

Newstead School

Bracknell Avenue, Southdene, Kirkby, Liverpool, Merseyside, L32 9PW

Inspection dates 28 February – 1 March 2013

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|--------------------------------|----------------------|-------------|----------|
| Overall effectiveness | Previous inspection: | Good | 2 |
| | This inspection: | Good | 2 |
| Achievement of pupils | | Good | 2 |
| Quality of teaching | | Good | 2 |
| Behaviour and safety of pupils | | Good | 2 |
| Leadership and management | | Good | 2 |

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The leadership team has maintained the good quality of teaching and good achievement reported at the last inspection. When pupils are admitted to the school, their attainment is low because of a history of disrupted education. However, pupils make accelerated progress and achieve well. Year 11 leavers attain a range of qualifications, including good GCSE passes.
- The partnerships with alternative providers are managed particularly well, which ensures that there is a good match between the pupils' learning needs and their courses.
- Practical subjects such as physical education, food technology and design and technology are major strengths. The pupils thoroughly enjoy these subjects and make consistently good or better progress.
- Teaching is good and continues to improve. Teachers have good subject knowledge and use the available time well.
- Behaviour is good and pupils feel safe in the school. Relationships are positive and this leads to high levels of mutual respect. Pupils and staff enjoy their lunchtime and after-school activities. The football team is very successful and the pupils are proud to represent their school. Displays throughout the school acknowledge and celebrate the pupils' many achievements.
- Leadership and management are good. The senior leadership and management committee have a clear understanding of the strengths and areas for development, which provide the basis for continual school improvement. They ensure that the pupils receive an extensive range of academic, personal and therapeutic support to meet their needs fully. Safeguarding arrangements are very thorough and are very well supported by the management committee.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching is not yet outstanding, because data are not used precisely enough by the teachers to provide ambitious, yet realistic levels of challenge for the pupils. Teaching and learning are not as good in science as in English and mathematics.
- Although there has been a marked improvement in attendance, this is not consistently good across the school. This limits the progress of a small minority of pupils.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching and learning in 11 lessons, taught by nine teachers and an instructor. The headteacher was included in two joint observations. Inspectors visited both of the school sites. They also listened to pupils read. The inspectors scrutinised the pupils' previous work and the teachers' planning. An inspector observed pupils working at HYTEC, which is one of the alternative providers used by the school.
- The inspectors spoke with pupils during lessons and the lunch breaks. The pupils' activities during a lunch break were also observed.
- The inspectors took account of the online questionnaire (Parent View), although too few responses were registered to gain evidence. The school's analysis of questionnaires completed by parents was considered. The inspectors also met with two parents. Questionnaires completed by 22 members of staff were analysed and considered.
- Meetings were held with staff, members of the management committee and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation including: the pupils' progress data; the school's self-evaluation; the improvement plan; safeguarding policies; behaviour policies and behavioural records; and documents relating to setting targets for teachers to improve their work.

