

# Newlands

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	135201
<b>Local authority</b>	Rochdale
<b>Inspection number</b>	381834
<b>Inspection dates</b>	22–23 February 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	Sara Morrissey HMI

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Community special
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	63
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Peter Moorhouse
<b>Headteacher</b>	Deborah Rogers
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	19 May 2009
<b>School address</b>	Waverley Road Middleton Manchester M24 6JG
<b>Telephone number</b>	0161 655 0220
<b>Fax number</b>	0161 655 0221
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## Introduction

### Inspection team

Sara Morrissey  
Maureen Coleman

Her Majesty's Inspector  
Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Eleven lessons were observed and eight teachers seen. Inspectors also made short visits to enrichment activities and observed an assembly and pupils' social time during morning and lunch breaks. Meetings were held with a group of pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body, and other members and groups of staff. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at assessment information about pupils' progress, samples of pupils' work, documentation relating to safeguarding procedures and incident logs. Inspectors also considered responses to staff and pupils' questionnaires as well as 31 parental and carers' questionnaires. There were no responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) to aid inspection planning.

## Information about the school

This small special school caters for pupils with a wide range of special educational needs that include complex communication difficulties, including autistic spectrum disorder, profound and multiple learning difficulties, severe and moderate learning difficulties. A number of pupils also experience physical and sensory difficulties and a small proportion has specific medical needs. Almost all pupils have a statement to meet their special educational needs and statements are pending for two pupils who are new to the school. Pupils are grouped in mixed-age classes in Key Stages 1 and 2. Two of these classes are organised according to need for pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties. There is also a discrete class for children of nursery and Reception age.

Newlands is co-located with a mainstream community primary school in purpose-built accommodation. Almost all pupils live within the borough of Rochdale. A significant number joins the school at different times during their primary education, most often transferring from mainstream education. Over half of all pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals, which is much higher than the national average. The proportion of pupils from a minority ethnic background is higher than the national average and English is an additional language for a small number of pupils.

Following the retirement of the previous headteacher at the end of the summer term in 2011, the school was led by an acting headteacher and acting deputy headteacher appointed from within the school. A new substantive headteacher took up post in January 2012.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory and 4 is inadequate**  
Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

<b>Overall Effectiveness</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Achievement of pupils</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety of pupils</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>2</b>

## Key Findings

- Newlands is a good school where pupils achieve well in their learning. Good teaching is characterised by the effective use of a wide variety of multi-sensory resources that stimulate pupils’ interests and increase opportunities for independence. Teachers are skilful at pacing activities so that learning proceeds briskly. However, the school’s overall effectiveness is not outstanding because activities are not always focused sharply enough to enable all pupils to reinforce and extend their learning fully. Opportunities are also missed in written feedback to enable pupils to reflect on what they have done well and how they might improve their work.
- Pupils are enthusiastic about school and enjoy a good variety of learning activities that are personalised to meet a wide range of abilities and needs. Staff are very skilful at dismantling barriers to learning and targeted strategies are used effectively to meet individual needs and accelerate progress. Consequently, pupils make good progress over time, particularly in communication, literacy and numeracy.
- From the moment they arrive at the school, dedicated and experienced staff teams ensure that pupils are kept safe. Excellent support enables pupils of all ages to grow in self-esteem and confidence. Pupils show great respect and consideration for each other and value highly the simple behaviour code that rewards good effort and helps them to manage their own behaviour extremely well.
- Good leadership at all levels, including governance, is underpinned by a strong community spirit and determination to enable pupils of all ages to achieve well. Leaders place strong emphasis on improving the quality of teaching and learning, supported well by ongoing professional development. Regular checks are made to evaluate progress in tackling key priorities for improvement, although these do not always pin point the impact of actions on raising pupils’ achievement.
- Parents and carers are very positive about their children’s experience at school and value the increasing opportunities to be involved in their children’s learning at home.

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

- Raise pupils' achievement by:
  - sharpening consistently the focus of planning to extend the impact of teaching strategies on pupils' learning
  - providing feedback to all pupils that increases opportunities for them to reflect on what they have done well and how they can improve
  - increasing the precision with which evaluation procedures measure the impact of provision on pupils' learning and achievement over time.

