

Newbury Manor School

Address: Newbury Manor, Newbury, Near Mells, Frome, Somerset, BA11 3RG

Unique reference number (URN): 131016

Inspection report: 12 May 2026

Exceptional	
Strong standard	●
Expected standard	● ●
Needs attention	● ● ● ●
Urgent improvement	

✓ Safeguarding standards met

The safeguarding standards are met. This means that leaders and/or those responsible for governance and oversight fulfil their specific responsibilities and have established an open culture in which safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and concerns are actively identified, acted upon and managed. As a result, pupils are made safer and feel safe.

How we evaluate safeguarding

When we inspect schools for safeguarding, they can have the following outcomes:

- **Met:** The school has an open and positive culture of safeguarding. All legal requirements are met.
- **Not met:** The school has not created an open and positive culture of safeguarding. Not all legal requirements are met.
- **Insufficient evidence:** Inspectors were unable to gather sufficient evidence to judge whether safeguarding standards are met.

Strong standard ●

Personal development and wellbeing

Strong standard ●

Leaders focus rigorously on preparing pupils for their future. Staff take time and care to ensure that pupils have ways to communicate what they need and want. High-quality pastoral support helps pupils to build their confidence and self-worth. For example, staff encourage and support pupils to engage with visitors to the school. A wide range of enrichment activities such as art, sport and music help to develop pupils' talents and interests. Staff are proud when pupils are successful and this in turn boosts the self-esteem of pupils.

The school's personal, social and health education programme has been expertly planned to meet the individual needs of pupils. The programme includes the development of independent living skills, such as using public transport and managing money. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe in an age-appropriate way. Pupils revisit and build on their knowledge of online safety, consent and healthy relationships. This helps pupils to apply their learning to their own lives.

The school celebrates people's different characteristics. Cultural events and experiences such as visiting places of worship help pupils to reflect on their own place in the world. The school's peacock values teach pupils the values that are important in modern Britain. For example, pupils learn about equality and compassion when running charity fundraising events such as the Christmas market. Pupil leadership groups including the student council and the 'diversity rocks' group enable pupils to contribute to the running of the school. This makes the school a welcoming space for pupils.

Careers education is a notable strength of the school. Leaders have planned careers provision that is broad and highly individualised to pupils' needs and interests. On-site and community-based experiences, together with highly bespoke work experience, help pupils to develop confidence, independence and employability skills. As a result, pupils move successfully to their next destinations in education, training or employment.

Expected standard ●

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard ●

Many pupils join the school having previously attended other schools. Leaders are aware of individual pupils' engagement with education prior to their arrival at the school. They use this information to plan a bespoke transition into the school for each pupil. This helps pupils to make a positive start at the school and attend well. Leaders have established clear routines to welcome pupils at the start of the school day. Key adults greet each pupil personally. This means the school is aware of any changing needs that pupils might have. Pupils feel happy and safe, which makes them keen to attend. Where staff identify barriers to pupils' regular attendance, they act swiftly to address those barriers. Consequently, the attendance of most pupils improves over time.

Leaders have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Bullying and unkind behaviour are never tolerated. Staff quickly resolve any signs of such behaviour. Leaders recognise that behaviour is a form of communication. The relationships between staff and pupils are warm and caring. When incidents occur, staff work with families to review and adjust support for pupils. Staff skilfully engage with pupils and support pupils to manage their behaviour. This means that the school is typically calm and the number of incidents of poor behaviour has decreased.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

Leaders want the best for all pupils at the school. Staff know individual pupils extremely well. Pupils use a range of communication methods to express their needs. Well-trained staff respond to pupils swiftly and with care. Staff skilfully support pupils in managing their learning and social experiences. Staff closely monitor what pupils are able to do. This means that leaders are aware of pupils' progress towards their education, health and care plan targets. There is a clear focus on preparing pupils for their adult lives. This includes ensuring pupils develop the life skills needed for more independent living.

Leaders take time to know the individual needs of pupils before they join the school. They work with families and other professionals to plan how to best meet pupils' learning and therapeutic needs. Bespoke curriculum pathways are developed to enable pupils to make progress from their starting points. Where these curriculum pathways include alternative provision or work experience, leaders plan such provision carefully and in the best interests of pupils. However, for a small minority of pupils these curriculum pathways are not flexible enough to enable leaders to adjust strategies swiftly as pupils' needs change.

