

# Short inspection of Sir Isaac Newton Sixth Form Free School

Inspection dates:

1 and 2 November 2023

## **Outcome**

Sir Isaac Newton Sixth Form Free School continues to be an outstanding provider.

## **Information about this provider**

Sir Isaac Newton Sixth Form Free School (Sir Isaac Newton) is in the centre of Norwich. It is part of the Inspiration Trust, which is a multi-academy trust for schools in Norfolk and north Suffolk. Sir Isaac Newton opened in September 2013 as a specialist sixth form, offering science and mathematics A level programmes. Leaders in partnership with the Jane Austen College to offer students arts and humanities A level subjects. Jane Austen College is also part of the Inspiration Trust.

There are currently 548 students studying at Sir Isaac Newton. A level mathematics, biology, chemistry and physics are the most popular programmes to study. Sir Isaac Newton also offers A level further mathematics, computer science, psychology and core mathematics. The school has more recently introduced an A level environmental science programme. The school has no students with high-needs funding.

## **What is it like to be a learner with this provider?**

Students have high aspirations to achieve their goals. They enjoy studying alongside like-minded peers. Students understand that making mistakes is an integral aspect of learning. As a result, students work hard, develop their resilience and grow in confidence. They become adept at learning independently to support their transition to higher education.

Students thrive in the highly supportive, ambitious and respectful environment at Sir Isaac Newton. They value the wide range of advantageous academic and pastoral support they receive. Students benefit from drop-in clinics and catch-up lessons. They receive individual mentoring support and have easy access to their teachers to ask questions. As a result, students stay on track with their studies.

Students enjoy many exciting opportunities to learn beyond the academic content of their programmes. They take part in competitions and challenges such as the

Cambridge chemistry race and the chemistry Olympiad. Students visit local universities where they learn in high-tech laboratories. Students gain an invaluable sense of the steps they can take when they complete their studies.

Students with targets to develop their social skills benefit from the 'talk about' programme. The programme aims to develop students' understanding of social behaviours such as empathy. Another programme 'mood masters' teaches students strategies to manage their anxiety. As a result, students make very good progress.

Students feel very safe in a positive culture of acceptance. They enjoy learning in a calm environment that values creativity and respects the individual ways in which they learn. Students feel listened to, and they are comfortable to talk to staff if they should have any concerns. Students are confident that staff would respond appropriately to their concerns.

## **What does the provider do well and what does it need to do better?**

Leaders have developed a highly purposeful curriculum. Leaders have a strong ambition to improve the science and mathematics participation of young people in the region. Leaders work with local schools to promote science and mathematics subjects and the resulting career opportunities. Leaders strive relentlessly to produce future science and mathematics practitioners and leaders for the science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) industries.

Leaders and managers have planned logical and well-structured programmes. They ensure that students learn basic concepts of mathematics and science, before moving on to more complex and challenging tasks. Chemistry students study fundamental elements such as atomic structure, formula and equations at the start of the programme. Mathematics students learn the fundamental concepts of mathematics that they revisit and extend in further mathematics topics. As a result, students develop their knowledge and skills gradually over time.

Teachers are highly qualified and experienced in their specialist subjects and teaching skills. Teachers participate enthusiastically in a broad range of professional development opportunities. They use their expertise skilfully to teach and inspire students, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Teachers adapt their teaching very effectively to reflect students' varying abilities.

Staff have developed an extensive range of high-quality resources for learning. Students enthuse about the exceptional course organisation and accessible resources. Students have access to a curriculum delivery plan, examination practice questions, useful links to external websites and revision tasks. Students highly value the resources that enable them to work independently and in a way that suits them best.

Teachers use teaching strategies very effectively. In practical chemistry lessons, they use demonstrations and labelled diagrams to explain chemical processes. They ensure that students understand by asking specific questions to check their understanding. As a result, students can apply their knowledge confidently to complete their practical work. Teachers correct misconceptions and gaps in knowledge very effectively. Teachers provide many opportunities for students to practice and hone their developing skills.

Teachers consistently model and use the correct language for their subjects. For example, mathematics students use technical mathematical language and mathematics notations. This builds in complexity and sophistication over time. As a result, students learn how to use the language that relates to their subject accurately.

Leaders and managers have created a culture of excellence. They work tirelessly to ensure that students are supported extremely effectively and have good study behaviours. Leaders track students' weekly homework performance forensically. They quickly identify and action additional support for students, where needed.

Leaders have robust arrangements for monitoring and improving the quality of education. Leaders carry out regular learning walks and professional discussions with teachers. Leaders have a keen focus on development. They identify effective actions to lead to improvement. These actions include targeted peer learning walks to explore questioning techniques, for example. Leaders ensure that students receive high-quality teaching. As a result, students make very good progress in their academic achievements and the development of their characters.

Careers staff provide a very extensive range of events, trips and opportunities for students. The careers team plans effectively for the wide profile of students in the college. Careers staff provide a high aspiration programme for those students wanting to go to prestigious and specialist universities. Students visit the different colleges in these universities. They receive dedicated support that has a positive impact on their application and success at interviews. Careers staff organise helpful apprenticeship opportunities for those students who do not plan to go to university. Careers staff provide help in writing job applications, personal statements and practising for aptitude tests.

Subject teachers are very knowledgeable about the different universities students may apply to. Students discuss their next steps with form tutors and teachers. Tutors understand the different challenges students may face and prepare them effectively. Students have guest speakers and access to a dedicated careers hub on their online website. This has resulted in the students being confident in completing their University and Colleges Admissions Service applications. They produce interesting, well-written personal statements. As a result, most students progress to university and many to their first choice.

Leaders use data extremely effectively to analyse trends in students' performance. They have an unwavering focus to improve further and develop the curriculum.

Leaders are relentless in reviewing strategies and approaches to meet the ever-changing needs of the students.

Trustees have an extremely good oversight of the quality of education. They challenge leaders very effectively to produce the next generation of STEM leaders. They empower leaders to fulfil the ambition to become one of the top performing sixth form providers nationally. Trustees provide highly effective support for leaders. Trustees assumed responsibility for securing additional accommodation to support growth in student numbers. Support from Trustees enables leaders to focus on ensuring a high-quality experience for students.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

## Provider details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	139896
<b>Address</b>	The Old Fire Station 30 Bethel Street Norwich Norfolk NR2 1NR
<b>Contact number</b>	01603280940
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.inspirationtrust.org/sirisaacnewtonsixthform">http://www.inspirationtrust.org/sirisaacnewtonsixthform</a>
<b>Principal, CEO or equivalent</b>	Chris Jennings
<b>Provider type</b>	Free School 16-19
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	3 and 4 May 2018
<b>Main subcontractors</b>	None

## Information about this inspection

The inspection was the first short inspection carried out since Sir Isaac Newton Sixth Form Free School was judged to be outstanding in May 2018.

The inspection team was assisted by the Principal, as nominee. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. The inspection was carried out using the [further education and skills inspection handbook](#) and took into account all relevant provision at the provider. Inspectors collected a wide range of evidence to inform judgements, including visiting learning sessions, scrutinising students' work, seeking the views of students, staff and other stakeholders, and examining the provider's documentation and records.

## Inspection team

Penny Fawcus, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Jacqui Ecoeur	Ofsted Inspector
Andrea McMahon	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](mailto: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/](http://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](mailto: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](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)

© Crown copyright 2023