Inspection of a good school: New Silksworth Academy Infant

Blind Lane, New Silksworth, Sunderland, Tyne and Wear SR3 1AS

Inspection dates: 9 and 10 July 2024

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this ungraded (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might be outstanding if a graded (section 5) inspection were carried out now. The school's next inspection will be a graded inspection.

The headteacher of this school is Emma Robins. The school is part of Extol Trust, which means that other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Julie Deville, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Jackie Butterworth.

What is it like to attend this school?

The pupils who attend New Silksworth Academy know that they belong here. They have a strong sense of their own identity and what it means to be a pupil at the school. The school's motto #WeAre encapsulates this sense of belonging. Pupils talk about their learning behaviours and what it means to be courageous, inspirational and resilient. The school community sum up these learning behaviours in #WeAreNewSilksworth.

Pupils are excited to arrive at school in the morning. They are keen to share stories and news with adults. The warm relationships between staff and pupils are immediately clear. Many pupils explain that the adults are the best thing about their school. Pupils are confident that their teachers want the best for them and will keep them safe.

The school has high aspirations for what pupils can achieve, at this school and beyond. The school ensures that even the very youngest children learn about careers and employability skills that will set them up to succeed in the future. Leaders build pupils' independence carefully during their time in school. Children in Nursery peel their own fruit and put on their wellies. Older pupils value their positions of responsibility in school.

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

The school has designed an ambitious curriculum that allows children to learn about the world around them. Leaders ensure that pupils learn about the area they live in and then the world beyond. The school recognises the importance of making sure that pupils learn

about role models and aim high. Pupils learn about local authors and industry as well as other cultures. In designing the curriculum, right from the youngest children, the school has ensured that knowledge is built carefully over time. Leaders have mapped out the crucial knowledge that pupils will learn. They have anticipated mistakes that pupils might make and explicitly teach important vocabulary.

Reading runs through everything at New Silksworth Academy. The school has ensured that reading and stories are at the heart of pupils' daily experiences. Pupils enjoy a book and a bagel each morning. They talk with excitement about the stories that adults share with them. Pupils of all ages learn poems by heart. Pupils understand why reading is important.

The school has ensured that all staff are effectively trained to teach phonics. Pupils learn to read well. They are able to use their phonics knowledge with confidence. Pupils who find learning to read more difficult are supported to keep up with their peers.

Children in the early years, from the youngest children in Nursery through to Reception, are challenged and engaged from the moment they arrive in school. The school is exceptionally ambitious for what children will achieve. The curriculum is expertly adapted to ensure that every individual child makes rapid progress. Leaders are acutely aware of children's needs and interests. The school has extremely high expectations of all children. Children flourish under these ambitions. Children's confidence and resilience are deliberately nurtured. Children in Reception talk confidently about their understanding of the world, including the Eiffel Tower, how vegetables grow and the strength of bridges.

Teachers deliver the ambitious curriculum well. They explain new concepts clearly and build in lots of opportunities for pupils to practise what they have learned. Teachers regularly check what pupils have understood and remembered. Teachers use assessment effectively across subjects. Leaders use the information they gather from assessments to improve the curriculum.

The provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is a considerable strength of the school. In line with the inclusive ethos, pupils with SEND access the same curriculum as their peers. The school has ensured that staff are well trained to identify and support pupils with a wide range of needs. Parents express their appreciation for the support provided by the school. The school ensures that pupils with SEND are fully involved in all aspects of school life.

Pupils across school behave extremely well. Even the youngest children share and cooperate without prompting from adults. This positive culture is created through embedded routines and warm relationships. Pupils regularly talk about how to treat each other. Bullying is not a problem here. A respectful culture underpins the high-quality curriculum. The school has recently introduced systems to help pupils manage their emotions and make positive choices. These systems are having a notable impact, especially for vulnerable pupils.

Staff are extremely proud to be part of this school community. They have faith in leadership and are committed to providing the best possible education to the pupils who attend here.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in June 2019.

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

Unique reference number	143414
Local authority	Sunderland
Inspection number	10346630
Type of school	Infant
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	2 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	217
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Jackie Butterworth
Headteacher	Emma Robins
Website	www.newsilksworthacademy.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	11 and 12 June 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This school is on the same site as New Silksworth Academy Junior. The two schools are both part of Extol Trust. They have a shared headteacher and governing body.
- This school uses no alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- This inspection was carried out at the same time as an inspection of New Silksworth Academy Junior.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and the chief executive officer (CEO) of the trust. They also met with representatives from the trust board,

including the chair. They also met with representatives from the governing body, including the chair.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and art. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also discussed the curriculum and looked at planning in some other subjects.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors met with staff about the provision for pupils with SEND, early years, behaviour and attendance and personal development.
- Inspectors considered the views of staff and parents through online questionnaires.

Inspection team

Katie Spurr, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
David Mills	His Majesty's Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
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M1 2WD

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