



**ISI** Independent  
Schools  
Inspectorate

**Regulatory Compliance Inspection Report  
For Schools with Residential Provision**

**The New Beacon School**

**May 2023**

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## School's Details

<b>School</b>	The New Beacon School		
<b>DfE number</b>	886/6017		
<b>Registered charity number</b>	1097977		
<b>Address</b>	The New Beacon School Brittains Lane Sevenoaks Kent TN13 2PB		
<b>Telephone number</b>	01732 452131		
<b>Email address</b>	admin@newbeacon.org.uk		
<b>Head</b>	Mrs Sarah Brownsdon		
<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mr James Thorne		
<b>Proprietor</b>	Tonbridge School		
<b>Age range</b>	3 to 13		
<b>Number of pupils on roll</b>	350		
	<b>Day pupils</b>	322	<b>Boarders</b> 28
	<b>EYFS</b>	48	<b>Juniors</b> 217
	<b>Seniors</b>	85	
<b>Inspection dates</b>	11 to 12 May 2023		

## 1. Background Information

### About the school

- 1.1 The New Beacon was founded in 1900 as an independent school for male pupils. It is set on the outskirts of Sevenoaks, Kent. Buildings have been added to its original purpose-built site. The school offers flexible boarding for older pupils on four nights a week.
- 1.2 The school is a charitable trust administered by a board of governors. Since the previous inspection, the school has joined the family of Skinners' Company schools in September 2021 and is overseen by the governance of Tonbridge School. The two schools merged their charitable bodies at that time. A new head was appointed in April 2023.

### What the school seeks to do

- 1.3 The New Beacon aims to provide a broad, balanced, intellectual, creative and spiritual education with academic achievement at its heart. Respect should be integral to school life, and an appreciation for learning and consideration for others is promoted throughout the school. Flexible boarding aims to encourage a spirit of adventure and fun alongside the development of self-confidence and independence.

### About the pupils

- 1.4 Almost all the pupils live within ten miles of the school. Data provided by the school indicate that the ability of the pupils is above average in relation to other pupils nationally who take the same standardised tests. One pupil in the school has an education, health and care plans (EHCP). The school has identified 54 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), which include dyslexia and dyspraxia, of whom 46 receive additional support. Six pupils have English as an additional language (EAL), all of whom receive additional help with their English. Where the school identifies pupils as being the most able in its population, the curriculum is modified to meet their needs.

## 2. Regulatory Compliance Inspection

### Preface

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is approved by the Secretary of State to inspect schools which are, or whose heads are, in membership of the associations which form the Independent Schools Council (ISC) and report on the extent to which they meet the Independent School Standards ('the standards') in the Schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, including the National Minimum Standards for Boarding ('boarding NMS'), where applicable. Inspections of schools with early years settings not requiring registration also report whether the school complies with key provisions of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework. Additionally, inspections report on the school's accessibility plan under Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 and the ban on corporal punishment under section 548 of the Education Act 1996. Inspections also comment on the progress made to meet any compliance action points set out in the school's most recent statutory inspection.

ISI inspections are also carried out under the arrangements of the ISC Associations for the maintenance and improvement of the quality of their membership.

**This is a COMPLIANCE ONLY inspection and as such reports only on the school's compliance with the standards, including the boarding NMS.** The standards represent minimum requirements and judgements are given either as **met** or as **not met**. All schools are required to meet all the standards applicable to them. Where the minimum requirements are not met, this is clearly indicated and the school is required to take the actions specified.

Inspections do not include matters that are outside of the regulatory framework described above, such as: an exhaustive health and safety audit; compliance with data protection requirements; an in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features; contractual arrangements with parents; an investigation of the financial viability of the school or its accounting procedures.

Inspectors may be aware of individual safeguarding concerns, allegations and complaints as part of the inspection process. Such matters will not usually be referred to specifically in published reports in this document but will have been considered by the team in reaching its judgements.

