

Inspection of an outstanding school: Newlands Girls' School

Farm Road, Maidenhead, Berkshire SL6 5JB

Inspection dates:

21 and 22 May 2024

Outcome

Newlands Girls' School continues to be an outstanding school.

The headteacher of this school is Jo Capon. This school is a single academy trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Stephen Bridge.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils thrive at this exceptional school. They are incredibly proud to be a part of the inclusive and high achieving community. Pupils benefit from the very high aspirations that are set for their learning. The wide-ranging personal development and extra-curricular opportunities significantly enhance school life. Pupils value the numerous clubs and trips that they are involved with.

Pupils are happy and feel safe. Their behaviour is impeccable. Pupils are kind to one another and celebrate others' talents. They build confidence when performing to their peers through dance, music or sport. In this school everyone is accepted and cultural differences are celebrated. Pupils cherish diversity, saying 'we are free to be who we are'. At the time of the inspection, pupils were preparing for the upcoming 'culture day'. They were excited about sharing food, music and clothing from different countries.

The school's values of courage, commitment and compassion are the pillars of daily school life. Pupils delight in the badges they receive, or having hot chocolate with the headteacher, in recognition of demonstrating these and making a positive contribution to the school. Pupils play a highly active role in school life, leading assemblies and school events or taking on many roles of responsibility.

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

Pupils benefit from an exceedingly high quality of education. As a result, pupils, including the small number of disadvantaged pupils, achieve remarkably well. The school has designed an ambitious and academically demanding curriculum. For example, all pupils study three modern foreign languages in Year 7, with many going on to study languages

in key stage 4. The knowledge that pupils should learn has been meticulously planned. New learning is carefully sequenced and successfully builds on pupils' prior knowledge.

Teachers have the expertise and training required to deliver the curriculum in a highly effective fashion. They follow the school's six 'teaching and learning principles'. This ensures that new learning is introduced clearly and this is frequently revisited to ensure that important knowledge is retained over time. Pupils' literacy skills are carefully honed. In the sixth form, students make detailed notes and write to a high standard. Teachers skilfully check pupils' understanding. They identify any gaps in knowledge and correct misconceptions in a timely way. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) benefit from close support. Staff confidently adapt learning to meet their individual needs.

The school emphasise the importance of reading. Pupils learn the specific vocabulary used within each subject. Texts studied in English are carefully selected and develop pupils' imagination. Many pupils enjoy reading for pleasure. Pupils' reading ability is checked at frequent points. The small number of pupils who require further support to develop confidence and fluency with reading get all the help they need.

Pupils display consistently positive attitudes to their learning. High expectations of pupils' behaviour, both in and outside of the classroom, are consistently upheld. Within lessons, pupils learn in a calm and focused environment. Pupils appreciate the security of knowing what is expected of them along with the pastoral support they get in the 'student focus centre'. School attendance is high. Leaders rigorously track trends and patterns in absence, taking intelligent action to address this. Their thorough analysis ensures that the school provides targeted support for the small number of pupils with lower attendance.

The extensive personal development programme enables pupils to learn about life in modern Britain and the wider world. Teaching about fundamental British values, including through assemblies, ensures pupils develop a keen understanding of the rule of law and the British parliamentary system. Relationships and sex education is age appropriate. It focuses on developing pupils' understanding of healthy, consenting relationships. Pupils look out for one another. Sixth-form students play an active role in supporting younger pupils. The 'big sister, little sister' approach provides younger pupils with nurturing mentorship.

The school provides a comprehensive careers programme. Pupils regularly meet with and visit employers. 'World of Work' days provide pupils with high quality guidance through workshops and talks led by external businesses and providers. Students in the sixth form value trips to universities to learn what higher education entails. This motivates them to strive for academic success.

Staff are highly committed to the school. They value the professional development opportunities that ensures they continue to develop their expertise. Leaders are considerate of workload. Staff appreciate the opportunity to share their views and ideas with leaders. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school. One parent reflected the views of many when saying 'Newlands has been an outstanding choice of school for my daughter and I would recommend it to any parents without hesitation.'

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Background

When we have judged a school to be outstanding, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains outstanding. 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 outstanding in October 2018.

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	142357
Local authority	Windsor and Maidenhead
Inspection number	10322003
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Girls
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Girls
Number of pupils on the school roll	1200
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	237
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Stephen Bridge
Headteacher	Jo Capon
Website	www.newlandsgirlsschool.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	9 and 10 October 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The headteacher was appointed to her role since the last inspection. There have also been a number of other changes in leadership at the school.
- The school is a single-academy trust.
- The school currently uses one registered and one un-registered alternative providers to support the education of a very small number of pupils.
- 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 educational 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. The lead inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken that into account in his evaluation of the school.
- The inspectors met with the headteacher, senior leaders, subject leaders, the leader responsible for pupils with SEND, other teachers and support staff.
- The lead inspector met with trustees.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, science, physical education and music. 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.
- 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.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils and staff to hear their views.
- The inspectors considered the responses to the confidential Ofsted surveys for staff, pupils and Ofsted Parent View.

Inspection team

Martin Smith, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Lucy Hillyard

Ofsted Inspector

Nick Simmonds

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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