

Newbury Hall School

Enbourne Road, Newbury, Berkshire RG14 6AD

Inspection dates

17–19 May 2016

Overall effectiveness

Inadequate

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Inadequate
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Inadequate
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Sixth form provision	Inadequate
Overall experiences and progress of children and young people in the boarding provision	Inadequate
Quality of care and support in the boarding provision	Requires improvement
How well children and young people are protected in the boarding provision	Inadequate
Impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers in the boarding provision	Inadequate
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Inadequate

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- Safeguarding processes do not meet statutory requirements. Incidents are not reported, recorded, followed up or analysed. Designated leads do not take appropriate action when allegations are made. Processes and systems do not ensure that pupils are safe. Leaders have not taken action to tackle previous shortfalls in meeting the national minimum standards for boarding.
- Processes for recruiting staff do not meet the independent school standards. Requests for references do not ask the right questions and leaders do not check whether the questions they have asked are answered.
- Although leaders expect staff to complete safeguarding training, some staff work with pupils without having done so.
- The sixth form is inadequate because safeguarding issues affecting the whole school also pertain to sixth-form learners.
- Pupils' personal development and welfare are not well supported. Leaders and staff do not analyse how often pupils attend school and how well they behave.
- Risk assessment processes are ineffective. Individual risk assessments are not carried out and generic ones lack essential detail so insufficient consideration is given to reducing or managing risks.
- Policies and documentation to support pupils' welfare, such as behaviour and anti-bullying, are not up to date and do not meet requirements.
- Staff appraisals are not effective: staff do not get the correct training to undertake their roles and they do not know what they need to do to improve. This means that the appraisal process does not drive improvement across the school.
- The proprietor does not hold leaders to account for keeping pupils safe and for meeting required standards. Meetings between leaders and the proprietor are not recorded in sufficient detail to evidence that requirements of governance are being fulfilled.
- Some teaching does not support pupils' needs well enough. In some lessons teachers fail to give pupils enough opportunities to practise reading and speaking English.
- Weak teaching has resulted in minimal progress for some pupils, particularly in English, mathematics and the sciences.
- Careers guidance for learners in the sixth form is limited. There are very few opportunities to learn about a range of career options.
- The boarding provision does not meet the national minimum standards.
- The school does not meet the independent school standards.

The school has the following strengths

- Staff are committed to the school and want the pupils to do well.
- There is a broad range of extra-curricular opportunities, some of which are in response to pupils' requests.
- Pupils demonstrate good manners and respect in and around the school.
- Teaching is improving and leaders are clear what more needs to be done for all teachers to be effective.
- The curriculum places a strong emphasis on preparing pupils for a range of formal examinations.

Compliance with regulatory requirements and national minimum standards for boarding schools

- The school must take action to meet the schedule to The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 and associated requirements. The details are listed in the full report.
- The school does not meet the national minimum standards for boarding schools. The details are listed in the full report.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Urgently take action to meet the statutory requirements for safeguarding by:
 - making sure that all designated safeguarding leads understand exactly what they need to do to keep pupils safe
 - ensuring that all staff are trained to recognise safeguarding concerns, and record them appropriately
 - implementing systematic processes so that every single incident and concern is reported, recorded, followed up and analysed, taking action where necessary
 - making sure that all records are kept confidentially, but are accessible to safeguarding leads at all times, and that all designated safeguarding leads are aware of incidents and concerns
 - informing and following guidance from the local authority designated officer when an allegation is made against a member of staff
 - carrying out and recording full, thorough and impartial investigations for all incidents, identifying clearly what action is taken
 - following all safer recruitment practices, including for references and police checks.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management by:
 - making sure that urgent action is taken to meet the independent school standards and national minimum standards for boarding schools
 - improving communication amongst leaders and staff, so that no incidents or concerns can be overlooked
 - review policies to ensure that they are up to date and include required information, including what and how behaviour sanctions are applied
 - amending staff appraisal processes so that individuals are set targets and held to account, so that performance of staff and the school as a whole improves over time
 - making sure that the proprietor holds leaders to account for safeguarding and meeting the required standards, and that meetings and information are recorded in sufficient detail to show that governance responsibilities are being carried out
 - implementing systematic processes so that all accidents and behaviour incidents are recorded in detail and stored in a central place, which is accessible for all staff
 - ensuring that records of accidents, behaviour incidents and attendance registers are checked and analysed by leaders on a regular basis, and necessary action is taken.
- Improve the quality of teaching and outcomes for pupils by:
 - making sure that pupils have opportunities to practise speaking English in lessons and around the school
 - providing more structured reading sessions for pupils so that they can practise their pronunciation and explore the meanings of specific words and phrases
 - ensuring that teachers have the skills to develop subject expertise at the same time as supporting language development
 - providing guidance for learners in the sixth form, and for younger pupils, so that they are aware of a wide range of possibilities for their future careers.
- The school must meet the following independent school standards:
 - The proprietor ensures that pupils receiving secondary education have access to accurate, up-to-date careers guidance that enables them to make informed choices about a broad range of career options (paragraph 2(2)(e)(ii)).
 - Teaching at the school utilises effective strategies for managing behaviour and encouraging pupils to act responsibly (paragraph 3(h)).
 - The proprietor ensures that:
 - arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school
 - such arrangements have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State (paragraphs 7(a) and 7(b)).

