

# Newton House School

**Inspection dates** 24–25 April 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Inadequate</b>	<b>4</b>
Pupils' achievement	Inadequate	4
Pupils' behaviour and personal development	Adequate	3
Quality of teaching	Inadequate	4
Quality of curriculum	Inadequate	4
Pupils' welfare, health and safety	Adequate	3
Leadership and management	Inadequate	4

## Summary of key findings

### This school is inadequate because

- The school has declined rapidly since last September.
- The curriculum is very restricted. It does not include many of the required subjects and areas of learning.
- Teaching only takes place on two days a week. Although other adults provide various activities to keep students occupied on the other three days, these are not aimed at improving their learning.
- There is no assessment of students' skills, knowledge and understanding to help staff plan to fill in gaps in learning or to promote and track their progress.
- The inadequate curriculum, teaching and assessment mean that students make limited progress.
- The proprietors, leaders and managers have not taken enough action to provide a suitable, full-time education for the students, or to ensure they make adequate progress.
- Those given responsibility for the running and quality of the school since the start of the autumn term do not have enough knowledge or expertise in education to do this well.
- The proprietors have not ensured that all the independent school regulations are met.

### The school has the following strengths

- Students' behaviour, and their spiritual, social and moral development improve well.
- The staff care for students well. Relationships between staff and students are good and placing authorities are pleased with the positive changes they see.

### Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school requires improvement and must take action to meet schedule 1 of The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, as amended by The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2012 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements. The details are listed in the full report.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspection was carried out with one day's notice.
- No lessons took place during the inspection and no teachers were seen. Three activities run by other adults were observed.
- Meetings took place with the proprietor and staff with interim responsibility for the school.
- No information was gained from on-line surveys by students or parents and carers, or past surveys of any kind. Informal discussions were held with students and telephone conversations were held with placing authorities.
- Students' work, various school policies and records and curriculum documentation were reviewed.

## Inspection team

Judith Charlesworth, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Newton House is a small independent special school for boys aged 10 to 18 years with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. It caters for residential students.
- All students have a statement of special educational needs.
- The school was registered in March 2012 and this is its first inspection.
- The school has not had a full time teacher since last July. Part-time teaching has been provided by agency staff.
- A new proprietor took over responsibility for the school at the end of February 2013.
- The school aims to enable students to 'achieve their full potential and equip themselves as well as possible for adult life'.

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

- The school must improve the quality of teaching by providing full-time teaching and ensuring that all the teaching and assessment regulations listed in Part 1 below are met.
- In order to improve the leadership and management of the school, the proprietor should ensure that:
  - it is led by an appropriately qualified and experienced person who can give support and guidance to staff
  - suitable curriculum provision is made that meets the regulations listed in Part 1 below
  - all independent school regulations are met and that all aspects of the school's work are regularly reviewed and improvements made where needed.
- The school must meet the following independent school standards.

#### Part 1

- Ensure that appropriate plans and schemes of work are provided and implemented fully (paragraph 2(1)).
- Ensure that the curriculum gives pupils of compulsory school age a full time education that includes the following areas of learning: linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical, aesthetic and creative, physical (paragraph 2(2)(a)).
- Provide subject matter appropriate for the ages and aptitudes of pupils, including those pupils with a statement of special educational needs (paragraph 2(2)(b)).
- Ensure that, where pupils have a statement of special educational needs, the education provided fulfils its requirements (paragraph 2(2)(e)).
- Provide a programme of personal, social and health education that reflects the school's aims and ethos (paragraph 2(2)(f)).
- Provide appropriate careers guidance for pupils receiving secondary education (paragraph 2(2)(g)).
- Ensure that the curriculum provides the opportunity for all pupils to learn and make progress by implementing full programmes of study for each subject (paragraph 2(2)(i)).
- Ensure the curriculum prepares pupils adequately for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life (paragraph 2(2)(j)).

- Ensure that the teaching enables pupils to acquire new knowledge and make progress according to their ability so that they increase their understanding and develop their skills in the subjects taught (paragraph 3(a)).
- Ensure that the teaching encourages pupils to apply intellectual, physical or creative effort and to show interest in their work and to think and learn for themselves (paragraph 3(b)).
- Ensure that the teaching involves well planned lessons, effective teaching methods, suitable activities and appropriate management of class time (paragraph 3(c)).
- Ensure that teachers show a good understanding of the aptitudes, needs and prior attainments of the pupils, and ensure these are taken into account in the planning of lessons (paragraph 3(d)).
- Ensure teachers demonstrate appropriate knowledge and understanding of the subject matter being taught (paragraph 3(e)).
- Ensure that classroom resources are of an adequate quality, quantity and range and that they are used effectively (paragraph 3(f)).
- Ensure that there is a framework in place to assess pupils' work regularly and thoroughly, and that information from such assessment is utilised to plan teaching so that pupils can make progress (paragraph 3(g)).
- Ensure that there is a framework in place by which pupil performance can be evaluated by reference to either the school's own aims, as provided to parents, and/or by national norms (paragraph 4).