Links to the standards and requirements can be found here: [The Education \(Independent School Standards\) Regulations 2014, National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools, Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework](#).

## Key findings

- 2.1 The school does not meet all of the required standards in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools 2022 and relevant requirements of the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, and associated requirements, and should take immediate action to remedy deficiencies as detailed below.**

### **PART 1 – Quality of education provided**

- 2.2 The school's own framework for assessment confirms that teaching enables pupils to make good progress in the context of Part 1 paragraph 3(a).
- 2.3 The curriculum is documented, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work for the pupils and covers the required breadth of material. The teaching enables pupils to make good progress, encompasses effective behaviour management and is supported by suitable resources. A suitable framework for the assessment of pupils' performance is in place. Boarders have access to a suitable programme of activities.
- 2.4 Pupils receive relationships education in the junior school and relationships and sex education in the senior school, except in so far as they are lawfully excused. The school has consulted parents and published a written statement of its policy which has regard to the relevant statutory guidance.
- 2.5 The standards relating to the quality of education [paragraphs 1–4] are met.**

### **PART 2 – Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils**

- 2.6 Principles and values are actively promoted which facilitate the personal development of pupils as responsible, tolerant, law-abiding citizens. Boarders' views are actively encouraged, and their opinions and concerns are appropriately considered by staff. Boarders are supported to develop good relationships with fellow pupils and staff which are based on mutual trust and respect. Any prefect system operating in the school is suitably managed.
- 2.7 The standard relating to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development [paragraph 5] and NMS 13, 17 and 21 are met.**

### **PART 3 – Welfare, health and safety of pupils**

- 2.8 Good behaviour is promoted; bullying is prevented so far as reasonably practicable; health and safety requirements are met, including those relating to fire safety; provision is made for first aid. Pupils are properly supervised; admission and attendance registers are maintained, as required. A disability access plan is in place.
- 2.9 An appropriate induction process for pupils new to boarding is implemented, and suitable provision is made for boarders' medical and health care, their food and drink and for managing boarders' laundry and possessions. Boarders have suitable contact with friends and family. Boarding staff are appropriately trained and deployed.
- 2.10 The school's arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils do not operate effectively in line with statutory guidance in relation to meeting the needs of children at risk. In particular, the school does not always refer concerns immediately to children's social services to mitigate the risk of harm in the event of a disclosure.
- 2.11 Recruitment checks are not always carried out before staff commence employment at the school. In particular, the school does not complete all necessary barred list checks, Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks or checks against the list of those prohibited from management.

- 2.12 The school does not always ensure that a suitable assessment of risk, including consideration of any need to arrange supervision, has been made when DBS checks have been delayed.
- 2.13 **The standards relating to welfare, health and safety in paragraphs 9–15, the requirement of Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 (accessibility plan), the ban on corporal punishment under section 548 of the Education Act 1996 and NMS 3, 5–7, 9–12, 15, 16 and 20 are met, but those in paragraphs 7 [safeguarding], 8 [safeguarding of boarders], 16 [risk assessment]; NMS 8 [safeguarding] are not met.**

### Action point 1

The school must ensure that all required recruitment checks are carried out before a person commences work at the school; in particular, barred list and Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks [paragraphs 7(a) and (b), 8(a) and (b); NMS 8.1; EYFS 3.7 and 3.9].

### Action point 2

The school must ensure that its safeguarding policy references current statutory guidance [paragraphs 7(a) and (b); 8(a) and (b); NMS 8.1; EYFS 3.7 and 3.9].

### Action point 3

The school must ensure that arrangements for safeguarding have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State and promotes the wellbeing of the pupils; in particular, the school must ensure immediate referral to children's social services in the event of a child disclosure to mitigate risk of harm [paragraphs 7(a) and (b), 8(a) and (b) and 16(b); NMS 8.1 and 8.2; EYFS 3.7 and 3.9].

