

Newark Orchard School

Appletongate, Newark, Nottinghamshire NG24 1JR

Inspection dates

17–18 January 2017

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
16 to 19 study programmes	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because senior leaders and governors have not ensured that all staff follow the school's agreed policies and procedures. Consequently, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is not consistently good across the school.
- The governing body does not always hold senior leaders and staff to account for the quality and impact of some aspects of the school's work.
- The plans for school improvement lack the necessary detail. They do not identify who is responsible for checking specific actions or give tight enough timescales for tasks to be reviewed or completed.
- Senior leaders and governors do not currently have an accurate view of pupils' progress and attainment in English and mathematics.
- Systems for evaluating the effectiveness of the school's work are not rigorous enough. As a result, senior leaders and governors do not have an accurate view of the school's current strengths and weaknesses.
- Where teaching is strongest, pupils make good progress from their starting points. However, where teaching is poorly planned, work is not well matched to pupils' needs, pupils are not challenged effectively and their progress is hampered.
- A small minority of staff do not consistently model positive attitudes to learning or present themselves in and around school with the necessary professionalism.
- Targets to promote the continuing professional development of the staff are not linked closely enough to the priorities for whole-school improvement.

The school has the following strengths

- Senior leaders and governors are uncompromising in their efforts to provide all pupils with the highest possible quality of care and personal support. Consequently, all pupils make good or better progress in their personal, social and emotional development.
- The behaviour of pupils is consistently good.
- The broad curriculum contributes exceptionally well to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of all pupils throughout the school.
- The 16 to 19 provision in the school is consistently well led and prepares learners and their families for life beyond Newark Orchard.

Full report

In accordance with sections 44(2) and 13(3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than it might in all the circumstances reasonably be expected to perform.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that:
 - all teachers follow the school's agreed policy and processes for assessing pupils' learning
 - all lessons are planned effectively so that activities are better matched to pupils' needs and pupils are suitably challenged and valuable learning time is not lost
 - all staff have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and model positive attitudes to learning.
- Improve leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - plans for improving the school are clear, measurable and set within specific timeframes
 - the governing body holds senior leaders to account more effectively for tackling poor professional conduct and poor teaching
 - governors and senior leaders have a more accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses, as well as pupils' progress and attainment in separate subjects, including English and mathematics
 - the targets which are set to improve the performance of individual staff link more closely to the agreed priorities for whole-school development so that the pace of improvement quickens.

An external review of governance should be undertaken to assess how this aspect of leadership and management can be improved further to bring about the developments needed in the school.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because systems for monitoring and evaluating the work of the school are weak. Consequently, while the school has maintained some strengths since the previous inspection, senior leaders and governors have an overly positive view of the current quality of teaching, learning and assessment across the school.
- Leaders do not have an accurate view of pupils' progress and attainment in English and mathematics.
- Leaders do not make thorough checks to make sure that all staff follow agreed school practice and fulfil their individual roles and responsibilities effectively. There are occasions where senior leaders do not challenge the poor or mediocre performance of a minority of staff swiftly enough. A minority of staff do not consistently model positive attitudes to learning in classrooms and do not model self-pride in their work or personal appearance.
- Plans for improving the school are not as precise as they need to be. They lack clear timelines and important details about who will be checking that agreed actions have been reviewed and completed.
- The priorities which have been identified for school improvement for this current year have not been communicated effectively to all staff. Although the majority of staff have a clear understanding of their individual roles, there is no shared vision of what the school needs to do next.
- Senior leaders and governors have ensured that all teachers have targets to help them to improve their practice. However, these need to match the school's current priorities more closely so that the pace of improvement increases.
- Subject leaders have the necessary knowledge and expertise to improve teaching and learning across the school. For example, the greater focus on the teaching of phonics since the previous inspection and the introduction of new practical resources to support early mathematical skills appear to be bearing fruit. However, leaders do not analyse the impact of subject leaders' work sufficiently. Also, not all teachers are carrying out the agreed assessments of pupils' learning. As a result, senior leaders and governors lack a sound understanding of which strategies are working best for different groups of pupils.
- The governors and senior leaders have worked hard since the previous inspection to plan the use of additional funding for pupils who receive the pupil premium and Year 7 catch-up funding more effectively. Leaders and teachers now identify individual programmes of support which are more closely linked to pupils' individual needs. The work in pupils' books and observations of pupils' learning indicate that these pupils are making greater progress than in the past.
- The school makes good use of the physical education and sports premium to enable all pupils, including those who have profound learning difficulties, to enjoy physical activity, develop self-confidence and acquire new physical skills.

