

Newark Orchard School

Appletongate, Newark, NG24 1JR

Inspection dates 3–4 July 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The headteacher has a good team of senior leaders to help her improve the school and raise standards.
- Senior leaders make sure that everyone has the same chance to do as well as each other.
- Pupils make good and often better progress. Staff have a good system for checking this.
- Teaching is usually good and sometimes outstanding.
- The sixth form is good and pupils have lots of opportunities to practise important skills for the future and gain useful qualifications.
- Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Pupils enjoy their time at school, one saying, 'school is fun and we meet a lot of very nice people'.
- The school warmly welcomes pupils with a whole range of learning and behavioural needs.
- The school's records show the huge impact it can have on improving the behaviour of pupils with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. One parent said the change in her child had been 'amazing'.
- Pupils feel safe in school and almost every parent agrees. Bullying is rare and everyone is confident that if it occurs it is dealt with swiftly.
- Governors know and understand the school well. They work in partnership with senior leaders but also challenge them to do better.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not enough teaching is outstanding. A few teachers need the chance to learn from their more experienced colleagues to help improve their own teaching.
- Teachers in charge of some subjects need more time to improve how well it is taught across the school.
- A little more work needs to be done to find the best possible way to manage the very challenging behaviour of a few pupils.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 14 lessons, of which 11 were carried out with senior staff. There were also a number of brief visits to classrooms. They talked to pupils at breaks and lunchtimes, joined an assembly and looked at pupils' work.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, other school leaders, governors, groups of pupils and a number of parents. Inspectors spoke to a representative of the local authority and the school's educational psychologist by telephone.
- Not enough responses to the online parent's questionnaire (Parent View) were available, but inspectors took account of the school's own survey and were able to speak to several parents.
- Inspectors looked at a variety of school documents about pupils' progress, behaviour and attendance as well as information about staff performance.

Debra McCarthy, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Simon Mosley

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Newark Orchard is an all-age special school for pupils with statements of special educational needs for moderate, severe and profound and multiple learning difficulties. The largest group of need is pupils with autism spectrum disorder and there are an increasing number of pupils with mental health issues.
- The school also admits some pupils with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties who join at the beginning of Key Stage 3 from mainstream primary schools and have been unable to continue onto their local secondary schools.
- The school is a member of a soft federation of Newark special schools.
- The school is on two sites, approximately a mile and a half apart. One site is for pupils aged 3 to 14 and the other for pupils aged 14 to 19. There is also an alternative provision called The Bungalow, funded by the school, for older pupils with complex emotional needs.
- Most pupils are White British and speak English as their first language. They attend the school from Newark and surrounding local authorities. Some pupils are Travellers but mainly live on static sites.
- There are only a very small number of pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- A few pupils attend Chuterede Primary School for inclusion.
- An above average number of pupils are supported by the pupil premium, extra government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, are looked after by the local authority or have a parent in the armed forces.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the amount of outstanding teaching by:
 - giving new and less confident teachers the chance to spend time in more experienced teachers' lessons to find out what works best, so that they can use it in their own teaching.
 - providing additional training for teaching assistants, who work with pupils at the early stages of learning to read, so that that they can help them make even better progress.
 - making sure teachers recently put in charge of subjects, have all the help they need, to regularly check how well their subject is being taught across the school and can keep senior leaders completely up to date with what needs to be done next to make improvements.
- Make sure behaviour is always the best it can be by:
 - making further small changes to the organisation of the school and providing additional specific training for staff, so that alternatives are found to fixed term exclusions for the very small minority of pupils whose behaviour is particularly challenging, and whose learning difficulties mean they are unable to take responsibility for their own behaviour.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils make good progress from their starting points, across all key stages and subjects, particularly mathematics, information and communication technology and most aspects of science. There is no noticeable difference between any groups of pupils, such as boys and girls. Everyone is given the same chances and the school does not tolerate discrimination of any kind.
- Pupils eligible to funding from the pupil premium also make the same progress as everyone else. Some are helped to improve their reading through the purchase of a different reading scheme, while others have benefitted from horse riding or hydrotherapy to help their physical development. Pupils are also given extra support in lessons if they need it to make faster progress.
- Teachers carefully check how well pupils are doing, so they can help them catch up quickly if they fall behind. Staff use the same way of marking pupils' work to make sure pupils know what they need to do next. Teachers also work together to make sure what they say about pupils' progress is correct. Sharing what they find with other schools means they can be sure the information is accurate.
- Pupils know how well they are doing and what they have achieved. Sometimes their targets are written down for them on their desks, or they are asked to think about how well they have done at the end of a lesson. They are also encouraged to comment on each other's work and suggest what could be done to improve it.
- Special classes in both the 3-14 and 14-19 departments help pupils with social, emotional, behavioural and sometimes mental health issues to overcome their difficulties, so that they are able to make better progress socially and academically.
- The school uses different ways of helping pupils learn to communicate, such as signing, symbols and pictures. This enables pupils with autism spectrum and other communication disorders to make sense of their world and take a fuller part in lessons.
- The school offers a range of useful qualifications to meet the needs of all pupils. Pupils with moderate and other learning difficulties can follow courses such as GCSEs in Art, Expressive Arts and Drama. The addition of English and mathematics at GCSE is giving them further opportunities for relevant accreditation.
- Pupils with severe or profound and multiple learning difficulties are helped to learn through their senses or by using information and communications technology. For example, by experiencing mathematical concepts such as weight, through holding light and heavy objects, or using switches to answer teachers' questions.
- The very small number of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make a good start in school. They benefit from the best of both worlds with opportunities to learn alongside their Key Stage 1 and 2 classmates as well as activities designed especially for them.
- The reorganisation of the school into two departments has had a positive effect on achievement in sixth form. Changes to the way sixth form is taught means they make good progress in a range of practically based subjects that prepare them well for when they leave school.

