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23 June 2021

David Martin
Executive Headteacher
Atam Academy
Little Heath
Romford
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Dear Mr Martin

No formal designation inspection of Atam Academy

Following my visit with Martin Finch and Jean Thwaites, Her Majesty's Inspectors, to your school on 25 and 26 May 2021, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings.

This inspection was conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 and in accordance with Ofsted's published procedures for no formal designation (NFD) inspections. The inspection was carried out because Her Majesty's Chief Inspector wished to determine the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements at the school following the judgement at the previous inspection in November 2020 that safeguarding was not effective.

Evidence

Inspectors scrutinised the single central register and other documents relating to safeguarding and child protection arrangements. We held meetings with you, the school's designated safeguarding lead (DSL), other leaders with responsibility for areas relevant to safeguarding, including attendance and behaviour, the chief executive officer, members of the local advisory board, the safeguarding trustee, the trust's DSL, and a police community support officer (PCSO). An inspector held telephone conversations with representatives of the local authority. We also held meetings with teaching and non-teaching staff, and with groups of pupils. We had conversations with 38 parents and carers at the start and end of the school day, and with staff and pupils around the school.

We scrutinised school policies relating to safeguarding, records of pupils' behaviour and attendance, minutes of meetings of the safeguarding team, records of work with the local authority, and the local authority's safeguarding audit of the school.

Having considered the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time:

Safeguarding is effective.

The judgement made in this inspection related specifically to the effectiveness of safeguarding. Inspection activities were completed with a sharp focus on safeguarding, including the leadership and management of safeguarding. The inspection team did not gather evidence or make judgements about other aspects of the school's work. This inspection did not seek to confirm whether the school continues to be an outstanding school. The next inspection is likely to be a section 5 inspection where inspectors will make a full range of judgements, including a judgement about the school's overall effectiveness.

Context

- Atam Academy is an all-through free school that opened in September 2016. The Nursery opened in 2018. Currently, there are pupils in each year from Nursery to Year 5, and in Years 7 and 8.
- The school is part of the Khalsa Academies Trust, a multi-academy trust. It has a Sikh denomination.
- Since the previous inspection, the trust has appointed new senior leaders. You took up your post as executive headteacher in January 2021. Two deputy headteachers, one of whom is the DSL, took up their posts during the spring term.

Main Findings

You and other new leaders have worked swiftly to compile and follow a safeguarding action plan. This has included revision of the school's safeguarding policy and practice since January this year. While new systems and procedures relating to safeguarding are not thoroughly embedded, early indications suggest that the impact of leaders' work is positive.

Leaders have organised safeguarding training for all staff. Teachers and non-teaching staff know their safeguarding responsibilities and the procedures to follow should they have any concerns about pupils' well-being. Staff are familiar with the school's new systems for record-keeping. During the inspection, staff told us about recent improvements in the way leaders collate information and follow up concerns when staff make referrals. Safeguarding and child-protection records show that leaders work closely with outside organisations and ensure pupils receive the support they need.

Leaders have started to boost communication with parents, staff and pupils about matters relating to safeguarding. Regular newsletters include safeguarding updates and guidance. Leaders have also started to provide staff with frequent safeguarding briefings and routinely discuss safeguarding issues during leadership meetings. There are new initiatives to enable pupils to report any concerns, including the launch of a new app. Pupils are familiar with how to use this resource and typically felt it was helpful for asking for additional support. Pupils, including children in the early years provision, were able to identify a trusted adult in the school who they could go to if they were sad or worried.

Leaders respond swiftly to any local issues that may pose a risk for pupils. They have organised specific events and speakers to provide reassurance and guidance to pupils following selected local incidents. Leaders collaborate well with the PCSO team to promote and support pupils' safety. Staff have adjusted the school's personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme to take account of and address concerns that you identified when pupils returned to school following the third lockdown. In particular, the PSHE curriculum prioritises pupils' mental health and well-being, online safety, and issues linked to domestic violence. Leaders have identified ways to promote safeguarding, including pupils' awareness of how to keep themselves safe from harm, across the curriculum. You are in the early stages of developing this further.

The school's clear attendance strategy highlights to all staff, parents and pupils the importance of pupils' regular attendance at school. The attendance team contacts parents to check where pupils are whenever they are absent. Staff are alert to risks of pupils going missing from education. They work with outside agencies, including with health and social care professionals, to make checks and referrals should they have any concerns.

Pupils said that they feel safe in school and know where and how to access support in and outside school. Pupils respond maturely to adults' expectations of behaviour so that routines in and between lessons and in the playground are well established. Pupils said that incidents of poor behaviour did not happen often. Some pupils reported that sometimes there is disruptive behaviour in lessons in some subjects, especially when there are frequent staff changes. Leaders take swift action to deal with incidents of unsettled behaviour. Leaders are at the very early stages of logging and analysing records of behaviour incidents to identify and address any patterns of pupils' behaviour across the school. This is a priority for development, especially as the number of pupils in the school increases year on year.

Trustees and members of the local advisory body are knowledgeable about the school's safeguarding processes and understand their statutory responsibilities. They have received appropriate training, including in safer recruitment. Trust leaders have expanded the safeguarding team, and have supported, developed and monitored the effectiveness of the school's safeguarding, as the new team becomes

established. The trust's DSL has provided operational support for, and quality assures the work of, the school's safeguarding team.

External support

School leaders' work has gained much from collaboration with outside agencies. The school has benefited particularly from the support of Redbridge local authority.

Priorities for further improvement

- Embed the new safeguarding systems and procedures so that safeguarding policy and practice are thoroughly established across the school.
- Develop systems to enable leaders to identify and address patterns of behaviour incidents, as the school roll increases.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the local advisory body, the chief executive officer of the Khalsa multi-academy trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Redbridge. This letter will be published on the Ofsted reports website.

Yours sincerely

Amanda Carter-Fraser
Her Majesty's Inspector