

Inspection of The New North Academy

32 Popham Road, Islington, London N1 8SJ

Inspection dates: 12 and 13 October 2021

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Early years provision **Good**

Previous inspection grade Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy at this caring and inclusive school. They like the friendly atmosphere. From a young age, they are taught about their rights and responsibilities. The recently updated behaviour policy is used consistently and fairly by staff. This helps pupils to develop a good understanding of the importance of tolerance and respect.

Pupils enjoy a wide range of activities, such as sport and music. Through these activities, leaders aim to help pupils develop into well-rounded individuals. Pupils know about different forms of bullying. They said that bullying is very rare at the school and that staff quickly sort out any problems. The number of incidents of poor behaviour is also increasingly rare. Leaders are determined to improve behaviour even further.

Staff know pupils well. During the disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, leaders checked that all pupils, including those known to be vulnerable, could learn more and remain safe.

New children settle quickly into the Nursery, Reception and specialist provision classes. They learn about taking turns, making friends and looking after one another. Daily reading and mathematics lessons ensure that they are suitably prepared for the next stage. Parents and carers are very positive about the school. They appreciate the wide range of opportunities that the school provides for pupils.

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

There has been significant change in staffing at all levels since the last inspection. Leaders have a clear vision for this school. They have ambitious goals for the curriculum that they want pupils to follow, including in the early years. Leaders have created a curriculum that is both broad and which celebrates difference and diversity.

Ensuring that pupils learn to read with confidence and enjoyment is a priority. All staff are well trained in teaching phonics. In the early years, staff help children to listen to and identify sounds accurately. Early years leaders and subject leaders work together to ensure the curriculum is coherently planned. Older pupils who struggle to read confidently are supported well. Occasionally, some pupils at the very early stages of learning to read are given books that are too hard. Their reading books are not always matched well to their phonics ability.

The mathematics curriculum has been planned effectively. Pupils know what they are learning. Teaching builds on what they have learned previously. As with reading, staff have been well trained. Teachers plan regular opportunities to check pupils' understanding of key knowledge. Pupils achieve well. They enjoy recalling and practising what they have been taught.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are supported well. Their individual needs are catered for, for instance through specialist resources or with support from adults in the classroom. Leaders work with outside agencies to make sure pupils' needs are met well.

Leaders of the other subjects, for example history, plan lessons so that pupils gain knowledge and skills. For instance, pupils can recall facts from their previous learning about different civilisations and religions. However, leaders have rightly identified that subject planning needs to make clearer links between pupils' previous and future knowledge. In some instances, planning does not specify the subject-specific vocabulary pupils need to know and use.

Leaders know the next steps they need to take to ensure that the curriculum becomes firmly established in all subjects. Curriculum developments slowed due to the pandemic. Leaders' plans are now back on track. The trust directors have a clear plan for supporting leaders. This includes working with other schools and staff in the trust to strengthen teachers' expertise. For example, staff receive subject-specific training as well as training on how to support pupils with SEND. Staff feel extremely well supported by senior leaders.

Pupils' attitudes to learning are positive. They mostly enjoy the demanding work that they get in lessons. Leaders challenge poor rates of attendance. They are relentless in following up any concerns about pupils with their families as well as with other agencies. Incidents of poor behaviour have decreased significantly. Pupils' good behaviour is underpinned by the school's values of resilience and respect. Children in the early years settle in well and play happily with their new friends.

Leaders plan a range of experiences to support pupils' personal development. Well-being is prioritised. Pupils appreciate the time and consideration given to them if they have concerns. Regular opportunities to learn outdoors and in the community are planned into the curriculum. These are being reintroduced following the end of the pandemic restrictions. Pupils spoke enthusiastically about a range of after-school clubs that they have taken part in.

The governing body and trust directors work collectively to oversee the school's development. More regular subject checks are planned to give governors insight into the curriculum and to help them to challenge leaders' actions.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

A well-trained team of designated leaders oversees the school's safeguarding procedures. Leaders and governors are also well trained in the safe recruitment of staff. A suitable record is maintained of the checks made when appointing adults to work in the school. Leaders and staff know what to do to secure support and protection when pupils may be at risk of harm. This includes early help services.

Robust procedures are in place to follow up safeguarding concerns. Pupils are taught about the risks they may face and how to keep safe, for example when learning online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The new headteacher has quickly identified that some of the long-term plans for foundation subjects do not clearly identify the knowledge that needs to be taught. Links with future and previous knowledge are not clearly identified and prioritised. However, it is clear from leaders' actions that they are making the necessary improvements to the curriculum. This includes designing new curriculum plans and training staff in how to use them. For this reason, the transitional arrangements have been applied.
- Occasionally, pupils who are at the early stages of learning to read have books that are too hard for them to read confidently. In the few instances that this happens, pupils struggle to read the books they are given. This is because some of the words go beyond pupils' phonic knowledge. Leaders should check that all books are precisely matched to pupils' current phonics knowledge.

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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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	137393
Local authority	Islington
Inspection number	10200060
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	281
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of governing body	Vamsi Vadde
Headteacher	Katherine Sewell
Website	www.newnorthacademy.com/
Date of previous inspection	20 September 2016, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The New North Academy joined the Learning in Harmony Multi-Academy Trust in 2019.
- The school uses no alternative provision.
- Since the previous inspection, the leadership of the school has changed. A new headteacher joined the school in September 2021, following a period of secondment from January 2021. There is also a new chair of the local governing body.
- The school has a specially resourced provision for nine pupils with SEND. All pupils have education, health and care plans. The provision caters for pupils with complex needs including autism spectrum disorder.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school has received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and assistant headteachers. They also met with the special educational needs coordinator and carried out joint lesson visits. They met with representatives of the local governing body and the trust.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, history, physical education, personal, social, health and economic education and computing. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers and pupils and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also listened to pupils read to a familiar adult and visited reading and phonics lessons.
- Inspectors looked at curriculum plans and spoke to leaders about other subjects, including science and art.
- Inspectors spoke to leaders and staff, including members of the safeguarding team, about safeguarding. They also considered documentation about safeguarding arrangements.
- Inspectors considered responses by staff, pupils and parents to the Ofsted online questionnaires.

Inspection team

Phil Garnham, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Abdul-Hayee Murshad

Ofsted Inspector

Helen Rai

Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2021