

New Barn School

The Long Barn, Welford, Newbury, Berkshire RG20 8HZ

Inspection dates

25 November 2020

Overall outcome

The school is likely to meet the relevant independent school standards if the material change relating to the school provision is implemented

Main inspection findings

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Paragraphs 7, 32(1) and 32(1)(c)

- The school's safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Leaders have ensured that there is a suitable and up-to-date safeguarding policy in place which is available on the school's website. It is tailored closely to the needs of pupils in the school and takes account of the latest statutory guidance.
- Leaders risk assess safeguarding carefully in order to minimise potential risks. There is a separate e-safety policy which sets out how the school ensures that pupils know how to keep themselves safe when online.
- Leaders and staff are well trained in safeguarding and child protection. Staff training focuses in particular on the additional safeguarding challenges that may arise because of pupils' special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Staff demonstrate that they take these into account. There are regular planned opportunities for staff to share useful information about any concerns they may have about a pupil and to provide further support for pupils where needed.
- Leaders are alert to the local and current vulnerabilities to pupils. They work closely with families, external professionals and social workers to keep pupils safe.

Paragraphs 11, 12 and 16

- Health and safety arrangements are fit for purpose. There is a written policy in place which identifies the processes and procedures that need to be followed to keep staff, pupils and others safe. The policy sets out the relevant testing and checks that need to be made to ensure that the site is safe and that any issues that arise are addressed. Governors check regularly that the policy is implemented well.
- The school complies with fire safety regulations. There are appropriate fire safety measures in place across both school sites, such as fire doors, alarms, detectors and extinguishers. Evacuation routes are clearly marked, as are areas where pupils should congregate should the alarm sound. The school has recently trained additional fire marshals so that there are sufficient to cover both school sites and to keep safe any

additional pupils the school may have should the material change be agreed. The proprietor ensures that an annual check is carried out to make sure that buildings and equipment meet all requirements.

- Leaders take a thorough approach to assessing risk. There is an overarching risk assessment policy with several linked risk assessment plans and procedures. These ensure that staff consider a range of risks to pupils from the building and the local environment, as well as those relating to pupils' behaviour and safeguarding. Risk assessments are detailed, specific, fit for purpose and reviewed regularly.
- Staff have regular training in health and safety. They are alert to the specific health and safety risks that need to be considered for pupils with SEND. For example, each pupil has a personal evacuation plan in place which considers the extra help and support they would need to leave a building safely and calmly in the event of a fire.

Paragraph 14

- The school employs a large number of staff relative to the number of pupils who attend the school. This ensures that pupils are supervised well throughout the day, and that their individual needs are met. Leaders makes sure there are enough staff to play with pupils and to supervise them at break and lunchtimes. Leaders intend to employ more staff should the proposed material change be approved. The induction procedures for these new staff will include training in relation to pupils' welfare, safety and in pupils' specific needs.
- It is likely that the school will meet the standards checked in this part should the material change be approved.

Part 4. Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

Paragraphs 17, 18, 19, 20 and 21

- Leaders place a high priority on the recruitment of staff. Sufficient staff have had safer-recruitment training. Leaders ensure that recruitment procedures are robust, including completing references and carrying out vetting checks prior to staff starting in post. All the required vetting checks have been carried out on staff, members of the proprietor body, governors and others who visit the school, including the owner of the land that the school is based on. These checks are recorded on the single central register, which is in good order and well maintained.
- The school is likely to meet this part of the independent school standards if the material change is implemented.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

Paragraphs 23 and 24

- Leaders have ensured that there are separate, individual toilets and suitable washing facilities for pupils. There are separate toilets for adults and disabled persons. There is a shower cubicle with a changing facility available on both school sites.
- There is suitable provision in the medical room for the short-term care of sick and injured pupils, and the medical examination and treatment of pupils. This room contains a washing basin and is situated next to a toilet. There is a locked medicine cabinet to store pupils' medication.

Paragraphs 25, 26, 27 and 28

- The proprietor ensures that the school premises are maintained to a very high standard. Buildings are clean, modern and of a suitable size and design for pupils. The buildings meet all the requirements regarding the supply of hot and cold water, ventilation and heating. The school is well lit, including external lighting. There is drinking water available for pupils, who all have their own drinking bottles.
- Leaders employ a maintenance manager to support the day-to-day maintenance of the site. His work is monitored by the headteacher, with support from the central Acorn Education and Care team.
- Classrooms are well organised and free from clutter. Staff have thought carefully about any small changes to layout that might be needed to accommodate an extra pupil in the class.

