

Harington School

16 to 19 academy

Inspection dates

17–19 January 2017

Overall effectiveness		Outstanding	
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Outstanding	16 to 19 study programmes	Outstanding
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Outstanding		
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding		
Outcomes for learners	Outstanding		
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection		Not previously inspected	

Summary of key findings

This is an outstanding provider

- Leaders have rapidly established a culture of high expectations for student achievement. During their courses, students take increasing responsibility for their learning and progress.
- Leaders have developed and refined robust quality assurance arrangements that accurately identify the school's strengths and areas for improvement, and use these very well to improve quality.
- Governors use their extensive experience of education to hold senior leaders to account and robustly challenge them using the detailed information they regularly receive about student progress.
- Managers meticulously monitor the progress of students and intervene successfully to support teachers whose students are making slower progress; the large majority of students make good progress and a high proportion make excellent progress.
- Teachers' assessment of student progress is thorough and highly accurate; in the large majority of lessons, this leads to detailed feedback and guidance for individual students that helps them to improve their work.
- Because of careful initial guidance and strong ongoing support, students receive offers for competitive university courses that match their aspirations.
- Students are highly motivated to learn and demonstrate a keen sense of enquiry in lessons; they have a very strong interest in their subjects and thrive in the academically challenging learning atmosphere that characterises the large majority of lessons.
- Students take a great deal of pride in their work and commit very seriously to their studies; they develop good independent learning skills and use these to enhance their subject knowledge, with striking impact on their progress.
- Teachers' expectations of students are very high and they are unrelenting in their pursuit of student success; they have excellent subject knowledge and use this very well to inspire students.
- Students make excellent use of opportunities to participate in a wide range of subject-based activities that enhance their understanding of topics and of the world around them; their wider enrichment activities are very effective in developing their personal and social skills.
- Students' behaviour and attitudes to learning are exemplary; they are respectful and supportive of each other and this leads to strong peer learning both within and outside of lessons.

Full report

Information about the provider

- Situated in Oakham, Rutland, Harington School opened its doors as a 16 to 19 academy in September 2015, focusing its curriculum on A levels in subjects that facilitate progression to the widest range of higher education courses. It is a part of the Rutland and District Schools Federation multi-academy trust (MAT), which, in addition to Harington School, comprises a preschool, a primary school and a secondary school. Harington School moved into a new building in November 2016, having initially operated from temporary accommodation. It recruits the large majority of its students from the MAT secondary, Catmose College, and also from Uppingham Community College, with a small number of students from other schools.
- Rutland is a very small county, with a population of around 38,000. Unemployment is low and a far higher proportion of its population works in managerial, professional or technical roles than is the case in the East Midlands and the nation as a whole. Youth unemployment is very low. Key employment sectors include manufacturing, wholesale and retail, hospitality and education. Qualification levels are higher than in the region and slightly higher than nationally. The proportion of young people who leave school with a good set of GCSEs, including English and mathematics, is higher than the national rate.

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Implement further actions to improve the small number of subjects where teaching and learning do not reach the very high standards found elsewhere in the school.
- Implement a clear process to identify those students who would benefit from work experience or other arrangements to develop their work-readiness, support them to access appropriate opportunities, and evaluate the quality of these experiences.
- Provide resources and facilities to further support students' independent learning in all subjects.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- Leaders and governors collaborated very effectively across the trust settings and with neighbouring schools during the creation of the school. This enabled them to share teaching expertise and helped to ensure a smooth transition for students arriving in the school's first year of operation. The partnerships established at that time continue to provide specialist support for students who have specific progression aspirations such as into medicine.
- Leaders established the school with the clear purpose of providing an academic sixth form focusing on those A-level subjects that facilitate progression to the widest possible range of degree courses at prestigious universities. Prior to the school opening, young people of Rutland had to travel some distance to access similar programmes.
- The ambition of leaders and governors is to provide a curriculum that allows students to thrive academically and also to provide a range of additional activities that helps them to become well-rounded individuals. In this, they have been highly successful. In addition to their A levels, students participate in such activities as the Duke of Edinburgh's Award and National Citizenship Service schemes and undertake additional qualifications such as the extended project.
- Leaders have rapidly established a culture of high expectations for students' achievement. Students are encouraged and supported to develop their independent learning skills progressively during the two years of their course. They respond very well to the expectation that they take increasing responsibility for their own progress.
- Managers employ extremely sophisticated systems to monitor the progress of students and intervene quickly and effectively to support teachers whose students do not hit their demanding targets. Consequently, teachers implement a wide range of support activities that enable almost all students to remain on track.
- Self-assessment is highly self-critical. Leaders have developed and refined robust quality assurance arrangements that focus clearly on student progress over time. They cross-reference the findings from frequent no-notice lesson observations with curriculum reviews, work scrutiny, in-year assessment scores and student feedback. Senior leaders from the trust moderate the draft findings and accurately identify strengths and weaknesses. As a result, managers know where to focus their improvement activities. Staff who manage clusters of subject teachers use the information gained from self-assessment to provide good support and guidance where teaching, learning and assessment require improvement.
- Resources to sustain the quality of provision and enhance the facilities for students during a period of planned growth over the next few years are secure. The school's funding model anticipates achieving financial independence in three years. So far, growth targets have been met.
- Managers have developed a thorough tutorial and enrichment programme to help students develop their understanding of the diverse workplaces and society in which they will find themselves later in life. Lead managers have developed a very well planned tutorial programme that covers a wide range of important topics related to life in modern

