

Atam Academy

Little Heath, Romford RM6 4XX

Inspection dates

15–16 May 2019

Overall effectiveness	Outstanding
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Outstanding
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Outstanding
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Outstanding
Early years provision	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- The executive headteacher provides outstanding leadership and ensures that all pupils make strong progress.
- The school's highly effective leadership team has brought about rapid improvement in a short space of time.
- Leaders, trust members, governors and staff have high aspirations for all pupils: for their behaviour, attitudes to learning and the progress they should make.
- The quality of teaching is consistently good, due to effective training and development of all staff.
- All groups of pupils' achievement is rapidly improving. In all year groups, progress is good and the most able are exceeding expectations for their age.
- Pupils' behaviour in class, around school and during breaktimes is outstanding. Pupils know and put into practice the school's core values.
- Early years provision is outstanding. Leaders and teachers have secured continual improvements and children make strong progress.
- The partnership between parents and the school is strong and makes a significant contribution to the learning and well-being of the pupils.
- Leaders and governors use the pupil premium to good effect. The progress of disadvantaged pupils continues to improve.
- The curriculum is rich, broad and balanced, but occasionally the work in some subjects is not of the same quality or quantity as in mathematics and English.
- The work of leaders and staff to keep pupils safe and secure is highly effective. Parents and pupils say that school staff care for pupils very well, and pupils say they are safe and happy.
- The school's values permeate every aspect of the school and the curriculum. This has an extremely positive impact on pupils' behaviour and safety and makes a significant contribution to their high rates of progress.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue to improve outcomes in all subjects to match the outstanding achievements in English and mathematics.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- The executive headteacher provides outstanding leadership. She personifies the relentless and tenacious drive to ensure that all pupils achieve. Aply assisted by her assistant headteachers and senior and middle leadership team, she has developed a culture in which the highest expectations of pupils and staff are the norm. Consequently, leaders and teachers continually try to improve their practice and secure better outcomes for pupils.
- Teamwork is an exceptionally strong feature of the academy. The executive headteacher is highly skilled at ensuring that all staff feel a valued part of the team. Everyone shares the vision and values of the school. This underpins the excellent, highly focused and comprehensive systems and processes established by leaders.
- Leaders track learning, attendance and welfare of all pupils regularly and in detail. They ensure that effective support is provided to ensure that pupils attend school regularly, catch up in their learning if they fall behind and feel happy and safe.
- Leaders, trust members and governors know the academy well. Their self-evaluation is very detailed and accurately evaluates the performance of the school. It identifies the areas that need to improve and those areas that leaders and governors need to monitor because improvements there are relatively recent and not yet fully embedded.
- School leaders make highly effective provision for disadvantaged pupils and use the pupil premium to very good effect. Consequently, although numbers are small, the progress of pupils receiving the funding continues to improve. The additional resources are used to help them to catch up and engage in a wide range of activities and trips.
- Middle and subject leaders are effective, and some are highly effective. They know their subjects and areas of responsibility well and ensure there is sufficient breadth to the curriculum. It is made more interesting, rich and diverse through a wide range of visits and visitors, for example visits to the Maritime Museum and Parliament. However, the quality and quantity of work in some subjects do not match the impressive standard of work in English and mathematics.
- Leaders have used the physical education and sport premium effectively, providing pupils with many opportunities to participate in sport and to have good links with sports clubs. As a result, pupils are highly motivated to participate and increasingly equipped to learn and play independently.
- There is a very strong and effective approach to inclusion that provides excellent support for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities. Pupils' needs are carefully and accurately identified, and good provision is made to meet those needs.
- Pupils are exceptionally well prepared for life in modern Britain, appropriately for their age. Democracy, Sikh and British values are at the heart of the school's ethos. There are important jobs for older pupils, such as buddies, mentors and councillors. Pupils take these roles very seriously and recognise the level of responsibility at an early age.

- Almost all parents and carers who spoke with inspectors or responded to Ofsted’s online questionnaire, Parent View, were positive about the school. They commented on the friendliness of staff. They said the school is welcoming and keeps their children safe, and their children are happy and enjoy school. Leaders recognise that improved communication with parents and the community, as the school grows, is an area for development.

