and underpinned by robust analysis. Leaders review their work consistently to ensure that it is having sufficient impact.

Leadership and governance

Strong standard 

Leaders have a succinct understanding of their school and its context. They know their pupils, staff and families well. They establish a culture of high expectations and unrelenting professionalism for their pupils and community. They are responsive in addressing any emerging needs with confidence. This knowledge, alongside rigorous strategic support from the trust and the local governing board, ensures that the work of leaders is sustainable and embedded. Governors are knowledgeable and assist leaders in all aspects of their work. Those on the governing board and in the wider trust have a detailed knowledge about pupils' attendance and prioritise fostering positive partnerships. This has resulted in sustained improvements in attendance.

Staff are well supported by a skilful and approachable leadership team. Leaders are thoughtful when introducing new initiatives. This ensures that staff are able to prioritise effectively for their pupils. Staff share leaders' visions for improvement to achieve the best for their pupils. They are committed to the school and its strategic priorities. Staff training is tailored to the school's and individual subject priorities. This means that staff continually evolve in their practice to ensure pupils achieve the best possible outcomes.

Expected standard

Achievement

Expected standard 

Leaders are committed to ensuring that all groups of pupils achieve well so that they are prepared and equipped for their chosen future pathways. Pupils' outcomes in statutory tests and assessments are broadly in line with or above national comparators. Leaders check how well pupils learn and address any gaps in pupils' knowledge and skills. They intervene quickly and systematically to ensure these gaps are addressed.

Pupils' learning shows clear progress over time from their starting points. The school continues to prioritise reading through screening tests, a newly refurbished library and a tailored intervention programme. Pupils' writing benefits from the support they receive through the careful use of guided writing strategies. This helps pupils to be able to write for specific purposes and access the broad and balanced curriculum on offer. Feedback in lessons helps pupils to move on with ease. Pupils talk confidently about their learning and next steps. They benefit from clear routines and consistency in the feedback provided by their teachers. This results in any gaps in their reading and writing being addressed swiftly and effectively.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

The curriculum is broad, balanced and well considered. It allows pupils to study a wide variety of relevant subjects. Leaders adjust the curriculum to suit the needs of their pupils and context. For example, this is evidenced by curriculum choices in languages where pupils study Mandarin. This was established in response to parents' and pupils' needs and wishes. Leaders are explicit about their high expectations for teaching. This has a positive

impact on pupils' outcomes, especially for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities or from disadvantaged backgrounds. Pupils speak with confidence about the different phases in their learning. Clear routines around teaching and learning ensure that pupils know what to expect from their lessons. Pupils are familiar with the steps that they need to take in order to ensure that they reach their end points.

Teachers show skill in the way that they explain activities and address any misconceptions in pupils' understanding. This allows pupils to engage well with their learning. Teachers use their excellent subject knowledge to structure lessons and adapt their practice for those who need additional help. Leaders ensure that staff benefit from a robust programme of professional development. This allows for continuous improvement and reflection. Leaders have an accurate understanding of the strengths in the school's curriculum and teaching and where further refinement is needed to ensure consistency.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

Leaders have developed an appropriate programme for pupils' personal development and wellbeing. This programme is well suited to pupils' needs and context. It includes topics such as rail and water safety. The programme allows pupils to develop the skills that they need for life in modern Britain. Pupils articulate the topics that they cover and their learning. Leaders use local and contextual issues to shape and inform the curriculum accordingly. Topics are clearly mapped to allow pupils time for deep thinking and respectful discussions. Pupils are knowledgeable about fundamental British values. The school works with a range of external services to ensure that pupils receive tailored information from experts. Leaders evaluate the impact of the programme. They know where there are strengths and where more work is needed to ensure consistency across all key stages.

Pupils express their opinions on school life with confidence. They voice their thoughts articulately and eloquently. Leaders respond to these suggestions through a 'you said, we did' approach. Pupils value the school's 'culture day', where the school community joins together and celebrates its diversity. Pupils understand that this day helps them to 'build a community' where everybody is respected.

Pupils' wellbeing is prioritised by the pastoral staff. They have an in-depth knowledge about pupils' needs and individual circumstances. This means that they are responsive in identifying and responding to issues. Staff work closely with external agencies such as the virtual school and alternative providers to strengthen and personalise this support further.

