

Newbury Hall School

Enborne Road, Newbury, Berkshire RG14 6AD

Inspection dates

5–6 December 2017

Overall outcome

The school does not meet all of the independent school standards that were checked during this inspection

Boarding provision outcome

The school does not meet all of the national minimum standards that were checked during this inspection

Main inspection findings

Part 1. Quality of education provided

Ensure that pupils receiving secondary education access accurate, up-to-date careers guidance that enables them to make informed choices about a broad range of career options (paragraph 2, 2(2) and 2(2)(e)(ii)).

- This standard was not met at the previous inspection because careers guidance for sixth-form students was limited. There were too few opportunities to learn about a range of career options.
- The school planned to use an online system to provide analysis of pupils' strengths and weaknesses and suggest suitable career pathways. Although there are currently no sixth-form students on roll, this system has been put in to place and used by current pupils. Pupils explained how the system suggested suitable careers, using their answers to a range of questions. Pupils say this is helpful.
- The current pupils are really ambitious, they want to do well academically, eventually attend a good university and have careers in law, medicine or engineering. They attend university, careers and jobs fairs that help them shape their ambitions.
- The school has modified the curriculum, provided more opportunities for pupils to find out about careers from different people, and has made careers education a regular agenda item at leadership meetings. As current pupils are not ready to move on to further education, training or employment it is not possible to assess the impact of these actions. However, leaders have taken appropriate steps to meet the standard.
- This standard is met.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Ensure 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 (paragraph 7, 7(a), 7(b), 8, 8(a) and 8(b)).

- In the past there have been numerous shortcomings in the safeguarding culture of the school. At the time of the last full inspection the safeguarding policy was out of date and did not comply with latest guidance. Some staff who worked regularly with pupils had not received adequate training.
- At the time of the previous progress monitoring visit in February 2017, the safeguarding policy was up to date and made reference to the latest guidance issued by the Secretary of State. However, it did not make reference to potential safeguarding concerns such as child sexual exploitation, female genital mutilation or peer-on-peer abuse. Staff training had been implemented and improved by February 2017.
- The school planned to evaluate the quality of care provided as an agenda item at weekly leadership meetings and termly meetings between the proprietor and principal. The proprietor also planned to undertake training to further his knowledge of the dangers of extremism and radicalisation. This training has now been completed by the proprietor.
- Leaders still do not have a thorough enough understanding of their safeguarding responsibilities. They are not aware of their responsibilities as set out in current guidance from the Secretary of State. The current safeguarding policy meets the requirements of the latest guidance, and is published on the school website. However, it does have a number of weaknesses.
- Leaders responsible for safeguarding do not have the knowledge or skills to implement the policy correctly. Leaders do not understand the role of the Local Safeguarding Children Board or the function of the designated officer. They do not have up-to-date knowledge of the risks that affect young people in the local area. There are different posters around the school with conflicting advice about who staff should contact outside of the school if they have a concern about a child.
- Although safeguarding has been a regular agenda item at meetings, there have been no discussions or reflections about recent safeguarding concerns or 'near misses'. The proprietor has not been made aware of these concerns or 'near misses'. There has been no recorded discussion about how leaders and the proprietor will ensure that the school meets the independent school standards and national minimum standards for boarding schools that relate to safeguarding in a timely manner.
- These standards remain unmet.

The standard in this paragraph is met if 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 pupil misbehaviour; the policy is implemented effectively (paragraph 9, 9(a) and 9(b)).

- At the previous full inspection in May 2016, documentation to support pupils' welfare such as behaviour and anti-bullying policies were not up to date and did not meet requirements. At the monitoring visit in February 2017, policies and procedures had been updated and records of sanctions were being kept. However, leaders were not monitoring how effective these procedures were.
- Since then, the school planned to amend guidance for staff about when individual behaviour plans or risk assessments were required. However, this has not been necessary due to the falling roll.

- There are very few pupils currently on roll and even fewer incidents of poor behaviour of any kind. Leaders are very aware of these minor incidents and have analysed why they happened.
- This standard is met.

Ensure that appropriate action is taken to reduce risks that are identified (paragraph 16, 16(b)).

