

Newark Orchard School

Appletongate, Newark, Nottinghamshire NG24 1JR

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	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Good
16 to 19 study programmes	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The school has improved considerably since the previous inspection. It is now providing a good quality of education for its pupils.
- The headteacher and the deputy headteachers have high aspirations and expectations for the school. These are shared by staff and pupils.
- The governing body supports and challenges leaders highly effectively. Governors are determined to ensure that the school continues to improve.
- Leaders' sharp analysis of strengths and weaknesses, and the action taken, are resulting in continuous improvement.
- Safeguarding is central to what the school does. Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe in and outside school, and online.
- Relationships between staff and pupils are very good, and promote excellent behaviour and attitudes to learning.
- The teaching of reading, writing and mathematics is good. Pupils practise their literacy and numeracy skills in different subjects.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced. It is designed to motivate and engage pupils. As a result, pupils engage enthusiastically in a range of activities, including trips out and residential activities.
- The 16 to 19 provision in the school is consistently well led and prepares learners and their families for life beyond Newark Orchard.
- Teaching assistants provide very good support and feedback to the pupils with whom they work. They consistently model positive attitudes to learning. Pupils respond by valuing their work and trying their best.
- Teaching is good. Teachers know pupils well and plan lessons which meet the wide range of individual needs. However, not all teachers consistently ensure that pupils are challenged with meaningful activities, especially towards the end of a lesson.
- Leadership across the school at all levels has developed well. However, not all information gathered is, as yet, systematically used to inform whole-school improvement.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- To continue the drive to improve the quality of education and raise standards, leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:
 - all leaders have a clear understanding of strengths and weaknesses within their responsibility areas
 - all information gathered by leaders is used effectively to feed into school improvement decision-making
 - teachers consistently plan effectively to maximise learning for all pupils.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Parents, carers, pupils and staff agree the school has improved greatly since the previous inspection. Parents are confident that the academic and health needs of their children are met very well during each school day.
- Leaders have implemented an effective plan of action to address weaknesses in provision. The impact of this work is evident across the school. Leaders and governors are clear the provision must reflect the highest expectations for each child, and their shared vision, 'Individual Growth for Individual People', should be at the heart of everything they do.
- The school has a welcoming and caring ethos. Pupils feel safe and are eager to learn. They take a pride in their work and are keen to share their achievements with staff and visitors.
- Underpinning the school's approach, there is a strong commitment to the welfare of each pupil and their family, with the focus on enabling pupils to overcome the difficulties they face and prepare them for a successful future. Pupils and staff adopt a 'can do' approach to each task they undertake.
- The headteacher, the deputy headteachers and the governing body have developed detailed action plans which enable them to clearly define their priorities and build consistently on improvements. As a result, leaders and governors have a clearer understanding of what the school needs to do to improve further.
- Developments at middle leadership level mean these members of staff identify the strengths in their subjects. While middle leaders now make checks on the quality of teaching and learning, this is at an early stage, which means they are not as well placed to fully contribute to school improvement.
- Leaders regularly review teaching and use the information gained to plan an effective programme of staff development. This helps to equip staff with the skills they need to enable pupils to make good progress.
- Leaders have ensured that improvements in reading and writing have taken place. They have provided all staff with the appropriate training to enable this. Pupils practise their literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum and are proud of their efforts. Their books reflect good progress and evidence shows they respond well to the regular feedback staff provide.
- In developing the curriculum, leaders have carefully considered the needs and interests of the pupils. They have placed pupils' engagement in learning as a high priority. All pupils, including the most able, and those who have been out of school for a considerable period before joining Newark Orchard, engage well in learning.
- Strong partnerships between the school, parents and external agencies are highly effective in supporting pupils and their families. Staff know the needs of the pupils well and ensure that provision is bespoke and flexible to their needs. Support provided for pupils' health, including their mental health, and their communication needs, is carefully checked for its impact. Staff have undertaken additional training to enable

support to take place in school as far as possible and minimise time taken out of school to attend appointments. The community paediatrician holds a weekly clinic in school for this purpose.

