

Inspection of a good school: New Silksworth Academy Junior

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

Inspection dates: 9 and 10 July 2024

Outcome

New Silksworth Academy Junior continues to be a good school.

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 pupils 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. Older pupils value their positions of responsibility in school, such as reading ambassadors, monitors and eco warriors.

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

The school has designed an ambitious curriculum that allows pupils 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, 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.

Mostly, teachers teach the ambitious curriculum well. They explain new concepts clearly and build in lots of opportunities for pupils to practise what they have learned. Most teachers regularly check what pupils have understood and remembered. However, there are occasions where the curriculum is not taught as well because questioning is not used as effectively, or explanations lack clarity.

Teachers use assessment over time 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. They work well together 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.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- On occasion, explanations are not sufficiently clear, or teachers do not systematically check pupils' understanding. This means that gaps in understanding may not be identified as quickly as they could. The school should ensure that ongoing professional development for staff continues to strengthen the consistent delivery of the curriculum.

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	143415
Local authority	Sunderland
Inspection number	10346631
Type of school	Junior
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	213
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Jackie Butterworth
Headteacher	Emma Robins
Website	www.newsilksworthacademy.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	18 and 19 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 Infant. 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 Infant.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and the chief executive officer 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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