

Inspection of a good school: Neston High School

Raby Park Road, Neston, Cheshire CH64 9NH

Inspection dates:

8 and 9 February 2022

Outcome

Neston High School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils, and students in the sixth form, are proud to be part of Neston High School. They are appreciative of the high-quality facilities available to them in the new school building. Pupils are polite and respectful towards each other and adults. Pupils behave well. They work hard in class. Pupils' conduct reflects teachers' high expectations.

Pupils told inspectors that they feel safe. They know who to speak to if things go wrong. Pupils enjoy strong relationships with staff. If bullying does occur, teachers ensure that it is sorted out quickly.

Trustees and leaders have high expectations of what pupils and students should achieve. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), have equal access to a suitably ambitious curriculum. Pupils progress well through the curriculum.

Pupils, and students in the sixth form, benefit from a strong personal development curriculum. They gain the knowledge and understanding that they need in order to live safe and happy lives. Staff provide many extra opportunities and school trips. Many pupils take advantage of these opportunities to learn about the wider world. They enjoy taking part in competitions at regional and national level.

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

Leaders, including trustees, have ensured that all pupils, including those in the sixth form, have access to a high-quality curriculum. Pupils at key stage 4 and students at key stage 5 can choose to study a wide range of academic, arts-based, technical and vocational subjects. The subjects meet pupils' diverse interests and needs. Pupils, and students in the sixth form, are well prepared for the next stage of their education, employment or training.

Subject leaders have designed the subject curriculums well. They have thought carefully about the order in which curriculum content should be taught so that pupils can build their knowledge over time. In most subjects, pupils can remember in detail all that they need to know for future success.

Typically, teachers deliver the curriculums well across the school. Teachers have good subject knowledge. In the sixth form, students learn well. Teachers explain topics clearly to pupils and students of all ages using well-designed resources.

Most teachers use effective strategies to check that pupils and students have learned the intended curriculum. However, some teachers miss opportunities to check that all pupils have fully understood the essential knowledge defined in the subject curriculums. This affects how well some pupils progress through the curriculum.

Pupils behave well around the large school site. Sixth-form students enjoy their own spacious study and dining areas. This supports their social skills and contributes to their mature attitudes. Lessons across the school typically take place without disruption. Leaders study patterns of behaviour and act swiftly if they identify any problems. Leaders have improved the attendance of all groups of pupils.

Leaders accurately identify the needs of pupils with SEND. Teachers and learning support assistants use the information that leaders provide to support pupils with SEND to learn well. This helps pupils and students with SEND to progress through the same ambitious subject curriculums as their peers.

Leaders have effective systems in place to identify pupils whose reading knowledge is weak when they join the school. These systems enable leaders to pinpoint and remedy the specific problems that individual pupils face with their reading. This helps most pupils to quickly become confident and fluent readers. Leaders recognise that for some pupils the habit of reading widely and often is not well established. They are taking effective steps to develop a stronger reading culture across the school.

Sixth-form students told inspectors that leaders had consulted with them to design a personal development curriculum that truly reflected what teenagers wanted and needed to learn. The curriculum provides pupils with opportunities to learn about and discuss a wide range of issues. These include relationships, sex and health education, fairness and tolerance, and more practical issues such as managing money.

Sixth-form students and younger pupils told inspectors that they receive age-appropriate careers education, information, advice and guidance. They have opportunities to receive independent careers advice. Recently, the school has introduced an 'aspirations' programme to encourage all pupils to aim high in their careers or further education choices.

Staff appreciate how leaders and trustees protect them from excessive workload. Trustees are well informed. They hold leaders to account and use their expertise to help leaders to further improve the quality of education.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong safeguarding culture across the school. Leaders ensure that all staff are kept up to date with pertinent safeguarding issues through regular training. Staff know what to do if they have concerns about a pupil. They record all relevant information promptly. Leaders work well with external agencies to ensure that pupils and their families get the timely help that they need.

Pupils are knowledgeable about the potential dangers that they may encounter, either in the community or online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- On occasion, some teachers do not use assessment strategies well enough to check whether pupils have learned the essential knowledge in the curriculum. This means that some pupils' learning is uneven. Leaders should ensure that all teachers understand how to use assessment strategies effectively to ascertain how well pupils have learned the curriculum. This is so that all pupils can build a rich body of knowledge across all subjects.

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 a section 8 inspection of a good or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in May 2013.

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.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	138318
Local authority	Cheshire West and Chester
Inspection number	10204446
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
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	1738
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	270
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Kevin Mothersdale
Headteacher	Keith Simpson
Website	www.nestonhigh.com
Date of previous inspection	17 January 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- A small number of pupils attend alternative provision at three alternative providers.
- The school moved to a new building in September 2018.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, senior leaders and subject leaders.
- The lead inspector met with the school improvement partner, and spoke to a representative of the local authority.

- Inspectors reviewed the school's records of safeguarding checks and referrals to the local authority. Inspectors spoke with staff about how they keep pupils safe. Inspectors also asked the pupils how they keep themselves safe, and what they do if they have concerns.
- Inspectors held discussions with staff and considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey for staff.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils from all year groups and considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey for pupils.
- Inspectors considered the views of the parents who responded to Ofsted Parent View. This included the free-text responses.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, mathematics, history, modern foreign languages and physical education. Inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also reviewed curriculum plans and pupils' work from some other subjects.

Inspection team

Timothy Gartside, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Christine Veitch	Ofsted Inspector
David Woodhouse	Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2022