

# Inspection of New Siblands School

Easton Hill Road, Thornbury, Bristol BS35 2JU

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Inspection dates: 27 and 28 February 2024

## **Overall effectiveness**

**Outstanding**

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The quality of education

**Outstanding**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Outstanding**

Personal development

**Outstanding**

Leadership and management

**Outstanding**

Early years provision

**Outstanding**

Sixth-form provision

**Outstanding**

Previous inspection grade

Outstanding

The headteacher of this school is Karl Hemmings. This school is part of Enable Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Andrew Buckton, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by David Tubb.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils thrive in all areas of learning at New Siblands School. Through the exceptionally strong and trusting relationships with staff, pupils relish learning across a breadth of subjects. Consequently, pupils learn how to communicate their feelings, ideas and views very well. Children in the early years respond enthusiastically to stories. Students in the sixth form express their views about the world around them with knowledge and maturity.

Staff are highly knowledgeable about the learning and therapeutic needs of pupils. This results in each pupil, including children in early years and students in the sixth form, having an expertly-designed curriculum that supports their learning. One parent described the school as, 'like treasure at the end of a rainbow. Absolute gold.' All pupils learn how to form very positive relationships with each other.

Through the curriculum, pupils are well prepared for the world beyond school. For example, they visit the local park and shops. Students in the sixth form develop very strong knowledge about the opportunities available for further education, training and employment. They visit a range of colleges and places of work.

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

Leaders' ambitious vision for the educational, social and emotional development of all pupils is shared by staff. Through the carefully crafted, personalised curriculum, pupils' lives are transformed. This unrelenting focus on developing pupils' communication skills is impressive. Speech and language therapy underpins the school's approach to the teaching of reading and communication.

Children in early years learn to read through a well-designed phonics programme. Through repetition, rhyme and rhythmic song, pupils learn to respond to texts very well. Staff skilfully extend pupils' communication skills by building their knowledge of vocabulary and sentences. Pupils learn to communicate their knowledge of texts through symbols, pictures, words, signing and touch. Stories lie at the core of the curriculum and deepen pupils' understanding of the world around them.

The way in which the curriculum is designed is based on pupils' needs. This supports them to flourish. Pupils build their knowledge through subject curriculums and through wider experiences. For example, pupils learn mathematics in lessons and through music, songs, cookery and PE. Pupils, including students in the sixth form and children in early years, apply their learning in many practical scenarios, such as charity fundraisers.

The curriculum seamlessly blends therapy and class-based education. This supports pupils to realise their potential. Pupils experience the sensory world of water and the ways in which it affects their physical movement during hydrotherapy. They extend their knowledge of physical education (PE) through physical and sensory games, such as sensory rugby, the use of trampolines, running and through sensory touch

and music. Through play-based learning, pupils engage confidently in understanding about number, the world around them, stories and physical education.

Students in the sixth form learn an impressively well-structured curriculum. For example, through reading local and national newspapers, students apply their knowledge of geography when responding to stories about climate change. Students are skilfully supported to draw on their prior knowledge to learn more and remember more. They are exceptionally well prepared for their next steps. For example, students articulate their knowledge about healthy relationships and consent with confidence and maturity.

Pupils learn the routines of school and the importance of socialising with others exceptionally well. The routines of learning are well embedded. As a result, pupils learn to manage their emotions and are highly motivated to learn. There is a calm, nurturing environment across the school.

Trustees and governors provide robust challenge and support in equal measure. They share the same vision of enabling pupils to flourish in their learning in preparation for the world beyond school. They ensure that all pupils have the resources, equipment and tools to do so. Staff are overwhelmingly proud to work at the school. They feel very well supported by leaders and undergo continuous training. They are well equipped to expertly meet the sensory, emotional and physical needs of each pupil.

Parents, who responded to the online questionnaire, are effusive in their praise of the school and the exceptional support it provides to their children and their families.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

## **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](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need](#)

of help and protection; pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	146013
<b>Local authority</b>	South Gloucestershire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10288230
<b>Type of school</b>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Academy special converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	2 to 19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	126
<b>Of which, number on roll in the sixth form</b>	22
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	David Tubb
<b>CEO of trust</b>	Andrew Buckton
<b>Headteacher</b>	Karl Hemmings
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.newsiblands.org.uk">www.newsiblands.org.uk</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	1 and 2 November 2022, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- New Siblands School is a special school catering for pupils from the ages of 2 to 19 years. It provides for pupils with severe and profound learning difficulties, alongside pupils with autistic spectrum disorder.
- The school is one of two schools which form the Enable Trust. It joined when the trust was formed in 2018.
- All pupils have education, health and care (EHC) plans.
- The school does not use alternative provision.
- The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information 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.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors held discussions with the headteacher and members of the leadership team.
- An inspector held discussions with the chief executive officer of the trust, a member of the board of trustees and the governing body.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics and personal, social and health education. In each subject, inspectors met with senior and curriculum leaders, talked to pupils, visited lessons, spoke to teachers and looked at examples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors met with staff to consider their views.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents and carers who responded to the confidential questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View. They evaluated the views of staff and pupils from the Ofsted online questionnaires.

## Inspection team

Susan Aykin, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Teresa Hill	Ofsted Inspector
Hilary Goddard	Ofsted Inspector

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