

Inspection of a good school: Newlands Academy

Stuart Road, Peckham Rye, London SE15 3AZ

Inspection dates:

5–6 February 2020

Outcome

Newlands Academy continues to be a good school.

There is enough evidence of improved performance to suggest that the school could be judged outstanding if we were to carry out a section 5 inspection now.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils do well at this calm and welcoming school, where every minute is viewed as a learning moment. Leaders and staff set high expectations. They want pupils to attend regularly, behave well and achieve academic success. Pupils learn to enjoy school and feel safe. Younger pupils are taught how to manage their behaviour and are helped to become good learners.

Pupils have trust in the staff and say there is always an adult to talk to and help them. Bullying or poor behaviour is not tolerated. Staff work together to support pupils' learning. They quickly resolve any conflicts. Staff support pupils who are experiencing difficulties to manage their behaviour.

Pupils try their best and take pride in their work. Sequences of lessons are carefully planned so pupils can achieve GCSEs and other qualifications. Any pupils who are behind are helped to catch up. Reading is fostered well.

Pupils enjoy a large range of carefully planned experiences, including trips which are varied and frequent. These help pupils learn how to interact, work together and gain new skills and knowledge. Tending the allotment and learning how to cook are popular choices. These all help to build pupils' self-esteem and social skills, and to broaden their horizons.

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

The principal, leaders and every member of staff have high ambitions for every pupil to succeed. Pupils are exceptionally well supported from the moment they arrive in school. Teachers, learning mentors and therapeutic experts all have clearly defined and understood roles. Their joint working directly contributes to pupils' strong academic, personal and psychological development.

Leaders have carefully thought about what pupils need to know as they move to the next stages of their education and adult life. Younger pupils study a broad range of subjects. Key stage 4 pupils successfully study a wide range of GCSE subjects, including English, mathematics and science. Leaders take note of pupils' interests and requests to tailor the subjects taught. This is shown, for example, by the recent introduction of Japanese and of history GCSE.

Pupils benefit from teachers' strong subject knowledge. Teachers are skilful at breaking topics into simple steps, which they explain well. Pupils' knowledge is built steadily across the school regardless of when they join. Teachers help pupils understand the unique aspects of each subject and to apply what they have learned in other subjects. For example, in science pupils apply their graph drawing skills, which they learned in mathematics. Teachers and the therapeutic team jointly plan learning to support pupils' emotional and academic needs. As a result, pupils' self-confidence grows and over time they know more and can do more.

Teachers help pupils to become more confident readers and enjoy reading. Every opportunity is taken to encourage pupils to write in more detail. The speech and language therapist works with staff to help improve pupils' speaking skills. However, at times staff do not make the most of opportunities to help pupils with their speaking skills or use these opportunities to improve the quality of their written work.

Pupils behave extremely well most of the time. They show trust and respect for each other and for staff. Staff are well equipped to manage situations if pupils are upset or conflicts arise. The learning mentors are skilled at anticipating and acting when pupils need extra help to manage their behaviour. This means that any disruption to learning is minimised.

Pupils are mature and keen to succeed in their GCSEs. The work of pupils of all ages is impressive. Books show that work is completed to a high standard across all of the taught subjects. Talents are fostered well. Artwork around the school is exceptional. Pupils' talents are fostered, for example through photography and learning to play the piano.

Lessons in personal, social and health education (PSHE) are carefully planned to meet pupils' needs. These lessons and experiences across the school day help pupils to build their social skills and learn how to manage situations they may find difficult.

Leaders make the most of the well-resourced school and local facilities to broaden pupils' experiences. This includes the outdoor areas, the large sports hall, cookery and art rooms. Breaktimes and lunchtimes are used well to foster relationships, provide well-planned activities and check on pupils' well-being.

Staff morale is high. The enthusiasm and shared commitment to pupils is palpable. Leaders are mindful of the demands on staff and take care to provide them with support and care. Staff value this and say that this is why they remain at the school, including those new to the profession.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders hold the safety of pupils as paramount. Staff are well trained and fully aware of their responsibilities to be vigilant and to report any concerns. Staff know pupils and their families well, building strong and supportive relationships with them. This contributes to pupils' safety and well-being, and helps them to manage their behaviour and anxieties. The school's leaders have formed exceptionally strong links with social services, the police, health and other agencies. This helps to ensure that pupils and their families receive the support they need. The premises are safe and secure. Pupils are carefully supervised on arrival and throughout the day.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The joint approach by teachers and the therapeutic teams supports pupils' academic and emotional development. This includes expertise from the speech and language therapist to help teachers and other staff develop pupils' speaking skills. However, at times staff do not use the agreed strategies to improve pupils use of formal language. Staff should take every appropriate opportunity across the school day to maximise improvements in pupils' oracy and written work.

Background

When we have judged school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. 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 the school could now be better than good or 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 second section 8 inspection since we judged predecessor school, Bredinghurst School, to be good in November 2012.

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 the school and 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	140138
Local authority	Southwark
Inspection number	10121634
Type of school	Special
School category	Academy special converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Boys
Number of pupils on the school roll	61
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	David Hall
Principal	Gareth Howells
Website	www.newlandsacademy.org
Date of previous inspection	16 March 2016

Information about this school

- The Newlands Academy became an academy on 1 September 2013. It is part of the Academies Enterprise Trust (AET).
- The trust delegates its systems for holding leaders to account for educational provision, standards and improvement to the local governing body.
- At the time of the inspection, the school was not making use of any alternative provision.
- Newlands Academy provides for pupils who have social, emotional and mental health difficulties. Many pupils have experienced disruption to their education before joining Newlands. All pupils have an education, health and care plan.
- The current principal, formerly the school's deputy principal, has been in post since 1 January 2019.

Information about this inspection

- We met with the principal, three assistant principals, teachers and the AET director for special education needs who was previously the school's principal. We also spoke with other staff, including learning mentors and the school's speech and language therapist.

- We did deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, science and PSHE. These involved discussions with senior leaders and the specialist subject teachers. We also made visits to lessons, scrutinised pupils' work and spoke to pupils about their learning across a wide range of subjects.
- We evaluated the effectiveness of safeguarding. The school's single central record was reviewed with the AET staff responsible for ensuring all the required pre-employment checks are undertaken. I met with the designated safeguarding lead, who is also the school's principal, and with the deputy special educational needs coordinator, and I scrutinised documentation, undertook case studies and spoke to pupils and staff.
- We met with the chair of the local governing body and spoke on the telephone with another AET director.
- We met with pupils to discuss their views about the school and talked to pupils informally about the school. Sixteen pupils responded to Ofsted's online pupils' survey.
- There were too few responses to the Ofsted Parent View survey to view the results, but the school's own survey data was taken into account.
- The views of 20 members of staff who responded to Ofsted's staff survey were also considered by the inspection team.

Inspection team

Angela Corbett, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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