- Leaders and governors ensure that pupils of all abilities have equal access to a broad and exciting curriculum. The most able pupils learn a foreign language and all pupils experience a wide range of activities to promote their understanding of geography, history, science and music.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development extremely well. This is a strength of the school. Pupils of all abilities develop a love of singing through the school choir. Annual events such as the school prom are used to celebrate pupils' achievements and increase their confidence in taking part in social activities in the wider community.
- There is a strong culture of safeguarding throughout the school. Staff are highly skilled at interpreting the different ways in which pupils communicate and this helps keep pupils safe. Staff work in close partnership with a very wide range of different professional agencies from health and social care services. They make sure that the complex needs of many pupils are well met and that families feel well supported and know who to turn to at times of difficulty.
- Pupils of all abilities and of all ages develop a strong sense of personal responsibility and fairness and, in this respect, are well prepared for life in modern Britain.

Governance of the school

- The governing body has not ensured that senior leaders have provided them with the necessary information to give them an accurate view of pupils' progress and attainment in English and mathematics. Consequently, they have not been able to challenge senior leaders effectively about pupils' progress.
- Governors have not held senior leaders to account effectively for the impact of their work. As a result, they do not currently have a fully accurate view of areas where urgent improvement is needed in some aspects of the school's work.
- All members of the governing body are extremely proud of Newark Orchard and invest a lot of time in attending meetings and visiting the school. Several members have demonstrated an unwavering commitment to the school over many years. However, more recently, they have not ensured that the plans for school improvement are detailed enough to bring about the next steps that are needed to improve teaching, learning and assessment.
- The chair of governors works successfully with the headteacher to ensure that the personal, social and emotional needs of the pupils remain at the heart of the school's work.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The sites are secure and suitably organised to meet the diverse needs of all pupils, many of whom have significant mobility difficulties.
- Governors and leaders have established a culture across the school where pupils are always listened to and parents are well supported.

- Senior leaders regularly check that agreed processes are being followed and all staff are trained appropriately for their individual roles and responsibilities. Senior leaders make sure that new staff receive detailed information about all aspects of safeguarding.
- The safeguarding needs of pupils who have complex disabilities are met extremely well. Leaders ensure that all staff work in close partnership with professionals from health services and other agencies. This enables all pupils to be safely included in the full range of school activities.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement because not all staff have high enough expectations of pupils or follow the school's agreed approach for planning and assessing what pupils have learned. The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is not consistently good in all classes or across both sites.
- The quality of staff interaction with pupils, including questioning, is too variable. Many staff are highly successful in supporting the language and understanding of pupils who have particularly complex needs, but this good practice is not routinely shared with all staff.
- The teaching of mathematics is generally good across the school but, in some classes, pupils do not have enough opportunity to reflect on questions or to work things out for themselves.
- Subject leaders have high expectations of all pupils. New systems have been introduced to monitor pupils' progress in English, mathematics and science and for identifying targets for pupils' next steps. However, there is more to be done to ensure that all teachers follow agreed practice, have an up-to-date and accurate view of each pupil's attainment and plan lessons that match pupils' understanding, interests and needs.
- In classes where teaching is consistently strong, pupils enjoy their learning, are frequently challenged and make good progress.
- The teaching of phonics is increasingly effective across the school. However, this is not the case in all classes. Where reading is taught well, pupils are developing a love of books and some most-able pupils become fluent readers. During the inspection, a Year 6 pupil eagerly and proudly read sections of a factual book about microscopes to the inspector and went on to explain confidently how a scientific theory has recently been disproved. Pupils' enjoyment of reading is also supported through much-loved opportunities to read books in the company of Tara the school dog.
- All pupils, whatever their level of disability, experience a very broad range of subjects and are given frequent opportunities to learn beyond the walls of their classroom. Pupils regularly take part in learning and cultural activities alongside pupils from other schools and colleges, go on visits into the community and spend time on residential trips. The pupils say how much they enjoy these events.
- All pupils experience many different types of music and sport during their time at Newark Orchard and often gain awards for their impressive achievements.

