

Newbury Hall School

Enborne Road, Newbury, Berkshire RG14 6AD

Inspection dates

5–7 June 2018

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
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Inadequate

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- Leaders have not ensured that the independent school standards and the national minimum standards for boarding schools are all met.
- Oversight of the quality of boarding provision is weak. Senior leaders, including the proprietor, do not have the systems and procedures to check on the quality of the boarding provision.
- Safeguarding is not effective. Leaders' assessment of risks to vulnerable pupils is weak. Systems to ensure that staff know which pupils are on or off the school site are poor.
- Pupils' bedrooms are not clean or well maintained. Inspectors and senior leaders found a number of fire, electrical and access hazards during the inspection.
- Governance is not effective. The proprietor does not provide sufficient support or challenge regarding the quality of teaching or pupils' progress.
- Teaching is inconsistent. Some adults are skilled at supporting pupils' speaking skills and making sure that pupils understand what is being said, but others are not.
- Pupils make variable progress. Short-stay pupils make good progress in their spoken language and gain confidence in engaging with English. Long-stay pupils make insufficient progress over time in a range of subjects.
- Sixth-form students are not safe. They too make insufficient progress over time.

The school has the following strengths

- Leaders with responsibility for teaching and learning have a very clear view regarding the quality of teaching.
- Leaders have thought very carefully about the two curriculums that short-stay pupils are offered. They are well planned and resourced, and flexible to meet pupils' interests and needs.
- Pupils have access to exceptional extra-curricular provision. Pupils are exposed to a rich range of stimulating and thought-provoking trips and visiting speakers.
- Pupils are well behaved and polite. They are proud of their achievements.

Compliance with regulatory requirements and national minimum standards for boarding schools

- The school must take action to meet the requirements of the schedule to The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, the national minimum standards for boarding schools and associated requirements. The details are listed in the full report.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Safeguard pupils by:
 - undertaking regular and effective checks of the boarding provision to ensure that all risks and potential hazards are known to staff and managed appropriately
 - ensuring that the risks associated with vulnerable pupils leaving the school site are considered, recorded and shared with relevant staff
 - ensuring that staff know accurately which pupils are on or off the school premises at any given time.
- Improve leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - senior leaders, including the proprietor, have better oversight of the quality of the boarding provision
 - leaders with a responsibility for the boarding provision have the knowledge, experience and training that they require
 - the proprietor has greater knowledge and insight into the quality of teaching and pupils' progress so that he can better hold leaders to account.
- Improve the quality of teaching and the progress that pupils make by ensuring that:
 - staff model written and spoken English to a sufficiently high standard
 - staff ensure that pupils have a good understanding of what they are being told and what is being asked of them
 - leaders continue to share the examples of effective teaching so that there is greater consistency in the quality of teaching across the school.
- Improve pupils' personal development and welfare by ensuring that the bedrooms that boarders stay in are clean and well maintained.
- The school must meet the independent school standards and national minimum standards for boarding schools, as set out in the annex of this report.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Inadequate
The effectiveness of leaders and managers in the boarding provision	Inadequate
How well children and young people are protected in the boarding provision	Inadequate