## Main Report

### Achievement of pupils

Pupils' attainment is low and reflects the complex range of their special educational needs. However, their achievement is good. This is because the very effective development of pupils' communication skills helps pupils and children in the Early Years Foundation Stage to overcome barriers to progress and make good gains in their learning and skill development. Reading is given a high profile across the school and pupils enjoy talking about their favourite books. They learn to decode unfamiliar words effectively and can talk about what they have read with meaning. For example, one Key Stage 2 pupil read his favourite book to the inspector with confidence and, when challenged, read unaided a new book of a higher level with both fluency and understanding. He was both surprised and delighted by his achievement. Assessment information plays an increasing role in helping teachers to track pupils' progress. Analysis of data reveals little variation in the progress made by different groups of pupils and reflects the school's commitment to meeting the diverse range of pupils' needs. Targeted strategies that include the involvement of external agencies are effective in accelerating the progress made by individuals and groups of pupils. For example, more-able pupils benefit from working with peers at the co-located mainstream primary school for specific subjects. Intensive therapy and multi-sensory approaches to learning also have a positive impact on the skill development of disabled pupils and those who have profound and multiple learning difficulties. Parents and carers who responded to the inspection questionnaire are justified in their confidence that their children make good progress during their time at the school.

In lessons, learning proceeds rapidly where staff anticipate the changing needs of individual pupils and adapt activities skilfully to sustain or increase their participation. For example, in a Key Stage 2 class of pupils with a mixed range of needs, the teacher used a variety of resources effectively as a stimulus to generate ideas that enabled them to make good progress in producing an individual piece of art work on the theme of rainy weather. The pace of progress slows at times where the intended learning outcomes are not sufficiently clear, or where pupils are engaged for too long in a single activity so that opportunities are missed to reinforce or extend their learning further.

### Quality of teaching

Bright and cheerful classrooms are set out well to meet the needs of different groups of pupils and staff teams are attentive to individuals' needs. Staff teams are deployed well by teachers to meet pupils' needs effectively. A continuous professional dialogue, supported by

training opportunities, promotes the continuing development of teaching strategies that engage and motivate pupils.

Teaching makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development by fostering a sense of enjoyment and fascination for learning and encouraging active participation. For example, all areas of learning are represented in the Early Years Foundation Stage and a good balance of child- and adult-initiated activities encourages children to participate within a supportive environment. Where teaching was observed to be outstanding, a wide range of multi-sensory resources enabled Key Stage 1 pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties to experience new textures, sounds and music from different cultures. Excellent interaction between adults and pupils ensured high levels of enjoyment and engagement. Tailored activities also enabled a group of Key Stage 2 children with a mixed range of educational needs to make good progress in learning to use a dictionary or picture prompts to find out the meanings of 'weather words'. However, while planning routinely takes into account pupils' individual needs, it lacks consistency in its format across the school. Consequently, opportunities are sometimes missed to adapt teaching strategies so that there is a consistently sharp focus on pupils' progress towards personal learning goals.

Staff teams are quick to recognise and celebrate pupils' achievements during lessons, including small steps taken towards personal learning targets. However, written feedback does not always give pupils the chance to think about what they have achieved or how they might improve their work. Responses in parental and carers' questionnaires were very positive about the quality of teaching and their comments reflect an appreciation of the way in which teachers support their children's academic progress and provide opportunities for them to be more involved in their children's learning.

### **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

Pupils' behaviour is outstanding, as exemplified by their excellent attitudes during a Key Stage 2 assembly. Pupils greeted each other with a rousing 'Good morning' and showed great respect and consideration towards others who made contributions to a quiz about objects used for measuring. Pupils enjoy receiving regular praise and rewards for good effort and 'special mentions' in assembly for particular achievements. A consistent and simple code for behaviour is well established and clearly understood by pupils and younger children. Some parents and carers commented appreciatively that their children have adopted similar principles at home and taken greater responsibility for their own behaviour management. Pupils with behavioural and emotional needs make very good progress in learning to manage their own behaviour through personalised programmes they attend in the 'group room'. Detailed support plans are used consistently and effectively by staff to diffuse challenging behaviour so that incidents that require positive handling are uncommon.