- During the inspection in May 2016, risk assessments were found to be ineffective. At the time of the monitoring visit in February 2017, leaders had begun to put risk assessments in place for a range of school activities. However, they were not monitored effectively and some were out of date.
- Leaders planned to put in place a programme for monitoring and updating risk assessments according to the type and regularity of an activity.
- There is a far more rigorous approach to risk assessment now in place. Pupils are made aware of the risks of different activities and locations through helpful photographs that depict potential dangers. External expertise has been used to update risk assessments for the building and regular school events.
- The student services manager monitors risk assessments on a regularly basis. However, despite these clear improvements there are still some significant failings. For example: some risk assessments are signed off even when they contain factual errors; risk assessments for some city visits are missing from the file so may not have been completed; risk assessments for trips and visits do not take account of the specific risks associated with the medical needs of individual pupils.
- This standard is not met.

Part 4. Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

Ensure the proprietor carries out appropriate checks to confirm in respect of each such person's identity; medical fitness; right to work in the United Kingdom; and where appropriate, the person's qualifications; in the case of any person for whom, by reason of that person living or having lived outside the United Kingdom, such further checks are made as the proprietor considers appropriate, having regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State; and these checks are completed before a person's appointment (paragraph 18(1), 18(2), 18(2)(c), 18(2)(c)(i), 18(2)(c)(ii), 18(2)(c)(iii), 18(2)(c)(iv), 18(2)(e) and 18(3)).

- In May 2016, processes for recruiting staff did not meet requirements, for example references were not thorough, and overseas checks were not completed on staff who had previously worked abroad.
- By February 2017, an appropriate single central record of recruitment checks was in place and improvements had been made to the interviewing process to check applicants' suitability to work with children. However, records held were judged to be of poor quality because candidate's responses were not recorded well enough.
- The school put in place plans to strengthen their record-keeping in this area.
- There have been very few new staff appointments since the last monitoring inspection. However, records for newly appointed staff are detailed and meet all requirements. All checks are completed before the applicant starts work. References are sought and

gained. Managers have a process in place to follow up references that have missing information, or do not appear to be from an acceptable source, to check their authenticity. Notes of interviews are detailed and record clearly candidates' understanding of and attitudes towards safeguarding.

- This standard is met.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Ensure that persons with leadership and management responsibility: 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; and actively promote the well-being of pupils (paragraph 34(1), 34(1)(a), 34(1)(b) and 34(1)(c)).

- At the previous full inspection in May 2016, safeguarding procedures were judged to be ineffective. There were numerous unmet independent school standards and unmet national minimum standards for boarding schools.
- The original action plan submitted to the Department for Education (DfE) was judged to be unsatisfactory. When leaders revised their plan it still did not meet requirements. At the progress monitoring inspection in February 2017 a few of the previously unmet standards relating to behaviour were met. However, many standards remained unmet.
- The latest action plan submitted to the DfE in June 2017 and accepted by them in November 2017 did meet requirements. However, leaders have not successfully achieved all they planned to do.
- The proprietor and leaders have shown both a lack of urgency and understanding in their work to meet all of the national minimum standards for boarding schools and the independent school standards. This is particularly the case when it comes to safeguarding requirements.
- Some improvements have been made since February 2017, for example to recruitment checks and careers education. However, there is not a strategic approach to overall school improvement.
- Leaders are not aware of what they do not know and lack the expertise and experience to ensure all the standards are met. The proprietor has not held leaders to account for meeting the independent school standards.
- The school's current situation has impacted negatively on pupil numbers. Overseas students are unable to obtain visas to study, for any prolonged length of time, at an inadequate school. To overcome this, the school sought to diversify by providing many more short English language courses during the summer of 2017. The school needed to use host families to accommodate some of the 300 students who attended the school. Insufficient checks and weak procedures within this provision led to new unmet national minimum standards for boarding schools. This demonstrated further weaknesses in leadership.
- The standards in Part 8 are not met.

Boarding provision

Compliance with the national minimum standards for boarding schools that were assessed during this inspection

NMS 11.1 – 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.

The following areas of improved/good practice were identified:

- There have been no allegations made against members of staff since the progress monitoring inspection in February 2017. The principal demonstrated good knowledge of the actions that should be taken if a young person does make an allegation against a member of staff in the future. This included steps that would be taken to keep young people safe.
- The proprietor, along with all other key members of staff, has now completed 'Prevent' duty training. As a result, the proprietor has had the opportunity to familiarise himself with the risks associated with young people becoming radicalised by extremist views.
- Recreational activities are no longer provided at the homes of staff members. Staff who facilitate activities for young people have had Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks completed.
- The independent visitor now visits the school on a regular basis. This ensures young people have ample opportunities to discuss any concerns they may have.
- The police have delivered a workshop to young people on personal safety and how to keep safe when accessing the internet.
- Security at the school has improved. Visitors can no longer gain access without reporting to the reception area.

