

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: The Newark Academy

London Road, Balderton, Newark, Nottinghamshire NG24 3AL

Inspection dates:

4 and 5 February 2025

Outcome

Evidence gathered during this ungraded (section 8) inspection suggests that the school's work may have improved significantly across all areas since the previous inspection. The school's next inspection will be a graded inspection.

The headteacher of this school is Inma Pena. This school is part of Nova Education Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Ashfaq Rahman, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Margaret Monckton.

What is it like to attend this school?

There is a strong sense of community at the school, where pupils and staff genuinely care for one another. The school's 'GREAT' values are well understood by all, fostering a culture of mutual respect and support. Pupils feel safe and develop trusting relationships with staff. Pupils are happy, enjoy learning and achieve highly.

The school provides for an orderly and highly purposeful environment. Staff are vigilant in ensuring pupils' safety, and pupils demonstrate exemplary behaviour. Pupils are respectful, courteous, and highly considerate towards both peers and adults.

The school has high ambitions for all pupils. Staff set consistently high expectations, and pupils rise to these challenges, thriving in their learning. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive effective support and access the full curriculum. Pupils are hardworking and motivated. They demonstrate strong commitment to their learning, producing high-quality work across subjects.

The school offers a broad and enriching curriculum beyond the classroom. Pupils engage in opportunities to discuss, reflect and empathise with others. They are encouraged to consider the impact of their learning on their personal development. This fosters a thoughtful and reflective approach to their education.

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

The school has designed a broad, ambitious curriculum for all pupils. Pupils choose from a wide range of academic and vocational subjects at key stage 4 and in the sixth form. The school has ensured that the curriculum is sequenced very effectively. Topics build logically over time so that it is clear what pupils should know, understand and be able to do.

Staff deliver the curriculum consistently very well. Overall, pupils learn very effectively because of teachers' careful explanations, followed by opportunities to practise and apply their knowledge. Teachers typically ensure that pupils revisit, practise and embed important ideas well. Pupils value this consistent approach. Teachers also have excellent subject knowledge. They check pupils' understanding effectively and expertly resolve any errors or misconceptions that may arise.

Some pupils join the school with weak reading skills. The school has an effective system for identifying exactly what support pupils need to improve their reading. Additional reading sessions are matched carefully to the needs of the pupils. This reading intervention is highly effective. Pupils improve their reading quickly. A wider love of reading is promoted across the school. Younger pupils have regular reading lessons in the 'Hive'. Pupils enjoy choosing books as part of this programme.

Provision for pupils with SEND is very strong. The school identifies their needs accurately and communicates these effectively to teachers. Staff make well-planned adaptations to activities. This enables all pupils to access and succeed in the curriculum.

Pupils' attendance is high. Staff are meticulous in their follow-up where patterns of concern are identified. They work closely with parents, carers and external agencies to ensure that pupils' welfare is supported effectively. The school has well-established systems to support pupils' mental health, ensuring their well-being.

The school's expectations for exemplary behaviour are communicated clearly to all members of the school community. These expectations are applied consistently. Pupils demonstrate high levels of self-control. A small number of pupils occasionally struggle, but staff provide highly effective support when needed.

There is a comprehensive personal development programme, underpinned by the school's 'GREAT' values. This supports pupils to become safe, confident and resilient individuals. Pupils develop strong character, learning about different faiths and perspectives while appreciating and respecting diversity. They are taught very well about how to show empathy. This ensures that pupils understand the importance of demonstrating the school's motto of 'Work hard, be kind'. It also prepares them exceptionally well for life in modern Britain.

Many pupils enjoy participating in the wide range of high-quality extra-curricular activities, including music and sport. They explore career aspirations through discussions with teachers and employers. Sixth-form students benefit from university visits and talks from

external speakers about future education, training and employment pathways. The school prepares pupils very well for life beyond the school.

Leaders at all levels share a clear vision and have driven continuous school improvement since the last inspection. Governors and trustees have a strong understanding of the school and rigorously challenge leaders in a supportive way. Staff feel well supported and are proud to be part of the school. Leaders have built positive working relationships with staff and carefully consider their workload.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024, graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged to be good for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. 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's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection 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 good for overall effectiveness in July 2019.

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	144489
Local authority	Nottinghamshire County Council
Inspection number	10347662
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,149
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	79
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Margaret Monckton
CEO of the trust	Ashfaq Rahman
Headteacher	Inma Pena
Website	www.newarkacademy.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	9 and 10 July 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The headteacher took up post in September 2023.
- The school currently uses seven alternative provisions, two of which are unregistered.
- 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 evaluation 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 and other school and trust leaders. They also met with a range of teaching and support staff.
- The lead inspector met with representatives of the board of trustees and the local governing body.
- Inspectors visited a sample of lessons, 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.
- Inspectors met with pupils from a range of year groups, including the sixth form.
- Inspectors considered the responses to the Ofsted Parent View questionnaire. They also took account of the responses to Ofsted's staff and pupil surveys.
- Inspectors reviewed a wide range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation and various policies.

Inspection team

Jamie Clarke, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Jo Ward	Ofsted Inspector
April Wright	Ofsted Inspector

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