

New Elizabethan School

Independent school inspection report

DCSF registration number	885/6021
Unique Reference Number (URN)	117030
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Reporting inspector	Mark Mumby HMI

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Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Section 162A¹ of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005², the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Information about the school

The New Elizabethan School is a co-educational independent day school providing education for pupils aged four to 16 years of age. The school has never admitted pupils under five years of age and, therefore, the Early Years Foundation Stage was not inspected on this occasion. The school is registered for 100 pupils and there are currently 17 pupils on roll. Two of the pupils attend part time. The school is situated in the village of Hartlebury in Worcestershire. It caters for pupils who have found learning and school attendance difficult. Most pupils have a statement of special educational needs. The school aims, 'to facilitate the development of individuals to enable them to achieve their optimum potential and, as far as they are able, to: live independently; integrate into the community; have a rich quality of life; maintain their integrity as individuals; progress educationally; and access both their indigenous culture and that of the society in which they live, where they differ.' The school opened in January 2007 and was last inspected by Ofsted in March 2007.

Evaluation of the school

The New Elizabethan School provides a good quality of education for its pupils. It provides a caring and supportive environment in which the pupils are able to make good progress. It has made considerable improvements since its previous inspection and now meets most of the independent school regulations. Arrangements for safeguarding now meet requirements.

Quality of education

The quality of education is good and the curriculum is satisfactory. The school now has a curriculum policy, an improvement since the last inspection. This sets out clearly how pupils will be provided for and how the curriculum will be adapted for their particular needs and interests. The curriculum is broad and balanced, covering all of the subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education. There is good provision for citizenship and personal, social and health education. Good use is made of National Curriculum and National Strategy materials to support planning. However, there is not an overall curriculum plan in place which underpins the individual subject

¹ www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2002/ukpga_20020032_en_14#pt10-ch1-pb4-l1g162

² www.opsi.gov.uk/ACTS/acts2005/ukpga_20050018_en_15#sch8

plans. In English and mathematics, planning is of good quality and very effective use is made of assessment to plan work to meet the needs of the individual pupils. The curriculum for the younger pupils is delivered through a thematic approach. For example, an English lesson about 'The Snow Bear' was linked to an art lesson on mask making for some of the younger pupils. However, the absence of an overall school plan means that opportunities to develop basic literacy and numeracy skills in other curriculum areas are sometimes missed. The school acknowledges that it could also do more to extend the learning of the most able pupils.

The school has good links with the local Connexions team to help prepare pupils for their future careers. A good feature of this partnership is the attendance of team members at statement reviews for pupils at the transition stage. Last year, all four pupils leaving Year 11 went on to colleges to attend further education courses.

Although a range of extra-curricular activities had been in place during the autumn and spring terms, the school chose not to have any such activities in the summer term due to poor uptake. The curriculum is enriched through visits such as a theatre trip to Stratford and a walk to the local Post Office, and through opportunities provided by the specific skills of members of staff. Older pupils talked with interest about opportunities in the past to experience driving or construction. However, they are disappointed that these opportunities have not continued.

Teaching and assessment are good and pupils make good progress. Lessons are calm and purposeful because staff know the pupils well and plan activities which interest and mostly challenge them. The very small classes and large number of adults ensure that pupils all receive a high level of individual attention. Staff have high expectations of behaviour and an appropriately calm approach to pupils. Learning progresses at a brisk pace in most lessons because teachers and other adults work together very well to monitor pupils' learning and to maintain their interest in the tasks. Lesson introductions are suitably brief and teachers use questioning well at these times to engage individual pupils in their learning. Occasionally, questions, especially for the most able pupils, are insufficiently challenging. The most effective teaching is in English and mathematics where teachers use the recently implemented assessment programme to plan very carefully the next steps in pupils' learning. As a result, pupils' understanding develops in a structured way and their learning is consolidated and built on effectively. This is reflected in the good progress seen in lessons and in pupils' work. However, the school acknowledges that its assessment system is not sufficiently well developed to be used to compare the progress made by pupils in this school with the school's aims or with other schools nationally. Detailed individual education plans, derived from pupils' statements where appropriate, are used effectively to inform daily planning and also to link with parents and carers. Each pupil has an individual behaviour management plan which is used effectively to maximise engagement in learning. As a result pupils respond well and make good progress.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall, although the cultural strand is less well developed. Pupils are very welcoming to others who join the school. This is particularly important for new pupils who have had difficulties in their previous school. They settle very quickly and the school's caring, inclusive environment enables them to thrive socially. As a result, they enjoy attending the school and participate well in lessons. Pupils' behaviour is good and they are very supportive of each other. Their spiritual development is enhanced through their understanding of the natural world around them and the need to nurture living creatures such as the baby ducklings which hatched out during the inspection. Looking after the ducklings is a good example of how pupils contribute to the life of the school. Team building and enterprise skills develop well through fund-raising at local events, cake-making and entertaining elderly people at Christmas. The school council enables pupils to participate in democratic processes and a suggestion box enables pupils to put forward ideas. The house system is used effectively by pupils to develop a good sense of belonging and integration. Citizenship lessons help pupils to understand themselves as well as our society.

Pupils' cultural development is satisfactory because pupils have a good understanding and respect for their own culture and contribute to the school's harmonious environment. They take part in events such as Holocaust Day, Remembrance Day and celebrations to mark St George's Day, but their knowledge of other cultures is limited.