Despite these improvements, significant failings were identified in relation to this standard. These include:

- The child protection and safeguarding policy, which was reviewed and updated in September 2017, is not an effective tool for ensuring that young people are protected from harm. The policy contains a misleading definition of historic abuse. Incorrect details are given in relation to which agencies and professionals should be notified when a child protection concern is identified.
- Staff do not consistently record and report safeguarding concerns in accordance with procedures specified in the school's child protection policy.
- The principal and the student services manager (who has responsibility for the boarding provision) do not consistently identify serious incidents as safeguarding concerns. On two occasions, a young person's health condition was not recognised as a safeguarding matter. A detailed welfare plan and risk assessment was not completed, despite clear evidence that the young person was at risk of harm.
- The young person's health record contained guidance for staff on what action to take in an emergency situation. The guidance was written by a member of staff and was not sanctioned by a medical professional. If staff had followed the guidance, the young person would have been placed at risk of significant harm.

- Management monitoring of young people's health records is poor. The principal did not identify that written guidance for staff, in relation to a young person's medical condition, was inappropriate.
- The principal, who is the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) person, and the student services manager, who has responsibility for the boarding provision and is a deputy DSL, were not aware of the safeguarding guidance issued by the Secretary of State.
- This standard is not met.

NMS 12.1 The school has and consistently implements a written policy to promote good behaviour amongst pupils. This policy includes: measures to combat bullying, including cyber bullying, and to promote positive behaviour; school rules; disciplinary sanctions; when restraint, including reasonable force, is to be used and how this will be recorded and managed; and arrangements for searching pupils and their possessions.

- The principal reported that there have been no serious incidents or concerns regarding the behaviour of young people, including bullying, since the progress monitoring inspection in February 2017. The inspector did not identify any concerns relating to how the school's behaviour policy is being implemented. As a result, it was not possible to judge how effectively the behaviour policy and procedures are applied when there are incidents of challenging behaviour.
- The inspector did not identify any incidents which would have warranted reviewing the effectiveness of the behaviour policy, outside of the normal review cycle.
- The standard has now been met.

NMS 13.1 The school's governing body and/or 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.

The proprietor was not available to be interviewed during this inspection. However, the following area of improved/good practice was identified:

- The proprietor has now given sufficient consideration to the security of the premises. Visitors now have to report to the reception area before they can gain access to the school buildings.

Despite this improvement, significant failings were identified in relation to this standard. These include:

- The proprietor conducts a monitoring meeting with the senior leadership team each term. There have been two meetings since the progress monitoring inspection in February 2017. The minutes from these meetings do not show that the school's action plan and the boarding self-assessment were reviewed as part of this monitoring process.
- The minutes from the proprietor's monitoring meeting in September 2017 record that there were no current safeguarding issues. There had been safeguarding issues since the proprietor conducted his last monitoring meeting. One pertained to a young person's medical condition and the other was in relation to a young person going missing during a school trip. The proprietor's monitoring meetings do not effectively scrutinise the standard of practice within the boarding facility.
- This standard is not met.

NMS 13.4 The school's leadership and management consistently fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the standards are met.

The following area of improved/good practice were identified:

- Leaders and managers have ensured that boarding staff complete key training courses in a timely manner.

Despite this improvement, significant failings were identified in relation to this standard. These include:

- Weak self-assessment of the boarding provision. A self-assessment report produced in September 2017 makes no reference to the national minimum standards that were failed in February 2017. The report does not analyse and evaluate the quality of the service being provided.
- Monitoring systems are not effective. They have not identified that welfare concerns have not always been reported in accordance with safeguarding procedures, or that a young person's health record contained inappropriate guidance.
- Leaders and managers are not aware of the responsibilities they hold in relation to implementing the Secretary of State's guidance on protecting young people from harm.
- The school's child protection and safeguarding policy indicates that the DSL will provide the proprietor with an annual safeguarding report and monthly data on safeguarding matters. This has not been done.
- The student services manager does not hold team meetings for boarding house staff. Consequently, there are no formal arrangements for staff to collectively reflect on their practice and contribute towards the development of the service.
- This standard is not met.