Pupils feel very safe in school and are confident in the support they receive from staff. Within their capabilities, pupils have a clear understanding of what constitutes bullying. Those who were interviewed were very clear that everyone 'gets on well together' at school and they could think of no incidents of bullying of any type. Most pupils attend regularly and staff follow up absences rigorously. Pupils with medical needs are supported well to ensure a smooth return to school following hospital treatment. The personal needs of pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties are managed very discreetly by staff prior to lunchtime so that high levels of dignity are maintained.

Many opportunities are provided for pupils to develop their social skills. For example, at morning break, pupils learned to share toys and take turns on bicycles. At lunch time, they enjoyed a meal of their choice with groups of peers and adults before clearing up their plates responsibly. Younger children demonstrated good table manners during snack time, when they shared biscuits that they had made earlier in the day and tried different fruits. Warm and supportive relationships between staff and pupils build an atmosphere of trust from an early age and promote a very positive environment for learning. Consequently, pupils grow in confidence and their independence increases. For example, during the inspection, pupils of all ages met in new groups for the first session of enrichment courses they had chosen previously. They settled quickly into sometimes unfamiliar settings and participated well in a variety of activities including cooking, art and gardening. In particular, older pupils reflected on their enjoyment of the 'pampering' course and were developing skills in giving a gentle massage on the hands of their peers.

### **Leadership and management**

The headteacher has established herself quickly at the school and is supported very ably by senior leaders. Effective strategic planning during a period of change has ensured that a good focus on tackling priorities for improvement has been sustained. Previously good practice in teaching has been refreshed and a new focus to raise achievement through the development of subject coordinator roles is already beginning to have a positive impact. Increased use of assessment information and moderation of pupils' work is providing leaders with a better understanding of the progress being made by pupils. The curriculum provides a very wide variety of learning opportunities in a broad range of subjects and enrichment activities that promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development well. Leaders are currently reviewing the curriculum to ensure that personalised learning pathways enable all pupils to achieve their full academic potential over time.

Leadership at all levels is strengthened by highly committed staff teams who are focused sharply on promoting equality of opportunity and preparing pupils well for the next steps in their education. The school improvement plan is monitored regularly by leaders and the governing body to check progress in implementing key actions. Evaluation has focused sharply on the effect of changes on provision, but is less precise in measuring the impact of actions taken on pupils' learning and achievement. Rigorous procedures for safeguarding pupils meet requirements fully and are reviewed regularly.

Responses in the parental and carers' questionnaires reflect high levels of appreciation about the support provided by staff at school. Feedback from one parent reflects a commonly shared view about children's enjoyment of school, which was also witnessed by inspectors. A comment was that, on arrival at school each morning, her child is 'clapping his hands and laughing. He pulls me into class because he loves it'. The parent also appreciated the training she had received to support her child in aspects of his personal development.

A very small number of parents and carers expressed slight concerns about communication with school. However, inspectors found overwhelmingly that staff take every opportunity to extend links with families, including those who are hard to reach, in order to ensure a high quality of care and support for pupils' learning and personal development.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

### Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



24 February 2012

Dear Pupils

### **Inspection of Newlands, Manchester, M24 6JG**

Thank you for making us feel so welcome when we inspected your school. Many of you told us how much you enjoy school. We enjoyed talking to you about your work and finding out about what you learn in your lessons. I really liked joining you during your enrichment sessions, which gave you the chance to try exciting new things.

We found that Newlands is a good school. This is because:

- your teachers know you very well, they make sure that your work is interesting and helps you to make good progress in your learning
- your headteacher and other school leaders know exactly what to do to help your school improve
- your behaviour is outstanding! You know how important it is to follow your school rules to keep everyone safe and to help everyone learn. Well done!

To help you make even better progress we have asked your teachers to:

- check that your work gives you the right challenges to do your very best
- give you more information to help you think about what you can do well and how you can improve your work yourself
- check that all the work they do on your behalf enables you to achieve your very best.

We are sure you will want to help by keeping up your outstanding behaviour and trying your very best in your work.

Yours sincerely,

Sara Morrissey

Her Majesty's Inspector (on behalf of the inspection team)

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