## Part 2

- Assist pupils to acquire an appreciation of and respect for their own and other cultures, in a way that promotes tolerance and harmony between different cultural traditions (paragraph 5(a)(v)).
- Ensure that partisan political views are not promoted in the teaching of any subject in the school (paragraph 5(b)).
- Ensure that where political issues are brought to the attention of the pupils, reasonably practicable steps have been taken to offer a balanced presentation of opposing views to pupils:
  - while in attendance at the school (paragraph 5(c)(i))
  - while taking part in extra-curricular activities which are provided or organised by or on behalf of the school (paragraph 5(c)(ii))
  - in the promotion at the school, including through the distribution of promotional material, of extra-curricular activities taking place at the school or elsewhere (paragraph 5(c)(iii)).

## Part 3

- Write a policy on first aid and implement it (paragraph 14).
- Ensure that the admissions register is maintained in accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (paragraph 17).

## Part 4

- Ensure that for each member of staff appointed on or **after** 1 May 2007, the register shows that the following checks were made, including the date on which each check was completed or the certificate obtained:
  - the person's identity
  - the person is not barred from regulated activity relating to children in accordance with section 3(2) of the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 (ISA barred list), or there is no direction made under section 142 of the 2002 Act in respect of that person (List 99), or disqualification,

- prohibition or restriction having the same effect
  - of relevant qualifications, if appropriate
  - whether an enhanced criminal records bureau (CRB) certificate was obtained
  - in the case of any person for whom, by reason of living or having lived outside the United Kingdom, the further checks made which have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State
  - of their right to work in the United Kingdom (paragraph 22(3)).
- In relation to staff not directly employed by the school, the register must show whether written notification has been received from the employment business that it has carried out the checks referred to in 20(2)(a) together with the date the written notification that each check was made or certificate obtained, was received. Checks required include:
- the person's identity
  - that the person is not barred from regulated activity relating to children in accordance with section 3(2) of the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 (ISA barred list), or there is no direction made under section 142 of the 2002 Act in respect of that person (List 99), or disqualification prohibition or restriction having the same effect
  - where appropriate the person's qualifications
  - in the case of any person for whom, by reason of living or having lived outside the United Kingdom, checks in regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State
  - the person's right to work in the United Kingdom
  - an enhanced criminal record bureau (CRB) check or has obtained a certificate in response to such a check made by it or another employment business. The CRB check must have been obtained no more than three months before the date on which the person is due to begin work at the school; or the person has already had an enhanced CRB check from working in a school or further education institution not more than three months previously
- and
- if an enhanced CRB certificate was obtained before the person was due to begin work and if it contained a disclosure, the school obtained a copy of the certificate from the employment business (paragraph 22(5)).
- In relation to each member of a body of persons named as the proprietor appointed on or after **1 May 2007**, the register must show whether the checks referred to in 21(6)(b) were made, the date they were made and the date on which the resulting certificate was obtained. Checks required include:
- an enhanced CRB check and, where requested by the Secretary of State, is countersigned by the Secretary of State
  - the individual's identity and their right to work in the United Kingdom
- and
- in the case of any person for whom, by reason of living or having lived outside the United Kingdom, further checks in regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State (paragraph 22(6)).

- The following information must be provided to parents of pupils and parents of prospective pupils and, on request, to the Chief Inspector, the Secretary of State or an independent inspectorate.
  - The name of the headteacher (paragraph 24(1)(a)).
  - The correct full name of the proprietor, their address for correspondence during both term time and holidays and a telephone number or numbers on which they may be contacted at all times (paragraph 24(1)(a)).
  - Particulars of the school's policy on and arrangements for admissions, discipline and exclusions (paragraph 24(1)(b)).
  - Particulars of educational and welfare provision for pupils with statements of special educational needs and for pupils for whom English is an additional language (paragraph 24(1)(b)).
  - Particulars of the curriculum policy of the school (paragraph 24(1)(b)).
  - Particulars of policies relating to bullying, health and safety, the promotion of good behaviour, and sanctions adopted in the event of pupils misbehaving (paragraph 24(1)(b)).
  - Particulars of the arrangements for tackling bullying, and for promoting pupils' health and safety on the school premises and on educational visits (paragraph 24(1)(b)).
  - Details of the complaints procedure adopted by the school, together with details of the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year (paragraph 24(1)(b)).
  - The number of staff employed at the school, including temporary staff, and a summary of their qualifications (paragraph 24(1)(b)).
- The school must publish the school's safeguarding policy on the school's website, or where no such website exists, provide a copy to parents of pupils, and of prospective pupils, on request (paragraph 24(1)(c)).
- Provide parents with an annual written report of the progress and attainment of each registered pupil in the main subject areas taught (paragraph 24(1)(f)).

