

New Barn School

Welford, Newbury, Berkshire RG20 8HZ

Unique reference number (URN): 144033

Progress monitoring inspection report:

22 April 2026

Overall outcome

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

At its most recent inspection, the school was judged to not meet all of the independent school standards.

The purpose of this inspection was to monitor the progress the school has made in meeting the independent school standards and other requirements that it was judged to not comply with at its previous inspection.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

At the last inspection, the proprietor had not ensured that all the independent school standards (the standards) were met. Weaknesses were identified in the school's curriculum design, standards of teaching and the proprietor's capacity to improve the school. In January 2026, the Department for Education (DfE) required the school to submit an action plan. The DfE subsequently deemed that action plan to be unsatisfactory. At the time of this progress monitoring inspection, the proprietor was reviewing and updating the action plan. It is making sure that the action plan sets out clear, measurable success criteria to meet the previously unmet standards securely and consistently.

Since the previous inspection, the school has undergone significant changes in staffing and leadership. For instance, a new headteacher and several senior leaders have joined the school. This includes leaders with specialist knowledge in curriculum and teaching. Additionally, many teachers are also new to their roles. There remain some staff vacancies.

The proprietor continues to work resolutely to ensure that pupils' safety, behaviour, welfare and wellbeing remain a priority. The number of suspensions and instances of staff using restrictive interventions are reducing, including on the primary site. The school's

safeguarding arrangements, attendance and admission records and the implementation of the behaviour policy, remain a strength.

The proprietor has worked to make sure that staff confidence and morale are improving. It consults on staff views and collects feedback before introducing changes. The proprietor recognises that some changes are recent and have affected staff workload. New leaders now work alongside staff, providing support, including making sure that staff receive their full entitlement for planning and preparation time. This means that the school has dramatically reduced its reliance on temporary staff.

Despite these positives, the pace of work to improve some of the previously unmet standards in part 1 has not been quick enough. The proprietor realises that further work remains to make sure that the curriculum is taught well in all subjects, supporting pupils to make progress in all areas of their learning. New leaders are introducing a programme of professional learning to develop the subject knowledge of staff, including in English and mathematics. They are also reinstating targeted training, such as phonics, to strengthen staff understanding of how to teach the curriculum effectively.

The newly appointed leadership team and the proprietor demonstrate the knowledge and capacity to continue driving improvement. However, it is too soon to see the impact of some improvement actions, with some standards not met consistently. Some standards in this part remain unmet.

Part 1. Quality of education provided

Curriculum

At the previous standard inspection, inspectors identified considerable weaknesses in the standard of education provided by the school. These included limitations in how well the curriculum was designed and taught, sometimes due to staff lacking the subject knowledge required to implement the curriculum effectively.

Since the previous inspection, the proprietor has worked well to revise and implement a coherent curriculum in all subjects, including in personal, social and health education (PSHE). The proprietor has ensured that students in the post-16 provision now study a suitable suite of accredited courses and gain appropriate qualifications in English and mathematics especially.

The proprietor has worked well to check that at each stage, the curriculums in all subjects account fully for pupils' starting points and any requirements outlined in their education, health and care (EHC) plans. This means that schemes of learning are now matched to pupils' aptitudes and individual needs. Leaders ensure that teachers have clear information about the targets in pupils' EHC plans. Leaders scrutinise teachers' planning to check that these targets inform pupils' work in the curriculum.

Leaders make sure that staff deliver the agreed timetable and tutor programme purposefully. As a result, most pupils remain in lessons and do not miss out on learning because of 'choosing time'. Where needed, staff work sensitively to ensure that pupils have the support they require to address their sensory and emotional needs. Despite this, some younger pupils continue to miss out on vital learning. New leaders maintain oversight of the school day to check that the daily timetable is implemented effectively. They know that there is more work to do to ensure that pupils' enjoyment of learning is consistently high.

Teaching

The proprietor's work to address previous weaknesses in teaching has been hampered by recruitment issues and previous temporary appointments. It has now appointed permanent qualified teaching staff and is beginning to strengthen staff professional development, ensuring that it is purposeful.

Despite the proprietor's actions, teaching remains too varied across both the primary and secondary sites. Staff do not have strong enough subject knowledge and do not deliver the curriculum well enough. For instance, in too many lessons, teachers provide poor explanations and design activities that do not match the curriculum. This means that pupils do not learn as well as they should.

