

New Silksworth Academy Infant

Blind Lane, New Silksworth, Sunderland, Tyne and Wear SR3 1AS

Inspection dates

11–12 June 2019

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
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher's determination and passion have secured a good quality of education for pupils. She is ably supported by capable and ambitious leaders who know what still needs to be done.
- The academy trust works closely with leaders and provides good support. Training and professional development have helped leaders and teachers to develop their expertise.
- Progress of pupils, including those who are disadvantaged and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), is good. Pupils want to do their best and take pride in their work.
- Pupils behave well both in the classroom and on the playground. They feel safe and secure, confident that staff will deal with any difficulties which arise. Bullying is exceptionally rare and dealt with promptly.
- Good teaching is characterised by effective questioning and clear explanations based on thorough subject knowledge in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The curriculum supports pupils to understand the school's values very well. It contributes effectively to pupils' social, moral, cultural and spiritual development. Physical education (PE) and sporting opportunities are varied and popular.
- Good partnerships with parents and carers are valued. Parents appreciate the increasing opportunities they have to participate in school life and aid their children's education.
- Governors' good knowledge of the school and community ensures that they provide suitable support and challenge. However, they do not check the impact of the school's actions to meet its equalities duty.
- Children settle quickly and progress well in the early years. Good teaching ensures that increasing proportions reach and exceed expectations for their age. Occasionally, children's independence and creativity are limited.
- At times, pupils are not consistently challenged or stretched to reach their capabilities.
- A few older pupils still struggle to read. They do not read frequently enough to help them to catch up.
- Teachers' planning in science, history and geography does not consistently build on what has already been taught. Pupils therefore have some gaps in their understanding.
- Some subject leaders are still developing their expertise, so their evaluation of the curriculum is not incisive enough.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve teaching so it is consistently good or better by:
 - setting learning tasks that routinely provide challenge to all pupils
 - planning the teaching sequence more precisely in science, history and geography
 - providing older pupils who are weak readers with more frequent opportunities to practise and develop their reading skills.
- Continue to strengthen leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that governors check that the school fully meets its equalities duty
 - extending the expertise of some subject leaders so that they exert greater influence on the quality of teaching and learning.
- Develop children's independence and creativity further in the early years by increasing opportunities for them to work out problems and select resources for themselves.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher leads with determination and clarity. She has a passionate desire to provide the best possible education for pupils and create a school of which the community is proud. All staff are united in this aim and continually seek to put children and their families at the heart of what they do. For example, parents and pupils were involved in developing the school's values. The school is a happy place to be. Pupils and staff exude enthusiasm.
- Parents who spoke with inspectors and who responded to the online questionnaire have full confidence in the school's leadership team. Parents value the regular opportunities to visit the school. Events such as 'Learn with me' and phonics workshops help parents to feel more confident to help their children.
- The academy trust has been instrumental in supporting leaders to realise their ambition for the school. Leaders are extremely appreciative of the partnership they have with the trust. It has brokered professional development which has raised the skills of both teachers and leaders. New leaders, in particular, say that the training provided has been invaluable. Monthly meetings have ensured that the academy trust maintains a close oversight and have provided leaders with timely support when they have requested it.
- Leaders have an incisive and accurate knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They make regular checks on the quality of teaching and provide clear guidance which helps teachers to improve. Systems in place to monitor pupils' progress are thorough. Consequently, prompt action is taken when pupils are in danger of falling behind.
- The special educational needs coordinator is very experienced and uses her knowledge to good effect so that additional funding for these pupils is used well. Support for pupils is carefully targeted. Staff are enabled to gain the right expertise so they provide appropriate assistance and guidance to pupils.
- Additional funding for disadvantaged pupils is also effectively targeted. The school's pupil premium champion ensures that pupils are given the right support to overcome any barriers they may face. She knows which areas of support still need further development and plans are in place to address them.
- The school's values are woven successfully through the curriculum. Pupils are suitably prepared for life in modern Britain. For example, they learn about democracy through voting for school councillors and from a visit from the local Member of Parliament. Pupils' social, moral, cultural and spiritual development is good. Funding to enhance sporting opportunities is well used. There are now more after-school clubs and a better range of equipment to use, which increases pupils' activity throughout the day.
- The curriculum is designed so that pupils build up their knowledge progressively. However, in science, history and geography, it is not detailed enough. Pupils have gaps in their knowledge and sometimes learning does not build on what is already known. Pupils are confused about time in history and, in science, some of their knowledge lacks depth.

- There are plans in place to develop subject leadership further. At present, some subject leaders do not have a detailed knowledge of strengths and weaknesses in their subject.

