

# Inspection of a good school: Newent Community School and Sixth Form Centre

Watery Lane, Newent, Gloucestershire GL18 1QF

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Inspection dates:

19 and 20 March 2024

## Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this ungraded (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a graded (section 5) inspection were carried out now. The school's next inspection will be a graded inspection.

The principal of this school is Dawn Burke. This school is part of Newent School and Sixth Form Centre 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 Christopher Germaine.

## What is it like to attend this school?

Newent Community School's values lie at the HEART (honesty, excellence, accountability, respect, teamwork) of the school. Pupils feel safe at school and value the pastoral support they receive. They have an adult they can talk to when they have concerns. However, pupils' experiences of school and the quality of education they currently receive are variable.

While the school has the ambition for all pupils to achieve academic success, this is not currently realised in the work and examination outcomes of pupils. The curriculum design and its delivery do not enable pupils to learn effectively. Some pupils struggle to remember what they have learned. The school is developing an ambitious curriculum, yet it has some way to go to establish this so that it has impact. Some pupils do not achieve as well as they should because they do not have the knowledge they need for the next step in their learning.

Behaviour around the school is calm. However, sometimes, when pupils' behaviour disrupts learning, it is not consistently managed by staff.

The school offers a range of wider opportunities, such as sports and performing in the school musical. Pupils speak excitedly about the recent performance of 'Billy Elliot'. They compete in their 'houses' and participate in charity events. Some sixth-form students develop their leadership skills by mentoring younger pupils, while others take on roles in the leadership team.

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

Most pupils follow a broad range of subjects. Sixth-form students follow study programmes that meet their individual needs and aspirations. However, the way in which the curriculum is taught does not support pupils to build their learning securely on what they already know and can do. The school has focused on developing an ambitious curriculum for pupils in key stages 4 and 5. However, the school does not have high enough expectations for pupils in key stage 3. As a result, the quality of the curriculum at key stage 3 means that many pupils lack depth in their subject knowledge and skills. This is hindering their ability to learn more and move on to key stage 4 successfully.

Subject leaders know what they want pupils to learn. They have considered the order in which to teach new knowledge and skills. In the sixth form, teaching helps students to use academic and technical vocabulary. Where the curriculum is well designed, pupils remember what they have learned. However, in some subjects, the curriculum is not delivered as effectively. The choice of learning activities does not support pupils to know and remember more, particularly at key stage 3. This prevents them from building their knowledge and deepening their understanding.

The school accurately identifies the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Staff receive the information they need to support pupils with SEND. Yet, where all pupils are not learning the curriculum well, pupils with SEND are at a greater disadvantage.

The school identifies pupils who are weak readers. Some of these pupils get help to become more fluent readers. However, not all pupils who need this support currently receive it. The school is aware of this. There is a plan to ensure that more pupils access this support. While pupils read regularly during tutor time, this is not done consistently well. As a result, it does not ensure that all pupils learn new vocabulary and develop their confidence as readers.

The school identified that pupils' behaviour was not good enough. It took action so that pupils' behaviour is now typically calm and orderly. Clear systems are in place to help teachers manage pupils' behaviour. Nevertheless, not all staff use these systems to ensure that pupils meet the expectations set for them. This means that pupils' learning is sometimes disrupted. Not all staff are confident that they will be supported in managing poor behaviour.

Pupils' attendance is closely tracked and monitored. Personalised support is provided for pupils who do not attend regularly. Too many pupils continue to miss school, but leaders are doing all they can to improve this.

Pupils learn about important issues, such as healthy relationships and consent. They also learn how to stay safe online and how to care for their mental and physical well-being. The curriculum is adjusted in response to local and national trends.

Careers education is well designed and effective. Pupils benefit from a wide range of information and useful experiences, such as the recent careers fair and forensic science

event. In Year 10 and Year 12, students are well supported to gain insight into relevant industries through work experience.

The school understands the need to improve the quality of the education provided. In some aspects of the school's work, improvement has not happened securely or quickly enough. Leaders know the school well. They have identified appropriate priorities to improve the school. Trustees hold the school to account and provide support.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- The curriculum is not taught consistently well. The work that pupils complete does not always enable them to acquire new knowledge or apply what they have learned before. As a result, they do not always learn as much as they could. The school needs to make sure that teaching is effective so that pupils know more and remember more.
- The school has identified the weakest readers. However, not all these pupils are receiving support with their reading. As a result, these pupils do not have the reading knowledge to access the curriculum. The school needs to ensure there is a comprehensive programme to support pupils who are in the early stages of reading to improve rapidly.
- Some staff say they do not feel supported by the school in managing incidents of poor behaviour. Therefore, some pupils experience inconsistent use of the behaviour policy, and learning is sometimes disrupted. The school should ensure that staff are supported in implementing the agreed approaches to managing behaviour so that incidents are reduced.

## **Background**

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. 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 second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in January 2014.

## 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>	138746
<b>Local authority</b>	Gloucestershire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10307254
<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary Comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 18
<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>	1,108
<b>Of which, number on roll in the sixth form</b>	74
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Christopher Germaine
<b>Principal</b>	Dawn Burke
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.newent.gloucs.sch.uk">www.newent.gloucs.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	21 March 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- 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.
- The school uses two registered and seven unregistered alternative providers.

## 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. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors held discussions with school leaders at all levels. Inspectors also met staff and trustees.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: history, science and English. 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.
- Inspectors considered the responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including free-text comments. Inspectors also viewed the responses to the pupil survey and the staff survey.

### **Inspection team**

Frances Bywater, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Alison Naylor

Ofsted Inspector

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