Inspection team

David Smith, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Jane Holmes

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Newstead is a pupil referral unit with provision on two sites. The main site provides for pupils from Key Stages 2 to 4. This is the first year that the school has educated Key Stage 2 pupils. The pupils on the smaller site are in Key Stage 3 and attend for a relatively short time, before returning to their mainstream school. Approximately a third of the pupils are registered at Newstead and a local school.
- There are nine girls on roll in Key Stages 3 and 4.
- The school receives the pupil premium, which is additional government funding for children in local authority care, those from service families and those known to be eligible for free schools meals. Nearly three quarters of the pupils are known to be eligible for free schools meals, which is well above average. A few children are in the care of the local authority. There are no service children on roll at the school.
- All of the pupils are supported at school action plus and 12 have statements of special educational needs.
- The staff team runs a breakfast club for the pupils that attend the school.
- The school uses several alternative providers, such as HYTEC, Dream Academy, Local Young Bike Riders Organisation and LearnFit/Educ8.
- All of the pupils are of White British heritage.
- The school has Healthy School status and the Bronze School Games Kitemark.
- The headteacher also works as the Head of Inclusion Services in the local authority.
- The school is due to start moving to a new site in the next few weeks and change the name to Meadow Park School.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the quality of teaching and learning so that achievement is outstanding by:
 - ensuring that pupils' progress data are used more precisely by teachers to set challenging but realistic targets for the pupils
 - improving the quality of teaching and learning in science, reducing the use of worksheets and increasing access to practical work and investigative activities.
- Ensure that improvements in pupils' attendance and behaviour continue by:
 - increasing the involvement of parents in the life of the school, by introducing after-school shared activities for pupils and parents
 - ensuring that the school becomes a hub for the community that it serves
 - developing regular attendance clinics, to engage parents more effectively in the drive to improve the persistent poor attendance of some pupils.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- The pupils' starting points in attainment are low when they join the school. Good progress is being made by the recently introduced Year 6 pupils. Approximately one in five of the Year 11 students attain five or more A* to C grades at GCSE or equivalent, which reflects good progress during their time at the school. A large majority of the pupils attain at least one qualification.
- Pupils make good progress in English, mathematics and information and communication technology but progress in science is not as good. Good progress is made in other subjects including physical education, food technology and design and technology. The high-quality art displays reflect the pupils' confidence and success in this subject.
- The school's data and inspection findings show that the progress of different groups of pupils is consistent with their peers in the school. All groups of pupils supported by the pupil premium, including those known to be eligible for free school meals, make good progress in line with other pupils in both English and mathematics. Pupils with a statement of special educational needs are provided with the support and challenge required to ensure that they make good progress.
- Short-stay pupils make particularly good progress in English and mathematics but not enough progress in science. They are prepared well for their return to mainstream education. Newstead and other schools work very well together to share responsibility for these pupils. The school is successful in increasing the number of pupils reintegrated into mainstream.
- The school has placed a high priority on improving the pupils' reading skills. There is a good selection of books available and pupils have the opportunity to read every day. The younger pupils are particularly keen to read, while the staff use a wide range of strategies to engage the more reluctant older pupils. The less confident readers are provided with additional support to boost their progress through an approach using phonics (linking letters and the sounds they make).
- Good use is made of alternative provision that matches pupils' needs and this leads to the attainment of qualifications at the appropriate level. Pupils make good progress; those observed on a visit to a provider were working enthusiastically and with a high degree of independence. The pupils respond well to the adult environment, which prepares them well for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
- Despite very good personal support, low attendance does still limit the progress of a small minority of pupils, although attendance and progress are improving for this group of pupils.

The quality of teaching is good

- Good subject knowledge and well-planned learning contribute to good progress. The staff know the pupils very well and form positive relationships which help to ensure that the pupils enjoy their learning. There is a brisk pace to learning and a wide range of strategies keeps the pupils engaged. Marking is thorough and informative and pupils are made aware of how to improve their work. The promotion of the pupils' skills in reading, writing, communication and mathematics is good.
- There was a clear focus on healthy lifestyles in a food technology lesson for Year 6 pupils. All of the pupils were busy and fully occupied preparing their lasagne. They were quite rightly very proud of their finished dishes, which looked very appetising. However, the targets for this group did not have sufficient challenge and limited progress to good rather than outstanding. In another lesson, Year 6 pupils made good progress in their understanding of averages in mathematics. Learning was purposeful and there was no time lost in the transition between activities. Staff provided regular feedback to pupils and ensured that they were clear about their progress and the next steps in their learning.
- Year 9 pupils made good progress in their animation skills and produced some high-quality recordings of their work. The teaching assistant made an excellent contribution to the pupils'

learning. Pupils had the confidence and maturity to assess one another's work in a constructive manner.

- Year 11 pupils were very keen to achieve well in a physical education lesson. They were fully aware of how to raise their grades and showed that they valued the opportunity to work towards qualifications. Year 11 pupils also made good progress in an English lesson and they demonstrated a deeper understanding of the characters and events in a play. In a design and technology lesson, skilled questioning helped Year 11 pupils to make good progress in developing their understanding of the technology industry. The pupils' behaviour in all of these lessons was outstanding and showed the positive impact of their time at Newstead.
- On the smaller site, enthusiastic teaching ensured that the Key Stage 3 pupils were fully engaged in their learning and made good progress. The pupils had a positive work ethic and were keen to answer questions about keeping healthy. A wide range of strategies was used to maintain a brisk pace to learning and ensured that no time was wasted. Pupils' previous work in English and mathematics shows that the pupils are making rapid progress in their short stay at the school.
- Too many worksheets are used in the teaching of science across the school, which limits the pupils' opportunities to work by themselves and to practise extended writing. Too few opportunities are provided in science for pupils to learn through their involvement in practical and investigative work, which slows down progress.
- The school has introduced a clear system to measure progress in small steps. The collection of progress data is rigorous. Data are analysed to measure progress for individual students as well as for groups of students. However, the use of such data to set targets accurately is not precise enough; as a result, some of the targets are too ambitious while others are not challenging enough.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils are making good progress in their attitudes, behaviour and confidence because of the very high-quality support provided by the staff and other agencies. The school's very generous staffing levels allow opportunities for one-to-one support for pupils to help prepare them for learning.
- The staff team effectively promotes pupils' interest and enthusiasm for learning and, as a result, pupils' attendance improves, when compared to their previous placement. However, despite the extensive range of strategies used, the attendance of a small minority of pupils remains too low. The new site is more central in the borough and closer to the homes of many of the pupils, which will make it easier for parents to be more fully involved in the life of the school.
- Behaviour in class is good and, at times, outstanding. This is a marked improvement over time, especially for the pupils with particular behavioural needs, and it has led to a reduction in fixed-term exclusions. There is a positive ethos in the school and teachers are able to focus on promoting good progress. Pupils are taking increased responsibility for their own behaviour and where disruption does occur, they are encouraged to learn from their mistakes. Pupils mentioned that they appreciate the support they receive and enjoy working with the staff.
- The breakfast club and lunch activities are positive social events where the pupils and staff enjoy one another's company.
- There is an excellent focus on health and safety. Pupils are made very aware of the dangers of the inappropriate use of the internet. Pupils say that they feel safe in the school and parents agree with this.
- The behaviour and safety of pupils who attend the alternative provision are checked by the school very regularly. Their attendance and behaviour are good and staff at HYTEC confirmed that the pupils are well motivated and relate well to one another.
- Pupils gain a good understanding of the different types of bullying during assemblies and their personal, social and health education lessons. Pupils and parents confirmed that there is a little bullying but when it does happen, staff manage it effectively.

