

Khalsa Secondary Academy

Pioneer House, Hollybush Hill, Stoke Poges, Buckinghamshire SL2 4QP

Inspection dates

13–14 September 2017

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The recently appointed acting principal and the trust's director of education have systematically made many well-focused changes that have led to rapid improvements.
- The acting principal and the trust's director of education are indomitable in their pursuit of improvement. Their determination and ambition have galvanised senior leaders, who have stepped up to the mark.
- Leaders at all levels monitor and evaluate the impact of their work with accuracy and rigour.
- Leaders have successfully improved teaching. In most classes, year groups and subjects, pupils learn well and make strong progress.
- Pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding are developed well because teachers employ their subject expertise effectively.
- Unverified performance information from 2017 GCSE results indicates that pupils' attainment was above average in English and mathematics. Pupils' GCSE results across a range of other subjects were similarly strong.
- The curriculum supports pupils' development and progress well. Most pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, are on track to meet their challenging, but realistic, end-of-year targets.
- Leaders and teachers have adopted a more stringent approach to managing pupils' behaviour, which has led to improvements.
- The school successfully promotes traditional values as well as a strong sense of unity, tolerance and aspiration.
- Leaders' actions to keep children safe are well-thought out. Risks that are most relevant to the school's context are sensibly emphasised in guidance provided for staff, pupils and parents.
- Local governors and trustees, including the chief executive of the trust, successfully hold school leaders to account. Governors have not shied away from making difficult decisions in the interest of securing better progress for pupils.
- In some subjects, teachers do not always use assessment effectively, although other aspects of their practice may be strong. This means that a small number of pupils, especially the most able, do not make the very rapid progress of which they are capable. In addition, some teachers do not always adapt their approach when they identify pupils who are not fully involved in their learning.
- Although leaders have sought to respond to parents' concerns, the school's work to build parental trust and engagement is not yet fully consolidated.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that teachers' day-to-day assessment practice, including feedback, is as strong as in the best examples seen in the school so that:
 - most-able pupils, including most-able disadvantaged pupils, make the rapid progress of which they are capable
 - pupils who do not participate in learning are identified rapidly and appropriate action is taken to engage them.
- Consolidate the extensive work already begun to build parental trust and engagement so there is greater harmony between the school and the parent body.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The acting principal and the trust's director of education have worked dynamically together. They have resolutely placed pupils' development and progress at the heart of the far-reaching and rapid changes they have made to improve the school. Senior leaders are crystal clear about their areas of responsibility and what is required in order for them to do their jobs well. They work effectively with the well-motivated staff body. As a consequence, the school now provides a good quality of education for its pupils.
- The senior team's unwavering insistence that pupils meet their raised expectations has led to improvements in pupils' behaviour and attitudes. They have successfully established a shared vision, which combines the ethos of inclusivity, along with high expectations for pupils. As a result, pupils are proud of their school and learn well.
- Senior leaders support subject leaders well. As a consequence, subject leaders' scrutiny of information about pupils' progress is effective. Together, they identify pupils who need additional help and ascertain if new approaches to teaching are working well. Where information indicates that further changes are required, they are made quickly.
- Since the previous inspection, leaders have developed teaching and learning effectively. Their approach has sensibly evolved in line with the needs of teachers. Initially, leaders successfully ensured that pupils' learning in class ran smoothly. They are now wisely focusing on developing teachers' use of day-to-day assessment. Some teachers' practice in assessment is better developed than others'.
- Subject leaders are making a positive contribution to moving the school forward. Where necessary, they provide teachers with well-thought out subject-specific guidance. A few were appointed at the start of the autumn term 2017 and, due to their well-considered induction, have made a good start in their roles.
- The curriculum enables pupils to develop their knowledge, skills and understanding well across a range of academic and practical subjects. In timetabled enrichment lessons, pupils have the opportunity to build their proficiency in a number of sporting and creative pursuits, such as archery and creative writing. Many of these also promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) learning and some are connected to pupils' home cultures. Recent changes mean more enrichment sessions are led by professionally trained experts, helping pupils to enhance their skills and confidence.
- Leaders and governors carefully consider the impact of the curriculum to ensure it meets pupils' needs well. For example, governors and leaders have decided that the European Computer Driving Licence is not an appropriate qualification for most pupils at the school and have also requested that the school collaborates with local providers to deliver carefully selected vocational learning. There are well-thought out plans to achieve this.
- The school ensures that additional funding for disadvantaged pupils, children looked after and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities has a positive impact on their learning and well-being. Leaders ensure that teaching assistants have the training they need to support the individual pupils with whom they work. In particular, teaching assistants are given the chance to observe them learning in class,

