

# Inspection of Atlas Academy

Prospect Place, Doncaster, South Yorkshire DN1 3QP

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Inspection dates: 8 and 9 March 2022

## **Overall effectiveness**

## **Requires improvement**

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The quality of education

**Requires improvement**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Requires improvement**

Personal development

**Requires improvement**

Leadership and management

**Requires improvement**

Early years provision

**Requires improvement**

Previous inspection grade

Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Most pupils are polite and friendly. Teachers have increasingly high expectations of pupils' behaviour. However, some lessons are disrupted by pupils' behaviour, and this affects their learning. Most pupils conduct themselves well, but there are still too many incidents of poor behaviour from a small minority of pupils.

Over time, swift action has not been taken by leaders to ensure a good quality of education for pupils. There are signs that the quality of education is strengthening due to the more recent actions of leaders. A new curriculum is helping pupils to learn to read quickly. However, pupils do not consistently experience an ambitious curriculum across a range of subjects. Consequently, they do not achieve as well as they should.

Leaders have created a truly inclusive school. Pupils say that they are 'united through diversity'. They know the importance of being respectful to each other. Pupils feel safe at school. Teachers are kind and take the time to speak to them if pupils are worried. Pupils know how to report a concern. They know that staff would help them with any worries that they have.

Leaders are focused on developing pupils' character and providing a rich set of wider experiences. Pupils are encouraged to take on leadership roles in school. Some are equality and diversity ambassadors, while others are playground buddies and help other pupils during social times. These pupils are rightly proud of the impact that they have.

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

Since the school joined Astrea Academy Trust, a multi-academy trust, there have been a number of new leaders appointed. Governors and trustees focused on getting 'the right people' in post. However, the time taken to complete this process impacted how quickly leaders addressed the weaknesses of the predecessor school. It is only now, with the recently appointed leadership team, that leaders are taking the right steps to make improvements. They have an accurate understanding of how well the school is doing, and what should be done next. There is now an increasingly positive picture of pupils' behaviour and attendance and curriculum planning and leadership across the school.

There is a legacy of underachievement in reading. Many pupils do not speak English fluently. Leaders are now rapidly addressing this. They have rightly prioritised support for those at the earliest stages of learning to read. All teaching staff have been trained in the new phonics reading scheme. Children in early years benefit from the strong support they receive. Older pupils who need help with learning to read are quickly identified. The interventions they receive enable them to catch up quickly with their peers. Pupils are now quickly learning to read.

In other subjects, leaders have implemented a number of new schemes of work. These identify the important subject-specific vocabulary that leaders want pupils to understand and use. The prior knowledge that pupils need before they can learn new topics is clearly set out. This enables teachers to help pupils to make sense of new learning. Subject leaders are enthusiastic and knowledgeable. They support teachers with their planning. However, the planned curriculum is not ambitious enough for all pupils. Some pupils are capable of more than they are being asked to do.

Quizzes in the middle and at the end of a topic enable teachers to identify and address gaps in pupils' knowledge. However, teachers do not consistently check that pupils have retained this information over a longer period. Pupils' knowledge in some subjects is fragile. They do not remember the important information that leaders have set out in the curriculum.

Support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) has been variable over time. Leadership of this area has been recently strengthened and improvements are being made. Teaching assistants provide some effective support to help pupils in lessons. For example, some pupils who have limited English use pre-prepared picture cards. However, not all pupils' needs are quickly identified. This can delay their receipt of the support that they require. Some teaching staff need further training to ensure that pupils' needs are quickly identified and met.

Leaders have implemented a new behaviour policy. Staff have received training in the new approach. Teaching staff appreciate the support they have received to help them manage pupils' behaviour. They now have consistently high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Most pupils behave well in lessons. However, some pupils struggle to behave respectfully towards others. This includes at social times. Some pupils are reluctant to report their concerns about behaviour. Leaders monitor pupils' behaviour and attendance closely. They know that there is still work to do. However, as with other areas, there is now consistent evidence that leaders' actions are now bringing about much-needed change.

