

Inspection of Newman School

East Bawtry Road, Rotherham, South Yorkshire S60 3LX

Inspection dates: 3 and 4 November 2021

Overall effectiveness

Inadequate

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Inadequate

Early years provision

Requires improvement

Sixth-form provision

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Senior leaders, including governors, have not taken appropriate action to ensure that safeguarding arrangements are effective. Staff do not have knowledge of the safeguarding risks that pupils may face. Leaders have not ensured that timely and appropriate action is taken to protect pupils who are at risk.

Leaders do not have high enough expectations of pupils. A poorly planned curriculum and a lack of ambition for what pupils can achieve have hampered pupils' progress in some subjects. While pupils' communication needs are well supported, pupils who need help to learn to read do not get the effective support they need.

There is an inclusive environment in this all-through school. All pupils have an education, health and care plan. Many pupils have complex needs. They are well supported by kind adults who are attentive to their care needs. Staff are skilful at listening to pupils and responding to their verbal and non-verbal communications. Pupils enjoy lessons. Despite the shortcomings in the school's safeguarding arrangements, pupils feel happy and safe at school. Pupils say that staff resolve any issues involving bullying quickly.

The 'preparing for adulthood' course threads through from the primary years into the sixth form. It is a strength of the school. Pupils are introduced to employers and are well supported to engage with the wider community. Pupils take part in community and voluntary activities, such as working at a local café.

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

Governors are not fully aware of their statutory responsibilities, including in relation to safeguarding. They have not ensured that systems are in place to check the impact of staff training. Over time, leaders, including governors, have not effectively analysed or evaluated the information that is available to them relating to pupils' attendance, behaviour and other incidents. Neither have they requested any analysis or evaluation from school leaders. Leaders do not check or use information to make well-informed decisions about action they need to take to improve the school, for example in relation to pupils' behaviour. As a result, leaders have failed to recognise and address a decline in the school's performance in a number of areas.

Leaders have not ensured that there is a consistently well-planned curriculum in place. The important knowledge that individual pupils must know and remember has not been clearly identified by leaders in some subjects. This applies from early years through to the sixth form. The curriculum is not ambitious enough for some pupils.

In some areas of the curriculum, teachers use their expertise to meet pupils' needs. For example, staff provide effective support to develop pupils' communication skills. However, teachers do not consistently plan sequences of lessons that help pupils to learn important concepts in some subject areas, such as science and mathematics.

For those pupils who are able to make academic progress, there is not a consistent approach to assessing gaps in their knowledge and understanding. Consequently, these pupils do not make sufficient progress in a number of subjects.

Leaders have not prioritised support for pupils who are at the early stages of learning to read. Staff, including the phonics leader, have not had the training they need to deliver an effective phonics programme. This means that the weakest readers do not receive effective help to catch up quickly. Leaders do not have a clear overview of the progress that all pupils are making. Teachers do not ensure that the books chosen for pupils to read consistently match the sounds that they know. Pupils are not given enough opportunities to read books to build up their fluency and comprehension. As a result, many pupils are not reading as well as they should.

Provision to support pupils' personal development is an area of strength. Pupils are taught how to keep themselves mentally and physically healthy. There is a focus on preparing pupils for adulthood from an early age. At 'Independence House,' pupils learn practical skills which help them prepare for living on their own. An independent careers adviser helps pupils to decide on their next steps.

Although lessons are typically calm, with orderly routines, the number of assaults on staff by pupils is high. Some staff have received team-teach training, which includes techniques to de-escalate a situation when pupils are displaying very challenging behaviour, but other staff have not. As a result, not all staff have the skills to manage pupils in crisis. Behaviour plans are not reviewed regularly. When pupils are in crisis, this lack of up-to-date information and training means that staff struggle to respond effectively to support pupils' needs.

Leaders work with a range of external agencies to support young people at a time of crisis. However, acting on advice from the local authority, there are occasions when leaders have failed to follow appropriate statutory procedures when pupils have been excluded from school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.

Leaders, including governors, have not taken account of the most recent statutory guidance to keep pupils safe. Senior leaders have not consistently carried out the appropriate checks when recruiting staff and governors. The shortcomings found in the single central record were corrected before the end of the inspection.