Assessment

Leaders have ensured that staff have clear information about pupil's EHC plan targets. They work well to enable staff from the multi-disciplinary and clinical teams to work in classrooms and provide pupils with appropriate support, including for speech and language. However, staff do not use their information gained from checks on pupils' learning effectively enough. In too many lessons, teaching does not address significant gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding. The proprietor has provided professional development to strengthen staff knowledge of how to use assessment information to inform teaching. However, this work is in its infancy.

The relevant standards in part 1 remain unmet.

Part 2. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

The proprietor has ensured that the PSHE curriculum is clearly sequenced and organised. It has also ensured that learning from PSHE underpins everyday routines and interactions on both sites. For example, staff model very well the school's respectful ethos. They take every opportunity to help pupils discuss and explore their emotions and learn positive strategies to deal successfully with difficult situations. Pupils learn how to keep safe in a range of contexts, including when online.

Pupils learn about the fundamental British values. They are respectful towards others and talk knowledgeably about topics, such as mutual respect, individual liberty, personal space

and consent. Pupils learn about other cultures and religions. The roles that pupils take in school and when working with visitors, such as the police, reinforce pupils' understanding of the rule of law and democracy. The extensive enrichment programme also enables pupils to pursue their hobbies and interests.

Pupils debate and consider a range of topics during tutor time and within the PSHE curriculum. These range from environmental issues to news items which affect them. This helps pupils to become positive and respectful citizens.

The standards in part 2 continue to be met.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Safeguarding

At the previous inspection in September 2025, safeguarding was judged to be effective and all relevant standards relating to the welfare, health and safety of pupils and staff were found to be met.

The school's single central record of pre-appointment checks on adults, including agency staff, contains the statutory information required. Key leaders and members of the proprietor body have undertaken safer recruitment training.

The safeguarding policy complies with present guidelines and is published on the website in accordance with the requirements set out in part 6 of the standards. Leaders use regular training and briefings to update staff about safeguarding matters.

Leaders uses an online system to record safeguarding concerns. The system enables them to track and monitor safeguarding concerns closely. Staff have been trained in its use. Leaders make sure that pertinent information relevant to external agencies, such as the police, is shared promptly with the local authorities who place pupils at the school.

Pupils learn how to stay safe, including online. They are positive about their school. Those who spoke with the inspector reported that they feel safe and trust staff. Pupils are confident that staff care for them and are always there if they have any worries.

The relevant safeguarding standards in part 3 continue to be met.

Behaviour and supervision of pupils

The behaviour policy sets out clear expectations for what is, and is not, acceptable behaviour. It places particular focus on the school's chosen approaches and tools to promote pupils' positive behaviour.

The proprietor ensures that staff use an established company-wide system to log incidents of serious misbehaviour, bullying and any actions taken, including sanctions imposed. It

monitors this regularly with the pastoral team, who use this information to spot patterns and trends and to provide appropriate support to pupils where necessary.

The behaviour policy outlines clear, up-to-date guidelines to ensure that any use of restrictive intervention is appropriate. Staff are fully trained in the use of physical intervention. The school has put in place suitable arrangements to log and record all incidents of physical intervention.

Leaders ensure that staff implement the behaviour policy effectively and consistently across both sites. Consequently, the atmosphere around classrooms and corridors is purposeful and pupils are respectful towards others. Where pupils need support to manage their behaviour and emotions, staff intervene sensitively and with care. They make sure that pupils take time to consider the impact of their actions, both for themselves and on others. As a result, the number of serious incidents is reducing and suspensions are low. Staff supervision is high during lessons, at breaktimes and lunchtimes.

The relevant standards in part 3 continue to be met.

Health and safety

The proprietor works very well to ensure that health and safety is prioritised. There are numerous suitable risk assessments in place that identify any potential hazards and ensure that appropriate control measures are implemented.

The relevant standard in part 3 continues to be met.

Admissions and attendance

There is a clear system in place to record admissions and attendance. Leaders use an electronic system to record and monitor attendance trends and patterns. The proprietor ensures that these arrangements comply with the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulation 2006.

Leaders ensure that staff use accurate codes to record any absences, including where pupils attend on a part-time arrangement or attend alternative provision.

This standard in part 3 continues to be met.

Risk assessment

Leaders check routinely that individual pupil risk assessments are reviewed and updated to include pupil voice so that their views are considered. Pupils know that they will receive effective support if or when they require it. As a result, leaders' oversight of pupil welfare and safety is a strength.

This standard in part 3 continues to be met.

About this inspection

The inspector carried out this inspection under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, at the request of the registration authority for independent schools. Inspectors checked the school's compliance with the independent school standards. These are the requirements set out in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

The inspector checked the school's compliance with the independent school standards. These are the requirements set out in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

Following our renewed inspection framework, all inspections are now led by His Majesty's Inspectors (HMIs) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMIs.