NMS 13.7 The school follows and maintains the policies and documents described in Appendix 1

The following area of improved/good practice was identified:

- Risk assessments are now undertaken when there are indications that a young person might go missing.

Despite this improvement, a significant failing was identified in relation to this standard:

- The school does not have a policy relating to the care of boarders who are unwell which includes first aid, care of those with chronic conditions and disabilities, dealing with medical emergencies, and the use of household remedies.
- This standard is not met.

NMS 13.8 The records specified in Appendix 2 are maintained and monitored by the school and action taken as appropriate.

The following area of improved/good practice was identified:

- Activities are now arranged so that young people do not come into close contact with adults who have not had a DBS check.

Despite this improvement, significant failings were identified in relation to this standard. These include:

- No welfare plan was written for a young person with a known medical condition.
- No records are kept of the administration of prescribed medication to young people who are placed in lodgings organised by the school.
- This standard is not met.

NMS 14.1 Schools operate safe recruitment and adopt recruitment procedures in line with the regulatory requirements, having regard to relevant guidance issued by the Secretary of State.

- There have been no boarding provision staff recruited since the progress monitoring inspection in February 2017.
- The recruitment documents for a new member of teaching staff were reviewed. These confirmed that appropriate references are now taken up prior to a member of staff being appointed. The references are being verified in accordance with statutory guidance on safe recruitment.
- Detailed records of staff interviews are now being kept.
- The standard has been met.

NMS 20.5 The school visits all potential lodgings it may arrange, and interviews any adult who will be responsible for the accommodation of the pupils in each lodging, takes up references, and has recorded a satisfactory assessment, before any pupil is placed there. The school can demonstrate that members of the host family aged over 16 are subject to a DBS check completed at the standard level, with a satisfactory outcome known before any pupil is placed.

- In addition to the on-site boarding house, the school organises lodgings for young people in the local community. There has been an increase in the use of this service since the progress monitoring inspection in February 2017. Due to the number of safeguarding shortfalls identified during this inspection, and the increased use of lodgings, the inspector reviewed practice relating to this aspect of the overall boarding provision.
- No record is kept of the interviews undertaken with the adults who have applied to become potential lodgings providers. There is no written assessment of their suitability and competence to provide appropriate lodgings.
- This standard is not met.

NMS 20.6 The school ensures that all adults providing lodgings for pupils on its behalf have undergone safeguarding training that is updated regularly as advised by the Local Safeguarding Children Board, and that they understand the school's policy in relation to pupils going missing and their role in implementing that policy.

- There has been no consultation with the Local Safeguarding Children Board in relation to the safeguarding training delivered to lodgings providers, or on any other aspect of the lodgings provision.
- This standard is not met.

Compliance with regulatory requirements and national minimum standards for boarding schools

The school does not meet the requirements of the schedule to The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards'), the national minimum standards for boarding schools published by the Secretary of State for Education under section 87C(1) of the Children Act 1989 as amended by the Care Standards Act 2000 and the Education Act 2011 that were checked during this inspection. This included the standards and requirements that the school was judged to not comply with at the previous inspection. Not all of the standards and associated requirements were checked during this inspection.

School details

Unique reference number	135819
Social care unique reference number	SC382720
DfE registration number	869/6016
Inspection number	10044097

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 and the Education Act 2011, having regard to the national minimum standards for boarding schools.

Type of school	Independent international boarding school
School status	Independent boarding school
Age range of pupils	13 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	5
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	0
Number of part-time pupils	0
Number of boarders on roll	4
Proprietor	Mr Till Gins
Principal	Mr Jon Crocker
Annual fees (day pupils)	£37,200
Telephone number	01635 36879
Website	www.newburyhall.com
Email address	jon.crocker@newburyhall.com
Date of previous standard inspection	17–19 May 2016

