

# Inspection of Newfield School

Old Bank Lane, Off Shadsworth Road, Blackburn, Lancashire BB1 2PW

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Inspection dates:	3 and 4 December 2024
The quality of education	<b>Good</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Good</b>
Personal development	<b>Good</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Early years provision	<b>Good</b>
Sixth-form provision	<b>Good</b>
Previous inspection grade	Requires Improvement

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

This is a welcoming school where pupils are known and celebrated as individuals. From the early years, pupils settle into the routines of school life well when they join the school. Relationships between pupils and staff are caring and strong. This helps pupils to feel happy and safe.

Pupils enjoy their learning, which is designed to stimulate their interests, develop their independence and prepare them well for adulthood. Expectations for their academic and social achievements are high, no matter which pathway they follow. Pupils make timely progress toward their personal goals.

Pupils, including students in the sixth form, benefit from staff's effective use of sensory and therapeutic approaches. This gives pupils the tools to regulate their behaviour. Staff swiftly respond to pupils' individual needs if they struggle with any emotional difficulties. Consequently, pupils' behaviour is calm in lessons and at other times during the day.

The school nurtures pupils' personal development well. Pupils relish the opportunities on offer to them. These help to develop and broaden their understanding of the world around them. For example, pupils enjoy performing with a visiting theatre production company and regular trips to the swimming pool. They are proud to compete in a bowling competition with other local schools.

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

The school has raised the bar on what it expects pupils to learn. It has identified the building blocks of knowledge that pupils should know and remember. Learning is sequenced seamlessly from the early years to sixth form. Importantly, pupils follow a curriculum that is highly personalised to their individual needs. This helps all pupils, including those with profound and complex needs, to learn well.

Staff have benefited from extensive training to support the individual special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) of pupils in their classes. Staff use effective assessment strategies to establish pupils' starting points and to shape their future learning. This helps staff to make sure that pupils' learning builds on the things they already know. However, in some subjects, including in the sixth form, the activities that staff select are sometimes not the most appropriate tasks to help pupils learn new concepts. This means that, at times, some pupils cannot understand what staff expect them to do and lose focus.

Across the school, there are thoughtful learning environments to suit each learning pathway. For example, sensory rooms provide calm, safe spaces for pupils receiving therapeutic support. Older pupils benefit from spaces set up to promote independence, for example in switch training and cooking skills. However, in the early years, the school has not considered carefully enough how it uses its indoor and outdoor spaces. As a result, the quality of opportunities for children to engage in play is variable. This hampers their ability to develop curiosity, to explore and to foster active learning through play.

The school prioritises the development of pupils' reading, language and communication skills. Staff use a wide range of communication strategies and tools. In the early years, children are immersed in a language-rich environment where they regularly hear songs, rhymes and stories. Students in the sixth form are supported to practise communication skills in the community. Staff skilfully teach the school's phonics programme. Pupils read from books that are matched to the sounds that they already know. This helps pupils to become confident and fluent readers.

All pupils who attend the school have an education, health and care (EHC) plan. The school has effective strategies in place to identify and support any additional SEND that pupils may have. This includes wraparound provision for pupils' sensory and behavioural needs. Typically, classrooms are harmonious and purposeful. Pupils are inquisitive and polite. The importance of regular attendance is highlighted to parents, carers and pupils. Pupils, including those in the sixth form, attend school regularly.

Pupils' personal development is at the heart of all the school does. Pupils learn about the differences between people, and they celebrate them. They know how to keep physically healthy. Pupils learn what makes relationships safe and positive. Pupils benefit from well-considered enrichment opportunities outside of the classroom. For example, they enjoy residential trips to the Lake District, visits to the fire station and running a Christmas market stall in the town.

From the outset, pupils benefit from many opportunities to prepare them for adult life. This includes a carefully crafted careers programme that supports pupils to explore the different options available to them when they leave the school. Students in the sixth form participate in independent living activities and work-related learning. These experiences help prepare them for their next steps.

Since the previous inspection, governance has been significantly strengthened. Governors now demonstrate a precise understanding of their roles and responsibilities, enabling them to provide effective oversight of the school's work. Staff receive relevant training that helps them to feel confident in their roles. They appreciate the school's consideration of their well-being and workload. Staff are proud to work at Newfield School.

## **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, staff do not choose the most effective pedagogical activities to deliver the curriculum as intended. Occasionally, this hinders pupils' learning of new knowledge. This includes students in the sixth form. The school should

support staff to design learning that closely reflects the intended curriculum so that all pupils can learn well.

- In the early years, some children have variable opportunities to apply their learning in different contexts. This hinders some children's development of curiosity, concentration and enjoyment through play. The school should support staff to better utilise physical environments and resources to enhance children's learning experiences.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	132051
<b>Local authority</b>	Blackburn with Darwen
<b>Inspection number</b>	10321396
<b>Type of school</b>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Community special
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	2 to 19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	237
<b>Of which, number on roll in the sixth form</b>	34
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Sara Barr-Frost
<b>Headteacher</b>	Rachel Kay
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.newfield.org.uk">www.newfield.org.uk</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	17 and 18 November 2021, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school caters for pupils with SEND. All pupils have an EHC plan.
- At the time of the inspection, the school did not have provision for two-year-old children.
- Since the previous inspection, there have been several changes to the leadership arrangements. A new headteacher and new members of the governing body have been appointed. There has also been a restructuring of the middle leadership team.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

## 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.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and with other leaders. The lead inspector also spoke with members of the governing body, including the chair of governors. She also spoke with a school improvement partner from the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading and communication, expressive arts, mathematics, physical development, and personal, social and emotional development, including personal, social, health and economic education. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors evaluated the curriculum in some other subjects.
- The lead inspector met with the SEND coordinators and reviewed samples of documentation relating to pupils with SEND.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, 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 took account of the views of parents expressed through Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. They also considered responses to Ofsted's online surveys for staff and for pupils.

## **Inspection team**

Kate Bowker, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Lee Fazackerley

Ofsted Inspector

Lindy Griffiths

Ofsted Inspector

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