Governance of the school

- Governance is highly effective. Governors and trustees know the school well and are highly committed to ensuring that the school is at the heart of the community. They have worked well with the executive headteacher and senior leaders to establish a culture of the very highest expectations of staff and pupils.
- Governors have an accurate understanding of the quality of teaching, which is informed by reports from school leaders, trust advisers and their own monitoring. They have a good understanding of the published data and the progress of pupils in the school, and hold leaders to account for pupils’ achievements.
- Governors know the areas they need to improve and those that need close monitoring to ensure that recent improvements are further developed. Governors have a wide range of experience, including in education and business, and consequently they give effective challenge and support to senior leaders.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- There is an exceptionally strong culture of safety in the school due to the excellent recording system, effectively implemented across the school. Leaders act upon any concerns about pupil welfare rapidly. They are tenacious in involving external agencies when this is appropriate, for example when tackling attendance concerns. All staff have received up-to-date training in safeguarding.
- Pupils feel safe, and most parents who spoke to inspectors said that their children are safe. Pupils are confident that adults will resolve any concerns they may have.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Outstanding

- Teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve in every lesson. They give clear explanations of what pupils will be learning and explain precisely what they expect, especially when introducing new topics. A feature of the introduction of new topics is checking what pupils know already and correcting any misconceptions so that learning builds on this foundation.
- Work in lessons is usually set at different levels of difficulty, and pupils can choose challenges to extend their learning. This enables pupils to gain confidence by starting with something they can do before moving onto more challenging tasks. Teachers are vigilant in checking pupils’ progress and guiding them to appropriate work, ensuring that they deepen their knowledge, skills and understanding.

- Teachers and teaching assistants, both with small groups and with the whole class, are skilled at asking questions that enable pupils to think for themselves. Pupils are encouraged to use resources, for example practical mathematical models, and try to work things out for themselves or go to the innovative 'help desk' in each classroom before asking for help.
- The teaching of reading, writing and mathematics is strong across the school. Due to effective training and a systematically applied reading scheme, teachers and non-teaching staff are confident in teaching phonics. Pupils use their phonic knowledge very well when reading new words.
- Teachers enable pupils to apply their mathematical skills and to practise their writing in a variety of ways across the curriculum. Professional development, coaching from experienced staff and the implementation of new approaches have secured continual improvements in the teaching of writing and mathematics, ensuring strong pupil progress.
- Teachers ensure that learning is exciting and interesting. Overall, teachers' subject knowledge is very good, for example in art and physical education, although there are some inconsistencies in the quality and quantity of work between subjects for some teachers.
- The assessment systems enable teachers to closely and easily track pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Consequently, pupils who are not making rapid-enough progress from their starting points are quickly identified and additional teaching is put in place to close gaps in learning, especially for disadvantaged pupils. The system supports the rapid identification of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. Suitable provision ensures that they make good progress from their starting points.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- The values and culture of the school promote all aspects of pupils' welfare. Systems for safeguarding are thorough, and the designated leaders are determined to ensure that all pupils are well cared for and that all staff and agencies fulfil their responsibilities.
- Pupils were keen to tell inspectors that they feel safe and happy. One pupil said, 'The teachers help you and I learn a lot.' Pupils shared with inspectors that they trust adults to take prompt and effective action to address their concerns and that there is no bullying.
- Pupils take great pride in their work, consequently handwriting and presentation improve consistently. Pupils concentrate very well in lessons, because they want to please their teachers and value learning.
- Pupils work and play happily together. They take up enthusiastically many roles of responsibility to help each other, for example playground 'buddies' and classroom monitor roles.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- The behaviour is outstanding because of the high expectations of adults, underpinned by the values of the academy, the highly effective strategies and routines that staff employ and the learning activities they provide. This view is shared by the overwhelming majority of parents, who believe behaviour is good.
- Pupils behave well in class, around the school and at breaktimes. In class, pupils listen attentively to their teachers, concentrate and work hard on tasks. Pupils are friendly, polite and happy to engage in conversation.
- Leaders and teachers have established vibrant, interesting and exciting learning environments, and this makes a significant contribution to pupils' self-confidence and assurance.
- Attendance is improving and is now at the national average. Leaders, staff and education welfare officers work tirelessly to address the hard-to-shift persistent absence of a few pupils. Leaders have secured significant improvements.