- Personal, social and health education is seen as a very important part of the support for pupils' personal and social development. Pupils are supported to become as independent as possible and learn key life skills throughout their time at the school. They are well prepared for life after Newark Orchard when they leave the school.
- Leaders ensure that pupils are prepared for life in modern Britain. They support pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through assemblies, work in class and visits out.
- Leaders check very carefully on how additional funding is used to help pupils to achieve on average as well as other pupils of their age. The physical education and sport funding is used well to ensure that pupils have access to a wide range of activities, such as after-school and lunchtime clubs, cricket competitions and swimming. The pupil premium is allocated effectively to ensure that appropriate strategies are used to support disadvantaged pupils.

Governance of the school

- The governing body is highly effective. Governors bring a range of experience and use their expertise well to support school development. For example, a governor recently led the school's 'Visionary' training day. The impact of governors' work is seen in the evident improvement in the quality of education the school provides.
- Governors are challenging and constructive in the way they hold leaders to account. They make regular focused visits to the school linked to their identified sections of the school development plan. They know the school well and understand the priorities, strengths and weaknesses.
- Governors ensure that pupils' welfare and safety are a high priority.
- The governing body works closely with school leaders and the local authority to monitor the impact of policy and financial decisions, for example in the use of additional funding for disadvantaged pupils.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Staff fully understand that everyone is responsible for creating a culture of safety. They are very aware of the issues, such as sexting, pupils may face outside school. They work successfully to enable pupils to learn how to take responsibility for their own safety, and deal with the challenges they may face, including when online.
- The school's safeguarding policy reflects the government's latest guidance. The school website provides information for staff and parents, including information on how to report any safeguarding concerns.
- Regular training on safeguarding and child protection procedures keeps staff up to date. Staff know what should raise their concerns and what to do if they are worried

about any pupils' safety and well-being. The recent move to an online reporting system has enabled staff to ensure whole-school cohesion.

- Safeguarding records are fit for purpose. Sensitive information is kept secure. Staff who work closely with families, and those who provide medical attention, work closely and effectively with senior staff to ensure that pupils and their families are well supported. The local police officer is a regular and welcome visitor.
- Leaders and governors ensure that the required pre-employment checks are carried out. Health and safety checks and risk assessments ensure that pupils are kept safe in school and when on visits out of school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teaching enables pupils to make substantial progress, both academically and personally. Mostly teachers have high expectations of what all pupils can achieve. Pupils show excellent attitudes in class, enjoy learning and are motivated to do their best.
- Teachers and their assistants are skilful in adapting the work they ask pupils to do to make sure all pupils are able to access learning. Their strong understanding of the pupils' individual needs means any barriers are overcome.
- Teachers' careful planning ensures that teaching effectively meets pupils' needs. Teachers have a sound knowledge of their subjects and are skilled in making it relevant and interesting to their pupils.
- Despite the overall strengths in the way teachers plan and adapt teaching to meet pupils' needs, sometimes valuable learning time is lost, especially towards the end of lessons. For example, inspectors observed pupils who had completed their work and were engaged in tasks which did not sufficiently challenge them or lead to progress in learning.
- Teachers and teaching assistants are highly skilled in developing learning for each pupil based on individual finely tuned targets. They ask pupils challenging questions, encourage, probe, and prompt, encouraging pupils to think for themselves.
- Teachers place a high priority on communication and ensure that they and their assistants support pupils' learning through use of signing, symbols and a wide range of teaching aids. Over time, all pupils learn to express themselves and communicate with each other and adults.
- Teachers and their assistants provide pupils with high-quality verbal and written feedback. Across the school, pupils' books consistently reflect feedback based on their individual targets and provide the next steps in learning. Pupils understand the steps they are taking to improve. They are proud to show their work. Upper-school pupils have a clear understanding of what they have achieved and the next steps to take in order to achieve their accreditation.
- The teaching of reading has been a major focus in the school and pupils are encouraged to read regularly. They enjoy reading activities and sharing their book with an adult. In English, pupils use their writing skills in different contexts, for example in creating stories and poems. They are encouraged to extend their writing and are

supported to write independently, for example when assessing their own work.

