

# Newlands Girls' School

Farm Road, Maidenhead, Berkshire, SL6 5JB

**Inspection dates** 02-03 October 2012

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- The proportion of pupils achieving the top GCSE and A Level grades is significantly above the national average.
- Pupils in all years make good progress, responding well to high expectations.
- Teaching and learning are good in all areas of the school.
- The sixth form is good. Pupils are taught well and make good progress. Attainment has been high for a number of years.
- Pupils are proud of their school and behave exceptionally well. They are safe and incidents of bullying of any kind are very rare.
- High standards of attainment have been sustained and improvements in teaching have been rapid. This demonstrates the school's excellent capacity to improve.
- Pupils treat others with respect and understand the value of working hard.
- The Headteacher is supported by an effective team of senior leaders who work well together. Middle leadership is also strong and, as a whole, leaders have demonstrated the ability to improve teaching.
- Leaders and managers have a very accurate and incisive view of the school. They monitor teaching and learning well and identify how individual teachers can develop their skills.
- Governors are totally committed to the school. They challenge decisions made by school leaders and consequently offer high levels of support.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- In some lessons, not all pupils are fully challenged and opportunities for independent learning are sometimes missed.
- In some lessons teachers' questioning skills are not fully developed, so progress slows.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 29 lessons, of which 10 were joint observations with senior leaders. In addition, the inspection team made a number of short visits to lessons as part of themed learning walks.
- Meetings were held with four groups of pupils, representatives of the Governing Body and of the local authority, and school staff, including middle and senior leaders.
- Inspectors analysed the 92 responses to the online parent questionnaire (Parent View) during the inspection.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation, including that relating to the monitoring of the quality of teaching and its impact on pupil achievement, the monitoring of the impact of the pupil premium, performance management, minutes of governors' meetings, records relating to attendance, behaviour and safety, exclusion and bullying and documents relating to safeguarding.
- Inspectors took account of responses to the staff questionnaire and of a very small number of written comments from parents.

## Inspection team

Caroline Dearden, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Hugh Betterton	Additional Inspector
Ken Bush	Additional Inspector
Pamela Fearnley	Additional Inspector
Julie Miriam	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Newlands Girls' School is a larger than average sized 11-18 school.
- The school is currently oversubscribed.
- Attainment on entry is above national.
- The proportion of students who are known to be eligible for free school meals is below national averages.
- The proportion of students from minority ethnic groups is above national. A significant number of these speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of students with special educational needs and supported at school action is in line with the national average, although the proportion at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is approximately half that of the national average.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is below average.
- The school exceeds the current government floor standards for pupils' attainment and progress.

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

- Improve teaching and achievement to outstanding by:
  - increasing opportunities for pupil talk to support learning within lessons
  - developing teaching strategies across the curriculum to embed independent learning and provide opportunities for all groups of pupils to respond to formative feedback
  - ensuring that effective teacher questioning is embedded across the curriculum.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- The 2010 dip in attainment has been rectified and as a result attainment was significantly above the national average in 2011 and 2012. Data for 2011 and unvalidated data for 2012 indicate 75% and 76% of pupils gained five GCSE passes at A\*-C including English and mathematics respectively.
- 'A' level results have been high for a number of years, including the last validated data in 2011.
- The school's own tracking of pupil progress is systematic and detailed. This together with evidence from observations of teaching and learning confirms that all groups of pupils, including disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are currently achieving well with gaps closing.
- Pupils eligible for the pupil premium make better progress than their peers nationally and locally.
- Pupils are given opportunities to read in lessons and during reading initiatives. A number of pupils who find reading challenging were observed reading. They read with enthusiasm, using their phonics learning to sound out words and to make sense of the text.
- Pupils writing skills are well developed across the curriculum. The recent focus on oracy is further improving pupils' communication skills. In a Year 7 English lesson, pupils used visual images as a stimulus for a Socratic debate. This resulted in immediate improvement in the use of higher order descriptive vocabulary.
- Learning and progress in the sixth form are good as a result of carefully chosen courses and support from specialist staff, including the Key Stage 5 learning mentor.
- Achievement is not yet outstanding because teaching does not always challenge every student fully enough and opportunities for pupil talk and independence are sometimes missed. As a result not all pupils are always learning exceptionally well.

