

Inspection of Newcroft Primary Academy

Trueway Drive, Shepshed, Loughborough, Leicestershire LE12 9DU

Inspection dates:	13 and 14 May 2025
The quality of education	Outstanding
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Outstanding
Early years provision	Outstanding
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

The headteacher of this school is Sara Aukland. The school is part of the Symphony Learning Trust, which means that other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Tim Sutcliffe, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Nigel Harrison.

Ofsted has not previously inspected Newcroft Primary Academy under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. However, Ofsted previously judged Newcroft Primary School to be outstanding for overall effectiveness, before it opened as Newcroft Primary Academy as a result of conversion to academy status. Since September 2024, schools have not been awarded an overall effectiveness grade.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at Newcroft Primary Academy thrive. They are incredibly proud of their school. Pupils thoroughly enjoy coming to school and they feel happy and safe. One pupil, whose comment was typical of many, said, 'At Newcroft, every day is a good day.'

Pupils are driven by the school's 'character keys'. They strive to be independent and to be effective team members. Their behaviour is exemplary. Pupils show high levels of kindness and respect towards others.

School ambassadors are superb role models. The mental health ambassadors support peers to have a positive mindset. They run sessions to support those who need it. Ambassadors speak with pride about their role and how they 'try and find a way to help others'.

Pupils delight in the plethora of enrichment activities which have been inspired by their interests. Pupils can enjoy football, construction, music and hockey clubs. They enjoy the residential trip to London. Pupils are actively encouraged to think about their future careers through engagement with parents, carers and former pupils as career ambassadors.

The school's unwavering focus on providing the highest quality of education enables pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, to achieve exceptionally well. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school.

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

Reading is at the heart of the school's provision. This begins in the early years, where children are engrossed in stories and join in enthusiastically with them. Phonics lessons begin when children start in the Reception Year. Staff model sounds precisely, and learning activities enable children to practise regularly what they have learned. As a result, they quickly become confident and fluent readers. If pupils find some aspects difficult, staff intervene quickly and help them to keep up with their peers. Beyond early reading, the tailor-made reading programme ensures that pupils explore interesting and diverse texts that further enhance their learning. Through this, pupils develop a passion for reading.

The curriculum is extremely well designed and consistently implemented by staff. The order in which pupils learn new knowledge and information is clear and logical. Teachers use this information to design well-sequenced learning where pupils recap on what they have learned before. Staff benefit from a rigorous programme of professional development to continuously develop their teaching. As a result, they are exceedingly well prepared to create learning activities that enable pupils to thrive. Pupils across the school develop a deep understanding of the most important knowledge over time.

Staff make effective adaptations to their teaching of the curriculum to ensure that those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) access it with ease. For example, they ensure that these pupils have seen the most important vocabulary before a lesson begins and encourage them to 'act out' their learning through role play. This helps pupils with SEND to gain a depth of understanding.

In early years, children display a real thirst for learning. Well-established routines and high expectations of children's learning are consistent across the setting. Children routinely benefit from the extensive learning and enrichment activities. The school identifies the additional needs of pupils swiftly. Support and intervention are highly effective in ensuring that those with SEND achieve exceptionally well. Children flourish. They become confident, motivated and independent learners.

The school's extremely high expectations of behaviour are realised. Pupils display consistently strong attitudes to their learning. They eagerly come to school each day. Staff work exceptionally well with pupils and their families to ensure that pupils attend well. Attendance is high.

The provision for pupils' personal development is extensive. It promotes tolerance and respect highly effectively. Pupils demonstrate a mature understanding and celebrate how 'people are different and unique'. Staff invite members of the community with knowledge and expertise in diversity into school to enrich experiences for pupils. Consequently, pupils develop a deep understanding of modern Britain. The school's work on character development is exceptional. For example, pupils use the 'character keys' to develop positive attributes and qualities. They celebrate their success with pride, for example when showing resilience. Pupils who are disadvantaged receive intensive support to overcome any barriers. For example, where pupils' interests cannot be developed in school, staff ensure that pupils are supported to develop these interests in the wider community. The school ensures that pupils have a secure understanding of how to keep themselves safe when learning and playing online.

The trust and governing body play an intrinsic role in developing this exceptional school. There is a steadfast commitment to ensure the very best for all pupils. Staff respect the consideration given to their workload and well-being. They are proud to work at this school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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	143250
Local authority	Leicestershire
Inspection number	10347629
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	399
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Nigel Harrison
CEO of the trust	Tim Sutcliffe
Headteacher	Sara Aukland
Website	www.newcroftprimaryacademy.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Newcroft Primary Academy converted to be an academy school in September 2016. When its predecessor school, Newcroft Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be outstanding overall.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.
- There is a before- and after-school club managed by the school.

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). 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.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed any impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, the special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) and the leader for early years.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, science, RE and art and design. 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. Inspectors also discussed the curriculum in some other subjects.
- The lead inspector met with two members of the governing body, including the chair, the chief executive officer and the trust director of primary.
- Inspectors took account of the responses to the Ofsted Parent View, including free-text responses and Ofsted's survey for school staff and pupils.
- Inspectors spoke informally with parents outside the school.
- An inspector visited the breakfast club that pupils attend.
- 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 considered pupils' behaviour at various times of day, including in lessons, around the school site and at lunchtime. They scrutinised the school's records for attendance and behaviour.

Inspection team

Donna Chambers, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Kirk Hopkins	Ofsted Inspector
Shazia Lydon	Ofsted Inspector

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