Needs attention

Achievement

Needs attention 

Pupils following the school's formal curriculum pathway do not build on their knowledge and understanding effectively across all subject areas. Leaders have begun to address this in some subjects. For example, pupils are now taking a range of science qualifications that build their scientific knowledge. However, pupils on this curriculum pathway do not achieve well enough and are not well prepared for their next steps. As a result, the school does not meet one of the standards (standard 3) in part 1 of the independent school standards.

Pupils who follow the school's informal and semi-formal curriculum pathways generally achieve well. Pupils on these curriculum pathways learn the knowledge and skills identified by leaders as being suitable to their needs. Therefore, these pupils make appropriate progress from their starting points. They build on their skills and typically reach their personal development goals, including with regard to the foundational skills of reading, writing and mathematics. These pupils are well prepared to move on to their next steps.

Curriculum and teaching

Needs attention 

Leaders have planned a curriculum that has 3 pathways, formal, semi-formal and informal. Leaders match pupils to a curriculum pathway that is appropriate to their starting points and individual needs. The formal curriculum pathway is not as well designed and sequenced as the informal and semi-formal curriculum pathways. In some subject areas, pupils do not build effectively on their prior knowledge or make progress towards ambitious learning goals. At times, teachers underestimate what pupils already know and can do. Consequently, the activities that teachers sometimes select are not effective in helping pupils to deepen their learning. This means that the school does not meet some of the standards in part 1 of the independent school standards.

The informal and semi-formal curriculum pathways are well designed. Each of these curriculum pathways sets out what pupils will learn and how they will build their skills over time. Teachers carefully track pupils' progress so that they can amend and adjust the curriculum in response to pupils' learning.

Across the curriculum, leaders have prioritised developing pupils' foundational skills of reading, writing and number. For example, enhanced training for staff means that the phonics curriculum is effectively taught and helps pupils learn to read.

Leadership and governance

Needs attention 

Since the previous inspection, the school has experienced a period of instability in leadership. This instability has had a negative impact on the quality of school provision. Over this time, the proprietor has not ensured that the school consistently meets all of the independent school standards (the standards). Some requirements of the standards in part 1 relating to the quality of the curriculum and teaching are not met. This is because the school's formal curriculum pathway is neither well designed, well implemented or ambitious enough for some pupils. As some standards in part 1 are not met, this means that the school does not meet the standard about leadership and management in part 8.

Regional leaders from the proprietor's school group and those responsible for governance understand their roles and responsibilities. Collectively, leaders have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. Supported by regional leaders and governors, school leaders have begun to address the weaknesses in the curriculum and teaching. This work has just begun but leaders demonstrate the capacity to improve the school.

Leaders listen carefully to staff concerns about workload and wellbeing. Staff feel supported and are proud to work at the school. Staff benefit from the recent professional development opportunities that leaders have provided.

Leaders acknowledge that some parents have been unhappy about the recent disruption to pupils' education as a result of the instability in leadership. However, leaders show a clear commitment to work with families and external agencies, such as local authorities who commission places for pupils at the school, to improve the quality of provision. In spite of the

challenges the school has faced with regard to leadership, many parents speak highly of the support that their children have received during their time at the school.

Post 16 provision

Needs attention 

Leaders carefully consider if it is in the best interests of individual students to continue into the school's post-16 provision. Students continue with the same curriculum pathways that they began in the school before the age of 16. Typically, students on the informal and semi-formal curriculum pathways make appropriate progress from their starting points. However, as lower down the school, the formal curriculum pathway lacks ambition and is not designed effectively. Students on the formal curriculum pathway do not make sufficient progress in developing their knowledge and skills. Leaders are currently reviewing the qualifications that the school offers students with a view to providing students with more ambitious courses that prepare them more effectively for their chosen destinations.

Staff carefully plan the wider personal development curriculum to prepare students for adulthood. Leaders focus sharply on what students' lives will be like aged 25 and beyond. Students build on their prior learning about how to keep themselves safe. They have an age-appropriate understanding of relationships and concepts such as consent.

Careers provision is highly individualised to students' needs and interests. Students enjoy opportunities such as assisted work experience and community volunteering which build their confidence and independence. Leaders make sure that students benefit from a wide range of extra-curricular activities that develop their individual interests. For example, some students engage in art projects to explore local trees.