- The proprietor ensures that:
 - arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of boarders while they are accommodated at the school
 - such arrangements have regard to the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools (paragraphs 8(a) and 8(b)).
 - The proprietor promotes good behaviour amongst pupils by ensuring that:
 - a written behaviour policy is drawn up that, amongst other matters, sets out the sanctions to be adopted in the event of misbehaviour
 - the policy is implemented effectively
 - a record is kept of the sanctions imposed upon pupils for serious misbehaviour (paragraphs 9(a), 9(b) and 9(c)).
 - The proprietor ensures that pupils are properly supervised through the appropriate deployment of school staff (paragraph 14).
 - The proprietor ensures that appropriate action is taken to reduce risks that are identified (paragraph 16(b)).
 - The checks referred to in sub-paragraphs 18(2)(c) and 18(2)(e) must be completed before a person's appointment (paragraph 18(3)).
 - The proprietor ensures that persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school:
 - demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role so that the independent school standards are met consistently
 - fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently
 - actively promote the well-being of pupils (Part 8, paragraphs 34(1)(a)(b)(c)).
- The school must meet the following national minimum standards for boarding schools:
- The school's proprietor monitors the effectiveness of the leadership, management and delivery of the boarding and welfare provision in the school and takes appropriate action where necessary (NMS 13.1).
 - The school's leadership and management consistently fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the standards are met (NMS 13.4).
 - The school follows and maintains the policies and documents described in Appendix 1 (NMS 13.7).
 - The records specified in Appendix 2 are maintained and monitored by the school and action taken as appropriate (NMS 13.8).
 - The school ensures that arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school and such arrangements have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State (NMS 11).
 - The school has and consistently implements a written policy to promote good behaviour amongst pupils. This policy includes disciplinary sanctions (NMS 12.1).
 - Schools operate safe recruitment and adopt recruitment procedures in line with the regulatory requirements and having regard to relevant guidance issued by the Secretary of State (NMS 14.1).

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is inadequate

Impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers in the boarding provision is inadequate

How well children and young people are protected in the boarding provision is inadequate

- Leaders have not ensured that safeguarding processes are effective. Although a high proportion of staff have completed the training to be designated safeguarding leads, none of them ensure that the correct processes are carried out with regard to reporting, recording, following up and analysing incidents, concerns and allegations. Although safeguarding concerns have been raised in previous inspections, leaders have not taken effective action to tackle all the weaknesses, such as issues with the safe recruitment of staff.
- The proprietor does not monitor the management and delivery of boarding. He has not identified the weaknesses in the leadership and management, especially around safeguarding. He has not taken action to tackle failures in meeting the national minimum standards for boarding identified during previous inspections and an external audit.
- The senior management team has not put into place systems to ensure compliance with the independent school standards and the national minimum standards.
- Staff appraisal processes are weak. They focus too much on what is going well and do not identify areas in which staff should be more effective. This means that staff do not necessarily get the right training and they are not clear about what they could do better. Consequently, appraisals do not support whole-school development. An example of this is the priority leaders have put on changing the culture of using mobile phones during the school day. Because there has not been a planned approach and this focus has not fed into staff appraisals, there continue to be inconsistencies in expectations and the way in which issues are managed.
- There are inconsistencies in information provided by leaders. The headteacher and proprietor state that they have made a strategic decision not to accommodate pupils in lodgings in future. However, other members of senior staff advised a parent that a pupil might be placed in lodgings. Inspectors were therefore unable to establish if the previous breach in the national minimum standards, regarding checks on host families and the quality of accommodation, has now been remedied.
- Staff do not have guidance in the risk assessment process. Individual risk assessments are non-existent. Staff do not fully reflect on incidents, the potential impact on others and the control measures that may be required.
- Leaders demonstrate passion for the mission of the school. They are committed to ensuring that the pupils, who come from many different countries, develop the English language skills, confidence, enquiry and challenge to become effective learners and successful adults.
- The curriculum is designed to prepare pupils for a range of examinations. Where leaders have adapted examination syllabuses according to the language needs of pupils, it is particularly effective. Leaders' plans to develop the curriculum further for pupils with less English are positive. They rightly recognise the need to make learning more meaningful for those pupils who struggle in the early stages of language acquisition.
- Changes to contractual arrangements resulted in a high turnover of teaching staff last year. Since then, leaders have taken effective action to recruit, induct and train teachers to meet the specific needs of pupils. Leaders carry out useful and accurate lesson observations, and provide clear and helpful feedback to teachers so they know exactly what they need to do to be more effective. This has led to improvements in teaching, so pupils in some subjects and lessons make good progress.
- Leaders' system of recording achievement is useful. They record termly assessment results and compare progress each term. However, this information shows that pupils are likely to achieve less well than in previous years, because teaching is not yet consistently good.
- Pupils' personal, social, health and emotional development is well supported. Leaders carry out research into the different cultures of education that affect their pupils, so that they are able to support pupils explicitly in becoming effective learners within the British education system. For example, some pupils are taught not to challenge teachers in their home country. Leaders at the school plan structured