Britain. They have provided thoroughly detailed and carefully targeted schemes of work and they quality assure and improve the programme by observing tutorials and gathering feedback from students and tutors. They support tutors well to manage sensitive discussions on personal relationships, personal safety, including risks associated with using social media, and equality and diversity. Managers and staff strongly promote an ethos of tolerance and respect for individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds.

The governance of the provider

- Governors use their extensive experience of education to hold senior leaders to account and vigorously challenge them using the detailed information on student progress that they regularly receive. They use these reports, supplemented by regular classroom visits and student surveys, to identify accurately strengths and areas for improvement. They know what students think of their courses.
- Most governors have been closely involved with the academy since its inception and have contributed effectively to its clear strategic direction. One governor leads on safeguarding matters and works with the designated safeguarding lead officer to oversee the effectiveness of staff and student training and policy matters.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Recruitment arrangements meet statutory requirements. Managers have updated policies and procedures to ensure that they follow current guidelines and requirements including those associated with the 'Prevent' duty. Staff manage IT systems well to minimise the risk that students will access inappropriate websites.
- Staff undertake regular training throughout the year to ensure that they know what to do in the event of a safeguarding concern. The senior designated safeguarding officer maintains a detailed record of any safeguarding referrals and actions taken. Students are safe and they can identify the potential safeguarding risks, including those associated with radicalisation and extremism.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Outstanding

- A highly academic and aspirational learning culture permeates the school and the large majority of lessons. Teachers encourage students of all abilities to reach their full potential and plan a wide range of stimulating activities in which students participate enthusiastically. As a result, a very large majority of students make good or excellent progress and meet the ambitious targets set by their teachers.
- Students demonstrate a thirst for knowledge and have an intellectual curiosity, often asking thought-provoking questions in lessons that extend their learning. For example, in a geography lesson, students explored patterns of immigration and emigration with very high levels of knowledge and understanding.
- Teachers' expectations of students are very high; they require their students to take their studies very seriously and to undertake a significant amount of independent study. Students respond very well to this and are thoroughly committed to their own success, working diligently in lessons and completing many hours of additional study in their own time.

- Students contribute to lessons in an articulate and mature manner, especially those lessons that include extended debate and discussion. For example, in a philosophy and ethics lesson, students participated confidently in a discussion about 'conscience' and were comfortable handling some very complex concepts and ideas.
- Students work very well with their peers to secure greater depths of understanding and correct any misconceptions they may have. For example, in an English literature session, students working independently of the teacher collaborated well to explore a critical reading of Arundhati Roy's novel, 'The god of small things' as part of their coursework.
- Teachers have excellent subject knowledge, which they use well to plan activities and design learning resources that challenge students of all abilities. The most able learners benefit particularly from this and often complete work at a level above the demands of the exam syllabus. Teachers use exam questions, mark schemes and model exam answers very effectively to provide a clear structure and purpose to lessons, and to prepare students very well for external assessments.
- Teachers place a great deal of emphasis on developing students' independent learning skills, particularly those required for higher-level academic study. As a result, students produce highly organised and comprehensive files of notes and learning materials. All students undertake an independent project during their first term of study and are encouraged to apply academic research skills to a topic of their own choice. Students relish this opportunity to focus in detail on an academic issue that interests them. Students develop strong analytical and creative thinking skills by the second year of study and the standard of work produced for the Extended Project Qualification is exemplary.
- In the large majority of lessons, teachers check learning systematically and accurately, and this provides them with a clear insight into the progress that individual students make. Following an improvement of systems at the beginning of the year, the tracking of student progress is now exceptionally detailed and rigorous.
- Excellent partnerships with local feeder schools result in teachers having access to detailed information about students from the outset. Teachers use this information and their own frequent formal assessments very effectively to evaluate the current academic performance of their students and to plan individual support for those who need more help.
- In the large majority of subjects, teachers provide additional help to a wide range of students and this has a very positive impact on their learning. However, in a small minority of subjects, the responsiveness and effectiveness of targeted intervention for students who are underachieving is not yet leading to sustained improvement in student progress.
- Feedback on students' work is comprehensive. The vast majority of students have a clear understanding of how they can improve their work and have a series of specific actions to complete in order to reach the next grade. Students have a particularly clear understanding of their next steps in music, English, history, chemistry and geography. However, in a small minority of lessons, teachers rely too heavily on the students' self-assessment of their answers, resulting in teacher feedback that is too generic to give students a clear understanding of their next steps in learning.
- Teachers believe passionately in the wider development of their students and offer an impressive range of additional subject-related activities outside of normal lessons that

develop students socially, morally and culturally and ensure that they have a good awareness of global issues. For example, students who took part in the 'poor countries' themed debating group had a very strong understanding of the plight of others and recognised the importance of understanding the diversity of the world around them.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