Governance of the school

- Governors share the same ambition and enthusiasm for excellence that leaders do. Governors are proud of the school but not complacent and know that more needs to be done.
- Careful recruitment means that governors have the right range of skills and knowledge to provide support and challenge to leaders. They have effective systems in place to review the school's work, both formally and informally. For example, the chair of the governing body regularly takes tea with the headteacher and a group of pupils, which provides him with useful insights about the effectiveness of the school.
- Governors' comprehensive understanding of the school means that they deploy funds successfully and have a detailed plan for future developments. They have a strong partnership with the academy trust which enhances their effectiveness.
- Governors do not check the school's plans to ensure that they meet their equalities duties, so their knowledge of this aspect of the school's work is not strong.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders, including governors, ensure that safeguarding pupils is a priority. They have created a safe and open culture where the welfare of pupils and their families is at the heart of what they do.
- Thorough systems to check pupils' welfare are in place. Leaders regularly scrutinise records to ensure that no concern is overlooked. Staff are suitably trained and know how to report any concerns they have.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teaching is good and improving as a result of leaders' relentless focus and teachers' keenness to develop their skills.
- Relationships between pupils and adults are good. Adults know pupils well and typically provide work in reading, writing and mathematics which is suitably challenging. Pupils read books at an appropriate level of difficulty or try to solve problems which challenge them to apply the mathematical skills they have.
- Questioning is used well to check pupils' understanding and to make them think more deeply. For example, in a phonics lesson, pupils were asked to consider the different ways the same group of letters may be pronounced.
- Teachers' explanations are clear. They demonstrate new learning well and help pupils to build on what they already know and understand. Pupils' knowledge of spelling was enhanced because the teacher skilfully explained the different letter patterns to them.
- Adults have good subject knowledge which is used effectively to ensure that teaching

is accurate. In a mathematics lesson, pupils deepened their knowledge of weight as a result of the teacher's thoughtful planning, while in PE, pupils gained better skills in running as a result of clear explanations by the sports coach.

- Expectations are high and pupils respond accordingly. They are keen to learn and participate in lessons. Work in all subjects is presented carefully. Pupils apply their writing and mathematics skills in other subjects, such as science and history, to a high standard.
- Classroom assistants provide good support to pupils who need it. They give appropriate guidance and support to ensure that pupils remain focused. They reinforce teachers' explanations to ensure that pupils fully understand their learning.
- Occasionally, pupils are not challenged sufficiently to think deeply because questioning is not probing enough. Sometimes, pupils are given tasks which do not demand enough of them. On these occasions, pupils are not fully stretched.
- Teachers' planning in science, history and geography is not consistently effective. Where it is weaker, there is not a clear sequence of learning which builds on what pupils already know. For example, older pupils' knowledge of the different parts of a plant is similar to that of younger pupils. In history, pupils know why the Gunpowder Plot was important but are unclear about how long ago it occurred.
- Pupils with SEND make good progress in reading. Most read more frequently than their peers and this helps them to practise what they have been taught. However, a few older pupils still struggle to read with confidence because they have not had enough practice to do so.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are polite and courteous. They are extremely welcoming and friendly. They willingly hold open doors and typically pass adults in the corridor with a smile and a greeting.
- The school's work to ensure that pupils have strong self-belief and high aspirations are central to the curriculum. For instance, they visit the local university to raise pupils' awareness of higher education.
- Pupils who exemplify the school's values are recognised and celebrated in weekly assemblies. Pupils are considerate towards each other. They willingly help each other in class if they are stuck. Their collaboration is praised as one of the school's values.
- Pupils act safely inside and outside the classroom. They move around school appropriately and calmly, managing stairs and long corridors well. Outside, they are well supervised to use equipment sensibly and safely. Pupils have a good understanding of how to stay safe. For example, they know about how to stay safe online.
- The school works well with a range of different agencies and partners to enhance pupils' welfare and well-being. A visit from a lifeguard helped to develop pupils'

knowledge of water safety and pupils also enjoy regular yoga lessons to help them relax and concentrate.

- Pupils are encouraged to be active and healthy. The sports coach runs a range of different lunchtime and playtime activities in which pupils participate.
- The breakfast and after-school clubs provide a calm and safe space at the beginning and end of the school day.
- Pupils typically demonstrate tolerance to each other and have an age-appropriate understanding of why different forms of name-calling are wrong. They understand why it is important to help people who are disabled but demonstrate less understanding of other aspects of diversity.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are diligent and keen to work. They respect adults in school and behave well, whether they are taught by their class teacher or someone less well known to them. Lessons are rarely disrupted and proceed unhindered.
- Pupils behave well at lunchtimes and playtimes. The calm atmosphere is maintained throughout the day.
- Pupils confirm that behaviour is good. This is endorsed by staff and parents. School records indicate that poor behaviour is extremely rare and dealt with appropriately.
- Pupils understand what bullying is and what they should do if it occurs. They have confidence in adults in school to help them if they feel unsafe.
- Leaders have worked ceaselessly to improve attendance and reduce instances of persistent absence. The social inclusion officer works very effectively with families to help them overcome any difficulties which prevent their children attending school more regularly. As a result of the work undertaken by leaders, attendance has increased and persistent absence has declined.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Improvements to teaching and prompt action to ensure that pupils do not fall behind have resulted in better pupils' progress and rising standards. Evidence in pupils' workbooks and the school's performance information demonstrate that pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Standards reached in PE are good, as a result of the expert coaching that pupils receive. Social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is strong.
- In 2018, increasing proportions reached the expected standard at the end of Year 2 in reading, writing and mathematics compared to their starting points at the beginning of Year 1. In reading and mathematics, standards were above the national averages and were similar to the national average in writing.
- Similar proportions of the current group of children in Year 2 are on track to reach the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics this year. Actions taken have successfully closed the gap in attainment between boys and girls so both groups are

performing equally well.