prior to delivering small-group or one-to-one extra help. Additional funding for Year 7 pupils effectively assists targeted pupils in improving their reading skills and in gaining confidence in key mathematical concepts.

- The school has benefited from internal and external support brokered by the trust's director of education, including highly focused external support for specific-subject areas, such as mathematics. Of note, are the effective mechanisms which the director of education has established for sharing good practice across the trust, such as educational development groups. Although in their infancy, these groups are starting to have a positive impact.
- The school's work to build parental trust and engagement is not yet having sufficient impact. The school's relationship with parents has improved recently and the majority of parents who responded on Parent View indicated that they would recommend the school. However, a small number remain dissatisfied, despite the acting principal determinedly seeking to resolve their concerns, which include the impact of staff turbulence last year.

Governance of the school

- Local governors have effectively supported the school on its improvement journey since the last inspection. They check all aspects of education provided by the school assiduously and maintain a watchful eye on whether leaders keep pupils safe. Governors have not shied away from making difficult decisions where they have found that improvements have not been rapid enough. They carefully review targets set for teachers' performance. They ensure that leaders have stringently applied agreed criteria when deciding whether teachers have met their targets.
- Despite the wide geographical reach of the multi-academy trust, the governing body has close links with the trustees. These close ties have boosted aspects of their work; for example, strengthening strategies to retain and recruit teachers. As a consequence, there is now more stability in the staff body. Governors' minutes show that governors challenge school leaders to explain the rationale behind their actions and identify the extent to which their ideas for the future will benefit pupils and be cost effective. This approach supports leaders in making the right decisions.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective and the school has a strong safeguarding culture. To ensure that procedures are fully compliant, governors sensibly conduct spot checks and other monitoring activities. Guidance as to best practice is carefully followed and a well-planned programme of training ensures that staff are up to date and knowledgeable about safeguarding issues.
- The acting principal is very aware of the risks that are most associated with the school's context. She wisely employs this understanding when planning support and guidance programmes for pupils and parents. For instance, she astutely identified that pupils might be more at risk during the long summer holidays. To counter this, the acting principal ensured that prior to the holidays, pupils received appropriate information and guidance, for example about forced marriages and child sexual

exploitation. In addition, the school's website contains detailed and accessible information for parents and pupils about sensitive and complex e-safety issues. As a consequence, pupils say they feel confident about how to stay safe.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teaching and learning are mostly strong, and occasionally they are very strong. However, some teachers' use of assessment is not as effective as that of others. Senior leaders have wisely identified this as a focus for future developments.
- Teachers generally use their subject expertise well to plan tasks that boost pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding. They use questioning effectively to ensure that pupils are clear about what they need to do and how best to do it. This supports pupils' progress well.
- Mathematics teaching across the school successfully enables pupils to expand their knowledge and understanding of mathematical theories and how best to apply them to real-life problems. Tests are used effectively to check if pupils' learning is thorough and to identify any gaps pupils have in key concepts. These are quickly rectified.
- Teaching in science effectively challenges pupils to apply their scientific knowledge when interpreting results from the experiments they conduct. There is a high degree of consistency in the way that pupils use correct subject terminology when explaining scientific phenomena.
- Most teaching in English enables pupils to develop their understanding of the techniques writers use and confidently apply these in their own writing. Effective questioning hones pupils' ability to explore the effects of the language choices writers make. Teachers enable pupils to connect the social issues depicted in the books they study with their own lives and today's society, which supports their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively.
- Teaching in humanities subjects is improving and in religious education it is very effective. Pupils' knowledge and skills are enhanced by summarising material from different sources and weighing up the validity of different types of evidence.
- Pupils enjoy learning across a variety of practical subjects, including drama, where they enthusiastically explore and evaluate different dramatic forms. In a range of other practical subjects, pupils ably apply the tips that they learn from teachers' demonstrations of different techniques.
- The school's approach to developing pupils' reading skills is successful. Wider reading is promoted well through aspirational reading lists that are helpfully grouped into themes. Targeted pupils who need to develop their reading confidence and stamina receive the support they need to do so.
- In a small number of classes, across a range of subjects, including some core subjects, day-to-day assessment practices are not always used effectively. On occasion, some pupils do not engage with learning enough and are not challenged to do so. In addition, sometimes work is not pitched highly enough for some pupils to make the very rapid progress of which they are capable.

