

# Inspection of Newingate School

48 New Dover Road, Canterbury, Kent CT1 3DT

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Inspection dates: 30 April and 1 May 2024

**Overall effectiveness** **Good**

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The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Outstanding**

Leadership and management **Good**

Does the school meet the independent school standards? **Yes**

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

'Truly amazing' is how one parent and carer summed up Newingate School. Another, referring to staff, said, 'They go above and beyond.' Pupils typically join the school after a turbulent period of education. Some have not attended school for a prolonged period. Pupils are proud of their school. They feel happy and safe. As a result, most attend well. Staff effectively support pupils who struggle to attend.

Staff warmly welcome pupils and get to know them as individuals. Staff have high expectations for what pupils will achieve. Pupils meet these expectations consistently. The values of 'acceptance, safety and kindness' are actively promoted. Staff have a strong understanding of pupils' individual learning and social, emotional and mental health needs. Staff provide bespoke support that meets these needs. The work of the therapy team has a positive impact. Pupils generally behave well. Staff use highly personalised strategies to support pupils' behaviour.

The way the school promotes pupils' personal development is exceptional. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is threaded through school life. An extensive programme of enrichment activities, trips and focus days, together with highly personalised careers advice and work experience opportunities, helps to prepare pupils exceptionally well for the future.

## **What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?**

The school welcomed its first pupils in September 2023. Very quickly, staff have ensured that pupils receive a good quality of education. This is not solely focused on academic outcomes, but also the wider communication, social and emotional needs that are detailed in pupils' education, health and care plans. Classes are small and supported well by teachers and support staff. A relatively new therapy team has begun to provide therapies that are already having a positive impact on pupils.

Pupils benefit from learning a broad range of subjects that have been well thought through to ensure pupils make as much progress as possible. The curriculum matches the requirements of the national curriculum. Staff have identified ambitious and challenging content they want pupils to learn in each subject. Importantly, there is no one-size-fits-all approach. Staff adapt the curriculum effectively so that it is tailored to meet pupils' individual learning needs. As a result, pupils increase their knowledge and understanding across several subjects and are ready for the next stage of their education.

Developing a love of reading is a high priority. The welcoming library and classroom reading corners offer pupils the opportunity to immerse themselves in high-quality books that promote equality and diversity. Carefully selected books mean that there is something for everyone. Many pupils enjoy reading, but some struggle. Staff know that pupils need to read well to be able to learn the content of the curriculum. They make regular checks on pupils' reading abilities and provide additional help as needed. An external reading specialist provides useful strategies to staff. A range of

reading intervention programmes is proving successful. As a result, pupils make great strides in reading.

Calming, well-organised classrooms help pupils to stay focused on learning. Pupils personalise their individual workstations with items and objects that interest and help them. Visual prompts and symbols help pupils to communicate how they are feeling and what they need from staff. Staff skilfully spot signs of anxiety and anger and make suitable tweaks to pupils' learning to support them. Regular repetition of key learning helps pupils to lodge it in their memories. While some staff check pupils' understanding of what they have learned very effectively, this is not something that is fully embedded across the school. This means that some pupils move on in their learning with misunderstandings or gaps.

Pupils are prepared exceptionally well for life after Newingate School. They soak up every opportunity, such as forest schools, the Duke of Edinburgh's and the John Muir Awards. Several trips to art galleries, riding stables and a baking school are just some of the many activities that enrich pupils' lives and help to broaden their horizons. Weekly enrichment time strongly supports pupils' personal and social development. Pupils enjoy cooking, playing chess, sporting activities and arts and crafts and welcome the all-important moments to socialise and interact with their peers. Pupils' views, gathered through 'focus groups', help to shape the school's extensive personal development offer.

The personal, social and health education programme ensures pupils learn about a broad range of important topics. They learn about different faiths, global citizenship and the importance they have to play in the wider world. Pupils receive helpful, independent careers advice. In key stage 4, pupils work towards appropriate qualifications that prepare them exceptionally well for their next steps in education or training. The focus the school has on preparing pupils for adulthood is transformational. One pupil talked to the lead inspector about the very positive impact of a work experience placement the school organised for him.

Those responsible for leading the school, including proprietors and governors, have an accurate view of the school's strengths and areas for development. Governors challenge the school's leadership by asking helpful, challenging questions. Staff love working here and are positive about their workload and the focus on their well-being. Newer staff to the profession are supported well through a bespoke programme.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

## **What does the school need to do to improve? (Information for the school and proprietor)**

- Staff do not consistently check that pupils have understood what they have

learned. This means that pupils sometimes develop misconceptions or gaps in understanding which are not routinely addressed before they move on in their learning. Leaders should ensure that staff consistently check pupils' understanding of the content they have learned and adapt teaching accordingly to ensure that pupils' understanding is secure.

## **How can I feed back my views?**

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	149398
<b>DfE registration number</b>	886/6178
<b>Local authority</b>	Kent
<b>Inspection number</b>	10299269
<b>Type of school</b>	Other independent special school
<b>School category</b>	Independent special school
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	16
<b>Number of part-time pupils</b>	0
<b>Proprietor</b>	Atrium Education Ltd
<b>Chair</b>	Nicholas Rogers
<b>Headteacher</b>	David Carden
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	£56,000 to £86,000
<b>Telephone number</b>	01227 501309
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.newingateschool.co.uk">www.newingateschool.co.uk</a>
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:office@newingateschool.co.uk">office@newingateschool.co.uk</a>

## Information about this school

- Newingate School is co-educational and caters for up to 50 pupils between the ages of 11 and 18.
- There are currently no students in the sixth-form provision.
- The school specialises in providing education for pupils with autism. Pupils also have associated social, emotional and mental health needs.
- The school occupies a refurbished former school building in Canterbury, Kent.
- The school has a small governing body. The chair of the governing body is also the headteacher of Infiniti School.
- One of the directors operates another independent school, Infiniti School, which is registered at Companies House under the company name of NR Education Ltd.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.
- This was the school's first standard inspection since its pre-registration inspection in December 2022.

## Information about this inspection

Inspectors carried out this inspection under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008. The purpose of the inspection is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.

The school meets the independent school standards. These are the requirements set out in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the continued impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held a range of meetings with the headteacher, senior leaders and teaching and support staff at the school. The lead inspector met with the chair of the proprietor body. He also spoke on the telephone with the chair of the governing body.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English and reading, mathematics and personal, social and health education. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers and support staff, spoke to a few pupils about their learning and looked at samples of work. Inspectors also visited a science and art lesson and looked at pupils' work from other subjects.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour on arrival at school and during visits to

classrooms.

- Inspectors considered the views of parents expressed in Ofsted Parent View, Ofsted's online survey for parents. Inspectors considered the views of staff during meetings with them and through the staff survey. Inspectors also considered a very small number of responses through the pupil survey.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.

### **Inspection team**

Shaun Jarvis, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Vicky Matthews

Ofsted Inspector

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