## Part 7

- Ensure the complaints procedure is made available to parents (paragraph 25(b)).
- Ensure the complaints procedure provides for the panel to make findings and recommendations and stipulates that a copy of the findings and recommendations are made available for inspection on the school premises by the proprietor and the headteacher (paragraph 25(i)).
- The procedure must provide for written records to be kept of all complaints, indicating whether they were resolved at the preliminary stage or whether they proceeded to a panel hearing (paragraph 25(j)).

## Inspection judgements

### Pupils' achievement

#### Inadequate

Students make inadequate progress. Both the curriculum and teaching time are very restricted which significantly limits students' learning. No formal records of students' skills or progress since they first started at the school were available. A review of the students' current commercial work books in aspects of English and mathematics shows that they generally complete the work set for them and improve their skills and understanding in the areas covered. However, there is no indication of how any misconceptions or mistakes are corrected or whether work is too easy or too difficult. Students are working towards an award through the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN), but this work is not yet completed. Students read satisfactorily although their writing is less mature. One student clearly enjoyed reading his novel during spare moments of the day.

The students' behaviour and application in the activities observed were good. They enjoy discussion and willingly chose an activity from a selection given - planning a forthcoming sports day on the basis of a previous one. They maintained their interest in the activity for the whole day. Students quickly created a questionnaire on the computer to gain staff's suggestions for good activities. They used these effectively as a basis for final decisions, following in-depth discussions led by members of staff. This activity contributed well to students' speaking and listening skills, and to their personal development.

### Pupils' behaviour and personal development

#### Adequate

Students' behaviour and personal development is adequate. Newton House effectively supports improvement in students' behaviour and spiritual, moral and social development, and this is recognised by their placing authorities. Behaviour was good on both days of the inspection, at all times of the day. Records show that behavioural incidents and outbursts reduce steadily after students are first admitted. They gain in confidence and self-respect and learn to manage their own emotions more effectively. Students understand the difference between right and wrong, both within the school and a wider context. They are familiar with English services and public institutions, such as the law courts and libraries, and are happy to work for the good of the school or wider community by participating in 'fun' events.

Students' relationships with each other and with adults are good. They were friendly and welcoming towards the inspector, and enjoyed her contribution to their discussions, for example on whether dodge ball was a good activity for sports day. During these discussions, students were careful to listen to one another and adults, and made sure that all opinions were heard, considered and then democratically voted upon. Students say they feel safe at school. Bullying is rare and any incidents between individuals are quickly and sensitively dealt with. Students appear relaxed, accepting and companionable in the family-like atmosphere, despite their considerable differences and difficulties. Students generally attend school regularly, which is often a significant improvement from their attendance at previous schools. There are times, however, when they are late first thing in the morning.

The weaknesses in the curriculum and teaching have a negative impact on the provision for students' personal development. This is because there is no programme of personal, social, health and citizenship education, and there is not enough formal, planned work to help students gain an understanding of and respect for other cultures and their traditions. The possibility of unbalanced political views being promoted through teaching has not been considered by the school's leaders and managers, and no measures are in place to warn students about this.



**Quality of teaching****Inadequate**

Teaching is inadequate and as a result students make limited academic progress. The school fails to meet all but one of the independent school regulations relating to teaching. The part-time agency teacher was not in school during the inspection. The documentation available was scant. It did not include recent lesson plans or any indication that work is based on a thorough knowledge of the students' strengths and weaknesses or whether they are appropriately challenged. No records of the assessment of students' skills, knowledge and understanding were available, and the interim manager said the school does not have any such records. Marking of the students' work in commercial work books and in their ASDAN folders does not include any indication of what teaching accompanied it. Also, it does not help students improve their work and make gains in learning. Resources for teaching and learning are inadequate. The classrooms are sparse and do not encourage or support learning.

Other adults, including residential staff, provide activities on the three days that the teacher is not in school. They do their best to keep the students interested and occupied, but promoting academic progress does not underpin their work. They receive no support or guidance from education professionals, and do not have high enough expectations of students' active, independent involvement. Nevertheless, their work supports students' personal development effectively. Students' behaviour is managed well and the good relationships between staff and students encourage students to participate and maintain their interest in the activities provided. These support students' general knowledge, for example through visits to local places of interest. They also help to improve their ability to organise their thoughts and planning, and their speaking, listening and information and communication technology skills.