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Pupils are positive about their school, wear their uniform with pride and present their work neatly. They show maturity in recognising that because the school is growing fast, there have had to be many changes. Pupils are keen to contribute to future developments through, for instance, joining the school council and the team of prefects.
- Pupils seek to promote the inclusive ethos of the school. They adhere to the school's mantra 'as one' and participate positively in community activities. They are able to articulate how values from different cultures tie in with fundamental British values. Pupils understand how their adherence to values informs their decisions, responses and day-to-day actions.
- The school supports pupils well in developing a strong sense of well-being by providing a school nurse and school counsellor, both of whom work with pupils confidentially.
- Careers guidance is especially effective and last year, according to the school's figures, all Year 11 pupils continued their education post-16. Pupils access independent careers advice, as well as carefully considered work experience placements. They are given encouragement and practical support in pursuing their high aspirations.
- Attendance in 2016/17 was in line with the national average. It improved compared to previous years, following leaders taking a strong line and refusing to authorise any term-time visits abroad. Similarly, levels of punctuality have improved due to a recent clampdown on lateness.
- In most lessons, pupils are exceptionally eager to learn, often volunteering to answer and present to the class. However, in some classes a small number of pupils are not as fully engaged in learning as their classmates. Where teachers' practice in feedback and assessment is well developed, they identify this quickly and adapt their approaches accordingly. However, where it is less developed, a small minority of pupils remain disengaged from learning throughout the lesson.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils behave well in class and follow teachers' instructions swiftly. Pupils respond positively to the system of rewards and sanctions that has been introduced.
- The acting principal, when she took up her post in February 2017, implemented a successful approach to improving pupils' behaviour. Although this 'zero tolerance' strategy led to a short-lived peak in reported incidents of poor behaviour, pupils and staff agree that it worked well. The atmosphere around school now, even in areas where corridors are narrow, is calm and purposeful. Pupils commented to inspectors that leaders' firmer approach has led to noticeable improvements in behaviour.
- The majority of pupils spoken to by inspectors said that bullying had reduced and any bullying was dealt with effectively. They understood well about the different forms that

bullying takes. The school's leaders have an accurate and well-informed view of the situation, diligently recording and dealing with all incidents. They recognise that, although much has been done, there is still a bit more to do. Leaders have strong plans in place to achieve this; for example, anti-bullying mentors who support younger pupils.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Across subjects and year groups, outcomes are strong because of improvements in teaching. As a result of effective approaches to learning, pupils attained above average standards in 2017 GCSE examinations, according to unverified data provided by the school. Information from the school also shows that pupils achieved well in the English Baccalaureate suite of qualifications, which includes core subjects as well as history, geography and a modern foreign language. A higher-than-average proportion of pupils achieved success in these subjects in the 2017 GCSE examinations compared to national results in 2016.
- Pupils make strong progress from their starting points. In the 2017 English and mathematics GCSE examinations, which were more challenging than GCSEs in 2016, unverified results show that over half of pupils achieved strong passes (grade 5 and above). This is above the national average and represents good progress from pupils' starting points.
- Most-able pupils achieve well at the school. According to the school's own records, in 2017 a higher-than-average proportion of pupils achieved grade 7 (equivalent of a grade A) separately in mathematics, English language, and English literature GCSEs. It is noteworthy that about one quarter of pupils achieved six or more A/A* grades in other subjects, which is well above 2016 averages.
- Pupils' learning and progress in separate sciences is enhanced by carefully considered practical experiments. Raised aspirations mean that an increasing number of pupils are taking separate science GCSE courses in key stage 4.
- In key stage 3, work in books and detailed assessment records show that the majority of pupils make strong progress towards their end-of-year targets, which are appropriately challenging. If pupils are struggling to meet these targets, teachers ensure that they receive well-planned additional help in a timely manner.
- Pupils do well in the subjects they take in enrichment, often because the teachers' passion for the subject is transmitted to pupils, for example in stitch craft. Professional sports coaches have trained pupils well during enrichment, and the school's football team came second in the Slough football league.
- Pupils eligible for additional pupil premium funding are supported well. Their progress is monitored carefully and most make the same strong progress as others in the school. A number join the school after Year 7, having had a turbulent time in their education to date. The school ensures that they have the academic and pastoral support they need to make effective progress.
- Pupils are given the additional support they need to catch up. Reading programmes are particularly successful. Last year, most pupils who participated made very impressive