### The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching over time is good. The school's records show that the large majority of teaching is at least good. Evidence from joint observations supports the view that the school has an accurate picture of the quality of teaching.
- Inspection evidence shows a high level of effective practice over time.
- Where teaching is strongest, teachers convey high expectations and lessons have pace and challenge. Teacher questioning elicits and addresses misconceptions and builds on prior learning. In a Year 11 science lesson questioning was well planned and included a range of methodologies to meet the needs of the pupils. As a result, all pupils participated and pupil responses were used to build an explanation that was understood by all. The teacher frequently and effectively drew pupils back to the learning focus.
- There is an exceptionally positive climate for learning across the curriculum. Relationships between teachers and pupils and pupils and their peers are cordial and purposeful. Pupils engage with their learning very well.
- The teaching of literacy and numeracy is promoted well across the curriculum.
- Teaching in the sixth form is good. Teachers offer personalised interventions and challenge pupil perceptions.
- The vast majority of parents and carers believe that teaching is good and this view is endorsed by pupils.
- Teaching is not yet outstanding because planning is not always sufficiently fine-tuned to provide appropriate challenge for all pupils and the quality of written feedback does not consistently provide pupils with specific enough guidance on how to improve. Questioning is

too variable and does not always promote very high level thinking skills, including independent thinking.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils** are outstanding

- The vast majority of parents and carers confirm that behaviour is positive. Expectations of behaviour are very high and consistently reinforced by adults and pupils.
- Bullying, of any kind, is very rare and pupils report that any issues are dealt with promptly and fairly. Sixth form pupils confirm that behaviour has improved over time.
- Pupils feel safe and enjoy coming to school.
- There have been no permanent exclusions for the last two years, and fixed term exclusions are significantly below the national average and are decreasing.
- Behaviour in lessons and around the school is exceptional. Pupils are courteous and polite. They respect adults and each other. This supports the exceptionally positive climate for learning seen across the school.
- A range of internal structures support pupils' personal and social needs well. Staff know pupils' individual backgrounds very well and the school provides effective support for those who are potentially vulnerable. In a Year 8 PE lesson a visually impaired pupil was very well supported by her peers. This resulted in her being able to fully participate in the physical activities both individually and as part of a group.
- Attendance is above national and no instances of poor punctuality were observed during the inspection.

### **The leadership and management** are outstanding

- The headteacher is highly capable. She is ambitious for the pupils and for the school. She is rigorous in her approach to improving teaching and learning. Her strategy for distributed leadership has ensured that the senior leadership team are similarly capable and ambitious.
- Self-evaluation is exceptionally honest and accurate. Development plans identify appropriate areas for school improvement, timescales are realistic and success criteria are always written in terms of pupil outcomes.
- Accountability is firmly embedded at all levels of leadership. This cements the school's ability to continue on its journey to outstanding.
- School leaders are effective in monitoring the quality of, and supporting improvements in, teaching and learning. Underperformance is quickly addressed and teachers have a clear understanding of ways in which they can improve their teaching skills. There has been very effective deployment of an advanced skills teacher to encourage discussions about pupils' learning amongst teaching staff.
- The performance management process is well structured. It supports accountability and underpins distributed leadership. The needs of individuals and groups of teachers are very effectively linked to professional development and the drive for improvement. Performance management is used to inform decisions on movements up the salary scale.
- The curriculum is very well matched to the needs of the pupils and to the community. Over two thirds of sixth form pupils go on to first choice university places including Cambridge.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well. Pupil leaders are representative of the school's ethnic mix and enrichment opportunities are well established. The highly positive school ethos helps pupils to develop their self-esteem.
- The school promotes equality of opportunity very well. Leaders and managers monitor the achievement of groups and know that no group performs less well than their national counterparts. The school has used the pupil premium effectively: for example, through the employment of learning mentors to work with pupils whose progress has dipped or for whom

learning has slowed. As a result of the school's targeted use of this additional money, progress and attainment for pupils eligible for free school meals is rapid and high. The local authority plans to use strategies developed by the school as a model of good practice for other schools in the borough.

- Safeguarding arrangements meet current requirements.
  - The vast majority of parents and carers believe that the school is well led and managed.
  - Unvalidated 2012 data indicates that attainment is significantly above that of other schools. For this reason, the local authority provides light touch support for the school.
  - The governance of the school:
    - governors have a clear view of the school's strategic direction and provide strong challenge and support
    - the governing body includes a range of well-deployed expertise and has effective succession plans in place with regard to the financial arrangements for the school
    - governors have effective links with senior and middle leaders. They are known by staff and recognised by pupils.
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## What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	110051
<b>Local authority</b>	Windsor and Maidenhead
<b>Inspection number</b>	403107

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11-18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Girls
<b>Gender of pupils in the sixth form</b>	Girls
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1171
<b>Of which, number on roll in sixth form</b>	241
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Brian Wastell
<b>Headteacher</b>	Louise Ceska
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	23-24 January 2008
<b>Telephone number</b>	01628 625068
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