

Inspection of an outstanding school: Newbridge School

161 Gresham Drive, Romford, Essex RM6 4TR

Inspection dates:

6–7 November 2019

Outcome

Newbridge School continues to be an outstanding school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy and safe at Newbridge School. Each morning, adults greet pupils off the buses with a warm welcome and a smile. This familiar routine helps pupils settle and be ready for learning.

Leaders have high expectations of pupils' learning and of everyone working together to achieve this. They refuse to see pupils' learning, social or physical needs as a barrier to achievement. They have strong partnerships with nurses, therapists and social workers. Parents and carers appreciate this positive approach. One parent wrote, 'I really feel with Newbridge we found a place where we belong.'

Teachers do everything they can to help pupils to learn, enjoy school and become more independent. They adjust equipment and activities to meet each pupil's needs. All adults excel at helping pupils to communicate. They stop at nothing to find ways of helping pupils to express their likes and dislikes. They help pupils to make friends and enjoy time together. Bullying very rarely happens. If it does, teachers deal with it immediately.

Pupils enjoy lessons in swimming, physical education (PE), art and cooking. Older pupils love their job in the weekly tuck shop, serving and taking the money. Pupils behave impeccably. They try hard with their work and are nearly always calm. If they are not, it is usually because there is something exciting going on.

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

Leaders and their staff make sure that pupils achieve very well. They help pupils meet their targets through a broad and stimulating range of lessons. All teachers plan activities for each pupil according to their individual needs. They make precise and detailed assessments of pupils' achievements. This helps to ensure that activities build on what has been previously learned. Teachers give pupils plenty of time to practise new skills without creating a sense of urgency. All staff use praise wisely and with sensitivity. This builds pupils' confidence and motivates them to learn.

Teachers use topics to enrich learning and make it memorable. We saw pupils in the lower school listening to the story of 'Barry the Fish with Fingers' as part of their topic 'Under the Sea'. Staff helped pupils remember special things about Barry using props and pictures. Pupils showed sheer delight using different modes of communication.

We saw pupils in the upper school learning about clothes that keep us warm in winter. They used pictures, communication books and real items of clothing to show that they recognise hats, scarves and jackets. In another class, pupils listened to disco music as they looked at photographs of different pop stars. They used different forms of communication to show that they recognised the pop star whose photograph was being displayed. We visited the school tuck shop. Older pupils thoroughly enjoy working in the tuck shop. Younger pupils successfully communicated their choices to those working in the shop. Experiences like this help pupils to gain skills that will be needed in adulthood.

Communication, language and literacy education are very well planned. Right from the start, teachers help pupils to find the best form of communication for them so that they can fully take part in lessons. One parent wrote, 'Since attending, he gained a voice, something he never had.'

Teachers find out which pupils are ready for more formal teaching about letters and sounds. They include phonics teaching in pupils' plans which, for some, take place in a mainstream school. Pupils in the early years showed interest in stories and in different objects using eye gaze or by reaching to touch. Pupils in the upper school used phonics to say the initial sounds of words. All pupils have regular reading time to develop their listening skills and enjoyment of books and stories.

Teachers plan interesting PE lessons to help pupils build strength and stamina. We saw pupils swimming, tackling an assault course and taking a sensory walk around the school. These activities become more physically demanding as pupils become stronger. We heard about the weekly walks in a local forest which help older pupils learn about and enjoy the outdoors and improve their fitness.

Teachers provide pupils with experiences that enrich their lives beyond the classroom. Pupils enjoy visits to local shops, a pizzeria, the library and even to a theme park. The whole school community celebrates cultural events such as religious festivals. We heard about a recent assembly celebrating Diwali. Every pupil made a clay Diwali lamp. All the lamps illuminated the hall for this important time of reflection. Teachers help pupils to develop social skills. We saw pupils enjoy snack times. They chose which snack they would like, waited their turn calmly and ate sensibly and with relish.

Leaders and governors want everything they do to make a difference to pupils. They use this sense of purpose to keep improving the school. Senior leaders are clear about the school's strengths but are not complacent. They are mindful of staff well-being and appreciate the extra lengths staff go to for the pupils. Staff recognise this and are supportive of leaders and the direction in which they are taking the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders make sure that pupils' mental and physical health, safety and well-being are uppermost in everyone's mind. They provide staff training that is relevant and regular.

Teachers know their pupils very well. They notice any changes in appearance, mood or behaviour. They report their concerns and leaders take appropriate action. Leaders support families, helping to prevent things becoming more difficult if problems arise. Leaders also take advice from other agencies to support them in keeping pupils safe.

Teachers' plans for teaching activities also include ways to support pupils' health and care needs. This joined-up approach helps pupils to learn and to keep safe.

Background

When we have judged a special school to be outstanding, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains outstanding. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good school or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the predecessor school, Newbridge School, to be outstanding on 2 July 2013.

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 Ofsted Parent View information 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.

If you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

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	144875
Local authority	Redbridge
Inspection number	10124654
Type of school	All-through special
School category	Academy special converter
Age range of pupils	2 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	149
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Ann Garrard
Headteacher	Louise Parr
Website	www.astrum-mat.org
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Newbridge School is part of the Astrum Multi-academy Trust. The school provides education for pupils with severe and complex special educational needs. It is located on two sites. The Gresham Drive site provides for pupils in the early years and Years 1 to 7. The Barley Lane site provides for pupils from Year 7 to Year 14.
- Each site is led by a head of school. There is an executive headteacher responsible for both sites. She is also the chief executive officer for the trust.
- The trust is in the pre-opening phase of a new early years and key stage 1 special free school.

Information about this inspection

- During the inspection, we met with the executive headteacher and the senior leadership team. We met with members of the governing body and the chair of trustees. We also met the school's school improvement partner.
- The inspection focused deeply on communication, language and literacy, personal, social and emotional aspects of learning, and physical aspects of learning. We met with leaders, teachers, pupils and other members of staff. We looked at pupils' work and

considered information about other subjects.

- The inspection focused closely on arrangements for safeguarding. We met with the designated safeguarding leads and other members of the safeguarding team. We had conversations with staff and governors to find out about their knowledge of safeguarding and the training they received. We reviewed the parent and staff surveys. We checked records of incidents and accidents. We checked the process for recruiting staff and the single central record.

Inspection team

Jane Moon, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Ruth Dollner

Her Majesty's Inspector

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