

Newbury Independent School

Unit 6, Cuckoo Wharf, 435 Lichfield Road, Aston, Birmingham, West Midlands B6 7SS

Inspection date

8 January 2025

Overall outcome

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

Main inspection findings

Part 1. Quality of education provided

Paragraphs 2(1) to 2(1)(b)(i)

- At the last standard inspection, In October 2023, the school had not established a well-planned and organised curriculum to help pupils build on previous knowledge. By the time of the first progress monitoring inspection in June 2024, the new headteacher had brought many new curriculum schemes to the school that provided a framework for future curriculum development. While this was positive, the schemes were not yet adapted to this school or its pupils.
- Since that monitoring visit, considerable work has been put in place to ensure that all subjects have long-term sequences of learning carefully planned for the pupils. These meet the independent school standards (the standards) and are ambitious for what pupils will achieve. A newly implemented catch-up curriculum has been created to support those pupils who join with gaps in their knowledge. This means that for every subject, there are clearly adapted sequences of learning that prioritise the essential knowledge and skills that pupils will need to catch up quickly.
- These standards are now met.

Paragraphs 3, 3(a), 3(c), and 3(d)

- At the last standard inspection, the school was not ensuring that all lessons met the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Lessons did little to reduce the gaps in pupils' knowledge and, in some cases, widened them. There had been little change since the last progress monitoring inspection. However, the new headteacher brought a fresh and articulated vision for quality learning, which he modelled through the classes he taught.
- Since then, there have been significant staffing changes. They have brought a fresh approach to curriculum implementation. There is now a rich dialogue about how pupils learn, what they have remembered and what could be better. As a result, there is now a strong focus on learning at the school. Work in books shows the pupils are learning the intended curriculum and successfully developing knowledge over time.

- These standards are now met.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Paragraphs 7(a) and 7(b)

- At the last standard inspection in October 2023, the school had failed to understand the specific risks some pupils faced, and act accordingly. Some pupils rarely attended school, and leaders were not making the necessary checks to assure themselves that these pupils were not at risk of harm. By the time of the progress monitoring inspection in June 2024, there had been some improvements to systems and processes for keeping pupils safe. However, the school was not consistently following up when pupils were away, often for extended periods. At that inspection, leaders were unable to provide evidence that the pupils were safe while away from school.
- Since that progress monitoring inspection, there has been an increased tenacity to ensure pupils are safe, even when away from school. Safeguarding and attendance procedures are well written and reflect the statutory guidance issued by the Secretary of State. General attendance for all pupils has improved, and all regularly attend school. In some cases where attendance is lower than leaders expect, learning packs are sent home, remote lessons are held, and frequent, face-to-face staff engagement is conducted. There is now an unrelenting expectation that pupils must be in school daily. Some pupils are currently on part-time timetables due to the complexity of their social, emotional and mental health needs, but these are frequently reviewed and well-planned so that every child is in school for at least half of each day. As a result of this careful planning, the attendance of all pupils is rapidly improving.
- These standards are now met.

Part 6. Provision of information

Paragraph 32(1)(b), 32 (1)(c) and 32(1)(h)

- The school continues to publish its arrangements for safeguarding pupils on its own website. This document is in line with statutory guidance from the Secretary of State.
- At the last standard inspection, the school was unable to demonstrate that it could provide an account of income and expenditure relating its pupils, who are all funded by a local authority. Local authorities were being appropriately invoiced by the time of the progress monitoring inspection, but it was unclear what they were paying for.
- Since that last progress monitoring inspection, the school has ensured records are available for each local authority, accounting for what their money is used for. These are incredibly detailed and provide evidence of not only contributions to staffing and resources but also provisions to meet the needs of individual pupils with SEND.
- These standards are now met.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Paragraph 34(1)(c)

- At the last standard inspection in October 2023, the school had failed to understand the specific risks some pupils faced and did not mitigate for these accordingly. This meant that some pupils were at greater risk of additional harm. At the progress monitoring inspection, systems and processes had raised expectations for monitoring attendance,

and for staff to report and act on concerns. However, some pupils remained away from school for long periods without the school ensuring that they were safe.

- Since then, leaders have worked tirelessly to ensure that they always know where pupils are and that staff act swiftly when pupils are away. The reorganisation of the attendance team, ensuring that they are also designated safeguarding leads, has enhanced this work. This means that all staff now know the link between poor attendance and risks to well-being, and act swiftly when concerned.
- These standards are now met.

