



Newlands School



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Characteristics of the School Newlands Primary School 11th June 2026

Overview

Newlands School (Newlands) is a primary specialist support school for children and young people with severe learning difficulties and, often, very complex special educational needs. It caters for children aged 3-11 years old. All the children have an EHCP. 73 children use home-school transport; 58 travel with parents or carers and 1 child uses both.

There are currently 132 children on roll of whom the majority (92) are boys. There are 16 children in Reception; 35 in Key Stage 1 and 80 in Key Stage 2. The school is heavily over-subscribed and is currently educating 12 pupils more than its PAN. Due to the school's reputation for excellent work, demand for places is high and leaders are looking to expand.

Number of places: 120	Number on roll: 132	Group: 5 LA ESTAB ref. 354/7014
Age range: 3-11	URN: 135201	LA: Rochdale, co-located with Hollin Primary Date of opening: 01/09/2007
No of boys: 92 (70%) No of girls: 40 (30%) TOTAL = 132	No of pupils on Pupil Premium: 66 (50%) – FSM over last 6 years Not on Pupil Premium: 66 (50%) TOTAL = 132 EAL pupils: 14 (10.6%) 9 different languages	Breakdown of year groups; R 16 Y3 21 Y6 28 Y1 18 Y4 16 Y2 17 Y5 16 TOTAL = 132
No of LAC: 1 Post LAC: 1 Additional funding: currently 1 pupil (IA) requested for 4	No of pupils on home-school transport: 73 No of pupils who travel with parent/carers: 58 No of pupils on both modes of transport: 1 TOTAL = 132	Cohorts EYFS R 16 Pathway 1 20 KS1 Y1-2 35 Pathway 2 64 KS2 Y3-6 81 Pathway 3 48 TOTAL = 132 TOTAL = 132
Attendance % Whole school attendance is 91.74% For the 2025-2026 year Target is 92% and zero lates.	Absence % Overall absence is 8.24% Authorised 6.26% Unauthorised 1.98%	Persistent absence PA is 18.94% 25 Children Any CME Potential; (initials of pupils)
Safeguarding data – refer to DSL record	Current SIP areas – see SIP overview.	Current SEF ready & available. Previous Ofsted grading from 08/01/2025 is still GOOD. Pending a graded inspection from 2026 onward.



School Context

The school caters for a wide range of needs including cognitive, physical, medical and autism. A significant number of the children are non or pre-verbal. The school uses a total communication approach to ensure that children have every available opportunity to develop oracy and needs-appropriate communication skills.

In terms of primary need:

75 (57%) of children have ASD,
33 (25%) have a Speech, Language or Communication Need,
6 (4.6%) have a Severe Learning Difficulty,
5 (3.9%) have a Physical Disability,
4 (3.4%) have Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties,
3 (2.3%) have Down's syndrome,
3 children (2.3%) have a Moderate Learning Difficulty,
1 child (0.75%) has a Hearing Impairment and
1 child (0.75%) has a Visual Impairment as their primary need.

45.38% (59) children are eligible for pupil premium via FSM 6. Also, 13 (10%) have English as an additional language. The school location area is classed as experiencing well above-average deprivation.

School context

The school shares a modern PFI (Private Finance Initiative) building with Hollin Primary School. It was opened in 2007 and is in good repair. The classrooms are a good size and all but one have access to an outdoor area. Pupils have many opportunities to join their mainstream peers in Hollins. This has a positive impact and has challenged the most able pupils, especially, across Mathematics, English and other National Curriculum subjects.

Newlands is a Numicon Advocate School; is certified for the UNICEF RRSA award; has the School Games Gold Award, the Leading Parent Partnership Award and the Yogini Yoga certification. It is also currently progressing through Autism Accreditation.

Pupil attendance rates are high as the children enjoy coming to school; they benefit greatly from the routine and structure that school provides. Attendance figures are regularly above national averages for special schools.

Teachers set aspirational targets and enter pupils for national tests where appropriate.

Community Context

The children at Newlands come from a wide geographical area and from a diverse range of families. This includes working professionals as well as parents with significant caring responsibilities for their children: some who work and some who are unemployed. The school also supports some parents with housing issues and transport.

Links with outside agencies to support pupils are extensive. Staff work in tandem with a wide range of services. For example, therapists from the NHS teams regularly work within school: physiotherapists, occupational therapists, dieticians, SALT, CAMHS, paediatricians who hold regular clinics, VI services, RANS, hearing testing, flu jabs, tooth brushing and continence teams.



Parental involvement is a priority in Newlands and parents have regular opportunities to be involved in their children's learning. Annual review meetings include in-depth discussions about children's response at home as well as at school. Parents are invited to drop-in sessions in school, to parent evenings and to events throughout the school year, for example, Mother's Day, Father's Day, parent and child yoga, stay and play sessions and information sessions. Termly target updates are sent home and families are invited to comment on these. The school has weekly information sharing via its EARWIG app which is its assessment tool. The school provides 'Riding the Rapids' training for parents.