Outcomes for pupils

Outstanding

- Pupils make substantial and sustained progress at Atam Academy and, as a result, are well prepared for their next stage of learning.
- In 2018, pupils made strong progress in reading, including developing strong phonics skills, writing and mathematics. As a result, Year 2 pupils attained significantly above the national average overall in these subjects.
- In 2018, disadvantaged pupils and those who speak English as an additional language also made good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. This performance is being matched and improved by pupils currently at the school. Disadvantaged pupils and pupils with English as an additional language make similar rates of progress to other pupils.
- The most able pupils make substantial and sustained progress. The most able pupils made strong progress and the current Year 2 pupils are on track to achieve higher than age-related expectations in reading, writing and mathematics. This progress is consistently maintained in Year 3.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disability make good progress from their starting points, given their needs. This because teachers understand and meet their needs well through high-quality teaching and effective additional support.
- Leaders and teachers monitor the progress of pupils systematically and carefully. They are quick to identify those pupils who are falling behind and to put in place measures to enable them to catch up. Consequently, pupils' achievements are very strong.

Early years provision

Outstanding

- Teachers and leaders have created a stimulating and creative environment – a fun place to learn. Both indoor and outdoor learning environments are attractive and linked

to learning themes for the week. They are interesting, with a wide range of resources for children to use and a diverse range of opportunities to learn.

- Most children enter nursery and reception classes at levels that are broadly typical for their age. They make strong progress and more children, including boys, girls and disadvantaged children, gain a good level of development than nationally. Children currently in the nursery and reception classes are also making strong progress.
- The leadership and management of the early years are highly effective and result in children making good progress. Leaders have a clear and accurate understanding of the strengths and areas for development in the early years. They take swift and effective action to ensure that areas of development are addressed effectively, for example the regular interventions by staff to challenge and develop children's vocabulary, especially for those children with English as an additional language.
- The quality of teaching over time is outstanding, and is never less than consistently good. Teachers ensure that their teaching and the support the children receive from early years staff are highly responsive to children's needs. Teachers provide a rich variety of activities that encompass the whole of the early years curriculum. As a result, children engage positively and show determination in their learning. The teaching of phonics is strong, and children make good progress in reading.
- The partnership between parents and early years staff is very positive and productive. Parents come into school regularly to support their child and to contribute to assessments. They are very positive about the progress their children are making, with comments such as 'My son is making good progress and can't wait to come to school'. As a result, children thrive.
- Behaviour in Nursery and Reception is outstanding. Staff have high and consistent expectations for behaviour, and children are very enthusiastic about learning. They concentrate hard and work well, both together and with their teachers.

School details

Unique reference number	142896
Local authority	Redbridge
Inspection number	10088856

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	All-through
School category	Academy free school
Age range of pupils	3 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	260
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Mankamal Singh Palray
Executive Headteacher	Sulina Piesse
Telephone number	0208 252 9831
Website	www.khalsaacademiestrust.com/293/welcome-to-atam-academy
Email address	info@atamacademy.com
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The academy opened as an all-through Sikh denomination free school in September 2016 as part of the Khalsa Academy Trust.
- The executive headteacher was appointed from within the trust in January 2018.
- The Nursery opened in September 2018. A large proportion of pupils in each year group therefore did not attend the Nursery.
- The school is growing rapidly due to additional year groups coming on stream, now including pupils up to and including Year 3.
- A significant proportion of pupils are from ethnic minority groups.
- The school is not in an area of high deprivation, and has a below-average number of disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors held meetings with the executive headteacher, the assistant headteachers, middle leaders and the acting coordinator for the provision for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. The inspectors met with the chief executive officer of the Khalsa Academy Trust, trust members and members of the governing body. Discussions explored a wide range of subjects, including safeguarding arrangements.

Inspection team

Phil Garnham, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Jo Jones	Ofsted Inspector
Brian Oppenheim	Her Majesty's Inspector

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