- Senior leaders do not have a good enough understanding of the independent school standards and, particularly, the national minimum standards for boarding schools. They had begun to evaluate for themselves if they meet these standards, but leaders have been too slow to complete this work. As a result, leaders, including the proprietor, are reliant on inspection to identify shortcomings in their ability to ensure the safety and well-being of pupils.
- Senior leaders do not have a good enough oversight of the boarding provision. They are honest in their evaluation that this aspect of their work is 'weak'. They do not manage the performance of staff well enough.
- Leaders with a responsibility for boarding are inexperienced. They do not have the knowledge or management skills they need to be effective. Senior leaders do not provide them with adequate training.
- Leaders with responsibility for teaching and pupils' progress have a clear view about what is going well and what needs to be better. They know and understand that the quality of teaching and pupils' progress is improving but is not yet good. A range of initiatives that were introduced in January 2018 are beginning to have a positive impact on pupils' learning, but they need more time to become fully embedded.
- The two curriculums for short-stay pupils have been thoughtfully constructed and very well resourced. Leaders have ensured that clear assessment processes are in place, even for pupils who are in school for a week or two. Pupils, parents, carers and those who place pupils in English schools can clearly select from the school's curriculum offer the language pathway or course best suited to support pupils' academic readiness in the English education system.
- Leaders are responsive to the interests of pupils, including those pupils who stay at school for a short time. Pupils are given valuable opportunities to develop their interests in the arts or sciences alongside their short-stay course.
- Newbury Hall has a significant, positive impact on pupils' social and moral development. Planned opportunities for pupils to talk and think about complex moral and ethical issues are plentiful. For example, the well-designed extra-curricular provision gives pupils scope to review films that tackle broad themes, such as natural resources in Africa or eating disorders. Visitors help deepen pupils' understanding about charity and the developing world.

Governance

- The proprietor is not effective in holding leaders to account for the quality of education or the safety and well-being of pupils. As a result, the school remains inadequate, safeguarding remains ineffective and the quality of teaching and learning is too variable. The proprietor's oversight of boarding is particularly weak.
- There have been improvements in the school since the last inspection. For example, leaders, including the proprietor, have ensured that the recruitment of staff is now safe. The proprietor does meet senior leaders and there are now records of the meetings. However, the proprietor does not demand enough of senior leaders and does not probe deeply enough to find out about either the quality of teaching or pupils' progress.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.
- Pupils' and students' bedrooms are not safe. There are too many potential hazards and risks that staff do not know about. For example, electrical items are stored in en-suite shower rooms and multiple lighting cables make it difficult to get into and out of rooms. Inspectors and senior leaders found medicines in pupils' bedrooms that pupils and/or booking agents had not declared prior to pupils' admission at school and that staff did not know about.
- Systems to ensure that staff know which pupils are on the school premises, and which are not, are weak. Consequently, staff cannot be sure where pupils are at any given time, particularly in the evenings.
- Leaders and staff do not follow the school's risk assessment policy. Risk assessments of general activities are appropriate. However, not enough consideration is given to pupils whom leaders know to be vulnerable. As a result, the risks to those pupils when they are off the school grounds are not well identified or shared with all relevant staff. Thus, staff are not able to manage risks well enough.
- Leaders and boarding staff do not follow the school's first-aid policy. They do not routinely inform parents or guardians when a boarder receives first aid or medicine.
- The child protection policy that is on the school's website has due regard for current statutory guidance.
- Leaders have improved the systems and processes to recruit staff. Leaders and staff responsible for recruitment are well trained and are therefore appropriately knowledgeable. All processes to ensure that recruited staff are suitable to work with pupils have been overhauled. Recruitment practice complies with safeguarding requirements.
- Since the last inspection, leaders have taken steps to improve their knowledge and understanding of how to keep pupils safe. They have attended a range of local safeguarding networks and are now familiar with the local authority's role and responsibilities relating to safeguarding pupils. Consequently, leaders now have a better insight into the risks to pupils that other educational providers and the local authority have identified.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching is too variable.
- Some staff are skilled at checking what pupils know and understand. They recognise when words or concepts may be inaccessible to pupils. The strongest teaching enables pupils to fully understand what they are reading, what they are talking about and what the purpose of the task in hand is. However, this is not consistent across the staff team. Some staff do not use questioning or explanation well enough. In too many lessons, pupils become confused and, sometimes, disinterested.
- Some adults are clear in their use of language. Consequently, they are accurate in their definitions of words and phrases, and are positive and effective role models in terms of their written English, spelling, punctuation and grammar. However, not all adults are clear enough in their guidance to pupils, and this leads to the introduction of unintentional misconceptions.
- Systems to assess pupils' achievement have improved since January 2018. Leaders have developed a clear and effective system to evaluate the progress of short-stay pupils.
- Leaders have developed better systems for teachers to support long-stay pupils. Newly introduced study guides enable teachers to be much clearer with pupils about how they can improve their work.
- The school's extra-curricular provision has a positive impact on pupils' learning. For example, trips to museums enable artists to study art history.
- Pupils are wholly positive about their time at school. They appreciate the extra time that staff offer them outside of lessons to help clarify anything that is not clear.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Inadequate