- Pupils have lots of opportunities to practice reading, for example in Key stage 4 pupils followed recipe cards to make rock cakes and used flash cards to 'conduct' other pupils in a music lesson.
- Key Stage 3 pupils know how to use the library and that colour coded reading books show them that they are making progress through the reading schemes.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is usually good and sometimes outstanding. The headteacher regularly checks to make sure it is as good as it should be and works closely with senior leaders to improve teaching further. She has tackled past teachers' underperformance robustly.
- Pupils clearly enjoy their learning and there is lots of laughter and smiles in lessons. Teachers make pupils work hard though and they expect them to always try their best. They plan lessons that build on what pupils have learnt before and make sure each individual has work that is at the right level for them.
- Teachers show pupils what they have to do and then give them the opportunity to try things on their own, so they learn to work out problems for themselves. For example, in one KS3 mathematics lesson, two pupils were working together to make a 'number line'. Finding they did not have enough space, they put a chair at the end of the table so they could complete the task successfully.
- Very occasionally staff are too quick to help pupils, so they miss out on the chance to practice day to day skills, think things through properly or learn from trial and error. Sometimes whole class teaching goes on a little too long, so there is not enough time for pupils to have practical, hands-on experiences in small groups or individually.
- Questioning is mostly used well to help teachers check how much pupils have understood, or to make them think a bit more about what they are doing. In a Key Stage 2 science lesson the teaching assistant asked exactly the right questions to skilfully help a pupil decide whether the water or polystyrene was the heaviest.
- Finding the right way to teach pupils to read has been a priority for the school and the investment in training and resources means reading, as well as writing, is evident throughout the school day. Some teaching assistants, however, sometimes show a lack of confidence in helping pupils with their letters and sounds.
- Teachers in charge of different subjects gather information about how well their subject is taught. This is helping them find out, for example, what needs to be done to further improve the teaching of reading, writing and scientific enquiry, although there is still a little way to go. However, keeping a close eye on records about pupil's progress in their subject and using more detailed ways of checking pupil's reading, means improvements are already beginning to have an effect.
- The school provides well for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. Key Stage 4 and sixth form pupils expressed a range of opinions on a topical news item about using mobile 'phones, while in a whole school assembly pupils clearly grasped the importance of valuing each other, spontaneously applauding staff acting out a scene about saying thank you. The school 'Community Tree' stresses the importance of working together, while links with a school in Turkey gives pupils a view of the world beyond their own. Opportunities are widespread to learn about other cultures, both in school and from outside visitors.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The school is committed to providing the best possible opportunities for all pupils, including those with a range of social, emotional and mental health issues, a small number of whom initially show extremely challenging behaviour when they join the school. It has deservedly gained a good reputation for working successfully with these pupils and their families and has been seen to have a profound effect on improving these pupils' behaviour.
- The school keeps careful records about how quickly these improvements take place, so that they can make any necessary changes to the school building, adapt the approaches they use or provide additional training for staff. Although very occasionally records about specific incidents are not quite as thorough as they could be, data from them have helped senior leaders identify the need for extra training for staff, for example, in teaching pupils with autism spectrum disorder, the reorganisation of class groups and providing counselling for pupils with mental health issues.
- Occasionally, despite the school's often creative interventions, the very challenging behaviour of a few pupils with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties either does not improve fast enough or takes a 'dip'. Sometimes the school uses short, fixed term exclusions to provide a 'short, sharp shock' to make these pupils realise they need to make some changes and take responsibility for their behaviour. In the vast majority of cases this is immediately successful.
- On a very few occasions, either because of a change in pupils' circumstances, or because a pupil may be unable to understand its significance, fixed term exclusions have been less successful. In these cases the school is working closely with families and other agencies to find a more appropriate solution to improving their behaviour.
- Pupils say they feel safe in school and that behaviour has not interrupted their lessons for a long time. Staff deal with the very occasional disruption to lessons by one or two pupils swiftly and effectively. Bullying is rare and parents and pupils are confident that staff will deal with incidents quickly and effectively.
- Pupils generally behave very well around the school. They are punctual to lessons, where the behaviour of the vast majority of pupils is consistently good and often outstanding. Pupils are very polite and welcoming to visitors, introducing themselves to inspectors and offering to shake their hands.
- Pupils learn about healthy eating through cookery lessons and have regular opportunities for physical exercise, despite the limited facilities at the site for younger pupils. They understand about different sorts of bullying, including cyber bullying and how to be careful on the internet. There are very thorough procedures in school to make sure staff know what to do to keep pupils safe and this leads to a positive, nurturing atmosphere.
- Pupils are caring and supportive of each other, for example, one pupil in cookery helped another to pour milk into a mixing bowl when he was struggling. They have ample opportunities to work together in teams, such as cooking produce to raise money in The Bungalow's 'Fun Day'.
- The school checks pupils' attendance very carefully and has put successful measures in place to decrease absenteeism. For example, pupils have responded very positively to the range of certificates for good attendance and the ultimate goal of a gold certificate. The school has also

