

Inspection of Newlands Academy

Stuart Road, Peckham Rye, London SE15 3AZ

Inspection dates: 13 and 14 March 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
------------------------------	-------------

The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Previous inspection grade	Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy and safe in the school's warm and caring community. Adults understand their pupils' needs and build working relationships grounded in trust. All adults have high expectations and ambitions for pupils. They want all pupils to do well throughout their education and in preparation for adulthood.

Pupils appreciate how staff have helped them to understand their own behaviour and well-being. The staff know the pupils well. They identify when pupils may need more input or support to be ready for learning. This ensures that pupils' behaviour is mostly calm and orderly.

The school provides a wide range of opportunities to nurture and develop pupils' confidence and resilience. These include musical performances and inter-school rugby tournaments.

Pupils are taught to be respectful of everybody regardless of differences. Incidences of bullying are rare and are dealt with swiftly by staff should they occur.

Parents and carers are positive about the school and the education that their children receive here. One parent typically commented, 'I cannot praise the staff enough. Their continuing support to both me and my son is without doubt above and beyond their job description.'

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

Leaders have designed a curriculum that is ambitious for all pupils. Leaders want all pupils to be successful regardless of their needs. They provide pupils with a broad education and a wide variety of experiences.

Typically, leaders of subjects have identified the key content that pupils need to know and the order in which it should be taught to help pupils to build up their knowledge and skills securely. In a few subjects where leaders are not subject specialists, the identification of essential content and the sequence in which it should be taught is not as coherently thought through. This is particularly the case where leaders do not have strong subject expertise. Mostly, teachers choose appropriate activities to help pupils to learn in lessons. Occasionally, where teachers do not have subject-specialist expertise, subject content is not taught as clearly. Where this occurs, pupils have gaps in their knowledge, which hinders their learning of new and more complex ideas.

When pupils join the school, leaders identify the pupils' learning needs quickly in English, reading and mathematics. Leaders promote the value of fluent reading and its necessity in enabling pupils to access learning across the curriculum. They take action to ensure that any pupils with gaps in phonics are helped to catch up.

Sometimes, pupils' behaviour affects their learning in class. Staff personalise behaviour plans and approaches to develop pupils' resilience, confidence and acceptance of feedback. They support pupils' mental health within this work. Staff provide pupils with strategies to help them to manage their own behaviour in the future. This ensures that pupils' behaviour improves over time.

Leaders promote good attendance and punctuality effectively, in the context of this school and the cohort of learners that attend. They recognise the challenges, socially and emotionally, that may have an effect on whether pupils attend school or arrive on time. Leaders work with pupils individually and provide support from external partners if necessary. High-quality pastoral and therapeutic support enables pupils to focus on their learning and to do their best. Parents are positive about this support.

Leaders encourage pupils to develop character and they enhance pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through assemblies, enrichment activities and educational visits. Pupils are provided with experiences that they may not have had before due to the nature of their needs and how they engaged in their schooling prior to coming here. Pupils are encouraged to take on more responsibilities than in the past as members of the newly formed school council and as peer-behaviour mentors.

Pupils are taught how to eat healthily, maintain an active lifestyle and keep physically and mentally healthy. They are also taught an age-appropriate understanding of healthy relationships and respect for the protected characteristics. Pupils are helped to engage with views, beliefs and opinions that are different from their own in considered ways.

Leaders encourage pupils to think carefully about their next steps in education, training or employment. They introduce pupils to a range of opportunities and experiences, including carpentry and retail. However, leaders do not currently make sure that pupils receive impartial careers advice and guidance.

Trustees have systems in place to assure themselves that the school meets all statutory requirements. They hold leaders to account and offer support, through various audits and quality assurance activities.

Staff are proud to work here and they take pride in the achievements of all pupils. They feel that leaders take care of their workload.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff know their safeguarding responsibilities. Leaders have ensured that the school's safeguarding team is well staffed. The members of the safeguarding team work closely together to ensure that they connect issues regarding attendance, behaviour and safeguarding to identify any emerging issues or concerns.

All staff are aware of the risks that pupils may face. Leaders make sure that staff receive regular training, which is contextualised for the specific needs of the school.

Staff are vigilant to signs of abuse and neglect. They know what to do if they have a concern about a pupil's safety or welfare. Leaders take appropriate action to keep pupils safe, including the safe recruitment of staff.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have not made sure that all staff have the support they need to lead and teach subjects where they do not have subject-specialist expertise. In a few subjects, curriculum thinking does not clearly identify the component knowledge that pupils need to know and remember. Where teachers are teaching beyond their subject expertise, the teaching of key concepts is not as routinely clear. This hinders pupils' learning where this is the case. Leaders should provide support for curriculum leaders and for teaching staff who are working outside of their subject specialism, to enable them to identify and teach the component knowledge and skills that pupils need to know.

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.

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	10255314
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	71
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	David Hall
Head of school	Emily Thompson Gareth Howells (Executive principal)
Website	www.newlandsacademy.org
Dates of previous inspection	5 and 6 February 2020, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school became an academy on 1 September 2013. It is part of the Academies Enterprise Trust. A board of trustees is responsible for governance.
- At the time of the inspection, the school was making use of alternative provision for two pupils at Newstart Training and Marydale Lodge.
- All pupils have an education, health and care plan or are in the process of obtaining one. Many of the pupils have experienced disruption to their education before joining the school. The school caters for pupils who have social, emotional and mental health difficulties. Some pupils may have additional diagnoses and needs.
- The head of school has been in post since September 2020.
- The executive principal took up post in September 2020.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 7 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

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

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors did deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, religious education and Spanish. These involved discussions with senior leaders, curriculum leaders and the subject teachers. Inspectors also visited lessons, scrutinised pupils' work and spoke to pupils about their learning across a wide range of subjects.
- Inspectors had meetings with the head of school, the executive principal and other leaders and staff, including curriculum leaders, teachers, therapists and support staff. The lead inspector met with the director of education for the trust as well as the trust's director for special schools.
- Inspectors met with leaders responsible for reading and heard pupils read.
- Inspectors met with the school's designated safeguarding leads and those responsible for the school's record of pre-employment checks. Inspectors reviewed policies and documents. They also looked at the school's website and other documents.
- Inspectors explored and gathered evidence on the school's wider curriculum offer, the impact of pupil's behaviour and attendance on learning, and how leaders are driving improvement and supporting staff with their workload.
- Inspectors met with pupils and talked to them throughout the inspection. They asked questions to understand their views on the school. Inspectors also spoke to staff individually and in a group.
- Inspectors reviewed and considered responses to Ofsted's online surveys completed by pupils, parents and staff.

Inspection team

Kieran Bird, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Lisa Strong

His Majesty's 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 2023