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is inadequate.
- The policies, procedures and staff practices to keep pupils safe are not effective.
- Pupils' bedrooms are poorly maintained. They are not clean or well ventilated. Even when leaders identify improvements that are required, they are slow to act.
- Leaders have thought carefully about how to induct short-stay pupils. Pupils feel their induction is helpful in keeping them safe while they are in England. Pupils who stay at school for longer value the visits from local police officers who help them to understand English law and learn about their personal safety.
- Pupils are proud of their achievements. They say they enjoy their time at Newbury Hall.
- Pupils have high regard for the home-cooked meals that they have throughout the day and evening. They recognise the extra effort made by staff to ensure that menus take inspiration from food around the world, including their own countries.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are calm and purposeful throughout the day. They make a smooth transition when moving from their bedrooms to school. Lunchtimes and breaks are orderly and pleasant experiences.
- In most lessons, pupils are focused on the task in hand. They show great diligence and desire to improve. However, when lessons are less interesting or the language content is too complicated, pupils sometimes lose interest.
- The climate for learning in classrooms is positive. Pupils are respectful of others, including when they are struggling to articulate their thoughts in English or to read aloud.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Leaders evaluate pupils' progress as a 'mixed bag'. Teaching over time is inconsistent and not good enough and therefore pupils' progress is too variable.
- Long-stay pupils are making better progress since January 2018. Leaders' assessment information now shows clearly where pupils' progress is improving and where learning plateaus.
- Rates of progress are not consistently strong enough across subjects. Pupils are now making better progress in mathematics and science than they are in business studies.
- Progress in reading over time is not consistently good enough.
- Short-stay pupils gain the skills to access and work more confidently with English academic literature. Pupils learn how to structure written arguments in English.
- Short-stay pupils gain good levels of confidence in how to communicate in English. Pupils are clear that they feel that their spoken English improves during their time at Newbury Hall.

Sixth form provision

Inadequate

- Older students are totally integrated with other pupils. They use the same boarding provision, they are in the same lessons and the sixth form is led by the same leaders who lead the school.
- Students are not safe. There are a wide number of shortcomings with the policies, procedures and practices to manage students' health, safety and well-being.
- The quality of teaching and learning is inconsistent. Some adults are good at explaining things and making sure that students fully understand. Others are not.
- Students make inconsistent progress. Short-stay students make better progress relative to the time spent at the school than long-stay students. Students' progress and attainment are variable, including in reading.
- Leaders provide a wide range of independent and effective careers guidance for students. Students value the aspirational visits and visitors that leaders arrange for them. Leaders

have thought carefully about the needs of short- and long-stay students, families' long-term aspirations for their children and any cultural sensitivities that may or may not exist.

- Students' behaviour is good. Classrooms are calm and productive places in which to learn. Students sometimes lose focus when adults are not clear enough about what students are learning or what they are doing.

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

- There are widespread and significant failings in how leaders ensure that boarders' welfare is properly safeguarded and promoted.
- Staff do not fully understand or respond well enough to boarders' vulnerabilities.
- Staff do not form consistently secure relationships with boarders. This has a negative impact on the care that adults provide. The quality of interactions between adults and boarders is too variable. Some staff do not provide effective care and nurture.
- Staff do not receive regular and effective reviews of their work in the boarding provision. The professional development of staff is weak.
- There have been improvements in how leaders manage private lodgings since the last monitoring inspection. However, not all adults have completed the required training. No risk assessments for shared bedrooms have been undertaken.
- Boarders have good knowledge of the expected behaviours in boarding. Staff are effective at promoting positive behaviour.
- The independent visitor is available to boarders and they know how to contact them.
- All boarders access a wide variety of activities on and off the school site. These activities have a positive impact on their social skills.

