

Inspection of West Newcastle Academy

Off Armstrong Road, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Tyne and Wear NE4 8QP

Inspection dates:	12 and 13 November 2024
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Good

The headteacher of this school is Susan Percy. This school is part of the West Newcastle Academy trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Susan Percy, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Shelagh Keogh.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at this school live out the school's values of 'ready, respectful, safe'. They benefit from many opportunities to embody these values. Pupils of all ages are happy and welcoming to visitors. They develop positive relationships with adults in school and with each other. Pupils from a wide range of backgrounds learn together in harmony.

The school has high expectations of pupils' achievement. Many pupils achieve well. This includes those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and pupils who speak English as an additional language. Where pupils' achievement does not meet expectations, well-trained staff put effective support in place.

The atmosphere in school is calm and purposeful. Pupils' behaviour is not a barrier to learning. If pupils struggle with their behaviour from time to time, the school takes sensitive and appropriate action to address this. Pupils show consideration and care for others. They are safe in school. Parents and carers agree.

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

There is real ambition at West Newcastle Academy. From children's first days in early years, talented staff support children through a detailed curriculum. The curriculum is explicitly developed to take account of children's prior knowledge. Staff use communication, language and vocabulary with precision. Children who speak English as an additional language particularly benefit from this provision. Children develop their knowledge and skills through exciting and engaging activities.

Well-trained staff deliver the school's phonics programme with fidelity. Over time, pupils develop their phonics knowledge. They become increasingly fluent readers. Staff make checks on pupils' phonics knowledge to pinpoint gaps in knowledge. They put effective support in place to close these gaps. As a result, pupils quickly catch up. However, published phonics outcomes for 2024 were well below national figures. These phonics outcomes do not reflect the quality of the school's phonics teaching, or pupils' attainment from their starting points.

Pupils enjoy memorable learning experiences in other curriculum areas. Pupils with SEND have their needs identified quickly. Effective provision and support allow these pupils to achieve and succeed. Lessons enable pupils to develop a broad base of knowledge. They then apply this knowledge in their learning. For example, pupils confidently discuss the properties of pentagons and hexagons. They then use this knowledge to solve mathematical problems based on shape. Younger pupils enjoyed their walk in the local area. They can recall key points in their journey and use satellite imagery to help embed their understanding of place. However, processes for checking pupils' long-term understanding of what they have learned are not sufficiently robust. This means that some gaps in knowledge are not consistently identified and addressed.

The school has developed a quality curriculum to engage and enthuse pupils. However, too many pupils miss out on the rich experiences the school offers due to absence.

Procedures to follow up on absence are robust. The school takes action to address absence. However, while this is having a positive impact in some cases, this is not consistent. The proportion of pupils who are absent or persistently absent is high. Behaviour across school is positive. Pupils demonstrate respect for themselves and others. Expectations are high. Routines are well embedded.

There is a clear, well-considered and effective programme for pupils' wider development. Caring staff support pupils' pastoral needs well. The extensive programme of outdoor and community learning allows pupils to develop resilience, self-belief and self-confidence. This prepares them well for life beyond school. Pupils develop a keen understanding of equality. They celebrate diversity. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural education ensures that pupils appreciate and understand a range of religions and beliefs. There is a wide range of clubs available to pupils. Many take up these opportunities.

Those responsible for management fulfil their roles with diligence. The school arranges effective professional development for new staff. Leaders engage well with staff around their workload and well-being. Many parents compliment the school highly on its engagement with them. There is a tangible focus on doing the best for all children. The vision of 'every child is at the heart of all we do' is evident throughout the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Checks on learning in some subjects are not being used to understand pupils' long-term retention of skills and knowledge. This means that gaps in pupils' knowledge are not always identified and addressed. The school should refine its approach to checking pupils' long-term learning so that it is more robust.
- The proportion of pupils who are absent or persistently absent from school is high. This means that these pupils regularly miss important learning and struggle to catch up. The school should continue to engage with parents to reduce the proportion of pupils who are absent from school.

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	139729
Local authority	Newcastle upon Tyne
Inspection number	10346497
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy free school
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	201
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Shelagh Keogh
CEO of the trust	Susan Percy
Headteacher	Susan Percy
Website	www.westnewcastleacademy.org
Dates of previous inspection	5 and 6 June 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- There has been a significant change in staffing over the last year. The deputy headteacher was appointed in February 2024. A number of other staff have been appointed within the last year.
- This school is the only establishment in the West Newcastle Academy trust.
- The school makes use of one registered alternative provision.
- The school's early years and Year 1 provision is under the registration of the school. It operates from separate premises with a different postcode to the main school building.
- Wraparound childcare operates on site under the management of the trust.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and

management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation 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.
- The inspectors met with the headteacher, other senior leaders, other school staff, representatives of the governing body and a representative of the trust.
- The lead inspector spoke with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, history and geography. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teacher, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- An inspector also visited a lesson in another subject and also visited an outdoor learning session.
- An inspector listened to pupils from Years 1 and 2 reading to a familiar adult.
- An inspector met with some parents at the end of the school day.
- 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 analysed the responses to Ofsted's staff survey. They reviewed responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments.

Inspection team

Richard Beadnall, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Julie Hall

Ofsted Inspector

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