

Newbury School

Unit 7 Cuckoo Wharf, Aston, Birmingham B6 7SS

Inspection dates

25–27 June 2019

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Inadequate

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Leaders' action-planning and monitoring of teaching, learning and assessment lack precision and rigour. As a result, they do not have a clear and accurate understanding of this aspect.
- The support given by leaders is not effective enough to ensure that the quality of teaching improves rapidly. Consequently, too few pupils make good progress across the curriculum.
- Governors are not provided with accurate information about how well leaders are achieving their aims.
- Pupils who enter the school with significant gaps in their knowledge and understanding of English and mathematics are not developing their basic skills in these subjects rapidly enough.
- In mathematics, the work set by teachers is not always matched well enough to individual pupils' learning needs, resulting in some pupils not achieving the standards of which they are capable.
- In writing, pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to practise and develop their writing skills.
- Teachers are not supporting the development of pupils' reading skills well enough. This is preventing some pupils from making good progress.
- The school's system of assessment is not used effectively by leaders and teachers to check how well pupils are progressing.

The school has the following strengths

- Leaders have devised a broad, engaging curriculum that provides pupils with a wide range of experiences and opportunities.
- Pupils' behaviour is well managed. Their personal development, confidence and self-esteem are given high priority.
- Pupils are extremely polite, well mannered and courteous towards staff and visitors.
- Pupils have a good understanding of different types of bullying and how to keep themselves safe and healthy.
- Leaders have successfully improved attendance for most pupils. Leaders give attendance and punctuality high priority.
- Pupils are proud of their school and value the support they receive. They recognise the importance of education and demonstrate positive attitudes towards their learning.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - action plans clearly identify how the intended impact of actions taken to improve outcomes for pupils and the quality of teaching, learning and assessment will be measured
 - leaders implement a system of monitoring the quality of teaching and learning that enables them to identify appropriate improvement targets for teachers
 - teachers are well supported to develop their teaching and learning skills through the provision of effective professional development opportunities and sharing the good practice that currently exists within the school
 - governors are provided with accurate information about how well the school is achieving its priorities so that they can hold leaders to account.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment so that pupils make consistently strong progress and outcomes are improved by ensuring that:
 - pupils acquire basic skills in English and mathematics more rapidly
 - learning in mathematics lessons is sufficiently challenging and appropriately matched to the individual needs of pupils, including the most able and those requiring additional support
 - pupils develop and practise their written communication skills so that they write accurately and fluently for different purposes and audiences
 - pupils are well supported to develop their reading and comprehension skills so that they maximise their learning in lessons
 - teachers make full use of the school's system of assessment to check how well pupils are progressing and provide additional support where necessary.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Leaders do not have an accurate view of the quality of education provided. This is because action plans are not evaluated systematically enough. As a result, leaders are unclear about what is working well and what needs improvement. Leaders have not acted quickly enough on the recommendations made by the school's external adviser. As a result, leaders have not secured a good quality of teaching, learning and assessment or good outcomes for pupils.
- The monitoring of teaching and learning is not robust. The senior leadership team has carried out some lesson observations, but not for all teachers. While records of these observations identify appropriate strengths and weaknesses, these have not been used to identify training opportunities or set targets to help teachers to develop their skills. Consequently, the overall quality of teaching and learning is not improving quickly enough.
- The school aims to support pupils to re-engage with learning, develop their personal and social skills and make good academic progress. Leaders have partly achieved these aims. They have established an appropriate learning environment and ensured that the social, emotional and behavioural needs of individual pupils are well met. Pupils' behaviour is good, and they engage well with their learning.
- Leaders have devised a curriculum that meets the needs of learners and the requirements of the standards for independent schools. It enables pupils to develop their personal, social and emotional skills well. Pupils gain qualifications in a wide range of subjects, including English, mathematics, food preparation and sport. The school works well with external agencies, such as the police and local sports clubs, to enrich the curriculum and ensure that pupils enjoy a wide range of opportunities and experiences.
- The careers information and guidance provided to pupils are effective. They prepare them well for their future careers and ensure that pupils are given information about a wide range of career options.
- Leaders' actions to improve the attendance of pupils have been successful. They give attendance a high priority and leaders work well with families and other professionals to ensure that pupils are supported and enabled to attend school regularly.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted effectively by all staff. Pupils demonstrate respect towards people from different backgrounds to their own, including those with different religious and cultural backgrounds. They have a good understanding of diversity and the importance of ensuring that everyone is treated equally and with respect. They have a developing understanding of British values and could explain why these values are important. Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.