- Students are positive about their education, and demonstrate exemplary behaviour. They are confident and self-assured, their attendance is very high and punctuality to lessons is excellent. Students work well together in lessons, and demonstrate a high level of respect towards staff and each other.
- Students take pride in their work, and throughout the inspection they were keen to demonstrate their achievements and improvements in their work. Both they and their teachers have high expectations of what they can achieve and as a result, the vast majority complete a large amount of independent study and adhere to challenging homework schedules.
- Staff and students have high aspirations for their next steps in education. Teachers provide excellent support for students applying to university and make good use of local partnerships to support those who have specific needs in relation to their higher education choices, such as those who wish to apply to Oxbridge and those wishing to follow medical careers. Those students who do not wish to progress to higher education benefit from high-quality, impartial careers advice provided by teachers and the trust's careers officer.
- Subject teachers and pastoral tutors work well together to plan support for students who are struggling. As a result, those students who are finding things difficult in more than one subject benefit from a well-coordinated response that helps most get back on track.
- A significant number of students participate in work experience where this is appropriate, and staff help them to secure appropriate placements. However, in most cases, students themselves identify a need for work experience and secure their own placements. Arrangements to identify and support all students who would benefit from work experience and to assess the quality of their activities are not sufficiently well developed or systematic.
- A programme of assemblies and tutorials is effective in helping students to understand a range of themes about life in Britain and the world, and potential risks to their health and wellbeing. They are supportive of each other, feel safe and are safe at the school. They know whom to contact should they have any concerns and are confident that staff will take these concerns seriously.
- The school offers a good range of enrichment activities that help students to develop their personal, social and employability skills such as team-working and problem-solving. These activities include more established programmes such as the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme and more novel ones, such as the World Record Group's attempt to construct the world's fastest toilet.
- Students develop their English and mathematics skills well because of the focus that teachers put on these skills in lessons and homework. For example, geography students develop their mathematics skills through calculations involving the amount of carbon in

water cycles. Teachers focus on the correct application of subject-specific language in lessons and use discussions very well to develop students' speaking and listening skills. They mark students' work carefully and provide detailed feedback to help students write more clearly and structure their answers more effectively.

Outcomes for learners

Outstanding

- The large majority of learners make good progress and a high proportion make excellent progress. Teachers and managers meticulously monitor the progress of each individual student through a series of formal assessments taken at five points during the year. They use this information very well to provide appropriate interventions to help those students in need of support to get back on track. Students themselves understand their progress and have detailed record sheets that clearly identify the subjects in which they need to improve.
- As a new institution, the school has yet to have a group of students finish their qualifications. However, in the summer of 2016, 60 students taking the older style of A-level qualifications sat AS-level papers. A significantly higher proportion were successful than in other similar institutions.
- The vast majority of students are well motivated and enjoy attending college. They have high aspirations and study hard, producing work of a very high standard. For the few who are not so well motivated, suitable measures are used to ensure that they do enough work, including discussions with parents, reporting daily on their efforts and requiring them to attend additional sessions where they have not done enough during the day. These measures help students to improve their progress.
- Staff discuss with students their GCSE attainment and educational and career aspirations prior to their enrolling at the college. These discussions inform decisions about appropriate A-level choices and are revisited in tutorials throughout the year. Students therefore follow programmes to which they are well suited. Very few drop out in-year and almost all progress to the second year of their programmes.
- Staff provide excellent guidance to students who apply to university. This, coupled with their appropriate subject choices and good progress, means that all those who have applied to university have received offers to study their choice of subject, with the large majority applying and receiving offers for highly competitive courses. Those who do not wish to progress to university have clear plans for progression to employment or alternative study routes.

Provider details

Unique reference number	141965
Type of provider	16 to 19 academy
Age range of learners	16–18
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	53
Principal/CEO	Stuart Williams
Telephone number	01572 772579
Website	www.haringtonschool.com

Provider information at the time of the inspection

Main course or learning programme level	Level 1 or below	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4 or above				
Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships)	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+
	–	–	–	–	134	–	–	–
Number of apprentices by apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate	Advanced	Higher					
	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+		
	–	–	–	–	–	–		
Number of traineeships	16–19	19+	Total					
	–	–	–					
Number of learners aged 14 to 16	–							
Number of learners for which the provider receives high-needs funding	–							
Funding received from:	Education Funding Agency							
At the time of inspection, the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:								

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the head of Harington School as nominee. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and online questionnaires to gather the views of learners and employers; these views are reflected within the report. They observed learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews. The inspection took into account all relevant provision at the provider.

Inspection team

Russ Henry, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Nick Gadfield	Her Majesty's Inspector
Tony Day	Ofsted Inspector
Lindsay Ogden	Ofsted Inspector

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