

Inspection of a good school: Newbridge Learning Community

Moss Lane, Platt Bridge, Wigan, Lancashire WN2 3TL

Inspection dates: 26 and 27 March 2024

Outcome

Newbridge Learning Community continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils feel safe and well cared for in this school. They enjoy the small class sizes and get the help that they need from the adults around them. The school has high expectations for pupils and this supports pupils to achieve well. They are happy and enjoy the practical lessons, including cookery, motorcycle mechanics and art and design. Pupils are proud of their achievements. Displays around the school are full of pupils' creative and written work. A league trophy, recently won by the school football team, takes pride of place.

Over time, pupils learn to manage their emotions and behaviour. Staff help them to find their own unique strategies, which pupils use in school to reduce any anxiety or negative emotions. Pupils trust the adults in school. They feel listened to and know that adults will intervene swiftly if any pupils fall out. The school promotes and celebrates positive behaviour. Pupils earn points, for example, when they show respect, kindness or self-discipline. They value these points and use them towards end of term trips or to buy a non-uniform day.

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

The school has carefully considered the special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) of the pupils in school when designing the curriculum. The curriculum is broad and ambitious and allows pupils to study a wide range of subjects. The school has also ensured that the curriculum allows pupils, who may have significant gaps in their knowledge, to catch up quickly. This ensures that pupils achieve nationally recognised qualifications, including GCSEs and vocational awards.

Teachers know which type of activities will engage pupils' curiosity and will prompt pupils to ask appropriate questions. This is because the school clearly identifies pupils' SEND and understands how to support individual pupils to learn well. Staff provide pupils with frequent and varied opportunities to explain their thinking. This helps pupils to build their knowledge and gain in confidence in each subject. In most subjects, before moving pupils on in their learning, teachers use a range of assessment strategies to check what pupils

have remembered and understood. The curriculums in these subjects are well thought out and allow pupils to build on what they already know.

However, in a small number of subjects, the curriculum is not as well developed. It is not always clear to staff what pupils need to know. In addition, staff have not received relevant support and training. This means that they are unclear about the strategies and resources that they should use to help pupils to learn well. At times, this causes some pupils to become distracted from their learning and they do not learn as well as they could.

There is a strong culture of reading in this school. Pupils read widely and often. The school has a vast range of exciting and age-appropriate books that pupils enjoy reading. The books can be read by pupils who are at the early stages of reading as well as pupils who are fluent readers. The school identifies pupils who may need additional support with their reading. There is a range of in-class and one-to-one support in place to help these pupils with their reading. Pupils gain the knowledge and skills that they need to become confident, fluent readers.

Regular attendance is a high priority for the school. It works closely with parents and carers, the local authority and a range of additional organisations to overcome any barriers to attendance. The school tries different strategies and will not give up until they see improvements. This practice has resulted in some significant improvements to pupils' attendance over time.

The school's work to support pupils' personal development is highly effective. It prepares pupils well for their next stage in education and adulthood. There is a well-established programme of lessons and activities, which allow pupils to learn about themselves, relationships, careers and life in modern Britain. A recent activity week focused on 'living in the wider world' and this had been carefully thought through. Some pupils met community first responders and learned some first aid. Older pupils had mock interviews and received feedback from local business owners. Other pupils enjoyed workshops around keeping themselves safe in the community.

The vast majority of staff are proud to work in this school. They can talk to leaders if they have any concerns about their workload or well-being. They feel that leaders will listen and give them additional time to complete tasks when they need it.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a small number of subjects, the curriculum does not make clear what pupils need to learn. Consequently, pupils do not build their learning on what they already know. The

school should ensure that all subjects are well designed so that pupils can acquire the intended knowledge and skills that they need.

- In some subjects, staff have not received the training and support that they need to engage pupils in their learning. Consequently, at times, pupils disengage from their learning and do not learn as well as they could. The school should ensure that the learning activities provided for pupils enable them to achieve well in all subjects.

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 second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in November 2012.

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	135199
Local authority	Wigan
Inspection number	10256227
Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	88
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Michael John Inman
Headteacher	Elaine Kucharski
Website	www.newbridge.wigan.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	9 November 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school uses five unregistered alternative providers.
- All pupils have an education, health and care plan. The school caters for pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

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.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, senior leaders, subject leaders and members of the governing body, including the chair of the governing body. An inspector also spoke

with a representative of the local authority and a representative of the local school improvement board.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English and reading, mathematics and humanities (history and geography). 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 in some other subjects.
- 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 reviewed a range of documents, including policies and analyses of pupils' behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors spoke to some pupils and staff about the school. They also observed pupils during lunch and breaktimes.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's online surveys for staff. They also considered the views of parents expressed through Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses. An inspector also spoke with a number of parents. There were no responses to the pupil survey to consider.

Inspection team

Julie Bather, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Michelle Beard

Ofsted Inspector

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