Governance

- The governing body includes members with an appropriate range of skills. They have undertaken appropriate training and ensured that the school meets its statutory responsibilities for safeguarding and health and safety.

- Governors clearly articulate their vision and aspiration to ensure that the school provides the highest-quality education to its pupils. Currently, though, this vision has not been fully realised.
- Governors are not provided with sufficient information about aspects of the school's performance, such as the progress made by pupils. Consequently, they are not able to hold leaders fully to account.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Safeguarding has a high priority and there is a strong culture of safeguarding within the school. Staff undertake regular child protection training, are knowledgeable about safeguarding policies and are clear about the procedures they need to follow if they have any concerns.
- The safeguarding policy is published on the school's website and is readily available. It meets the most recent government requirements.
- Leaders follow safer recruitment guidelines, ensuring that all the required employment checks are carried out before new members of staff are appointed.
- The school implements its policies, such as anti-bullying, behaviour management and health and safety, effectively to ensure that pupils are safeguarded.
- The designated safeguarding lead engages well with parents and carers, agencies and professionals to ensure that appropriate support is provided to potentially vulnerable pupils.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Teaching is not consistently good in all subjects, including English and mathematics. Tasks are not consistently well matched to the needs of pupils of differing abilities, especially the most able and lower-attaining pupils. As a result, not enough pupils make sufficiently good progress over time to enable them to achieve the standards of which they are capable.
- Work in pupils' books shows that teachers do not have high enough expectations of pupils' writing abilities. Too few opportunities are presented for pupils to practise and develop their basic grammar, punctuation and spelling skills. Work produced is sometimes of a low level, is not completed or is not completed to a high enough standard. Although this is occasionally challenged by teachers, there is little evidence of subsequent improvement.
- Teaching is not sufficiently challenging for some pupils in mathematics. This is evident in books, where there are examples of pupils repeating work that they could already do. This limits their progress. Additionally, pupils are not always given sufficient opportunities to solve problems for themselves or develop and apply their mathematical reasoning skills. This is reflected in the outcomes for mathematics.
- Teachers do not provide sufficient support for pupils who struggle to read. This reduces pupils' access to the curriculum and limits the development of their comprehension skills.

- Leaders have developed an assessment system that enables pupils' skills to be assessed on entry to the school and, thereafter, each term. This information is used by teachers to plan lessons. However, it is not yet being used effectively to check how well pupils are progressing or to identify pupils who may need further support or interventions.
- Adults use the behaviour management system effectively. Consequently, pupils' conduct and levels of engagement in lessons are positive. No inappropriate behaviour was observed during the inspection. This reflects pupils' typical behaviour over time.
- Teachers have a good understanding of pupils' personal, social and emotional needs. They have established effective working relationships with pupils. This results in pupils confidently contributing in lessons.
- The school provides regular, detailed information to parents about their child's progress.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The school has ensured that pupils know how to keep themselves safe in a range of situations, including when using the internet. Pupils are safe, and say they feel safe and well cared for, in school. They have a good understanding of a range of different types of bullying. They say that there is no bullying in school and they know what to do should it happen.
- Pupils could talk confidently about the importance of making healthy life choices.
- The school's support for vulnerable pupils is effective. Leaders work well with families and a range of agencies to ensure that appropriate support is provided as necessary. This support has contributed to the improved attendance and academic outcomes of several pupils.
- Pupils are confident and self-assured and demonstrate positive attitudes to their learning. They can discuss their ideas and opinions confidently and listen respectfully to others.
- Pupils recognise the value of education. They are aspirational for their futures and understand the role of education in helping them to achieve their ambitions. Pupils speak very highly of the school and hold the staff in high regard. They say they feel valued and respected.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Almost all pupils who attend Newbury School have a history of fixed-term exclusions in their previous setting due to inappropriate behaviour. Pupils' improved conduct is as a direct result of the actions taken by leaders and adults in this setting.
- The school's behaviour management systems are effective. Adults routinely challenge inappropriate behaviour. This has resulted in significant improvements in pupils' behaviour during their time at the school.