What it's like to be a pupil at this school

Newbury Manor School is an inclusive school. Pupils quickly feel that they belong and know they are safe. Staff take the time and care required to get to know pupils' individual needs and personalities. Staff support pupils to engage in the day-to-day life of the school and build friendships with their peers. Pupils typically behave well. Bullying and unkindness are uncommon and never tolerated. Pupils trust adults to help them to resolve any concerns.

Many pupils follow a well-planned curriculum that helps them to develop their knowledge and skills. However, this is not the experience of all pupils. Consequently, some pupils do not make as much progress from their starting points as they should. Some pupils are not prepared well for their next steps in education, training or employment.

Pupils and post-16 students enjoy the learning and social experiences the school provides. Most pupils attend well. Pupils and their key adults greet each other warmly each morning. Where pupils experience difficulties in attending school regularly, leaders work with families and other professionals to put support in place.

Leaders go to great lengths to provide pupils and post-16 students with a broad range of experiences to develop their individual characters and interests. For example, pupils enjoy activities such as bike maintenance, railway visits, yoga and chess tournaments. Whole-

school events such as 'grounds day' and celebrating Chinese New Year bring the school together. The school's 'peacock values' remind pupils about their responsibilities as citizens. Pupils volunteer in the community and fundraise for charities. Pupils run the redwood café for other pupils and staff to enjoy. Pupils are proud of the 'peacock coins' that they earn for their contributions to the school.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that the formal curriculum pathway, pre- and post-16, is ambitious, well-sequenced and leads to appropriate qualifications that prepare pupils well for their next steps.
 - Leaders should ensure that teaching is consistently effective across all curriculum pathways so that pupils develop a coherent body of knowledge and skills and achieve well from their individual starting points.
 - The proprietor should ensure that the school consistently meets the independent school standards.
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About this inspection

Inspectors carried out this standard inspection under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, and 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.

Inspectors spoke with the regional director, representatives from the proprietor body, school leaders and staff during the inspection.

The proprietor body is Aspris Children's Services Ltd

The chair of the proprietor body is Nancy O'Regan

The fees currently charged are £95,000 to £120,000

The school's email address is: newburymanorschool@aspriscs.co.uk

Inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

All pupils who attend have an education, health and care plan. The school provides specialist provision for pupils with needs relating to autism.

The school is registered to admit 65 pupils.

The school uses one alternative provision.

The school has undergone a significant change since the last inspection. There have been changes to leadership and an increase in pupil capacity from 45 to 65 pupils.

Headteacher: Dr Paul Gorham

Independent school standards

Independent school standards are either met or not met for each category.

1. Quality of education provided

Standards not met

The following standards have not been met:

Paragraph 2(1)

The standard in this paragraph is met if–

- (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

Paragraph 3

The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that the teaching at the school–

- (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;
 - (c) involves well planned lessons and effective teaching methods, activities and management of class time;
 - (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;
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2. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

Standards met

All standards have been met.

3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Standards met

All standards have been met.

4. Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

Standards met

All standards have been met.

5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

Standards met

All standards have been met.

6. Provision of information

Standards met

All standards have been met.

7. Manner in which complaints are handled

Standards met

All standards have been met.

8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Standards not met

The following standards have not been met:

Paragraph 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–

- (a) demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role so that the independent school standards are met consistently;
- (b) fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently; and

Lead inspector:

Sara Berry, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspector:

Richard Vaughan, Ofsted Inspector

Facts and figures used on inspection

This data was available to the inspector at the time of the inspection.

 This data is from 12 May 2026

Total pupils

60

School capacity

65

Pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan

60

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

0

Our grades explained

Exceptional 

Practice is exceptional: of the highest standard nationally. Other schools can learn from it.

Strong standard 

The school reaches a strong standard. Leaders are working above the standard expected of them.

Expected standard

The school is fulfilling the expected standard of education and/or care. This means they are following the standard set out in statutory and non-statutory legislation and the professional standards expected of them.

Needs attention

The expected standards are not met but leaders are likely able to make the necessary improvements.

Urgent improvement

The school needs to make urgent improvements to provide the expected standard of education and/or care.

Insufficient evidence

Inspectors were unable to gather reliable enough evidence to grade an evaluation area. This is rare and normally only happens if there are no pupils on roll at the school.

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