opportunities to encourage these pupils to be more questioning. As a result, pupils who have been at the school for a while demonstrate confidence in their point of view and are keen to share their ideas with their peers and adults.

- British values are taught effectively. Pupils are clear about what tolerance, respect, justice and other values mean and what they look like in practice. They learn about other cultures through evening activities, when pupils prepare and present information about their own countries, cultures and lifestyles. This ensures that pupils understand and show respect for each other's differences and the way in which they respond differently to life in England.
- Pupils have opportunities to experience a broad range of extra-curricular activities, some of which are organised in response to requests from pupils. Pupils speak very positively about the amount of sporting clubs and activities in which they participate. This year, activities have been broadened further to include textiles and horse riding, among many others.
- Pupils are encouraged to develop independence outside school. They are allowed to go to the local shops and, with appropriate permission from guardians, further afield, such as London or visiting universities around the country.
- Leaders do not gather parents' views systematically. Understandably, the language barrier and physical distance get in the way of this; however, leaders do not do enough to develop communication links with parents.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The proprietor carries out the role of governor at the school. He receives verbal communication from school leaders about teaching, achievement and safeguarding. However, he is too trusting of what he is told by leaders. He does not check the information, or hold them to account. As a result, ineffective aspects of leadership have not been identified.
 - Records of meetings between school leaders and the proprietor are vague and lack sufficient detail to show that the proprietor knows about, and provides challenge in, the required aspects of governance. Consequently, policies are out of date and do not include required information, procedures do not meet requirements and staff appraisal processes are ineffective.
 - The proprietor meets with leaders to review the strategic purpose of the school. He ensures that the school building and boarding provision are in good order. He also provides financial support to ensure that the school continues to be viable.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.
 - The processes for managing safeguarding concerns do not meet requirements. Staff, including those who are trained to be designated safeguarding leads, do not recognise signs of potential safeguarding concerns. For example, although the school took appropriate medical action to manage a situation in which a pupil consumed alcohol, they did not investigate, follow up or record the situation sufficiently well. No action was taken to tackle how the alcohol was acquired, nor was it clear what sanctions were applied to the other pupils who were involved. The designated leads had not identified the situation to be a safeguarding concern.
 - Despite improvements made to recruitment procedures, references do not ask for important information about disciplinary issues. Reference requests ask whether the applicant is fit to work with young people but, when referees do not respond to this question, it is not followed up by leaders. Police checks for suitability to work with pupils are not applied for until the staff member joins the school. Risk assessments to manage safeguarding vulnerabilities while the school waits for checks to be made are weak and take too much account of historical documentation.
 - Staff complete safeguarding training online. Some staff complete basic training before they begin working with pupils but there is no expectation that all staff will do so. As a result, some staff work with pupils for several months without carrying out safeguarding training.
 - It is positive that one of the designated leads has undertaken training to improve the central record of staff safeguarding information. The changes being made are positive.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment **requires improvement**

- Teaching is not consistently good. Some teachers do not provide enough opportunities for pupils to practise their skills in speaking and reading English. This means that, on occasions, opportunities are missed to promote key language skills.
- Some teachers do not have sufficient expertise in developing pupils' knowledge and use of English. This

means that, although teachers have excellent subject knowledge, the language barrier can get in the way of pupils making as much progress as they should.