- Pupils conduct themselves well in lessons and throughout the school day. Behaviour logs show that adults consistently respond quickly and effectively to inappropriate behaviour.
- Overall attendance remains below national expectations. However, attendance for most pupils has improved significantly since they joined the school. This is the result of the actions taken by leaders to support pupils and their families. Leaders are continuing to develop ways to improve attendance further.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Outcomes for pupils are not yet good because pupils are not making consistently good progress or securing the basic skills rapidly enough to enable them to make enough progress to achieve their potential.
- The progress of pupils in mathematics is not good because the work they are given is not challenging enough. In addition, pupils do not make as much progress in writing as they could because they are not given enough opportunities to develop and practise core writing skills. For example, teachers do not consistently ensure that pupils use basic sentence punctuation accurately or spell common words correctly.
- Some pupils, for whom reading is a barrier to learning, are not supported well enough to develop their reading skills. This means that, sometimes, their progress is limited as they cannot always fully access the learning in the lesson.
- When pupils arrive at the school, many have significant gaps in their skills and negative attitudes to learning. Initially, the school rightly concentrates on improving pupils' attitudes to learning, self-confidence and behaviour. The school does this very effectively and, consequently, pupils make good progress in their personal development and in their ability to manage their own behaviour.
- There is no destination information available as no pupils have left the school since it opened in 2017. Pupils can remain at the school until the age of 19.

School details

Unique reference number	143174
DfE registration number	330/6031
Inspection number	10093011

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.

Type of school	Other independent school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	11 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	19
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietors	Robin Smith and Anthony Walters
Chair	Pauline Young
Headteacher	Gary Belcher
Annual fees (day pupils)	£25,502 to £48,902
Telephone number	0121 794 4039
Website	www.newburyschool.co.uk
Email address	newburyindependentschool@gmail.com
Date of previous inspection	21–23 November 2017

Information about this school

- Newbury School is an independent day school providing 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.
- In January 2019, the school moved to new purpose-built premises in Aston, Birmingham. The school does not use any other premises.
- Pupils attending the school have a range of social, emotional and mental health difficulties. Nearly all the pupils have experienced disruption to their education and the majority have been permanently excluded from previous schools.

- Pupils come from a range of cultural, ethnic and religious backgrounds. The school does not have a specific religious character or denomination.
- Birmingham local authority commissions places at the school.
- The school's aim is to 'make tomorrow better than today' for their pupils.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out by one inspector over three days.
- This was the school's second full standard inspection. The school's first full inspection was in November 2017. The school also had a progress monitoring inspection in November 2018.
- The inspector observed teaching and learning and looked at pupils' work in English, mathematics, humanities and personal, social, health and economic education.
- The inspector looked at the school's assessment information for pupils.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, the school's designated safeguarding lead and two representatives from the school's governing body. The inspector also spoke with a group of pupils.
- Questionnaires submitted by 10 members of staff were scrutinised.
- There were no responses to Ofsted's Parent View survey.
- A wide range of documents and policies were looked at, including health and safety checks, records of observations of teaching, safeguarding documentation and records of attendance.
- A check of the premises, including the facilities provided for pupils, was also carried out.

Inspection team

Janet Satchwell, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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