

New Barn School

Welford, Newbury, Berkshire RG20 8HZ

Inspection date

1 June 2021

Overall outcome

The school is likely to meet the relevant independent school standards if the material change relating to the school provision is implemented

Main inspection findings

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Paragraph 7–7(b), 32(1), 32(1)(c)

- Safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. The school's written child protection and safeguarding policy is published on the school's website. It provides clear direction to school staff about expectations for this element of their work. The policy is supported effectively by the well-considered routines and procedures established in the school. These reflect the culture of vigilance that leaders promote.
- Staff receive suitably rigorous safeguarding training when they join the school. This training is updated on a regular basis. Planned daily conversations keep staff alert to potential risks and help them reflect together on lessons learned from any issues that arise. Consequently, staff are well placed to identify and act quickly on emerging concerns.
- Leaders keep careful oversight of any potential safeguarding concerns that arise. This helps them to act promptly where pupils are identified as needing extra help to keep them safe. Leaders sensibly seek advice from local authority safeguarding officers, and from safeguarding experts within the Acorn Care and Education group. This helps to reassure them that their actions are in pupils' best interests.

Paragraph 11, 12, 16–16(b)

- Leaders give due regard to health and safety arrangements in the school. They undertake relevant training that helps them to understand and carry out this aspect of their work. Staff check the school site as a matter of routine, with identified issues addressed in a timely way. Consequently, school premises are well maintained and safe for pupils and staff.
- Leaders ensure that the school complies with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. Fire arrangements have recently been updated to take account of the new building on the primary school site. Buildings are fitted with appropriate alarm

systems, fire doors and fire-fighting equipment. Pupils' personal emergency evacuation plans are suitable and reviewed routinely.

- Leaders present as being highly risk aware. They understand the extra potential hazards linked to the school's rural location, pupils' particular needs and the activities that pupils undertake as part of their curriculum. Risk assessment and reduction are integral to the school's daily work. Leaders consider risk assessment as a dynamic process, revisiting it constantly in the light of changing needs and circumstances. Risk assessment documents are readily accessible to those staff who need to access them.
- Written policies for health and safety, fire safety and risk assessment are fit for purpose. Together, they provide a useful framework that underpins practice in the school. Leaders keep careful records of relevant health and safety checks, including fire drills and testing of fire alarms and equipment. They use experts from beyond the school to test out their own evaluations about how well pupils and staff are kept safe. The proprietor body holds leaders to account for this aspect of their work.

Paragraph 14

- Pupils are supervised closely throughout the day. Leaders employ large numbers of staff to facilitate this successfully. Therapeutic and pastoral staff provide additional capacity that supports teaching staff in managing any situations that may arise during the day. Leaders' plans to increase the number of staff are proportionate to the additional number of pupils to which the material change request relates.
- Leaders are mindful of needing to ensure that pupils remain safe during the school day, while having space and freedom to manage their own emotions. A secure area to the rear of the school provides an opportunity for pupils to take time out if needed, with adults able to supervise from an appropriate distance. Pupils are never left alone in the areas at the front of the school where boundaries with the road and neighbouring properties are less secure.
- The paragraphs that were checked from this part of the independent school standards are likely to be met if the material change request is granted.

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

Paragraph 18(2)–18(3), 19(2)–19(3), 20(6)–20(6)(c), 21(1)–21(3)(b), 21(5)–21(6)

- Leaders have ensured that all the required checks are carried out on adults working in the school. The proprietor body lends helpful expertise to this work, coordinating recruitment administration. The single central register captures all of these checks in a suitably clear and accurate way. Two minor administrative errors were amended during the course of this inspection.
- Supply staff are rarely used by the school. At times, leaders recruit staff on a 'temporary to permanent' basis, with agency staff working in the school for a period of time before being recruited permanently. In this instance, leaders ensure that the relevant agency has completed all of the required recruitment and vetting checks for any staff being sent to work at New Barn. If these staff are then employed on a permanent basis, school leaders carry out the same checks that they would for any new employee.

- The school has a proprietor body and a local governing body. All of the required checks have been carried out on all members of both of these groups. Information about these checks is recorded on the school's single central register.
- This part of the independent school standards is likely to be met if the material change request is granted.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

Paragraph 23(1)–24(1)(b), 24(2), 25–29(1)(b)

- A new building has been constructed on the primary school site. This building provides plenty of extra space to accommodate the additional pupils to which the material change request relates.
- Facilities in both school buildings on the primary school site are of high quality. Rooms are light, bright, spacious and comfortable. Furnishings are appropriate to the purpose of the rooms. Fixtures and fittings are well maintained. Careful thought has been given to how pupils are divided between the different rooms, taking their varying needs into account.
- Pupils have safe space outside for play and exercise. Leaders have given careful thought to how access to this space is managed, so that it does not become overcrowded. There are other large, open spaces that pupils can access under planned and close adult supervision, including a forest school site on the other side of the main road. Leaders also make use of local community sports fields and halls for pupils' physical education.
- There are adequate toilet facilities on site, with hot and cold running water. Hot water is at an appropriate temperature. Pupils have access to shower facilities in the main school building.
- The new building includes a purpose-built canteen, to which all pupils on the primary school site will have access. Pupils have access to drinking water throughout the day, from appropriately labelled supplies. Currently, staff fill up pupils' water bottles throughout the day. This is because COVID-19 (coronavirus) arrangements are currently restricting pupils' free movement around the school, so they are less able to access drinking water taps themselves.
- There is a dedicated medical room in the original primary school building. It provides suitable space and facilities for the care of any pupil who becomes ill during the day. Controlled medicines are stored securely, with appropriate arrangements in place for administering them safely.
- The secondary school site was not visited as part of this inspection. This is because any additional pupils that the school is given permission to admit will be accommodated on the primary school site. This will include some pupils of secondary school age who will remain on the primary school site to complete a 'transition' year. The secondary school site was visited as part of a material change inspection in November 2020 and judged as suitable for the number of pupils it currently accommodates.