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.
- It was previously inspected in May 2016 and judged to be inadequate. A progress monitoring inspection took place in February 2017.
- The school opened in 2008 and was registered in March 2009.
- It is registered for 100 pupils but currently has five pupils on roll. No current pupils have identified special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- The school provides boarding accommodation for its pupils. Four pupils currently live on-site. The school has previously accommodated some pupils with host families.
- Over the summer of 2017 the school taught over 300 different pupils on short-term English language courses. These pupils were either accommodated in the boarding provision at the school or in host families in the community.
- 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 motto is 'gusto, grit and growth'.
- The school is situated on a small single site with very limited outside space, most of which is allocated for parking. Pupils use local leisure facilities for sports. There is no other alternative provision used.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out at the request of the registration authority for independent schools. The purpose of the inspection was to monitor the progress the school has made in meeting the independent school standards and other requirements that it was judged to not comply with at its previous inspection.
- This was the second progress monitoring inspection since the school was judged to be inadequate.
- The school submitted its latest action plan in June 2017 which was accepted by the Department for Education in November 2017.
- The inspection was conducted without notice. The Social Care Regulatory Inspector was on site on both days of the inspection. Her Majesty's Inspector was on site on the second day of the inspection.
- Inspectors met with leaders throughout the inspection. They spoke informally to all pupils. They toured the school to visit lessons and the boarding facilities. They scrutinised a wide range of school documentation. The proprietor was not available to speak to inspectors during the inspection.

Inspection team

Lee Selby, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Stephen Collett

Social Care Regulatory

Annex. Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school does not meet the following independent school standards

Standards that were not met at the previous inspection and remain un-met at this inspection

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- 7 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that–
 - 7(a) arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school; and
 - 7(b) such arrangements have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State.
- 8 Where section 87(1) of the 1989 Act[11] applies in relation to a school the standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that–
 - 8(a) arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of boarders while they are accommodated at the school; and
 - 8(b) such arrangements have regard to the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools or, where applicable, the National Minimum Standards for Residential Special Schools or the National Minimum Standards for Accommodation of Students under Eighteen by Further Education Colleges.
- 16(b) appropriate action is taken to reduce risks that are identified.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

- 34(1) The standard about the quality of leadership and management is met if the proprietor ensures that persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school–
 - 34(1)(a) demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role so that the independent school standards are met consistently;
 - 34(1)(b) fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently; and
 - 34(1)(c) actively promote the well-being of pupils.

The school now meets the following independent school standards

- Ensure that pupils receiving secondary education access accurate, up to date careers guidance that enables them to make informed choices about a broad range of career options (paragraph 2, 2(2), 2(2)(e) and 2(2)(e)(ii)).
- The standard in this paragraph is met if 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 pupil misbehaviour; the policy is implemented effectively (paragraphs 9 and 9(b)).
- Ensure the proprietor carries out appropriate checks to confirm in respect of each such person's identity; medical fitness; right to work in the United Kingdom; and where

appropriate, the person's qualifications; in the case of any person for whom, by reason of that person living or having lived outside the United Kingdom, such further checks are made as the proprietor considers appropriate, having regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State; and these checks are completed before a person's appointment (paragraphs 18(1), 18(2), 18(2)(c), 18(2)(c)(i), 18(2)(c)(ii), 18(2)(c)(iii), 18(2)(c)(iv), 18(2)(e) and 18(3)).

The school does not meet the following national minimum standards for boarding schools

Standards that were not met at the previous inspection and remain un-met at this inspection

- 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 11.1).
- The school's governing body and/or 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).

Standards that were met at the previous inspection, but are now judged to not be met at this inspection

- The school visits all potential lodgings it may arrange, and interviews any adult who will be responsible for the accommodation of the pupils in each lodging, takes up references, and has recorded a satisfactory assessment before any pupil is placed there. The school can demonstrate that members of the host family aged over 16 are subject to a DBS check completed at the standard level, with a satisfactory outcome known before any pupil is placed (NMS 20.5).
- The school ensures that all adults providing lodgings for pupils on its behalf have undergone safeguarding training that is updated regularly as advised by the Local Safeguarding Children Board, and that they understand the school's policy in relation to pupils going missing and their role in implementing that policy (NMS 20.6).

The school now meets the following national minimum standards for boarding schools

- The school has and consistently implements a written policy to promote good behaviour amongst pupils. This policy includes: measures to combat bullying, including cyber bullying, and to promote positive behaviour; school rules; disciplinary sanctions; when

restraint, including reasonable force, is to be used and how this will be recorded and managed; and arrangements for searching pupils and their possessions (NMS 12.1).

- Schools operate safe recruitment and adopt recruitment procedures in line with the regulatory requirements, having regard to relevant guidance issued by the Secretary of State (NMS 14.1).

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