Welfare, health and safety of the pupils

The provision for pupils' welfare health and safety is satisfactory. This is a significant improvement since the previous inspection because the school has addressed most of the issues raised. Although the majority of the school's procedures are now at least satisfactory, some policies are not sufficiently detailed or up to date. For example, the bullying policy does not take account of the latest DfE guidance and the first aid policy provides too little guidance for staff such as procedures for dealing with spillages of bodily fluids. Nevertheless, pupils feel safe and report no bullying. They say that the 'bit of banter' that does occur is always dealt with quickly, usually by the pupils themselves. The school has ensured that staff have attended appropriate training with regard to health and safety. Consequently, there are now sufficient qualified first-aiders and trained fire marshals. Procedures for child protection are robust and the staff, including the designated senior member of staff for child protection, have received appropriate training.

The school has carried out risk assessments for the premises and for school activities. These risk assessments are generally suitable but the school acknowledges that improvements could be made in this area. It is beginning to develop a more comprehensive system to assess risk. Checks on fire safety equipment and evacuation practices are carried out in line with the school's fire risk assessment.

Pupils are very well supervised around the school. They participate in daily physical education lessons which contribute to their generally healthy lifestyles. The school maintains an admissions register, but attendance registers are not completed sufficiently rigorously at the start of each morning and afternoon session.

The school has planned well to increase accessibility and will be drawing up a further plan to review the possibility of further improving access.

Suitability of the proprietor and staff

The school has rigorous procedures in place relating to the checks it makes on prospective employees and volunteers regarding their identity, qualifications, and suitability to work with children. Individual staff records are comprehensive and the school exceeds requirements by ensuring that criminal records bureau checks are repeated frequently for all members of staff. However, the school's single central record of staff checks does not include the dates when checks were carried out or who performed the checks. Consequently, it does not fully meet the regulation to maintain its records in line with the latest guidance.

School's premises and accommodation

The school premises provide a suitable range of indoor accommodation to meet its needs. Considerable renovation work has been carried out since the last inspection and most of the accommodation is in good decorative order providing clean, bright and airy teaching spaces. The school is aware that the washroom facilities are inadequate because there are no shower facilities as required by the regulations. The grounds are extensive, providing ample space for physical activities as well as accommodating the ducks, hens and garden areas.

Provision of information for parents, carers and others

The school has improved the quality of the information it provides for parents and carers and now fully meets the requirements. It is aware that the annual reports for parents and carers about their children's attainment and progress could be improved and the new headteacher is taking action to address this. The reports currently being prepared, to a revised format, provide more detailed and helpful information for parents and carers. Weekly newsletters to parents and carers provide them with a good range of information about school events, pupils' achievements and work across the curriculum.

Procedures for handling complaints

The school has a clearly written complaints procedure which meets requirements.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets all of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 as amended ('the Regulations'), with the exception of those listed below.³

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the curriculum (standard 1) and must:

- put in place a framework by which pupil performance can be evaluated by reference to either the school's own aims, as provided to parents and/or, by national norms (paragraph 1(4)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety (standard 3) and must:

- prepare and implement a written policy to prevent bullying which has regard to the DCSF guidance Safe to Learn: Embedding anti-bullying work in schools (DCSF-00656-2007)⁴ (paragraph 3(2)(a))
- prepare and implement a satisfactory written policy on first aid (paragraph 3(6))
- maintain attendance registers in accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006⁵ (paragraph 3(9)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of suitability of proprietor and staff (standard 4) and must:

- maintain a single central register of all volunteers and staff who work at the school which fully complies with DfE requirements including showing the date on which each check was made (paragraph 4C(2) and (3)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the premises and accommodation (standard 5) and must:

- provide sufficient washrooms for staff and pupils, including facilities for pupils with special needs, which take account of the Education (School Premises) Regulations 1999 (paragraph 5(k)).

³ www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2003/20031910.htm

⁴ www.teachernet.gov.uk/_doc/11908/SAFE%20TO%20LEARN.pdf

⁵ www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2006/20061751.htm

Inspection judgement recording form

outstanding	good	satisfactory	inadequate
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The quality of education

Overall quality of education		✓		
How well the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of pupils			✓	
How effective teaching and assessment are in meeting the full range of pupils' needs		✓		
How well pupils make progress in their learning		✓		

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Quality of provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development		✓		
The behaviour of pupils		✓		

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The overall welfare, health and safety of pupils			✓	
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School details

Name of school	New Elizabethan School		
DCSF number	885/6021		
Unique reference number (URN)	117030		
Type of school	Day School		
Status	Independent		
Date school opened	January 2007		
Age range of pupils	4–16		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 11	Girls: 4	Total: 15
Number on roll (part-time pupils)	Boys: 1	Girls: 1	Total: 2
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational need	Boys: 8	Girls: 2	Total: 10
Number of pupils who are looked after	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Annual fees (day pupils)	£9,075		
Address of school	Quarry Bank The Village Hartlebury Kidderminster DY11 7TE		
Telephone number	01299 250258		
Fax number	01299 250379		
Email address	info@newelizabethanschool.org.uk		
Headteacher	Andrew McDouall		
Principal	Ms Annabel Goodman		
Reporting inspector	Mark Mumby HMI		
Dates of inspection	29–30 June 2010		