Pupils receive bespoke careers advice through a well-planned and continual careers programme. Pupils receive clear advice and guidance alongside visits from external speakers and industry experts. This ensures that they are well prepared for further education, apprenticeships or employment.

Post 16 provision

Expected standard 

Leaders ensure that the post-16 provision is an inclusive, welcoming and ambitious place to be. They have high expectations in terms of both academic and personal development for their students. The school's values in the sixth form of independence, scholarship and professionalism are woven throughout the academic and personal development curriculum.

This means students benefit from a wide range of enrichment and experiences. These include visiting partner schools, universities and local employers. This allows them to be successful in their next steps in education, employment or training. Leaders have devised a comprehensive careers programme in partnership with other Harris Federation schools. This means that students achieve well and many go on to universities, competitive apprenticeships and employment.

Leaders are forensic in the analysis of students' attainment. They are reflective and responsive in the way they make adjustments. This continual monitoring and improvement is evidenced in students' successful learning and progress over time. Students are well prepared for their external examinations through the support they receive from subject experts across the trust.

Students are supported by effective teaching, teachers' detailed subject knowledge, robust oversight and a well-designed curriculum. They are proud to attend this sixth form and confident in taking their next steps.

What it's like to be a pupil at this school

Pupils are welcomed to this friendly school with warmth. The morning 'rise and shine' line-ups set the positive tone for the day. Pupils value their voice being heard. They appreciate their regular check-ins with the headteacher and enjoy their hot chocolate. This contact enables them to make suggestions and give feedback about their experience at school. Pupils show gratitude for their teachers through the weekly 'staff shout-outs'. They value the mutually respectful relationships that they have with staff. These relationships allow pupils to feel secure in their learning journey. They know that their trusted adults will support them. Pupils are clear that their successes are celebrated by teachers who 'really care'. Pupils have a clear sense of community and show pride in the way that they build meaningful connections at school. This results in pupils being happy, polite and kind. They are clear that bullying is rare and dealt with effectively.

Pupils behave with integrity and maturity at all times. They travel around the school site calmly and with purpose. This is as a result of the school's ethos, 'Be kind, work hard and take responsibility'. Pupils value the diversity at school in both the staff and student population. They demonstrate a clear sense of belonging and pride in their school. Older students show a level of emotional maturity in the way they support younger pupils.

Pupils enjoy their well-structured and sequenced lessons. They appreciate the broad curriculum on offer and achieve well. They study a wide range of subjects. Pupils know that what they learn is purposeful and relevant. They articulate the skills and qualifications that they will need for the future. Pupils value their time at school and attend well.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that the personal development and wellbeing programme allows pupils to develop a secure and detailed knowledge across all key stages.
 - Leaders should ensure that the implementation of the curriculum is consistent across all key stages to ensure that all pupils have the best possible learning experience.
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About this inspection

This school is part of the Harris Federation, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Sir Daniel Moynihan, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Lord Phillip Harris.

Inspectors carried out this full inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Following our renewed inspection framework, all inspections are now led by His Majesty's Inspectors (HMIs) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMIs.

Inspection activities:

Inspectors spoke with the governance professional, the director of secondary education, the headteacher, senior leaders, staff and pupils during the inspection. Inspectors reviewed the findings of the parent, staff and pupil Ofsted online surveys.

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 inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The headteacher took up their position in September 2025. Since the last inspection, there have also been significant changes to other members of the senior leadership team.

The school currently makes use of 3 unregistered alternative provisions.

Rachel Sofianos: Head of Academy

Lead inspector:

Ross Marks, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Susan Sutton, Ofsted Inspector

Paul Lawrence, Ofsted Inspector

Daniel Leonard, Ofsted Inspector

Emma Matthews, Ofsted Inspector

Facts and figures used on inspection

The data was used by the inspector(s) during the inspection. More recent data may have been published since the inspection took place.

 This data is from 28 April 2026

School and pupil context**Total pupils**

1,117

Close to average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils currently at this school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 1,067

School capacity

1,106

Close to average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils who can attend the school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 1,154

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

30.01%

Close to average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years.