- The majority of parents who completed questionnaires or spoke to inspectors say that they are kept well informed about their children's learning. They also say that they are given lots of ideas about how they can support their child's learning at home and are extremely positive about the progress which their children make at Newark Orchard. The school has recently introduced an initiative through which parents can access books from the school's online library to read with their children at home.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The school's breakfast clubs provide a warm and positive start to the school day for the pupils who attend.
- The relationships between the staff and the pupils are consistently warm and respectful.
- Pupils thrive in their personal development and well-being during their time at the school. The school invests heavily in training for staff in relation to the management of pupils' behaviour and personal, social and emotional development. Staff work exceptionally hard to build pupils' self-confidence and there is generally a strong 'can do' culture across the school.
- The vast majority of staff consistently model positive attitudes to learning and, as a result, pupils try their best and develop the confidence to try things they previously thought impossible.
- Parents specifically praise the school's work in developing children's independence and self-help skills. Several parents were keen to tell inspectors how the school has made 'an incredible difference' to their child's overall quality of life.
- The school's programme of work to promote independence in school and the wider community is highly successful. In some cases, older pupils are now able to use public transport by themselves and younger pupils who were not able to walk independently when they first arrived at the school are now able to move around the school with minimal adult support.
- The pupils receive useful information about the opportunities that are waiting for them in work and training when they leave school. The staff are highly skilled in using a wide range of communication systems to ensure that all pupils have the opportunity to express their views and fulfil their individual ambitions.
- Leaders refuse to see pupils' disabilities as barriers to learning and achievement. For example, support staff have received the appropriate training from physiotherapists to enable them to carry out programmes of exercise and support safely for individual pupils in school. As a result, there are fewer absences for attending medical appointments.
- Pupils of varying abilities have a very clear understanding of how to keep themselves safe. They understand about the dangers of being online and know who to go to if they need help either at home or at school.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They behave well at all times of the day, in and out of lessons. Pupils take pride in themselves and their work.
- The headteacher is uncompromising in her determination that all pupils are polite and respectful to one another and they do not let her down.
- Pupils develop a very strong sense of fairness and recognise the importance of sharing and valuing one another's differences. A group of pupils told an inspector that everyone at Newark Orchard is expected to take care of one another and, indeed, this is clearly the case.
- The majority of staff use praise effectively to recognise pupils' best efforts but also to encourage them to do even better. The majority of pupils have a very clear understanding of what is expected of them.
- Leaders plan regular opportunities for young pupils to work alongside older pupils. For example, key stage 3 pupils told inspectors how much they enjoy going to a nearby college to take part in physical education lessons with key stage 4 learners.
- The work to support the pupils with the most challenging behaviour has improved since the previous inspection. Senior leaders now ensure that all staff receive the training needed. Consequently, the school's own records show that incidents of poor behaviour have reduced since the time of the previous inspection.
- The attendance of pupils is also improving over time. The rewards system introduced since the previous inspection works well and absences are reducing.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Outcomes for pupils are not yet good because leaders are not able to demonstrate that pupils are making consistently strong progress in individual subjects, including English and mathematics.
- The school's records for 2015/2016 show that the majority of pupils made expected progress towards the overall targets identified in their individual education, health and care plans. Information also showed that there was little difference in the achievement of different groups of pupils. However, work in pupils' books and teachers' observations indicate that pupils who receive additional funding and support are making greater progress than in the past.
- The school's own scrutiny of pupils' work indicates that the progress and attainment of pupils currently in the school are strongest in key stage 2 and key stage 4.
- The school successfully involves pupils and their families in identifying pupils' next steps for learning. This ensures that pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, employment or training.
- The greater emphasis on reading and phonics since the previous inspection is leading to improved outcomes. More pupils than in the past are reading at higher standards and it is clear that, in classes where teaching is strongest, pupils are developing a real love of reading and delighting in a wide range of different types of books.