found creative solutions to increasing the attendance of pupils with medical problems by buying in additional physiotherapy to help keep pupils well.

The leadership and management are good

- The school has undergone some significant staffing changes in the last year, but the headteacher has used this as an opportunity to gather around her an experienced, skilled and effective team of senior leaders, some of whom are established staff members.
- This mix of the old and the new has combined experience and innovation to bring staff together in a buzz of excitement about the future of the school. The impact of this is already beginning to be seen in the increased confidence expressed by the vast majority of staff. There is still more work to do in fully developing the role of some school leaders.
- In spite of the huge disappointment that there would be no funding to build a new school, everyone tries their hardest to make the best of the limited facilities they have. As one parent said 'it's about the staff, not the building'. Parents feel their views are listened to and acted upon, that the headteacher and staff are approachable and prepared to go 'above and beyond' to do what is needed.
- Effective support from the local authority has helped the school be more reflective about its day to day practice and aims for the future. The way it sees itself is accurate and this helps senior leaders make the right plans for the future.
- The school promotes equal opportunities well, welcoming some of the authority's most challenging pupils. Each individual is helped to do as well as the next, including those pupils eligible to pupil premium funding. There is a whole school commitment to keeping a careful check on pupils' progress. The reorganisation of the school into two departments and the greater range of qualifications available for older pupils have significantly improved outcomes for the sixth form.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength of the school. Photographs and displays of pupils' work radiate a sense of pride in their community, shared by pupils and staff. The good curriculum gives pupils of all ages a range of interesting experiences in school as well as through links with visiting artists. Useful work experience and other work related learning adds to this. Pupils also benefit from an array of opportunities to develop their literacy, communication and mathematical skills in practical situations.
- Safeguarding requirements are met and the school makes every effort to keep pupils safe and well, working effectively in partnership with other agencies.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors know the school well through an established system of visits. Together with information they receive from senior leaders, this means they can effectively challenge the headteacher about pupils' progress, the quality of teaching and the performance of staff related to their pay. They have a good grasp of the school's finances and know that pupils eligible for the pupil premium make the same progress as their peers. They know what the school is doing to reward good teaching and how it tackles any underperformance.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	130996
Local authority	Nottinghamshire
Inspection number	402440

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	87
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	26
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Lesley Booth
Headteacher	Margot Tyers
Date of previous school inspection	4 November 2009
Telephone number	01636 682255
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