- In mathematics, regular practice helps pupils develop confidence in using basic numeracy skills. In a key stage 1 lesson, pupils enthusiastically counted back from five as they sang 'five sizzling sausages frying in the pan'. They recognised the written number and matched it to the number of sausages. Older pupils used their mathematical skills when considering left and right turns.
- Teachers use every opportunity for pupils to use their literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum. For example, when cooking, pupils apply their skills when considering 'how much' they need to use.
- Teachers provide parents with accurate information about how well their child is doing. The school is piloting an online app which will allow parents regularly to see photographs of their children's work, with an opportunity to make comments. Some parents told inspectors that this enables them to practise the skills learned when at home with their child.
- Teachers take every opportunity to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding of the wider world and the society in which they live. Visits to places of interest and the choice of topics all help to raise pupils' aspirations and build pupils' confidence in their ability to function successfully in the adult world.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding. Pupils are very proud of their school; they demonstrate a very positive attitude and are keen to engage in learning.
- Very good relationships between adults and pupils contribute strongly to this aspect of the school's work. Adults have consistently high expectations and pupils respond very well. Despite the many difficulties pupils face, they put their trust in the adults who work with them and they keep on trying. Small steps of success are celebrated by all.
- Playtimes are well organised, providing a range of activities which are supported by staff. Pupils play well together and there are rarely incidents of poor behaviour.
- Bullying is rare, and pupils know what to do if they feel someone is bullying them or being unkind. They are confident staff would 'sort it out'. Pupils also have a good understanding of aspects such as e-safety and how to keep themselves safe while online.
- Effective training is provided to help pupils travel independently to and from school. This also means pupils are able to meet friends at the weekends or go to the local gym.
- Assemblies and lessons support pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. They also promote effectively the very strong caring ethos of the school. The school provides a range of extra-curricular activities, including residential visits, lunchtime and after-school clubs. Pupils enjoy their lessons and their learning is reinforced by related educational visits.

- Attendance is good. Attendance policies and procedures are effectively managed. Leaders work very closely with families and external agencies to improve attendance. Many pupils improve their attendance considerably after joining the school.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Governors and leaders have created a very positive and welcoming atmosphere across the school. Pupils and parents describe the school as a 'family'. Pupils and staff are keen to make everyone feel involved and valued. Pupils show respect for others and comment on the excellent behaviour across the school.
- The school's individual approach to working with pupils helps them to identify what might trigger difficulties. Staff support pupils well to manage their anxieties and emotions and to take increasingly more responsibility for their own behaviour. If a pupil is having a difficult day, sensitive procedures ensure that their behaviour does not disrupt the learning of others.
- Pupils understand the school's rewards and consequences system, which is linked to both acceptable and inappropriate behaviour. If necessary, internal exclusion with an adult is used to support a pupil, and help them understand what they need to do to move on. Fixed-term exclusions are used rarely.
- Leaders ensure that the behaviour policy is consistently applied, meaning pupils know exactly what is expected of them. They learn how to behave in different situations and are well prepared for life after Newark Orchard.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Across the school, pupils of all ages and different needs are making good progress.
- Disadvantaged pupils, including those who are looked after, make the same strong progress as other pupils in English and mathematics.
- Progress for the majority of pupils is good or better across the curriculum. This is due to the commitment and effort of leaders and staff in ensuring that expectations and aspirations for what pupils can achieve are consistently high.
- The youngest pupils are making rapid progress in acquiring very relevant skills. They learn well early communication, English and mathematical skills. Staff are skilful in developing early independence skills.
- All pupils, including those unable to communicate, and those who have more recently joined the school, develop ways of making themselves understood through signing, symbols and a range of communication aids tailored to their needs by staff.
- The majority of the most able pupils make good progress over time in developing their reading and writing skills.
- Effective transitions mean that pupils are well prepared when they join the school and for their next steps, especially as they move from the lower to upper phase in the school.

- In key stage 4, pupils have opportunities to take recognised qualifications, such as functional skills in English and mathematics, and GCSE courses where they show an aptitude for the subject. Many pupils achieve at the least entry level on the different courses. They also achieve vocational qualifications in a range of subjects, for example, food and design.