16 to 19 study programmes

Good

- The provision for 16 to 19 learners is well led and is a strength of the school.
- The senior leaders with responsibility for 16 to 19 study programmes have high expectations of staff and learners.
- The behaviour of learners is good and they develop impressive degrees of independence during their time in the department.
- There is a wide range of study programmes, carefully selected and tailored to meet the needs of individual learners. These include qualifications at entry levels 1–3, vocational courses and other courses leading to valuable accreditation.
- The most able learners study for GCSE and, in 2016, all leavers went on to some kind of employment or training.
- Impartial careers advice is available from the school and an external provider. Learners are effectively supported to make informed, realistic and ambitious plans for the future.
- The learners value their time in this part of the school and say that all staff help them to achieve and reach their full potential. Consequently, attendance and punctuality are good.
- Opportunities for work experience are well matched to learners' individual interests and abilities. On some occasions, these experiences have led directly to employment or apprenticeships.
- Teachers have high expectations of students and, in return, students demonstrate great pride in the presentation of their work.
- Learners are well supported to develop the personal, social and emotional skills they need to follow their chosen path, whether it is college, employment or other further study.
- Most pupils in key stage 4 continue to Year 12 and then into Year 13. The vast majority of students successfully complete their courses.
- Learners say that they feel safe at school. They learn about healthy eating, personal hygiene, internet safety and how to manage their feelings and behaviour. They also develop a wide range of essential skills associated with travel, shopping and cooking.
- Learners behave consistently well and show care and consideration to one another and to all staff. They take great pride in helping younger members of the school and are positive ambassadors for the whole of the school. They socialise well together and help one another to develop good habits of sharing, communal eating, playing games and looking after themselves.

School details

Unique reference number	130996
Local authority	Nottinghamshire
Inspection number	10005500

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	All-through special school
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	3 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	102
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	30
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Lesley Booth
Headteacher	Margot Tyers
Telephone number	01636 682 255
Website	www.newarkorchard.notts.sch.uk
Email address	office@newarkorchard.notts.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	3–4 July 2013

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- Newark Orchard is an all-age special school for pupils with moderate, severe and profound and multiple learning difficulties and social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. All pupils attending the school have an education, health and care plan or a statement of special educational needs.
- The school operates on two sites approximately a mile and a half apart. One site is for pupils aged three to 14 and the other is for pupils aged 14 to 19. The Bungalow

provision on the upper-school site, funded by the school, supports older pupils with complex emotional needs.

- A large proportion of pupils who join the school at the beginning of key stage 3 have experienced long periods of absence from school and/or attended several different schools prior to starting at Newark Orchard.
- There is currently only one child in the early years foundation stage. As a result, this key stage has not been reported on separately.
- A greater-than-average proportion of pupils receive free school meals.
- The majority of pupils are White British and speak English as their first language.
- The largest group of need continues to be pupils with autism spectrum disorder. School buildings have been reorganised since the previous inspection and a separate facility for pupils who have autism spectrum disorder, known as The Hub, now operates from two separate buildings on the lower-school site.
- The school has recently completed a restructuring of the senior leadership team.

Information about this inspection

- An inspector visited each of the sites. Inspectors observed teaching and learning in each age range across a range of subjects and in The Hub. Some of these observations were done jointly with the headteacher or deputy headteacher
- Inspectors listened to pupils read and talked to them about their learning. An inspector also met with members of the school council.
- Inspectors spoke to parents and considered 20 responses to Parent View, as well as the school's own questionnaires.
- Inspectors met with staff on each of the sites and took account of 12 questionnaire responses.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation, improvement plan and records for safeguarding.

Inspection team

Clare Cossor, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Dorothy Martin

Ofsted Inspector

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