Leaders have recently introduced a new personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education curriculum. Pupils have a good understanding of some aspects of PSHE education, such as the concept of democracy. Pupil ambassadors can recall information on equality and diversity with confidence. However, this is not consistently the case for all pupils. For example, pupils' knowledge of some aspects of British values is fragile. Pupils with SEND are not consistently well supported to learn the important knowledge in the PSHE education curriculum.

A number of parents and carers do not speak English and some cannot access some of the information available from the school. The new app used to communicate with parents does not currently translate important messages. Policies and wider information on the website are only available in English. Some parents are not aware of the wider offer of support for parents of pupils with SEND. This was particularly the case for those who spoke little English.

Leaders, including governors and trustees, have not acted quickly enough over time to address weaknesses in the school. This has not served pupils well. More recently, leaders at both trust and school level have started to address the issues in the school. The current governors of the transition management board (TMB) support school leaders effectively. They have the knowledge and expertise to challenge leaders appropriately. Governors now check carefully that leaders are taking the right actions to rapidly improve the school.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have ensured that all staff have been well trained. As a result, staff know how to spot the signs that a pupil may be at risk of harm. Leaders and staff act promptly to make referrals to outside agencies when necessary. They help pupils and their families to get the help that they need. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe, including when online. They know what to do if something is worrying them.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- In some subjects, pupils have not learned the important information that leaders have set out in the curriculum. This includes in PSHE education. This is because there is not a consistent approach to ensuring that pupils regularly revisit key concepts over time. As a result, pupils have not secured this information in their long-term memory. Leaders should ensure that assessment is used effectively across all subjects to help pupils to learn and embed important knowledge.
- Some pupils continue to disrupt lessons. Sometimes, pupils do not behave well towards each other at social times. Not all pupils are confident to tell a teacher when this happens. Leaders need to continue to develop and embed strong systems to secure good behaviour from all pupils and to ensure that pupils are confident that staff will respond to their concerns.
- A few pupils with SEND do not receive the help they need. This is because some staff do not have the knowledge to identify pupils who need additional support. Consequently, some pupils with SEND underachieve. Leaders should ensure that all staff have the expertise to recognise where a pupil may need further support due to their special educational needs.
- Communication with some parents is not sufficiently strong. This is particularly the case for parents who speak little English. These parents are not always aware of the wider offer and support available to them. Leaders should ensure that systems are in place to communicate effectively with all parents.

## 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.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	144950
<b>Local authority</b>	Doncaster
<b>Inspection number</b>	10212322
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy sponsor-led
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	312
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Kay Godfrey
<b>Principal</b>	Jonathan Moody
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.astreaatlas.org">www.astreaatlas.org</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- This is the first inspection since the predecessor school, Stirling Primary School, joined Astrea Academy Trust.
- There have been significant changes to the senior leadership team. This includes the appointment of a new principal and vice-principal. Additional senior leadership capacity has been provided through the trust.
- A number of new middle leaders have joined the school since the previous inspection.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.

## Information about this inspection

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

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

- Inspectors met with senior leaders, including the chief executive officer of the trust, the primary regional director and members of the TMB, including the chair.
- Inspectors met with leaders for safeguarding and behaviour and attendance. Other meetings were held with a range of staff, including subject leaders, pastoral staff and wider support staff. Inspectors spoke with teachers at the early stages of their teaching career.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in reading, mathematics, science and geography. They met with subject leaders about their curriculum plans. Inspectors talked with pupils about their learning in these subjects. Inspectors looked at pupils' work, visited lessons and talked with teachers. Inspectors heard pupils read.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation. This included safeguarding records, data and analysis on behaviour and attendance, wider curriculum plans and policies.
- The views of parents were considered through the responses to Ofsted's Parent View survey and talking with parents outside the school, and through telephone conversations held with some parents.
- The views of staff were considered from meetings held with staff and from the responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire.

### **Inspection team**

Eleanor Belfield, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Juliet Demster

Ofsted Inspector

Tracey Ralph

Her Majesty's Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)

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