

Inspection of Addington Valley Academy

Fieldway, Croydon CR0 9AZ

Inspection dates: 25 and 26 January 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are keen to get to school each day. Leaders ensure that pupils have access to high-quality experiences. Staff understand pupils well so that they can meet their individual needs. They are kind and caring and have high expectations. They encourage pupils to lead a happy and independent life.

The school is a calm and orderly environment. Staff manage pupils' behaviour exceptionally well. Parents and carers appreciated the rewards their children achieved for good work and behaviour. Staff work closely with parents, such as sharing pupils' 'wow' moments with them.

Bullying is not tolerated here, and staff are vigilant. If pupils have any concerns, they are confident to communicate these to any adult, who will deal with them seriously.

Leaders provide pupils with excellent resources to help them to develop. For example, pupils enjoyed using the food technology space to develop their cooking skills. Older pupils access the school's gym and take part in sporting activities such as football and basketball. Leaders increase pupils' opportunities to explore the local area. For example, some pupils go horse riding, while others use a local swimming pool. Pupils go on forest walks and have regular visits to the local area.

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

Leaders plan an ambitious curriculum based on pupils' individual and specific needs. Staff break down targets for each pupil into well-planned steps. Staff check pupils' understanding constantly. As a result, they adapt their lessons so that they can support pupils effectively. Staff provide many opportunities for pupils to build on what they have previously learned. On rare occasions, pupils' targets are not precisely matched to their individual needs. This limits these pupils' ability to work as independently as they could.

The curriculum is broad and balanced across the school. Pupils have opportunities to learn in many areas, including through art, music, drama and cooking. Staff consider the sequencing of subject content carefully so that pupils undertake more complex learning. For example, a primary-phase art class combined previous learning about printing and mark-making to create a dragon for the Chinese New Year.

Leaders, staff and therapists work together to identify and support pupils' needs. They provide extra support to develop pupils' speech and language skills. Sessions with the school's therapy dog, Autumn, are beneficial for pupils in need of additional emotional support.

Leaders prioritise the development of pupils' communication. Reading activities are an important part of the day for each pupil. These are appropriate for pupils' individual stages of development. Staff use a range of communication strategies

skilfully with pupils, including signing, symbols and words. Pupils enjoy sensory stories and hearing teachers read to them. Teachers revisit vocabulary from the stories pupils read. Phonics is used to support pupils who are ready to use it. Books that these pupils read are matched to the sounds that they know. However, leaders have not ensured that all staff are fully confident to teach phonics.

Staff are knowledgeable about how to manage pupils' complex behavioural needs. As a result, pupils behave extremely well and learning is not disrupted. The school is an environment where pupils can thrive.

Pupils' preparation for adult life threads through school life. For example, pupils in the primary phase learn to brush their teeth. Many pupils follow different recipes in cooking lessons. Leaders ensure that pupils receive a well-planned relationships and sex education curriculum. Pupils are taught about personal care and hygiene at an appropriate level. Leaders plan exciting experiences for pupils such as art workshops and sensory pantomimes. Pupils are taught about different religious festivals such as Christmas and Eid. A group of sixth-form students have attended a careers fayre. They have completed some work experience in school. However, careers education for younger secondary-age pupils is not as well planned.

Staff at all levels said that leaders recognised their efforts. All staff are treated equally. Leaders are readily available and help staff manage their workload. Leaders provide workshops for parents to help support them, including sensory play and communication strategies. Members of the governing body are well informed about leaders' work and offer appropriate challenge and support.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

School leaders have thought carefully about possible safeguarding challenges at this provision such as some pupils' limited ability to communicate. All staff have a heightened sense of professional curiosity regarding safeguarding. Staff are encouraged to be vigilant and report any minor concerns.

Leaders are tenacious in working with external agencies to ensure that any concerns are pursued in a timely manner. Pupils are taught about keeping themselves safe as part of their personalised curricular targets. For instance, staff teach pupils about road safety and to be cautious when speaking to adults they do not know.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders do not ensure that all staff are confident to teach phonics to pupils who are ready to learn phonics. This limits these pupils' ability to start to segment and blend sounds. Leaders must ensure that all staff are trained in phonics so that they can give pupils effective opportunities to build and improve their reading

fluency.

- Leaders do not ensure that all pupils in the secondary phase have a carefully planned careers programme. This limits some pupils' understanding of their future options. Leaders should ensure that they provide all secondary-age pupils with information about education and careers opportunities based on their individual needs in the secondary phase.

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.

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

Unique reference number	147874
Local authority	Croydon
Inspection number	10255292
Type of school	All-through
School category	Academy free school
Age range of pupils	4 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	113
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Jay Mercer
Principal	John Reilly
Website	www.addingtonvalley.org
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Addington Valley Academy is a special school that caters for pupils aged four to 19 who have a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder and complex or severe learning difficulties. All pupils have an education, health and care plan.
- The school opened in temporary accommodation in September 2020. It moved into its current building in September 2021.
- Addington Valley Academy is part of the Orchard Hill College Academy Trust.
- The school opened early years and sixth-form provisions in September 2022.
- Leaders do not make use of any alternative provision.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 7 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

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

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with leaders responsible for the quality of education, behaviour and attendance, personal development and safeguarding. They spoke to the leaders for early years and sixth-form provisions.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in the areas of reading and communication, mathematics and problem-solving, and physical development.
- Inspectors also considered the curriculum in other areas.
- Through discussions with leaders, staff, pupils and the governing body, inspectors considered the effectiveness of safeguarding. Inspectors considered the school's documentation and processes relating to safeguarding.
- Inspectors met with a group of parents. They considered parent and staff responses to Ofsted's online surveys.
- Inspectors met with members of the local governing body, the chief executive officer of the trust and a representative from the local authority.

Inspection team

Lisa Strong, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Teresa Neary

Ofsted Inspector

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