Paragraphs 34(1) to 34(1)(b)

- At the last standard inspection, the school did not ensure that the standards were consistently met. The school had not ensured that persons with leadership and management responsibilities had sufficient knowledge and skill to ensure that the school consistently met the standards. By the time of the progress monitoring inspection, a new headteacher had been appointed, bringing a fresh drive and dynamism to the school. There was a clarity of understanding about the standards, and a thorough understanding of the gaps in provision. However, some standards were still unmet, and more work was needed to ensure that all standards were consistently met.
- Since that last inspection, the proprietor and a tenacious and driven staff group have worked to ensure that all remaining standards from the progress monitoring inspection have been met. However, much of this work has happened since the arrival of the new headteacher in May 2024. It has been enhanced since the arrival of the new leadership team in July and September 2024, who are still developing their understanding of the needs of pupils and school systems and processes. This means there still is insufficient evidence of a track record to ensure that the standards are securely and consistently met over time.
- These standards are still unmet.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school does not meet the requirements of the schedule to The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements that were checked during this inspection, as set out in the annex of this report. 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

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| Unique reference number | 143174 |
| DfE registration number | 330/6031 |
| Inspection number | 10372918 |

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.

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| Type of school | Other independent school |
| School status | Independent school |
| Age range of pupils | 11 to 19 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Gender of pupils in the sixth form | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 7 |
| Of which, number on roll in sixth form | 2 |
| Number of part-time pupils | 4 |
| Proprietor | Anthony Walters |
| Headteacher | Enamul Hoque |
| Annual fees (day pupils) | £30,502 to £67,942 |
| Telephone number | 01218 030831 |
| Website | www.newburyschool.co.uk |
| Email address | enquiries@newburyschool.co.uk |
| Dates of previous standard inspection | 3 to 5 October 2023 |

Information about this school

- Newbury Independent School is an independent day school that provides education for pupils between the ages of 11 and 19. It opened in October 2016 and is registered by the Department for Education to accommodate up to 60 pupils.
- Since 2020, the school has also operated from a second site at Unit 4, Cuckoo Wharf, 435 Lichfield Road, Aston, Birmingham, West Midlands B6 7SS. This site has been in use since 2020.

- Pupils attending the school have a range of social, emotional, and mental health difficulties. Most have an education, health, and care plan. Most have been excluded from or were at high risk of being excluded from their previous school.
- Since the last standard inspection, there have been two changes to the headteacher at the school. The current postholder took up their post in May 2024. A new head of teaching and learning was appointed in July 2024 and a new special educational needs coordinator in September 2024.
- The school currently uses one unregistered alternative provision.
- The school's last full standard inspection was from 3 to 5 October 2023.

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 school's progress in meeting the standards and other requirements that it was judged to not comply with at its previous inspection.
- At the school's last standard inspection, which was carried out in October 2023, the school did not comply with all the standards.
- The Department for Education required the school to prepare an action plan.
- Ofsted evaluated this action plan on 24 September 2024.
- This was the first progress monitoring inspection since the school was found not to comply with the standards at its last standard inspection.
- Leaders were not given any prior notice of this progress monitoring inspection. The inspector arrived at the start of the school day.
- The inspector met with the headteacher, the head of teaching and learning, the special educational needs and disabilities teacher, and the attendance officer/deputy designated safeguarding lead. He also met remotely with the proprietor and the school's improvement partner.
- The inspector examined several policies, schemes of work and plans, visited classrooms, spoke to pupils, and looked at work in pupils' books.
- The inspection also considered the school's safeguarding arrangements, including the single central record of pre-employment checks and whether the school's safeguarding policy is available to parents and carers. These requirements of the independent school standards are met. The inspector examined the school's most recent action plan and considered evidence of progress against planned actions. The inspector discussed the progress against the previously unmet standards with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and the proprietor.

Inspection team

Chris Pollitt, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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 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.

The school now meets the following requirements of the independent school standards

- 2(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if–
 - 2(1)(a) the proprietor ensures that a written policy on the curriculum, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work, which provides for the matters specified in sub-paragraph (2) is drawn up and implemented effectively; and
 - 2(1)(b) the written policy, plans and schemes of work–
 - 2(1)(b)(i) take into account the ages, aptitudes and needs of all pupils, including those pupils with an EHC plan.
- 3 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that the teaching at the school–
 - 3(a) enables pupils to acquire new knowledge and make good progress according to their ability so that they increase their understanding and develop their skills in the subjects taught
 - 3(c) involves well planned lessons and effective teaching methods, activities and management of class time
 - 3(d) shows a good understanding of the aptitudes, needs and prior attainments of the pupils, and ensures that these are taken into account in the planning of lessons.
- 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
- 32(1) The standard about the provision of information by the school is met if the proprietor ensures that–
 - 32(1)(h) where a pupil wholly or partly funded by a local authority (except where funding is solely for free of charge early years provision in accordance with the duty contained in section 7 of the Childcare Act 2006) is registered at the school, an annual account of income received and expenditure incurred by the school in respect of that pupil is provided to the local authority and, on request, to the Secretary of State

- 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)(c) actively promote the well-being of pupils.

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