

Inspection of New Town Primary School

School Terrace, Reading, Berkshire RG1 3LS

Inspection dates:	14 and 15 January 2025
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Good

The headteacher of this school is Polly Cornish. This school is part of the Oxford Diocesan Schools Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Anne Dellar, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Kathy Winrow.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are proud of their extremely inclusive school. The diversity of the school's population is celebrated and pupils broaden their horizons each day as they hear about different cultures and faiths. The many pupils and their families who speak English as an additional language are warmly welcomed and supported well. The values of love, kindness and tolerance are at the heart of school life.

There are high expectations set for pupils' learning and behaviour. Across most of the curriculum, pupils achieve well. They listen carefully and work hard in their lessons. At break and lunchtimes, pupils enjoy playing games and chatting with friends across year groups. The school staff are kind and nurturing. Pupils feel safe and happy as part of the school's caring family.

The school's pastoral team offer a wide range of support. This offer extends to whole families as well as their children. It includes access to in-school therapeutic support as well as information about external services. Pupils understand the benefits of living a healthy lifestyle through their diet, physical activity, and emotional well-being.

Parents and carers appreciate their regular invitations to school events. These include informative workshops about phonics, mathematics, and online safety. Parents value the clear and comprehensive information they receive from the school through regular newsletters and year-group knowledge organisers.

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

The school has a high number of pupils who speak English as an additional language and pupils who arrive at the school not having started there in Nursery or Reception. Information about pupils' needs and previous school experience is gathered quickly and used to shape appropriate support. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. In lessons, pupils have access to the equipment and adult help that they need to ensure that they learn well. For example, in mathematics pupils use a range of helpful resources with confidence and independence. The school's 'Nest' provision provides individual pupils with a high level of support across the breadth of the curriculum.

The school ensures that in every subject there is a clear sequence of learning. This means that teachers know what to teach and in what order. This is carefully thought through from the very start of learning in Nursery and Reception. Decisions about curriculum content are made with pupils' interests at heart. For example, the school has made recent changes to the writing curriculum. This has been carefully considered as a result of in-depth analysis about pupils' achievements and what they need to strengthen their written outcomes. For example, pupils are successful when applying what they have learned about grammar to their writing. However, they do not consistently benefit from work and explanations which help them to build their knowledge of other aspects of writing. Therefore, pupils do not achieve as well as they could.

Pupils become confident and skilled readers. School staff are trained in teaching pupils to read using a phonics-based approach. Pupils have regular reading opportunities and apply their phonics learning well, reading with increasing fluency. They benefit from the wide range of text types and genres they encounter across the curriculum. Parents receive a wealth of information so that they know how to support their child with practising their reading at home. Pupils who need extra help are supported well to strengthen their reading.

The school develops pupil's spoken language and vocabulary. This starts in Nursery and Reception, where children listen to wide a range of stories and nursery rhymes. They enjoy joining in with familiar refrains and learning the meaning of ambitious vocabulary. In all lessons, across the school, teaching staff model and explain subject-specific vocabulary. Pupils benefit from many opportunities to debate their learning in partner and small-group work, as well as contributing to class discussions.

Pupils behave well because they know the school rules and expectations. Visual timetables help them to know what is happening throughout the school day. They follow instructions quickly and calmly. Pupils concentrate and do not disrupt others' learning. They show resilience and know that making mistakes is a healthy part of the learning process. The school's work to reduce pupils' absence rates has been successful.

The school considers pupils' personal development well. Pupils learn about a wide range of faiths and cultures. They show empathy and understanding to others. The school offers an interesting and varied range of after-school clubs and enrichment opportunities. Pupils enjoy trips and visits, which enhance their learning across the curriculum. For example, pupils visit local museums to enhance their history learning about the Victorian era.

The trust and governing body are well informed about the school. They understand its unique context well. They provide appropriate support and healthy challenge to school leaders. The trust and governing body recognise the importance of assuring themselves about the school's safeguarding procedures, including those for pupils who attend alternative provision. School staff appreciate their wide range of professional training and development opportunities and the processes to look after their well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Teachers do not always have the subject and pedagogical knowledge they need to teach all aspects of the recently updated writing curriculum. As a result, there are occasions when the activities that teachers provide pupils with do not help them to build their writing skills as well as they could. The school should ensure that teachers

have the knowledge they need to successfully teach all aspects of the writing curriculum so that pupils achieve well.

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	142682
Local authority	Reading
Inspection number	10341798
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	415
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Kathy Winrow
CEO of the trust	Anne Dellar
Headteacher	Polly Cornish
Website	www.newtown.reading.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	8 and 9 May 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Oxford Diocesan Schools Trust.
- The school currently uses one unregistered alternative provider.
- The school has an above-average number of pupils who speak English as an additional language.

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.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspection team met with school leaders as well as representatives from the trust and the governing body.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, English, physical education and art. 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 for all subjects 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.
- The inspectors analysed responses to the staff survey and spoke to staff about their views of the school.
- The inspectors took account of the responses to the Ofsted online parent survey, Ofsted Parent View and the additional free-text responses. An inspector also spoke with parents in the morning of the first day of the inspection.
- The inspectors evaluated responses to Ofsted's online pupil survey.

Inspection team

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His Majesty's Inspector

Louise Ling

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Ofsted Inspector

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