School details

Unique reference number	135819
Social care unique reference number	SC382720
DfE registration number	869/6016
Inspection number	10047031

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 category	Independent boarding
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	25
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	8
Number of part-time pupils	None
Number of boarders on roll	24
Proprietor	Mr Till Gins
Headteacher	Mr Jon Crocker
Annual fees (boarders)	£37,500
Telephone number	01635 36879
Website	www.newburyhall.com
Email address	info@newburyhall.com
Date of previous inspection	17–19 May 2016

Information about this school

- Newbury Hall is an international boarding school. All pupils come from countries from outside of the United Kingdom. All pupils are placed at the school by at least one intermediary. Many are placed by booking agents and booking offices.
- Most pupils stay at the school for a short period of time, some for just one or two weeks. As a result, pupil numbers fluctuate hugely from week to week. The week before the inspection, the school had half the number of pupils it had during the inspection. The following week, pupil numbers are expected to almost double. A small proportion of pupils stay for more than 12 weeks.
- Students over the age of 16 are a mixture of short- and long-stay.
- The school opened in 2008 and was registered in 2009. It occupies a small single site with limited outside space. Sporting activity is conducted off-site. No alternative provision is used. The school's goal is 'to fuel an enthusiasm for studying'.
- The school provides boarding accommodation for pupils. It also uses host family lodgings.
- The school was judged to be inadequate in 2013 and again in 2016. Two integrated monitoring inspections have been conducted, in February and December 2017. These inspections continued to find that the independent school standards and the national minimum standards for boarding schools were not met.

Information about this inspection

- Meetings were held with senior leaders to review their work to keep pupils safe.
- Inspectors conducted an evaluation of the pupils' bedrooms with senior leaders.
- A telephone call was held with the proprietor, and minutes of his meetings were reviewed.
- A wide range of policies and documentation were reviewed, including risk assessments, signing-in books, admissions records, training logs and appraisal information.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils and staff throughout the three days, including during breaks, meal times and in the evenings.
- The single central record of recruitment checks was evaluated alongside staff personnel files.
- Inspectors visited all classrooms with leaders. Assessment information was reviewed and pupils' progress in books and folders was evaluated.

Inspection team

Mark Cole, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Amanda Maxwell, lead social care inspector

Social Care Regulatory Inspector

Emeline Evans

Social Care Regulatory Inspector

Annex. Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school must meet the following independent school standards

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 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that-
 - 16(a) the welfare of pupils at the school is safeguarded and promoted by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written risk assessment policy; and
 - 16(b) appropriate action is taken to reduce risks that are identified.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

- 30 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that, where the school provides accommodation, regard is had to Standard 5 of the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools or, where applicable, Standard 5 of the National Minimum Standards for Residential Special Schools.

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 must meet the following national minimum standards for boarding schools

- The school has, and implements effectively, appropriate policies for the care of boarders who are unwell and ensures that the physical and mental health and emotional well-being of boarders are promoted. These include first aid, care of those with chronic conditions and disabilities, dealing with medical emergencies and the use of household remedies (NMS 3.1).
- Boarding houses and other accommodation provided for boarders are appropriately lit, heated and ventilated, cleaned and maintained, and reasonable adjustments are made to provide adequate accessible accommodation for any boarders with restricted mobility (NMS 5.4).
- The school premises, accommodation and facilities provided therein are maintained to a standard such that, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of pupils are ensured (NMS 6.2).
- 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 (NMS13.4).
- Senior boarding staff have an adequate level of experience and/or training (NMS13.6).
- The records specified in Appendix 2 are maintained and monitored by the school and action taken as appropriate (NMS13.8).
- Any staff member or volunteer employed or volunteering in a position working with boarders has a job description reflecting their duties, receives induction training in boarding when newly appointed and receives regular reviews of their boarding practice, with opportunities for training and continual professional development in boarding (NMS 15.1).
- The staff supervising boarders outside teaching time are sufficient in number, training and experience for the age, number and needs of boarders, and the locations and activities involved (NMS 15.3).
- 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).

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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