- Proportions reaching the higher standard in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2 increased in 2018 compared to the previous year. However, they were still below average in reading and mathematics. A larger proportion are on track to reach the higher standard this year in both subjects.
- Strong teaching resulted in a proportion similar to the national average attaining the expected standard in phonics in 2018. Those who did not reach that standard have made good gains. Consequently, nearly all pupils leave the school well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- Leaders use funding for disadvantaged pupils to target appropriate support. This ensures that they progress well and achieve as well as other pupils. More disadvantaged pupils are now on track to attain the higher standard in reading, writing and mathematics than in previous years.
- The progress of pupils with SEND is good as a result of the effective support they receive.
- Progress in science, history and geography is not consistently good because teachers' planning does not always build on what has already been learned.

Early years provision

Good

- The early years is well led. Detailed monitoring and scrutiny of performance information is used to identify strengths and areas for further development within each class and for each child. As a result, an above average proportion of children are suitably prepared for the demands of the Year 1 curriculum.
- Provision for the youngest children, who are two years old, is effective. The room is calm and inviting. Children can use a range of suitable resources which they explore with their senses, such as rolling and squashing dough or painting their hands and making prints. Adults help new starters to feel safe and secure through gentle reassurance and encouragement. Children quickly become confident and decide for themselves what they want to play with. Adults act as good role models, introducing children to new vocabulary and language as they play.
- Older children in the Nursery and those in the Reception classes play and cooperate well together. They share ideas as they play. They enjoy developing stories in the role play areas, supported by adults who prompt children to think about ways to develop the story further.
- Relationships between adults and children are good and trusting. Children feel confident and secure. They behave well.
- The teaching of phonics and mathematics is effective. Activities are well matched to children's capabilities and adults provide appropriate guidance, explaining, demonstrating and questioning, so children deepen their understanding.
- Adults successfully introduce new vocabulary to children. For example, Nursery children were outdoors experimenting with water and the adult asked them why she should be wearing a coat. This helped children think about the properties of water and prompted them to use vocabulary such as 'waterproof'.

- Work with parents is valued and adults ensure that parents are kept well informed about what children are doing. They are invited to join in 'Learn with me' sessions. Adults use social media to keep parents up to date with what has been happening.
- Sometimes, adults restrict opportunities for children to be independent or to challenge them to think for themselves. For example, they tell children what to do rather than asking them to work it out for themselves. On other occasions, children are unable to be as creative as they are capable of because adults restrict the availability of resources and materials.

School details

Unique reference number	143414
Local authority	Sunderland
Inspection number	10087493

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	2 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	219
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Phil Tye
Headteacher	Emma Robins
Telephone number	01915 000015
Website	www.newsilksworthacademy.co.uk
Email address	office@newsilksworthacademy.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Extol Academy Trust and became an academy in September 2016.
- It shares the same headteacher as New Silksworth Academy Junior. A number of staff have leadership responsibilities, including subject leadership, that are carried across both schools.
- The school is smaller than the average-sized school.
- The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The school has a larger proportion of disadvantaged pupils than is found nationally.
- The proportion of pupils identified with SEND is slightly lower than the national average.
- The school offers part-time places for two-year-olds. Places in the Nursery class are either part time or full time. Children in the Reception classes attend full time.

- The school runs before- and after-school clubs.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed a range of teaching and learning in parts of lessons in each class. The majority of the observations were undertaken jointly with the headteacher or deputy headteacher.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils about learning and school life, both individually and in groups.
- Inspectors listened to pupils reading. They reviewed pupils' work in lessons and analysed samples of work in their books. A group of pupils discussed the work they had done in their workbooks.
- Discussions were held with members of the local governing body, the chief executive officer of Extol Academies Trust and members of staff. A telephone conversation took place with the school's improvement adviser.
- Inspectors looked at the school's review of its own performance, its improvement plan and a number of key school policies. They considered a range of documentation in relation to child protection, safeguarding, behaviour and attendance.
- Informal discussions were held with parents. The 11 responses to the online questionnaire for parents, Parent View, were considered.
- There were 26 staff questionnaires completed and considered by inspectors.

Inspection team

Susan Waugh, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Stephen Fallon

Ofsted Inspector

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Manchester
M1 2WD

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