- The teaching of reading is not as well structured as it needs to be for pupils in the early stages of reading English. Pupils are given abridged versions of complex texts but sometimes the vocabulary and story are too complex for pupils in the early stages of language acquisition. Pupils do not have systematic opportunities to explore elements they do not understand and, when reading aloud, their pronunciation is not always corrected.
- The effectiveness of teaching within individual subjects, including in mathematics, science and art, varies widely. Some teachers meet pupils' needs very well. In these lessons, teachers plan carefully structured activities, which interest pupils, support their vocabulary and facilitate their learning well.
- A high proportion of new teachers joined the school this academic year. Many teachers have become more effective during the course of the year through useful support and development. Further development is required to ensure that all teaching is effective, but this work is in progress.
- The very small numbers of pupils in each class enable teachers to focus on individuals' specific needs. Where teachers explore with pupils where improvements can be made in their work, rather than telling them, this brings about a deeper understanding.
- Many teachers provide useful challenge to the most able pupils. This is partly because they are able to understand and use English with greater confidence and skill, and partly because these pupils can access the teachers' high-quality subject knowledge.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is inadequate

- Behaviour incidents and sanctions are not reported, recorded or analysed. This means it is not clear how often incidents occur, nor how often pupils receive detentions or are grounded. As a result, leaders do not consider whether poor behaviour is linked to specific lessons or teachers, so it does not improve over time.
- Policies linked to behaviour and welfare are out of date and do not include required information. For example, it is not clear what behaviours will result in what sanctions and how sanctions will escalate. This means that behaviour is not managed consistently and some teachers are not clear what they can do to manage situations themselves.
- Pupils behave appropriately in lessons and around the school. They are courteous and polite to visitors and generally demonstrate respect for each other and the adults who teach them.
- Pupils are taught to keep themselves safe. They learn about extremism and how to identify if someone is trying to radicalise them, taking account of their different countries and cultures. At the appropriate time, they learn to be aware of driving safely through training courses. Staff have been proactive in engaging with the police to talk to boarders about e-safety and substance misuse.
- Boarders say they are not restrained. They live in a safe environment with all necessary health and safety checks in place. They do not go missing from school or from the boarding provision.
- Attendance records are kept but there is no analysis. Pupils who regularly miss school because they are sick are not picked up systematically.
- Accidents are not recorded, even when pupils end up going to hospital. There are useful medical records but they are not checked or analysed, so opportunities are missed to identify patterns or signs of concern.
- Pupils feel safe both in the school and the boarding provision. They are confident that there is someone they can tell if they are worried about anything, although the role of the independent visitor is not embedded.

Outcomes for pupils require improvement

- Some pupils do not make enough progress because of variations in the quality of teaching. This is particularly the case in English, mathematics and the sciences.
- Recent assessment tests in English, mathematics, biology, chemistry and physics indicate that the proportion of pupils who are on track to achieve GCSEs is smaller than usual and well below other schools nationally.
- In reading, most pupils join the school with reading levels which are well below what would be expected for English-speaking pupils of the same age. The school rightly aims for pupils to make accelerated

progress in this area and some pupils make two or three years' progress in one year. However, this is not always the case. Some pupils do not catch up on these essential skills and therefore make slower progress in their academic studies than they could.

- The most able pupils and those with good language skills make at least expected progress, and often better, achieving well across the curriculum. They benefit from the excellent subject knowledge and personalised support offered by teachers. However, those pupils whose English is in the early stages sometimes do less well because insufficient focus is given to them developing their language acquisition, and too much is on subject-specific knowledge.
- Progress and achievement in other subjects is erratic, depending on the effectiveness of the teacher. For example, some sixth-form artwork is of a very high standard, but some pre-GCSE art was less well developed, and opportunities were missed to develop pupils' skills further.

Sixth form provision

is inadequate

- The safeguarding issues which apply to the rest of the school also apply to the sixth form. This means that learners in the sixth form are not kept safe.
- Learners do not have enough opportunities to find out about a wide range of careers. The advice they receive is limited and very few visitors come to talk about careers. Younger pupils would also benefit from improved provision in this area.
- In many other respects, the school meets learners' needs well. Much support is provided to ensure that learners make the right choice of university, making visits both accompanied and unaccompanied to see what is available, with the majority choosing to attend a British university.
- The sixth-form curriculum meets learners' needs well. A wide range of subjects are provided and these are closely matched to learners' areas of interest and required qualifications.
- The school supports learners very well to achieve the required grades for the courses of their choice. They check learners' progress carefully, providing additional classes. If learners request additional support, leaders make sure that it is available to them.
- Learners have opportunities to develop their skills further by undertaking activities out the school day, such as the Duke of Edinburgh Award.