leaps in their reading, developing reading skills that were well beyond those expected of their age group.

- The courses which pupils access and the learning they undertake equip them well for the next stage of their education. According to information from the school, all pupils who left Year 11 in 2017 went on to post-16 education.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities broadly make the same strong progress as others in the school. In class, they are supported effectively by teachers and by assistants. Teaching staff, including assistants, are given effective guidance by the new special educational needs coordinator.
- Although, generally, most-able pupils attain well, some most-able pupils, especially most-able disadvantaged pupils, do not make the very strong progress of which they are capable. The school has identified this issue and has detailed plans in place to support these pupils, including through purchasing additional, bespoke, resources such as special textbooks. However, some teachers' day-to-day practice in assessment does not always support this small minority of pupils in making the very rapid progress of which they are capable.

School details

Unique reference number	139897
Local authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	10032831

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy free school
Age range of pupils	11 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	372
Appropriate authority	The academy trust
Chair	Mr Satnam Singh Thamu
Principal	Ms Sulina Piesse
Telephone number	01753 662009
Website	www.khalsasecondaryacademy.com
Email address	principal@Khalsasecondaryacademy.com
Date of previous inspection	24–25 June 2015

Information about this school

- The academy was established by the Khalsa Academies Trust, which serves local Sikh communities and helps them to establish Sikh faith skills. It opened as an academy free school in September 2013.
- At the start of the autumn term 2017, a new chair of the local governing body was appointed and the ex-chair became chief executive of the trust.
- The acting principal took up her role in February 2017. The executive principal, who took up her role in November 2016, is also the director of education for the Khalsa Academies Trust.
- The academy is much smaller than the average-sized secondary school. Although it is registered for a sixth form, it currently does not have one.
- Almost all students are of Indian ethnicity. More than half the pupils speak English as an additional language.

- The proportion of pupils eligible for support through the pupil premium is low.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is well below the national average. The proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is well below average.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.
- This year (2017) was the first year that the school entered pupils for GCSEs in core subjects. The government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress, have not yet been published for 2017.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors made visits to observe learning in approximately 25 lessons. They also visited enrichment classes. Samples of pupils' work were scrutinised by inspectors.
- Inspectors met with the acting principal (accompanied by the director of education for the trust on most occasions) and also, separately, with senior leaders, subject leaders, a group of staff (including newly qualified teachers), and two groups of pupils. Separate meetings were also held with the leader responsible for careers guidance, the leader responsible for enrichment, and with the designated safeguarding lead.
- Inspectors held meetings with the chair of the local governing body, accompanied by the chief executive officer of the trust and also met with parents informally on day one of the inspection and formally on day two.
- Inspectors reviewed the 16 staff survey responses, the 39 responses made by parents to the online parent survey, Parent View, and also the 12 comments made by parents using the free-text facility on Parent View. Inspectors also spoke on the telephone to the headteacher of a local primary school.
- Documentation and policies, which included the school's own evaluation and development plans, were reviewed. Inspectors scrutinised the school's safeguarding records, including safety checks made when teachers are appointed, pupils' records and a selection of teachers' files.

Inspection team

Sarah Hubbard, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Judith O' Hare	Ofsted inspector
Lizzie Jeanes	Ofsted Inspector

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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. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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