

Newbury Hall School

Enbourne Road, Newbury, RG14 6AD

Inspection dates

14–16 May 2013

Overall effectiveness

Pupils' achievement	Inadequate	4
Pupils' behaviour and personal development	Adequate	3
Quality of teaching	Adequate	3
Quality of curriculum	Adequate	3
Pupils' welfare, health and safety	Inadequate	4
Leadership and management	Inadequate	4

Summary of key findings

This school is inadequate because

- The required range of subjects and activities that students aged 11 to 16 years study is not fully in place, notably for technological, and aesthetic and creative aspects. There is no scheme of work for physical education.
- Students are taught the required content in examination subjects. However, the schemes of work that outline how and when students will be taught and how teaching will be adapted to meet their differing needs are too variable in their quality. This adversely affects the quality of teaching and students' achievement.
- The programme of extra-curricular activities to enrich students' educational experiences through speakers, visits and links with the local and wider community lacks coherence and reduces its value to students' development.
- The school has not worked with sufficient rigour to ensure the health and safety of students and staff at all times, including for educational visits.
- There is no planned programme for staff training and professional development.
- The proprietor and the school's managers have not implemented robust systems for monitoring and evaluating all aspects of school life, including teaching, achievement and health and safety of students, to inform development planning and to ensure that the school meets the independent school regulations.

The school has the following strengths

- Adequate teaching ensures that from very varied starting points, students make adequate progress in examination subjects and good progress in learning to speak and write in English as an additional language.
- Students are thoughtful, considerate and respectful towards each other. They are keen to learn and undertake their studies diligently. They say feel safe in school and that staff will help them if they have any concerns.

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

- This inspection was carried out with one day's notice.
- Ten lessons, two jointly with the director of education, and two tutorial sessions were observed.
- Meetings took place with the headteacher, senior leaders, staff and students. Telephone discussions were held with two parents and the proprietor. The inspector examined students' work, examination results, and a range of documentation including policies, risk assessments, schemes of work and staff training records.
- The inspector considered four staff questionnaires but students were not given the opportunity to complete Ofsted's online Point-in-Time survey and there were no responses to Ofsted's online parental questionnaire, Parent View.

Inspection team

Angela Corbett, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Newbury Hall School in Berkshire is an international boarding school that provides for students aged from 13 to 18 years, all of whom come to the school from different parts of the world. All are learning to speak English as an additional language, with most arriving in the early stages of development.
- The school opened in 2008 and was registered in March 2009.
- It is registered for 88 students but currently there are 39 students on roll, including 10 in the sixth form. No student has a statement of special educational needs and none are disabled.
- The school provides boarding accommodation for its students. Currently 32 are living in purpose-built facilities on the campus and seven residing with host families in the Newbury area.
- The school's central purpose is to enable students to improve their use of English and to help young people from overseas to grow into successful adults with good social skills, self-discipline, and high self-esteem and to become accredited in GCSE and A-level examinations.
- The school makes use of local leisure facilities for sport but no other alternative provision is used.
- Since the last inspection, the school has acquired additional premises for teaching that are currently being refurbished for use from September 2013. There have been significant changes in senior leadership, with the boarding manager, deputy headteacher and director of education in post since September 2012 and the headteacher since January 2013.
- The school's governing body last met in June 2012 and has been disbanded.
- The school was first inspected by Ofsted in February 2010. While the quality of education was judged to be satisfactory, many of the regulations for independent schools were not met. A follow up monitoring visit took place in November 2010 to check on the school's progress in meeting the regulations and this visit judged them to be met.
- The last full social care inspection took place in October 2011, when the overall effectiveness of boarding was judged inadequate with numerous standards not met. A follow up visit in May 2012 to check on the school's progress assessed that the school now met the national minimum standards for boarding schools. The boarding provision was not inspected on this occasion.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching to raise students' achievement and help them to become more independent learners by ensuring that teachers:
 - reduce the time that they spend talking to their students
 - use a wider range of teaching approaches, including more opportunities for practical and active learning
 - plan their lessons to ensure the most able students are fully challenged, particularly for those following the pre-GCSE course
 - support students in providing individual and thoughtful responses to verbal and written feedback.
- Improve the curriculum by:
 - ensuring there are detailed schemes of work in place for all subjects and courses that provide a clear overview what is to be taught
 - developing a cohesive programme of extra-curricular activities, both within and beyond school, that enrich students' academic, cultural and personal development
 - improving links with, and students' contribution to, the local and wider community.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management by:

- implementing robust systems for monitoring and evaluating all aspects of school life, including teaching, achievement and health and safety of students, to inform and plan for improvement and in checking the extent to which the school meets the independent school standards
- bringing greater rigour to ensuring students' health and safety both on and off the school site
- developing a programme of staff training and professional development.
- The school must meet the following independent school standards.
 - Ensure that schemes of work are 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: science, technological, aesthetic and creative, physical (paragraph 2(2)(a)).
 - Ensure arrangements are made to promote the welfare of pupils at the school which have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State (paragraph 7).
 - Ensure that the written policy which complies with relevant health and safety laws is implemented effectively (paragraph 11).
 - Ensure there is a sufficiently detailed written policy on first aid and that this is effectively implemented (paragraph 14).
 - Ensure that the admissions register is maintained in accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (paragraph 17).
 - Ensure that the required identity and qualification checks are completed before a person's appointment (paragraph 19(3)).
 - 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.
 - Particulars for promoting pupils' health and safety on educational visits as required under part 3 paragraphs 10 and 11 (paragraph 24(1)(b))
 - Particulars of academic performance during the preceding school year, including the results of any public examinations (paragraph 24(1)(b))
 - Details of the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year (paragraph 24(1)(b))
 - A summary of staff qualifications (paragraph 24(1)(b)).