### Action point 4

Where the school allows an individual to start work in regulated activity before the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) certificate is available, the school must ensure that suitable safeguards are in place determined through appropriate risk assessment [paragraphs 7(a) and (b), 8(a) and (b) and 16(b); NMS 8.1; EYFS 3.7 and 3.9].

## PART 4 – Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

- 2.14 The school makes appropriate checks to ensure the suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors, and a register is kept as required. Visitors to boarding accommodation are appropriately supervised and the school's arrangements for guardianship are suitably managed.
- 2.15 **The standards relating to the suitability of those in contact with pupils at the school [paragraphs 17–21] and NMS 19 and 22 are met.**

## PART 5 – Premises of and accommodation at schools

- 2.16 Suitable toilet and changing facilities, and showering facilities where required by the standard, and appropriate accommodation for pupils' medical and therapy needs are provided. The premises are maintained to a standard commensurate with health and safety; acoustics and lighting are appropriate; water provision is adequate. Suitable outdoor space is provided for physical education and outdoor play. Boarding accommodation is adequate for the needs of all boarders, and safeguards and promotes their welfare.
- 2.17 **The standards relating to the premises and accommodation [paragraphs 22–31] and NMS 4, 7 and 23 are met.**

## **PART 6 – Provision of information**

2.18 A range of information is published, provided or made available to parents, inspectors and the Department for Education. This includes details about the proprietor, the ethos of the school and the curriculum, and of the school's arrangements for admission, behaviour and exclusions, bullying, health and safety, first aid, details of the complaints procedure, and the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year, and the provision for any with education, health and care plans or English as an additional language. It also includes particulars of the school's academic performance during the preceding school year, inspection reports and (for parents only) a report at least annually of their own child's progress. The safeguarding policy is posted on the school's website. A suitable statement of boarding principles and practice is published by the school.

**2.19 The standard relating to the provision of information [paragraph 32] and NMS 1 are met.**

## **PART 7 – Manner in which complaints are handled**

2.20 Parental complaints, if any, are handled effectively through a three-stage process, (informal, formal and a hearing before a panel of three, one of whom is independent of the school). Each stage has clear time scales, and at the third stage the panel can make findings and recommendations which are communicated to the complainant. Records are kept appropriately, including of any action taken, whether or not a complaint is successful, and identifying those relating to the boarding provision.

**2.21 The standard relating to the handling of complaints [paragraph 33] and NMS 14 are met.**

## **PART 8 – Quality of leadership in and management of schools**

2.22 Appropriate leadership and management of boarding ensure that the required policies and records are maintained and effectively monitored.

2.23 The proprietor does not ensure that the leadership and management demonstrate the skills and knowledge, necessary to fulfil their responsibilities effectively, so that the other standards are consistently met, and they actively promote the wellbeing of the pupils. In particular, with regard to safeguarding and the oversight of robust recruitment processes.

**2.24 The standard relating to leadership and management of the school in paragraph 34 and NMS 2 are not met.**

### **Action point 5**

**The school must ensure that leadership and management demonstrate good skills and knowledge to fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the standards are met consistently and pupils' wellbeing is actively promoted; in particular, with regard to safeguarding and the oversight of robust recruitment processes [paragraphs 34(1)(a), (b) and (c); NMS 2.1, 2.2, 2.4 and 2.5].**



### 3. Inspection Evidence

- 3.1 The inspectors observed lessons, had discussions with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with members of staff and with the chair of governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, attended chapel and assemblies. Inspectors visited the boarding house and the facilities for the youngest pupils, together with the learning support and educational resource areas. Inspectors considered the responses of parents, staff and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires. The inspectors examined curriculum and other documentation made available by the school.

#### Inspectors

Dr Pamela Edmonds	Reporting inspector
Mr John Pheasant	Compliance team inspector (Bursar, HMC school)
Mrs Wendy Martin	Team inspector for boarding (Former head, SofH school)