

Inspection of Newton Road School

Newton Road, Rushden, Northamptonshire NN10 0HH

Inspection dates:	28 and 29 January 2025
The quality of education	Requires improvement
Behaviour and attitudes	Requires improvement
Personal development	Requires improvement
Leadership and management	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Requires improvement
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

The principal of this school is Elizabeth Turner. This school is part of Nene 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), Chris Hill, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Jenna Weedon.

What is it like to attend this school?

New leadership is transforming Newton Road. Changes to the curriculum and a revised approach to managing behaviour are raising standards. However, these improvements are relatively recent. They are yet to have the impact that the school intends. The quality of education that pupils receive is not good enough. Many aspects of the school require further development.

Pupils' behaviour is improving. The number of serious incidents of misbehaviour has fallen significantly, as has the school's use of suspensions. This is thanks to the school's higher expectations and a sharper focus on meeting pupils' needs. However, pupils do not engage in lessons well enough. They lose focus quickly and they are distracted easily. This prevents them from learning as well as they could.

There are warm relationships between staff and pupils. Pupils know that their teachers will always help them. Pupils are positive about the recent changes at their school. They can see how things are improving. Pupils say that they did not feel safe on the playground in the past, but they do now.

Pupils know the school's PRIDE values of positivity, respect, integrity, determination and excellence. However, they do not exhibit these values well enough in their attitudes to learning.

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

The school has not ensured that pupils achieve well in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 2 in recent years. Published results in 2024 were weak. Since this time, leaders have made wholesale changes to the school's curriculum. For instance, in mathematics, there is now a much sharper focus on numerical fluency and problem solving. In writing, pupils now practise grammar and punctuation skills repeatedly before applying them in their own texts. They also spend time orally composing what they want to write before committing pencil to paper. These improvements are beginning to have an impact on how well pupils remember their learning and on the quality of pupils' work.

The school has developed its reading culture. Pupils enjoy reading books and answering questions on the school's new reading app. Pupils who have earned badges for reading wear them with pride. The school has oversight of how well pupils are progressing in phonics. However, some children in the early years and some pupils in key stage 1 do not engage in phonics sessions as well as they should. Staff sometimes give pupils books to read that contain letter sounds that they do not know. When this is the case, pupils cannot read books accurately or fluently on their own.

The school has adopted well-thought-out curriculums in all subjects. However, staff do not implement them consistently well. The quality of teaching is variable. Some staff do not explain new concepts clearly. At times, they do not assess how well pupils are learning the curriculum in lessons. Staff sometimes fail to correct important misconceptions that

pupils have. They do not check closely enough that children in the early years understand what they should be doing in activities. Consequently, pupils' recall of important knowledge and skills is stronger in some subjects, and in some year groups, than others.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are fully included in all aspects of school life. The school identifies pupils' additional needs swiftly. It ensures that learning is adapted to meet the needs of pupils with SEND.

Learning is not disrupted by poor behaviour. However, the school does not help some children in the early years to sustain their concentration well. Some pupils make few responses in lessons. Some staff do not follow the school's new behaviour policy to deal with pupils' poor engagement. Pupils' lack of engagement hinders their progress.

Pupils' attendance at the school is improving. While absence and persistent absence are both still above the national average, they are falling. The school works closely with families to identify why pupils have time off school and offers support to increase attendance.

Pupils enjoy a range of activities that develop their talents and interests, including choir, theatre club and several sporting opportunities. However, the school's personal development provision is not preparing pupils well enough for life in modern Britain. Pupils have little knowledge of some of the key differences between people, such as in faith, culture and background.

Staff are positive about the changes at Newton Road and the school's support for their workload. They appreciate the regular training that they now receive. With the support of the trust's interim improvement committee, new leaders have acted swiftly to improve the school's work. They are working on the right things, in the right order, as quickly as they can.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- New curriculums in many subjects have been introduced this academic year. While they have started to have to a positive impact on the quality of pupils' learning, these improvements are only recent. Published outcomes at key stage 2 have been too low. The school needs to continue its work to improve the curriculum so that pupils achieve well in all subjects.

- Sometimes, the school does not ensure that staff present new subject content to pupils clearly. They do not check that pupils have a firm grasp of what is being taught or resolve misconceptions swiftly enough. As a result, some pupils do not have a secure understanding in some subjects. The school should ensure that staff help pupils to gain the knowledge and skills that it intends.
- The reading books that the school provides for some pupils are too difficult for them. Pupils cannot read these books accurately on their own and develop their fluency. The school should ensure that all pupils in the early stages of learning to read are given books that are matched to the letter sounds that they know.
- The school has not ensured that pupils engage well in their learning. Pupils do not listen or concentrate as well as they could. Consequently, some pupils do not gain as much as they could from lessons and their understanding of important curriculum information is not secure. The school should ensure that staff apply the new behaviour policy consistently, helping all pupils to acquire positive attitudes to learning and high levels of engagement.
- The school has not ensured that pupils gain a secure understanding of the differences between people. Consequently, pupils are not prepared well enough for life in modern Britain. The school should ensure that pupils develop an understanding of equality and diversity appropriate to their age.

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	146208
Local authority	North Northamptonshire
Inspection number	10347679
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	223
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Jenna Weedon
CEO of the trust	Chris Hill
Principal	Elizabeth Turner
Website	www.newtonroadschool.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	27 and 28 September 2022, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of Nene Education Trust.
- There have been significant leadership changes in the last year.
- The principal took up their role in May 2024.
- 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 carried out deep dives in English, including early reading, mathematics and music. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with pupils and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also considered pupils' learning in science, history, religious education and personal, social, health and economic education.
- Inspectors met with the principal and the vice principal, subject leaders, teachers and support staff. Inspectors also met with leaders with responsibility for pupils with SEND, the early years, behaviour, attendance and personal development.
- 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 examined a range of school documents relating to behaviour, attendance and governance, as well as the school improvement plan and documents relating to leaders' self-evaluation of the school.
- The lead inspector listened to a sample of pupils in Year 1, Year 2 and Year 3 read. Inspectors met with groups of pupils from different year groups.
- The lead inspector met with the CEO of the trust and the deputy CEO of the trust.
- The lead inspector met with members of interim improvement committee, including the chair of the trust.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View and the results of Ofsted's online staff survey.

Inspection team

Shaun Carter, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Stuart Edmonds

Ofsted Inspector

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