16 to 19 study programmes

Good

- This provision is well led. Individual study programmes are relevant to students' needs and interests. There is a strong focus for students to develop social, communication and independence skills to support their future lives.
- Staff have high expectations for their students. A range of accreditation through vocational courses is offered. Students also receive certification in literacy and numeracy. The most able students study for GCSE subjects.
- Teaching, learning and assessment are of good quality. Teaching staff create interesting and purposeful activities for students to develop their mathematical and English skills throughout their study programmes.
- Students make consistently good progress from their starting points in a range of areas, including basic skills, independence and personal development. Regular checks on how well students progress towards the targets set in their education, health and care plan (EHCP) show most students progress well and move onto higher targets.
- The provision very well promotes students' personal development and welfare. This is evident in their excellent behaviour, positive attitudes to learning and cheerful manner. Students engage regularly in physical health and fitness lessons. They learn safety procedures, including when in the kitchen and when using specialist tools in the workshop.
- Students appreciate the interesting and meaningful experiences the school provides. They learn about independent living, managing money and travelling on public transport. They organise charity events involving the school community, such as the recent car wash.
- All students take part in work experience, which is well matched to their individual interests and abilities.
- Most pupils in key stage 4 continue to Year 12 and then into Year 13. The vast majority of students successfully complete their courses.
- Students show care and consideration to one another and to all staff. They say they feel safe at school and learn how to manage their feelings and behaviour. They further develop their understanding of how to stay safe when online and through the travel training, when they are out in the community. They develop increasing independence and confidence.
- Careers advice is available from an external provider and school staff. Students receive impartial advice about post-school placements and how to prepare for interviews. Visits to local colleges are organised. Students, along with their families, are able to make realistic and ambitious plans for their future lives. All students who left the school at the end of the 2018 school year secured a placement at college.

School details

Unique reference number	130996
Local authority	Nottinghamshire County Council
Inspection number	10087369

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

Type of school	All-through special school
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	3 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	111
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	21
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Laura Redfern
Headteacher	Margot Tyers
Telephone number	01636 682 255
Website	www.newarkorchard.notts.sch.uk
Email address	office@newarkorchard.notts.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	17–18 January 2017

Information about this school

- Newark Orchard is an all-age special school for pupils with moderate, severe and profound learning difficulties, multi-sensory impairment and challenging behaviour associated with learning difficulties. All pupils attending the school have an education, health and care plan.
- The school operates on two sites approximately a mile and a half apart. The lower-school site is for pupils aged three to 14 and the upper-school site is for pupils aged 14 to 19. A new school building adjacent to the upper-school site is underway and due to be completed by May 2020, to cater for all staff and pupils on the one site.
- A large proportion of pupils who join the school, especially at the beginning of key

stage 3, have experienced long periods of absence from school prior to attending Newark Orchard.

- There are currently only two children in the early years. As a result, this key stage has not been reported on separately.
- Approximately 43% of pupils are disadvantaged pupils. This is well above average. There is a number of children looked after.
- The majority of pupils are White British and speak English as their first language.
- The school does not use alternative provision.
- The school works with schools within both the Newark and Nottinghamshire schools partnerships.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed a range of lessons or part lessons across the whole school. All observations were undertaken jointly with members of the leadership team.
- Meetings were held with governors, the school nurse, school leaders and staff. The lead inspector spoke on the telephone to the school effectiveness adviser from the local authority.
- Inspectors spoke with parents at the start and end of the school day. They considered parents' opinions through the 17 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and the seven free-text responses. They also took account of the seven responses to Ofsted's online staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors talked with pupils both formally and informally. They looked at pupils' work and the school's records of their progress. There were no responses to the pupils' online questionnaire.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documents, including the school's plan for improvement, school self-evaluation, reports from external reviews of provision, the most recent information on the achievement and progress of pupils, information relating to the health, safety and safeguarding of pupils, the most recent data relating to the attendance of pupils and minutes of the governing body meetings.
- Inspectors considered the wide range and quality of information provided on the school website.
- The school's safeguarding policies, practice and procedures were scrutinised by inspectors.

Inspection team

Lynda Morgan, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

John Edwards

Ofsted Inspector

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