

Inspection of Newmarket Academy

Exning Road, Newmarket, Suffolk CB8 0EB

Inspection dates: 11 and 12 July 2023

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education

Good

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Good

Previous inspection grade

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Most pupils enjoy attending Newmarket Academy. They develop strong friendships. They enjoy trips, visits and the visitors who come into school. Pupils learn about different careers. On the second day of the inspection, for instance, a team from the United States Air Force talked to girls about careers in science and technology. Pupils visit a local college. Consequently, pupils are well prepared for the next stage in their education or employment.

There are many opportunities for pupils to develop their leadership skills through the school council and a range of ambassador roles. There are many popular sporting clubs as well as musical productions. The school runs foreign exchange visits. Pupils can take part in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme. These opportunities increase pupils' confidence and widen their range of experiences.

The majority of pupils are keen to do well. They work hard. They attend well. They treat each other and adults with respect. They are therefore frustrated that the behaviour of a minority of pupils sometimes interrupts their learning in lessons.

All pupils access a broad and engaging curriculum. Pupils in the Polaris unit receive a bespoke curriculum that meets their needs so they successfully achieve well.

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

Leaders have put in place a well-thought-out and carefully designed curriculum. They pick out the key knowledge that pupils need to learn and teach this in a logical order. Teachers check pupils' knowledge of recent and past learning regularly, including at the start of lessons in 'do now' tasks. As a result, pupils usually build their knowledge securely. Where it is strongest, activities in lessons are precisely matched to pupils' needs. Pupils build up knowledge securely. Some teachers are less sure of how to match work to meet pupils' needs, including pupils with complex special educational needs and/or disabilities . This leads to gaps in some pupils' knowledge.

Reading has been a real focus for leaders. Teachers check how well pupils learn to read. Well-planned interventions led by skilled staff provide support for weaker readers. Consequently, pupils learn to read confidently and fluently. Reading has a high profile. Leaders have invested in a new library. Pupils meet well-known authors and encounter a range of different texts. As a result, pupils increasingly read widely and often. They enjoy reading.

While leaders have high expectations of behaviour, staff do not routinely follow the behaviour policy. This confuses pupils and leads to some disruption to lessons. Some pupils do not have a positive attitude to school. They do not see the value of education. Pupils do not always feel that good behaviour is well rewarded. As a result, behaviour has an impact on some pupils' learning. Leaders are aware that behaviour is not as good as it should be. They monitor behaviour closely. They have

used this information to make positive changes to school systems. These are improving behaviour and punctuality. Leaders have clear plans to improve consistency and to develop a positive culture among all pupils. These are already starting to make a difference. Leaders are also aware of the importance of restoring parents' trust in the school.

The personal, social and health education curriculum prepares pupils for life in modern Britain. Pupils learn about topics such as democracy, the benefits of diversity and how to keep themselves healthy.

Governors and the trust provide support and challenge for leaders. Teachers and leaders benefit from appropriate training. This has led to improvements in the quality of education.

Staff, including early career teachers, say that they are well supported with their workload and well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders carry out rigorous checks on adults who wish to work with children. Governors and the trust regularly monitor the effectiveness of safeguarding in the school.

Leaders have trained staff to identify, report and help any pupils they have concerns about. Staff are aware of local safeguarding issues, such as county lines. Designated safeguarding leads rapidly follow up concerns as they emerge. They work closely with local services to provide support for pupils.

Pupils know how to report concerns and how to keep themselves safe. They learn about topics such as the dangers of social media and the misuse of drugs and alcohol.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some teachers do not know how to match and adapt activities precisely to the needs of a range of pupils. As a result, there are gaps in some pupils' learning. Leaders should ensure that teachers receive the training and support they need to match work consistently to pupils' needs.
- While many teachers consistently apply the school's behaviour policy, some do not. This means that pupils are not always clear about what is expected of them, and some do not behave well enough in lessons. Leaders should continue their work to improve behaviour and ensure that teachers are provided with training so that they all understand expectations and follow the school's behaviour policy

consistently. Leaders should make regular checks to ensure this continues to make a positive difference to behaviour throughout the school.

- Some pupils do not value their education highly and this affects their motivation in lessons. Rewards are not always consistently awarded or sufficiently engaging. Leaders should ensure that positive behaviour is rewarded effectively and that opportunities to show all pupils the value of learning are built into the wider curriculum.

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	140669
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	10268144
Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	834
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Christine Quinn
Headteacher	Martin Witter
Website	http://www.newmarketacademy.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	18 and 19 May 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Newmarket Academy is a member of the Unity Schools Partnership.
- The headteacher was appointed in December 2021, and both deputy principals were appointed in September 2022.
- The school runs an on-site local authority funded unit called Polaris. This provides specialist education for pupils in Years 7 to 11 with communication and interaction needs. It is currently attended by 21 pupils.
- The school currently uses one unregistered alternative provision.

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 school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, senior leaders, subject leaders, pastoral leaders, the careers coordinator, the special educational needs and disabilities coordinator, and the head of the Polaris unit.
- Inspectors met with staff from the Unity Schools Partnership, including the chief executive officer.
- Deep dives were carried out in six subjects: English, science, mathematics, geography, physical education and technology. For each deep dive, an inspector met with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Members of the local governing body met with the lead inspector.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and at other times around school. They met with groups of pupils.
- Inspectors held a series of meetings with leaders and pupils to discuss the school's safeguarding arrangements. They scrutinised a range of records relating to safeguarding, behaviour and attendance.
- The lead inspector considered the 152 responses and the 122 free-text responses received during the inspection to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View. He also considered the 60 responses to Ofsted's survey for staff and the 131 responses to Ofsted's survey for pupils.

Inspection team

Steve Woodley, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Carol Dallas	Ofsted Inspector
Jess Pearce	Ofsted Inspector
Damian Loneragan	His Majesty's Inspector

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