The leadership and management are good

- Confident and well-established leadership has developed a cohesive staff team, with a shared ambition for improvement. The headteacher's enthusiasm and energy help to raise aspirations across the school. The staff team works effectively to reverse the pupils' negative views towards their education and provides them with equality of opportunity with their peers in mainstream schools. A parent commented that 'the school is fabulous and has transformed [her] son's attitude to learning.' She also stressed that her son had been prepared very well for the next stage of his education at college.
- Good progress has been made towards the key issues from the last inspection. The school's view of its own performance is robust and improvement planning is clearly focused and effective.
- There are consistently high expectations for teaching and learning. Good quality policies ensure that pupils make good progress in their literacy and marking is consistently good.
- The local authority has provided a light level of support for this good school. Local schools are encouraged to work together to help one another in the drive for continual improvement. Staff are positive about the training opportunities that this approach provides. The headteacher's dual role has had a positive impact on the school and has helped to shape behaviour policies in the local authority. The imminent move to a new site is an exciting development and places the school more centrally in the community that it serves. This provides the opportunity for the school to become a hub in the area for a range of family-linked activities.
- There are very strong links with a wide range of partners, including local high schools. The staff work well with parents but need to involve them more fully in the life of the school with, for example, the provision of attendance clinics. The management of the links with alternative providers is very good; this contributes to the positive progress made in pupils' personal development and the range of qualifications pupils can gain.
- The curriculum is well managed and meets the needs, aptitudes and interests of the pupils. The school has specialist facilities for most subjects and very good use is made of the local area to boost the opportunities for physical education. There is a wide range of extra-curricular and enrichment activities offered by the school. Pupils stated that they thoroughly enjoy activities including boxing and table tennis.
- Safeguarding procedures are rigorous and meet all current statutory requirements.
- The school is good at promoting the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils are willing to participate in, and respond to, artistic, musical, sporting and other cultural activities in developing their respect for cultural diversity. This is good progress since the school's previous inspection.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Members of the management committee know the school very well and provide a blend of support and challenge to school leaders. They offer a very good level of support for safeguarding, which ensures that statutory requirements are met. Members of the management committee have attended appropriate training to help hold the school to account for safeguarding. Performance management systems are used to set appropriate targets for leaders and teachers and the management committee know about the link between the quality of teachers' work and arrangements for pay. The management committee is kept informed about the quality of teaching and of the provision and about the progress of pupils, including those supported by the pupil premium. This additional money provides, for example, specialist support to ensure that learning is tailored to meet the pupils' needs.

What inspection judgements mean

| School | | |
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| Grade | Judgement | Description |
| Grade 1 | Outstanding | An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment. |
| Grade 2 | Good | A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment. |
| Grade 3 | Requires improvement | A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection. |
| Grade 4 | Inadequate | <p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> |

School details

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| Unique reference number | 104418 |
| Local authority | Knowsley |
| Inspection number | 400715 |

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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| Type of school | Pupil referral unit |
| School category | Pupil referral unit |
| Age range of pupils | 8–16 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 81 |
| Appropriate authority | The local authority |
| Chair | Cllr N Keats |
| Headteacher | Mr M Marshall |
| Date of previous school inspection | 28 June 2010 |
| Telephone number | 0151 477 8382 |
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