Paragraphs 29 and 31

- There is ample outdoor space for pupils to play in, exercise and congregate. This includes a playground with climbing equipment in the primary site and a hard surface suitable for team games on the secondary site. There is also access to a field and an adventure area in woodland which sits between both school sites.
- The school is likely to meet this part of the independent school standards.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Paragraph 34

- Members of the proprietorial body have experience of leading special schools. Several of the proprietor's regional directors have previously been headteachers in special schools. The proprietor also ensures that members of the governing body have experience in education to strengthen their capacity to hold school leaders to account. The chair of the proprietorial body is knowledgeable about the school and school leadership. He spoke convincingly about ensuring that pupils are well looked after, learning and safe.
- The chair of the governing body is in weekly contact with the school. This ensures that he is familiar with the school's work and helps him to hold school leaders to account. He follows the proprietor's systematic reporting processes so that those responsible for the governance of the school are reassured that pupils' welfare, safety and education are thoroughly monitored and reviewed. He also checks that staff receive their entitlement to appropriate and timely training, including in maintaining pupils' welfare and safety.
- The headteacher is knowledgeable about special education and school leadership. She is held in high esteem by directors, leaders and staff. She has built capacity in her senior leaders since the second school site was opened. The recent change in ownership of the school means that there are more schools within the group, which has added capacity for the schools to share good practice and specialist expertise with each other. These factors have contributed strongly to the proprietor's wish to increase the intake of the school by an extra six pupils.
- This part of the independent school standards is likely to be met if the material change request is approved.

Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

- The school has a suitable accessibility plan in place. There is disabled access to the ground floor of the buildings for wheelchair users. There are disabled toilets available.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school is likely to meet the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements that are relevant to the material change.

School details

| | |
|-------------------------|----------|
| Unique reference number | 144033 |
| DfE registration number | 869/6019 |
| Inspection number | 10165726 |

This inspection was carried out under section 162(4) of the Education Act 2002, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's likely compliance with the independent school standards relevant to the material change that the school has applied to make.

| | |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| Type of school | Other independent special school |
| School status | Independent special school |
| Proprietor | Outcomes First Group Ltd |
| Chair | Richard Power |
| Headteacher | Ms Alice Anstee |
| Annual fees (day pupils) | £51,000–£77,000 |
| Telephone number | 01488 505 145 |
| Website | www.acornnewbarnschool.co.uk |
| Email address | info@acorncare.co.uk |
| Date of previous standard inspection | 5–7 December 2017 |

Pupils

| | School's current position | School's proposal | Inspector's recommendation |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------|----------------------------|
| Age range of pupils | 6 to 19 | 6 to 19 | 6 to 19 |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 50 | 56 | 56 |

Pupils

| | School's current position | School's proposal |
|------------------|---------------------------|-------------------|
| Gender of pupils | Mixed | Mixed |

| | | |
|--|----|----|
| Number of full-time pupils of compulsory school age | 50 | 56 |
| Number of part-time pupils | 0 | 0 |
| Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities | 50 | 56 |
| Of which, number of pupils with an education, health and care plan | 50 | 56 |
| Of which, number of pupils paid for by a local authority with an education, health and care plan | 50 | 56 |

Staff

| | School's current position | School's proposal |
|---|---------------------------|-------------------|
| Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff | 32 | 34 |
| Number of part-time teaching staff | 3 | 3 |
| Number of staff in the welfare provision | 4 | 4 |

Information about this school

- New Barn School caters for pupils with SEND. Most pupils have social, emotional and mental health difficulties. Some have experienced trauma and neglect in their early lives. A number of pupils are looked after by the local authority. Pupils are aged between six and 19. Most pupils are boys. There are currently two pupils in the sixth form.
- The school is situated in a rural, wooded setting on the Welford Park estate, near Newbury. The primary school is known as Willow Farm, with the post code RG20 8HZ. The secondary school, located close by, is known as Home Farm and has the post

code RG20 8HR. The contact address for the school is New Barn School, The Long Barn, Welford, Newbury, Berkshire, RG20 8HZ.

- The school was registered with the Department for Education (DfE) in January 2017 to admit up to 20 pupils aged six to 16. Demand for places at the school has steadily grown. In May 2018 the DfE approved an increase in capacity to allow the school to admit 50 pupils. Since then the DfE has also approved an increase in age range to allow the school to admit pupils up to age 19. The school's current request is for permission to admit up to 56 pupils.
- The school's last standard inspection was in December 2017, when the overall effectiveness was judged to be good.
- The school uses two providers of alternative provision. These are Outdoor Academy and Upper Lodge Farm.

Information about this inspection

- On 17 March 2020, all routine inspections were suspended due to the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic. As part of our phased return to routine inspection, Ofsted implemented an 'interim phase' for autumn 2020. As part of this, Ofsted is carrying out additional inspections in line with our usual arrangements.
- The inspection was carried out at the request of the DfE. The purpose of the inspection was to establish if the school would be likely to meet all the relevant independent school standards if the proposed material change, to increase the number of pupils in the school to 56, is implemented.
- The DfE requested that the school's arrangements for safeguarding, health and safety, fire safety, risk assessments and supervision of pupils were scrutinised in order to check whether they would be likely to meet all requirements. The DfE also requested that further checks were made on the school premises, recruitment of staff and the quality and capacity of leaders to lead the school should the material change be approved.
- Her Majesty's Inspector met with the headteacher and the head of the primary school. She spoke to a group of staff remotely, via a video call. She also held a video call with the proprietor's representative and the chair of the governing body. She did not meet with pupils. The inspector toured the primary school before pupils arrived in the morning. She also toured the secondary site, where there were no pupils because they were temporarily self-isolating at home because of COVID-19. A range of documents, policies and plans was scrutinised.

Inspection team

Catherine Old, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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