- The school is likely to meet this part of the independent school standards if the material change request is granted.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Paragraph 34(1)– 34(1)(c)

- School leaders are experienced and knowledgeable. They understand the context of their school extremely well. They work effectively together, demonstrating a common purpose. As such, they are well placed to provide for pupils' needs and to enable them to be safe and successful.
- Leaders show commitment to a culture of ongoing improvement in the school. They make good use of the established systems and processes within Acorn Care and Education to reflect on what is working well and what could be even better. This places them well to sustain the school's compliance with the independent school standards if the school increases in size.
- The governing body provides a useful link between school leaders and the proprietor body. The chair of governors visits the school regularly in his role as regional director for Acorn Care and Education, enabling him to test out what leaders report about standards in the school. Governance meetings provide useful opportunities for leaders to reflect on, and be held to account for, the quality of provision at New Barn. Leaders value both the support and challenge that this process provides.
- The proprietor body is well informed about the school's strengths and weaknesses. It has developed helpful systems for checking the school's compliance with the independent school standards, and more widely the quality of education provided by the school. Information gathered and tested out by the local governing body feeds usefully into this process.
- This part of the independent school standards is likely to be met if the material change request is granted.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school is likely to meet the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements that are relevant to the material change.

School details

Unique reference number	144033
DfE registration number	869/6019
Inspection number	10188507

This inspection was carried out under section 162(4) of the Education Act 2002, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's likely compliance with the independent school standards relevant to the material change that the school has applied to make.

Type of school	Other independent special school
School status	Independent special school
Proprietor	P Bloom Limited
Chair	Richard Power
Headteacher	Alice Anstee
Annual fees (day pupils)	£46,663 to £77,800
Telephone number	01488 505 145
Website	www.acornnewbarnschool.co.uk
Email address	newbarn@acornnewbarnschool.co.uk
Date of previous standard inspection	5–7 December 2017

Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal	Inspector's recommendation
Age range of pupils	6 to 19	6 to 19	6 to 19
Number of pupils on the school roll	56	70	70

Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Mixed

Number of full-time pupils of compulsory school age	56	70
Number of part-time pupils	0	0
Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	56	70
Of which, number of pupils with an education, health and care plan	54	70
Of which, number of pupils paid for by a local authority with an education, health and care plan	54	70

Staff

	School's current position	School's proposal
Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff	34	37
Number of part-time teaching staff	3	3
Number of staff in the welfare provision	4	5

Information about this school

- New Barn is an independent school for pupils aged six to 19. Pupils are referred to the school by their local authority, which funds their place. All pupils have complex social, emotional and mental health needs. Many have a medical diagnosis, such as for autistic spectrum disorder, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder or post-traumatic stress disorder. Almost all pupils have an education, health and care plan.
- The school is based on two sites that are located close to each other in a rural setting. Primary-aged pupils are based at Willow Farm, RG20 8HZ. Secondary-aged pupils are based at Home Farm, RH20 8HR. A new building has recently been constructed on the

Willow Farm site to accommodate the additional pupils to which the material change request relates.

- A small number of pupils attend alternative provision on a part-time basis. The alternative providers used by the school are Upper Lodge Farm, The Furniture Project, Outdoor Academy and Herd Thyme Farm.
- Since the previous material change inspection in November 2020, the proprietor body has changed its name. P Bloom Limited was previously known as Outcomes First Group Ltd. P Bloom Limited is now the named proprietor body for this and a number of other schools. Outcomes First Group Ltd is now the name of the umbrella company that oversees P Bloom Limited and Acorn Care and Education. Acorn Care and Education is the proprietor body for another group of schools that also comes under the umbrella of Outcomes First Group Ltd. Acorn Care and Education also provides school improvement support for schools overseen by P Bloom Limited.
- The school's previous standard inspection took place in December 2017, when the school was judged to be good. Since then, the school has had two material change inspections, in May 2018 and November 2020. As a result, the Department for Education (DfE) gave the school permission to increase the number of pupil places from 23 to 56. During that time period, the DfE also gave permission for the school to extend its age range, so that pupils could remain on roll until the age of 19, instead of leaving at the age of 16.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out at the request of the DfE. It was in response to leaders' request to increase the number of school places from 56 to 70.
- Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI) toured the primary school site, including the newly built Howard Wing. The secondary school site was not visited as part of this inspection. This is because the additional pupils relating to the material change request would all be accommodated on the primary school site.
- HMI met with the headteacher, the head of primary and the head of secondary. She spoke to the chair of the proprietor body via video call and met in person with the chair of the governing body. HMI also reviewed a range of relevant documents provided by leaders and available on the school's website. She did not meet with pupils, as the inspection took place during the half-term holiday when pupils were not attending school.

Inspection team

Kathryn Moles, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making a complaint about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

Parent View

You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.gov.uk/ofsted.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2021