The inspection was commissioned by the Department of Education (DfE) to consider standards in parts 1, 2 and 3 following complaints about the provider. The inspector was also commissioned to review the post-Ofsted action plan.

The school received its last standard inspection from 16 to 18 September following an emergency inspection in April 2025. Both inspections identified unmet standards in parts 1 and 8 of the standards.

This was the school's first progress monitoring inspection and was conducted without notice.

The inspector spoke with the headteacher and other senior leaders in the school, as well as the chair of the governing board and members of the proprietor body. The inspector also spoke with pupils and staff during the inspection.

Following the last inspection, the DfE required the school to prepare a statutory action plan. It was assessed by Ofsted in February 2026. The DfE did not accept the action plan and informed the school of this decision on 1 April 2026.

The inspector confirmed the following information about the school:

Pupils are referred to the school by their local authority, who fund their place. All pupils have social, emotional and mental health needs. Some pupils have a combined diagnosis of attention deficit hyperactive disorder and autism. All pupils have an EHC plan.

The school uses 4 unregistered alternative providers.

Lead inspector

Shazia Akram

His Majesty's Inspector

About this school

Proprietor	P Bloom Ltd
Headteacher	Krishna Purbhoo
Type of school	Other independent special school
Capacity	130
Number of full-time pupils of compulsory school age on roll	68
Number of part-time pupils of compulsory school age on roll	0
Age range of pupils	6 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Annual fees for day pupils	£57,000 to £87,580
Email address	newbarnschool@acornnewbarnschool.co.uk

Annex. Independent school standards

Independent school standards that the school does not meet

Part 1. Quality of education provided

- 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(b) fosters in pupils self-motivation, the application of intellectual, physical and creative effort, interest in their work and the ability to think and learn for themselves;
 - 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;
 - 3(e) demonstrates good knowledge and understanding of the subject matter being taught;
 - 3(f) utilises effectively classroom resources of a good quality, quantity and range;

- 3(g) demonstrates that a framework is in place to assess pupils' work regularly and thoroughly and use information from that assessment to plan teaching so that pupils can progress;

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

Independent school standards requirements that the school now meets

Part 1. Quality of education provided

- 2(2) For the purposes of paragraph (2)(1)(a), the matters are-
 - 2(2)(a) full-time supervised education for pupils of compulsory school age (construed in accordance with section 8 of the Education Act 1996), which gives pupils experience in linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical and aesthetic and creative education;
 - 2(2)(h) that all pupils have the opportunity to learn and make progress; and

Additional independent school standards requirements that the school continues to meet

Part 1. Quality of education provided

- 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; and
 - 2(1)(b)(ii) do not undermine the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.
- 2(2) For the purposes of paragraph (2)(1)(a), the matters are-
 - 2(2)(d) personal, social, health and economic education which-
 - 2(2)(d)(i) reflects the school's aim and ethos; and

- 2(2)(d)(ii) encourages respect for other people, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics set out in the 2010 Act[9];
- 3(h) utilises effective strategies for managing behaviour and encouraging pupils to act responsibly;

Part 2. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

- 5 The standard about the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils at the school is met if the proprietor-
 - 5(a) actively promotes the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs;
 - 5(b) ensures that principles are actively promoted which-
 - 5(b)(i) enable pupils to develop their self-knowledge, self-esteem and self-confidence;
 - 5(b)(ii) enable pupils to distinguish right from wrong and to respect the civil and criminal law of England;
 - 5(b)(iii) encourage pupils to accept responsibility for their behaviour, show initiative and understand how they can contribute positively to the lives of those living and working in the locality in which the school is situated and to society more widely;
 - 5(b)(vi) encourage respect for other people, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics set out in the 2010 Act; and

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.
- 9 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor promotes good behaviour amongst pupils by ensuring that-
 - 9(a) a written behaviour policy is drawn up that, amongst other matters, sets out the sanctions to be adopted in the event of pupil misbehaviour;
 - 9(b) the policy is implemented effectively; and
 - 9(c) a record is kept of the sanctions imposed upon pupils for serious misbehaviour.
- 11 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that relevant health and safety laws are complied with by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written health and safety policy.

- 14 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that pupils are properly supervised through the appropriate deployment of school staff.
- 15 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that an admission and attendance register is maintained in accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006[13].
- 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.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) inspects services providing education and skills for children and learners of all ages, and inspects and regulates services that care for children and young people

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2026