National average: 28.9%

Pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan

2.86%

Close to average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan. This covers pupils with more support than is available through special educational needs support.

National average: 3.09%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

10.38%

Below average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with reported special educational support needs at the school.

National average: 13.4%

Location deprivation

Close to average

What does this mean?

Based on the English Indices of Deprivation (2019) and the school's location, we have calculated whether the school is located in a more or less deprived area.

Resourced Provision or SEND Unit (if applicable)

No resourced provision

What does this mean?

Whether school has Resourced Provision or SEND unit (if applicable).

All pupils' performance

English and maths GCSE

Percentage of pupils who achieved grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (final)	45.3%	45.4%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	51.1%	45.9%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	50.0%	45.3%	Close to average

Attainment 8

A measure of pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (final)	47.9	46.1	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	49.6	45.9	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	49.3	46.3	Close to average

Progress 8

How much progress pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	0.23	-0.03	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	-0.06	-0.03	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils' performance

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after.

Disadvantaged pupils' English and maths GCSE grade 5 or above

Percentage of disadvantaged pupils achieving grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (final)	33.3%	25.8%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	34.7%	25.8%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	25.9%	25.2%	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils' Attainment 8

A measure of disadvantaged pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (final)	43.0	34.9	Above
2023/24 (final)	42.6	34.6	Above
2022/23 (final)	37.7	35.0	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils' Progress 8

How much progress disadvantaged pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	-0.07	-0.57	Above
2022/23 (final)	-0.65	-0.57	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils' performance gap

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after. The school disadvantage gap is the difference between the performance of the school's disadvantaged pupils compared to the performance of all non-disadvantaged pupils nationally.

Disadvantaged pupils' English and maths GCSE grade 5 or above

Percentage of disadvantaged pupils who achieved grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2024/25 (final)	33.3%	53.1%	-19.8 pp
2023/24 (final)	34.7%	53.1%	-18.4 pp
2022/23 (final)	25.9%	52.4%	-26.5 pp

Disadvantaged pupils' Attainment 8

A measure of disadvantaged pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2024/25 (final)	43.0	50.4	-7.4
2023/24 (final)	42.6	50.0	-7.4
2022/23 (final)	37.7	50.3	-12.6

Disadvantaged pupils' Progress 8

How much progress disadvantaged pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2023/24 (final)	-0.07	0.16	-0.23
2022/23 (final)	-0.65	0.17	-0.82

Destinations after 16

Destinations after 16

Percentage of pupils staying in education or employment for at least 2 terms after the end of secondary school (key stage 4).

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023 leavers (revised)	94%	92%	Average
2022 leavers (revised)	99%	93%	Above

16 to 18 performance

A-level average point score

The average points that students achieved per A-level entry.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (final)	36.11	35.00	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	35.68	34.38	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	34.72	34.16	Close to average

A-level value added

A score showing students’ progress between the end of key stage 4 and the end of their academic qualification studies.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (final)	0.0	0.0	Close to average
2023/24 (revised)	0.0	0.0	Close to average

Absence

Overall absence

The percentage of all possible mornings and afternoons missed due to absence from school (for whatever reason, whether authorised or unauthorised) across all pupils.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (3 term)	5.7%	8.4%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	5.9%	8.9%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	7.5%	9.0%	Below

Persistent absence

The percentage of pupils missing 10% or more of their possible mornings and afternoons.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (3 term)	13.5%	23.4%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	13.3%	25.6%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	20.8%	26.5%	Below

Our grades explained

Exceptional 

Practice is exceptional: of the highest standard nationally. Other schools can learn from it.

Strong standard 

The school reaches a strong standard. Leaders are working above the standard expected of them.

Expected standard ●

The school is fulfilling the expected standard of education and/or care. This means they are following the standard set out in statutory and non-statutory legislation and the professional standards expected of them.

Needs attention ●

The expected standards are not met but leaders are likely able to make the necessary improvements.

Urgent improvement ●

The school needs to make urgent improvements to provide the expected standard of education and/or care.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) inspects services providing education and skills for children and learners of all ages, and inspects and regulates services that care for children and young people.

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