Inspection judgements

Pupils' achievement

Adequate

Students' achievement is adequate. It is adequate rather than good because too often, teaching is not well matched to students' needs and abilities and students are not encouraged to show initiative and become really involved in their education.

Every student enters the school from a unique starting point in relation to age, educational experience, ability and competency in speaking English as an additional language. Achievement is not yet good because students, particularly on AS level and pre-GCSE courses, do not make more than adequate progress across all subjects. For example, in 2012, students taking around half the examinations entered failed to achieve pass grades at AS level. However, current school data and evidence from lesson observations and students' work suggest that almost all are now on track to achieve at least a pass grade in each subject studied in 2013, indicating that all students are now making at least adequate progress.

Achievement for students following GCSE courses, including mathematics and IGCSE in English, is adequate. These students are highly committed and make adequate and, for some, good progress, achieving pass grades and higher, and access to university courses.

The school's focus on developing English speaking and writing skills ensures that most students make good progress in the language so that they are able to fully access the English education system. As a result, many transfer to other schools to follow sixth form courses or gain university places of their choice, either in the United Kingdom or overseas.

Pupils' behaviour and personal development

Adequate

Students' personal development is adequate and their behaviour is good. Students act responsibly, have a strong sense of right and wrong, attend well and have very positive attitudes to learning.

In school, students are placed in one of four houses. Close links with the boarding staff and subject teachers enable the house tutors to check on students' well-being and academic progress and provide personalised support for each student and help them to develop independence and self-confidence. House captains take on the role of seeking the views of other students and in conveying their ideas and thoughts to the headteacher at a weekly lunchtime meeting. However, a few students feel that their views are not taken account of.

Students get on well and they are highly supportive of each other, sharing a mutual understanding of what is like to live away from home in another country. As a result, they are kind to each other and look out for those who need extra help to develop both academically and personally. Students make good use of their different international backgrounds to learn about each other's cultures. A new programme of social, health and education (PSHE) lessons and themed evening activities, such as Chinese New Year, supplements this adequately, promoting tolerance, harmony and understanding of other faiths. Although students' spiritual development is adequate, opportunities are missed for students to debate and reflect so they fully appreciate the world around them.

The school is keen for students to adapt to life in modern Britain and takes great care to ensure that they are fully familiar with the practical aspects of day-to-day life. Students develop a balanced and adequate understanding of life in multicultural, democratic Britain and public institutions and services through the PSHE programme and a limited range of visiting speakers, including a recent talk by the local MP. First hand experience is gained through visits to local sports facilities, a few sports matches with local schools, and trips into town and further afield to places of interest as the Science Museum in London. Students who reside with families gain an in-depth

insight into the British way of life. However, there are too few opportunities, particularly for those who board, to make links with, and to contribute to, the local and wider community.

Quality of teaching

Adequate

The quality of teaching is adequate overall, although some good and outstanding teaching was observed during the inspection. Teachers have good subject knowledge. They understand the capabilities of their students in relation to their English language development and provide considerable one-to-one support. They take care to help students make good progress in learning English, supporting the development of subject vocabulary, grammatical structure and handwriting. They are successful in this.

In other areas of the curriculum, teachers aim to be supportive and caring and most teachers plan their lessons adequately to ensure coverage of the required content of examination courses. They explain subject matter clearly and provide relevant guidance on answering examination questions. In the most interesting and lively lessons, students make good progress because they are provided with a wide range of approaches with good opportunities for practical and active learning such as working in pairs, use of information and communication technology (ICT) or independent research. However, this is not consistently the case and too many lessons lack variety. Students are often taught in mixed age classes, notably in the pre-GCSE course. In these lessons in particular, the more able learners are not sufficiently challenged. Too often teachers direct students as to what they have to do. While students like this style of teaching, it results in them relying too heavily on their teachers and they do not become independent, resilient learners. This impacts negatively on their success in examinations.

Teachers assess students' learning in lessons and when marking their written work, noting their progress against the relevant examination criteria and their engagement in learning. Work is generally well marked and students receive both verbal and written guidance on how they can improve. However, teachers miss opportunities for students to reflect and respond to their verbal and written comments in order to accelerate learning and promote independence.