Ofsted Inspection

The most recent inspection took place on 07-08 January 2025 as a Section 8 ungraded inspection. The report noted that *'evidence gathered during this ungraded (section 8) inspection suggests that aspects of the school's work may not be as strong as at the time of the previous inspection.'*

Inspectors recognised that:

- the inspection took place at a time of change at Newlands, reflecting the increasingly complex needs of the pupil population and the necessary, required changes to the curriculum taking place;
- the organisation of pupils into three pathways from early years to key stage 2 made it easier for teachers to meet pupils' learning needs;
- the school's assessment systems were also being refined to match the new pathways and curriculum;
- pupils were valued and felt safe;
- staff knew the children and their families/carers well and
- relationships were positive

Inspectors identified that:

- some staff were not as clear as they should be about new aspects of the curriculum;
- sometimes, pupils lost focus in lessons;
- governors' systems to monitor the school's provision at times lacked rigour and
- the rapid improvements to the curriculum inadvertently increased the workload of some staff.

Since the inspection, leaders and staff have worked tirelessly to embed the curricular and assessment changes that have taken place and to respond to the Ofsted points. There has been considerable progress made in respect of the development of the curriculum. The school now has a two-year curriculum cycle planned for every subject. Staff have visited an outstanding special school in Manchester to learn about effective pedagogy and classroom management. Additionally, they follow an increasingly professional range of CPD. As a result, staff have introduced the individual TEACCH Approach¹ in some instances, a revised lesson structure and grouping system.

All National Curriculum subjects are being taught and, overall, the curriculum on offer to the children and the quality of teaching are more ambitious and challenging than previously. Phonics is being taught daily and is a non-negotiable part of the school day. Staff and pupils have benefitted from leaders' investment in Read, Write, Inc training and support.

Update on areas identified by Ofsted in the inspection of January 2025.

- *Some staff are not as clear as they should be about aspects of the new curriculum. This means that, occasionally, they select activities which do not fully support the curriculum's effective implementation. As a result, from time to time, activities can lack focus. The school should ensure that it finalises its*

¹ <https://www.integratedtreatmentservices.co.uk/our-approaches/speech-therapy-approaches/teacch/>



curriculum thinking so that staff's curriculum knowledge improves, and they select more appropriate tasks for pupils.

School Response: The curriculum is fully embedded. It reflects the statutory EYFS Framework and the National Curriculum. It continues to be refined to meet the needs of the changing population at Newlands. For example, the English Curriculum has been re-written and the Core Word Programme recently introduced.

- Sometimes, pupils lose focus in lessons. Now and then, this can affect other pupils' learning. At times, some staff are not as effective as they could be in re-engaging pupils. The school should ensure that staff receive professional development to support them to re-engage pupils when this occurs.*

School Response: Overall, pupils' concentration and focus are improving. This is evidenced by the improvements seen in the response of individual pupils; for example, leaders referred to the impact of changes on specific children in specific classes. All staff continue to receive support on the management of the three-group carousel, timings and re-engagement of pupils. Leaders understand that a rigorous whole-school approach to the management of the three-group lesson; transition of pupils and timings will raise expectations for staff and for pupils.

- Governors' systems to monitor the school's provision at times lack rigour. This means that they cannot fully hold leaders to account for the school's effectiveness. Governors should refine their systems for gaining an oversight of the school's provision, so that they are more precise in holding the school to account for its performance.*

School Response: Governors have introduced an annual monitoring programme and have undertaken link-visits to school to meet their counterparts and 'drop-in' to lessons. Staff and governors are finding these visits useful. Link Governors report back on their visits to the full Governing Body and provide a written report on the lesson 'drop-ins'. Governors were involved in the appointment of new Business Manager. In collaboration with staff and governors, the Headteacher has led the completion of a new SEF using the new Ofsted Framework headings.

- The rapid improvements to the curriculum have inadvertently increased the workload of some staff. Despite efforts from the school, some staff still view their workload to be high. The school should ensure it looks closely at how to support these staff during this period of change.*

School Response: Staff morale is high. Staff can see the positive impact of the changes being made and are enjoying the greater consistency and support for teaching. Directed time has been provided for subject leaders to update their documentation and a meeting/survey with governors has been planned.

Current Challenges

A new deputy has been appointed to start work in September. She is currently working closely with leaders on transition arrangements into her new role. This means that there will be a new senior leadership team at Newlands. Maintaining the momentum and focus on the quality of teaching and pupil outcomes is imperative.

Factors Contributing to Success

- The school has a healthy budget with clear plans for what the funds need to be spent on.
- The staff team and morale are strong.
- There are strong systems and processes in place.
- There are clear action plans in place.
- The school has solid curriculum in place and assessment procedures have also been updated.

End of report.