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people in the boarding provision

are inadequate

- Leaders and managers are not effective at identifying and tackling weaknesses, especially around safeguarding. Staff do not record significant incidents or low-level concerns.
- Boarders speak positively of their experience. They enjoy a wide range of food and varied activities. However, although boarders say that staff listen to them, they are not aware of how to make a formal complaint if necessary. Boarders are able to communicate easily with their parents through various media.
- Boarders speak positively of their house parents. They enjoy a positive and constructive relationship with them. Staff promote the use of English language in boarding and boarders make good progress in developing their language skills.
- Boarders live in suitable school accommodation that is well maintained and decorated. They are able to personalise their rooms. Staff have enhanced the communal space, as recommended at the previous inspection, with the addition of another common room. The physical environment is safe and all necessary maintenance checks are in place.
- No boarders are currently accommodated in lodgings.

Quality of care and support in the boarding provision

requires improvement

- There are no welfare plans in place for boarders who require them. Staff have no mechanism to capture information to inform risk assessments. Consequently, staff do not keep individual risk assessments on boarders they have identified as needing further support.

- Boarders report that there is a good induction process which helps them to settle into the routine quickly. They say they feel welcomed into the school.
- Boarding and education staff discuss any relevant issues and ensure that there is a suitable handover.
- Contact with home is a strength. Boarders are easily able to contact their family and friends. Staff make suitable arrangements when there are time differences to be considered.
- Boarders are positive about the food. Staff cater for their preferences and dietary needs. Boarders speak positively of being able to try a range of international cuisine as they celebrate each other's cultures.
- Activities are a strength. Boarders say they do not get bored, as there are a range of healthy activities they enjoy, such as swimming, basketball and badminton.

School details

Unique reference number	135819
Social care unique reference number	SC382720
Inspection number	10012909
DfE registration number	

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, 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.

The inspection of boarding provision was carried out under the Children Act 1989, as amended by the Care Standards Act 2000, having regard to the national minimum standards for boarding schools.

Type of school	Independent international boarding school
School status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	13–18 years
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	34
Number of part time pupils	0
Number of boarders on roll	34
Proprietor	Till Gins
Headteacher	Jon Crocker
Annual fees	£37,200 per year
Telephone number	01635 36879
Website	www.newburyhall.com
Email address	info@newburyhall.com
Date of previous inspection	School: 14–16 May 2013 Boarding: 20–22 May 2015

Information about this school

- Newbury Hall School is an international boarding school. All the pupils come from countries outside the United Kingdom and all are learning to speak English as an additional language.
- The school opened in 2008 and was registered in March 2009.
- It is registered for 100 pupils but currently has 34 on roll. No pupils have identified special educational needs and none are disabled.
- The school provides boarding accommodation for its pupils. All 34 live on-site. The school has previously accommodated some pupils with host families but the proprietor and headteacher have stated that this will no longer be the case. The proprietor intends to apply to change the registered number with the Department for Education.
- The school's core purpose is to enable pupils to improve their use of English, secure good academic results and become successful adults with social skills, self-discipline and confidence.
- The school is situated on a small single site with very limited outside space, most of which is used for parking. Pupils use local leisure facilities for sports. There is no other alternative provision used. The second site, which was purchased just prior to the inspection in 2013, is currently being sold.

- The last education inspection was carried out in May 2013 and the school was judged to be inadequate, with many independent school standards not met, including some related to safeguarding.
- The boarding provision was inspected in May 2015 and was also judged to be inadequate, with several national minimum standards not being met, including some related to safeguarding. The subsequent monitoring inspection indicated that leaders were making progress but that safeguarding issues remained.

Information about this inspection

- Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior leaders, a group of teachers and the proprietor.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, senior leaders including the boarding manager, the proprietor and groups of staff to discuss safeguarding, education and care.
- Inspectors toured the school and the boarding accommodation. They observed routines and care in the boarding provision and spoke to several groups of pupils about safety, safeguarding, education and care. In addition to discussions, pupils' views were also gathered through a questionnaire, which all pupils completed. They also ate lunch with pupils.
- Inspectors observed eight lessons, three of which were accompanied by a senior leader, scrutinised pupils' work and listened to them read.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils and groups of pupils, formally and informally, and with a number of pupils in lessons, in their boarding accommodation and around the school.
- Inspectors met with a group of teachers and spoke to other school and boarding staff.
- Inspectors took into account the views of two parents who responded to inspectors' emailed request for comments. There were no responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documents including curriculum documents, records and policies related to safeguarding and education. They also checked the school's website.

Inspection team

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Social Care Regulatory Inspector

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Social Care Regulatory Inspector

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