Quality of curriculum

Inadequate

The curriculum is inadequate. Students are taught at one of three levels, pre-GCSE, GCSE and A level in mixed age classes according to their ability to speak English. The age span is particularly wide in the pre-GCSE course. While the school provides a basic range of examination courses at both GCSE and A level, it does not ensure the required breadth of curriculum for students of compulsory school age. For example, there are too few technological, aesthetic and creative opportunities such as design and technology, music and drama.

A curriculum policy is in place. However, the progression in the content of each subject is not made clear and the policy is not supported by sufficiently detailed schemes of work that outline what is to be taught and how teaching will be adapted to meet the different needs and abilities of students. This is particularly the case for some pre-GCSE subjects. While students do have access to physical education, there is no scheme of work to ensure their progression in developing skills and experience in different sports. Teachers provide medium-term plans for the current school year, although these vary too much in quality and detail.

Personal, social, health and citizenship education has improved since the last inspection with a well-devised scheme of work in place for each level. Careers advice has improved and students commented positively on the help they have received with university applications.

There is no cohesive approach between education and boarding staff to plan and provide an extra-curricular programme to ensure variety and systematically enrich students' academic and personal development. Most extra-curricular opportunities are provided by the boarding staff; for

example, every other Saturday all students visit places of interest such as Oxford and Cardiff. The varied programme of evening activities has been recently reduced in order to provide dedicated homework time.

Pupils' welfare, health and safety

Inadequate

Students' welfare, health and safety are inadequate. Four of the independent school regulations are unmet. The school's approach to health and safety lacks attention to detail. Actions to mitigate risk in relation to concerns identified in the March 2102 audit have not been undertaken and the last termly risk audit took place a year ago. Assessments to ensure the health and safety of students when off site, either in their own time or on organised trips, lack rigour. The school's first aid policy has omissions, such as how to deal with spillage of bodily fluids, there is no current fully qualified first aider, and first aid boxes in the school building are of poor standard and have not been checked for over 12 months. However, fire safety is taken seriously, with annual audits, routine fire drills, testing and checking and servicing of fire safety equipment.

Overall safeguarding arrangements for checking on the safety of staff to work with students are adequate. They are not good because although all the required checks have been made on staff, in a very few instances checks were undertaken after employment commenced rather than prior to, as required. The child protection policy is detailed and has been recently reviewed to reflect current guidance, for example in dealing with allegations against staff. Staff have received appropriate level training child protection and understand their responsibilities well.

The behaviour management policy meets requirements and is implemented effectively. Incidents, rewards and sanctions are recorded adequately. However, most recording is kept in individual student records. While boarding and education staff review the records of individual students on a daily basis and provide support as needed, the school is not able to analyse these for patterns in order to identify and rectify concerns. The school has clear procedures for dealing with any bullying. Students are very supportive of each other and say bullying does not occur. Parents spoken to said they felt their children were well looked after and kept safe.

The admissions register does not meet requirements, with missing details such as the date of entry and the last school attended. It is kept electronically but printouts are not made at least annually, as required.

Leadership and management

Inadequate

Leadership and management are inadequate because the absence of effective monitoring and self-evaluation, inadequate schemes of work to support the curriculum and insufficient attention given to ensure students' welfare, health and safety both on and off the school site. Other aspects of the school, including students' achievement and the quality of teaching, are adequate and not good.

The school lacks rigorous processes for monitoring and checking all aspects of school life, including the curriculum and the effectiveness of the implementation of policies, particularly those in relation to welfare, health and safety and the quality of teaching. For instance, to check on the quality of teaching, some lesson observations are undertaken with limited feedback provided to individual teachers. However, these observations are not used to provide rigorous guidance or inform a planned programme of professional training and development. Consequently, there is no formal checking of the extent to which independent school regulations are met or development planning to bring about improvement. However, the recent restructuring of the school's senior leadership and appointment of faculty heads is beginning to build capacity and provide leaders with clear roles of responsibility and accountability. This has yet to impact on the quality of provision or to ensure students' health and safety. Some staff and students feel they could be better informed

about the changes and the reasons for them.

The school building is reasonably well maintained and provides for adequate learning although décor and displays are tired in most classrooms. Most of the required information is provided to parents and carers but the school does not publish details of any formal complaints over the last 12 months, a summary of staff qualifications, details of how the school ensures students' health and safety on educational visits and a summary of staff qualifications. Parents and carers are provided with frequent detailed written reports on their children's progress. The two parents spoken to by telephone were positive about the work of the school. The complaints policy meets requirements.

The proprietor and other leaders have failed to ensure that all the regulations for independent schools are met.

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

Unique reference number	135819
Social care unique reference number	SC382720
Inspection number	420230
DfE registration number	869/6016

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.

Type of school	Independent international boarding school
School status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	13–18 years
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	39
Number of part time pupils	0
Number of boarders on roll	32
Proprietor	Till Gins The Education and Training Company Limited
Headteacher	Rupert Whitham
Date of previous school inspection	11–12 February 2010
Annual fees (boarders and in lodging)	£31,500
Telephone number	01635 36879
Fax number	01635 48400
Email address	rupert.whitham@newburyhall.com

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