**Quality of curriculum****Inadequate**

The curriculum is inadequate and does not provide students with all the required subjects and areas of learning or a full-time, properly planned education. This contributes to their inadequate academic progress and leaves them ill-equipped for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life.

The school fails to meet all but one of the independent school regulations relating to the curriculum. No subject, including English and mathematics, is supported by current, appropriate planning or schemes of work. The curriculum policy does not represent the curriculum now provided. Subjects (mainly literacy and numeracy) are currently only provided by a teacher on two days a week. Activities on the remaining days are run by other adults, and include life skills, 'independence', educational visits and 'activities'. These take place without any suitable educational guidance or planning.

Students' statements of special educational needs are not taken sufficiently into account. Students do not have access to the National Curriculum as required and their individual education plans do not reflect the educational targets set in their statements. Many subjects such as personal, social and health education, careers education, and the human and social, technological and creative and aesthetic areas of learning are not adequately included in the school's curriculum.

Some aspects of English and mathematics are covered on the two teaching days and students make some progress in these areas. Students work through commercially published workbooks written for pupils aged seven to 11, but there is no evidence of whether this work is modified or appropriate to their individual needs. Simple timetables show that other subjects are sometimes touched upon, such as science and Spanish. Sporting activities including badminton, table tennis and running take place on the 'Wednesday activity day', and these days have a clear structure. Computers are used within other subjects, but information and communication technology is not taught as such.



**Pupils' welfare, health and safety****Adequate**

The provision for students' welfare, health and safety is adequate. Students are safeguarded well and Newton House has good safe recruitment practices which ensure that adults, including agency staff, are suitable to work with young people. Staff training in child protection is up to date and regularly refreshed. However, although all the required checks are made and recorded, they are not all recorded in a single central register as required. Three independent school regulations relating to this are not met.

Newton House has suitable policies to promote good behaviour and eliminate bullying and harassment. These are implemented effectively and the school is generally a calm place where bullying is rare. This is helped by the close supervision of students at all times. Sanctions and physical interventions are appropriately recorded in separate logs, and staff training in physical intervention, which is a last resort in the management of challenging behaviour, is up to date. Assessments are made of the risks posed by individual students, and by everyday activities and off-site visits. Fire safety is well considered. The school has a suitable fire risk assessment and fire safety policy, and checks on fire-fighting equipment, lighting and evacuation arrangements are regularly made by school staff and external professionals. Several staff members are trained in first aid and accidents are recorded appropriately.

Two regulations are not fully met in relation to students' welfare, health and safety. The first aid policy is combined with a detailed policy on the administration of medicine, but does not contain all the guidance it should on first aid. The admissions register does not contain all the information required for each student.

**Leadership and management****Inadequate**

Leadership and management are inadequate. The proprietors have not ensured that the school meets all the regulations for independent schools. The previous proprietors did not appoint a suitable replacement for the teacher in charge who left last July. Responsibility for managing the school was given to senior staff members from other professions who agree they do not have enough educational knowledge or expertise to do this job effectively, and said they were reluctant to take it on.

The curriculum provision, quality of teaching, students' achievement and implementation of the required policies, routines and procedures were not monitored, and consequently deteriorated. No management of staff performance or self-evaluation of the school's strengths and weaknesses has taken place to generate improvement. Suitable educational guidance is not given to the staff members who run 'activities' to the best of their ability. The proprietors did not consider alternatives, such as the provision of external support and guidance, as an interim measure. The new proprietor has begun to remedy this situation, but until very recently, did not make improving the quality of provision and students' progress a top priority.

The school accommodation is fit for purpose and includes a small computer suite and kitchen. The accommodation is warm, in good decorative order, and provides well for students to learn safely. The school has no prospectus or website and four regulations in respect of the information that must be provided to parents, carers and others are not met. For example, parents and carers have not been notified of the new proprietor and his contact details, and are not made aware of the range of policies that are available on request, including the safeguarding policy. Reports do not indicate students' attainment and progress. The complaints procedure does not comply fully with the regulations.

## What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	A school which provides an exceptional quality of education and significantly exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 2	Good	A school which provides a high quality of education that exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 3	Adequate	A school which meets minimum requirements but needs to improve the quality of education it provides.
Grade 4	Inadequate	A school where minimum requirements are not met and/or the quality of education has serious weaknesses.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	138138
<b>Inspection number</b>	420275
<b>DfE registration number</b>	926/6002

This inspection was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

<b>Type of school</b>	Special school
<b>School status</b>	Independent special school
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	10–18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Boys
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	2
<b>Number of part time pupils</b>	0
<b>Proprietor</b>	Premier Children's Services
<b>Chair</b>	Andrew Sweeney
<b>Headteacher</b>	Annelie Jameson
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	Not previously inspected

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