Leaders, including governors, have not ensured that systems are in place to check staff's understanding of the training that they have received. Some staff do not have sufficient knowledge of the risks that pupils may face, such as child criminal exploitation.

Procedures for identifying and recording concerns that pupils may be at risk of harm, including the school's follow-up actions and outcomes, are not robust. In some

cases, leaders have not recorded outcomes of the investigations that have taken place. They have not acted in line with statutory guidance.

Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe through weekly personal, social, health and economic lessons. This includes how to stay safe online, and about healthy relationships. However, as with other areas of the school curriculum, leaders are not checking that pupils have a strong understanding of the important concepts that are taught.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders, including governors, have not fulfilled their responsibilities to ensure the quality of safeguarding arrangements. Arrangements to safeguard pupils are not effective. Leaders should urgently address weaknesses in safeguarding arrangements, including ensuring that appropriate action is taken where pupils are at risk of harm. Leaders should ensure that staff are provided with necessary training to ensure that they recognise risks to pupils and that safeguarding concerns are accurately recorded and followed up with urgency. Leaders should also ensure that appropriate checks on the suitability of adults to work with pupils are conducted and logged in the single central record.
- There is a lack of strategic leadership by senior leaders, including governors. Leaders have not analysed information to evaluate areas of the school's work, such as pupils' attendance and behaviour. As a result, leaders do not have an accurate picture of the school and have not taken the necessary steps to address declining performance. Leaders should ensure that they gather and review appropriate information to accurately evaluate the school's performance, in order to take prompt action to improve aspects of the school's work.
- Behaviour plans for pupils in crisis are not reviewed and regularly updated. Some staff have not had training to de-escalate crisis situations. This means that some staff do not have the information they need, or the expertise, to support the most vulnerable pupils. Leaders should ensure that pupils' behaviour plans are regularly reviewed and that staff are given the help they need so that they are able to support the most vulnerable pupils effectively.
- Leaders have not ensured that curriculum plans identify the precise knowledge they want pupils to know and remember over time. Teachers are not adequately supported to plan appropriate content or assess how well pupils have understood key concepts. Senior leaders should ensure that subject leaders have the time and appropriate training to develop detailed and ambitious curriculum plans that meet the needs of all pupils. Leaders should support teaching staff to ensure that the curriculum is taught consistently well.
- Pupils do not consistently achieve as well as they should in reading and phonics. Some older pupils, including those in key stage 4, still struggle to read. Staff, including the reading leader, have not received the necessary training to support pupils who are at the early stages of learning to read. Leaders should ensure that

staff are well trained to teach phonics effectively so that pupils receive the support they need to read fluently.

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	106966
Local authority	Rotherham
Inspection number	10210148
Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	2 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	160
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	20
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Mr Steve Cooper
Headteacher	Mr Paul Silvester
Website	www.newmanschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	6 March 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This community special school is registered for pupils from age 2 to 19.
- All pupils have an education, health and care plan.
- Most pupils have complex special educational needs. This includes those with physical disabilities, physical and psychological medical conditions, autistic spectrum disorders, social, emotional and mental health, moderate and severe learning difficulties, as well as profound and multiple learning difficulties.
- The school runs an off-site unit called 'Independence House'. This is where pupils can develop practical skills as preparation for living independently within the community.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. Inspectors deemed the inspection a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

In accordance with section 44(2) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than it might in all the circumstances reasonably be expected to perform.

This was the first routine inspection the school 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 held meetings with the headteacher, other senior leaders, subject leaders and staff. A telephone conversation was held with a representative of the local authority. The lead inspector met with representatives of those responsible for governance, including the chair of governors.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in mathematics, science, reading and personal, social, health and economic education. Discussions were held with senior leaders, subject leaders and teachers. Inspectors visited lessons, looked at work pupils had completed and spoke with pupils about their learning. Inspectors also looked at curriculum planning in history.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documents relating to safeguarding. The school's single central record was checked, as were recruitment procedures. Discussions with pupils and staff focused on how the school keeps pupils safe.
- Inspectors reviewed curriculum documents, school policies and information about attendance and behaviour, including bullying. The lead inspector reviewed a sample of minutes from meetings of the governing board.
- Inspectors spoke with teachers, support and administrative staff. One inspector spoke with a parent.
- Inspectors considered responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire for parents.

Inspection team

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