



## **Progress Monitoring Inspection Report**

**West Buckland School**

**November 2023**

## School's details

<b>School</b>	West Buckland School			
<b>DfE number</b>	878/6032			
<b>Registered charity number</b>	306710			
<b>Address</b>	West Buckland School West Buckland Devon EX32 0SX			
<b>Telephone number</b>	01598 760000			
<b>Email address</b>	enquiries@westbuckland.com			
<b>Headmaster</b>	Mr Phillip Stapleton			
<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mr Andrew Boggis			
<b>Proprietor</b>	West Buckland School			
<b>Age range</b>	3 to 18			
<b>Number of pupils on roll</b>	634			
	<b>Day pupils</b>	521	<b>Boarders</b>	113
	<b>EYFS</b>	19	<b>Prep</b>	125
	<b>Seniors</b>	346	<b>Sixth Form</b>	144
<b>Inspection dates</b>	24 November 2023			

# 1. Introduction

## Characteristics of the school

- 1.1 West Buckland School is a co-educational independent day and boarding school situated in rural North Devon. The school has four sections: an early years setting; the prep school for pupils in Years 1 to 6; the senior school for pupils in Years 7 to 11; and a sixth form. A registered charity, managed by trustees who form the governing body, owns the school. The school has 157 pupils who require support for special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Four pupils have an education, health and care (EHC) plan. English is an additional language for 49 pupils. The school's previous inspection was a regulatory compliance inspection in May 2023.

## Purpose of the inspection

- 1.2 This was an unannounced progress monitoring inspection at the request of the Department for Education (DfE) to check that the school has fully implemented the action plan submitted following the regulatory compliance inspection in May 2023. The inspection focused on the school's compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 (ISSRs), the National Minimum Standards for Boarding 2022 and the requirements of the Early Years Statutory Framework. The inspection considered additional concerns at the request of the DfE.

Regulations which were the focus of the inspection	Team judgements
Part 1, paragraph 4 (framework for pupil performance)	<b>Met</b>
Part 3, paragraphs 7 (safeguarding) and 8 (safeguarding of boarders); NMS 8	<b>Met</b>
Part 6, paragraph 32 (provision of information)	<b>Met</b>
Part 8, paragraph 34 (leadership and management); NMS 2	<b>Met</b>

## **2. Inspection findings**

### **Quality of education provided – framework for pupils’ performance [ISSR Part 1, paragraph 4]**

- 2.1 The school meets the standard.
- 2.2 Leaders and governors ensure that a suitable framework for the assessment of pupils’ performance is implemented. This includes baseline assessments of pupils’ ability on entry to the school and at key points later to measure pupils’ progress. Suitable arrangements are made to assess pupils’ ongoing development and their attainment at key points in their school career against national benchmarks. These are monitored effectively by leaders. A personal tutorial system ensures that pupils receive regular individual reviews of their performance and guidance on how to improve.

### **Welfare, health and safety of pupils – safeguarding and safeguarding of boarders [ISSR Part 3, paragraphs 7 and 8; NMS 8]**

#### **Safeguarding policy**

- 2.3 The school meets the requirements.
- 2.4 The school has an appropriate policy for safeguarding which provides suitable arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school.

#### **Safeguarding implementation**

- 2.5 The school meets the standards.
- 2.6 The school’s safeguarding arrangements are implemented effectively to ensure the welfare of pupils, including boarders and children in early years. Pupils confirmed that they can approach any member of staff if they are worried, knowing that they will receive a response and that appropriate action will be taken to support them. Records of safeguarding confirm that this happens in practice. Discussions with both staff and pupils confirmed that leaders have established a positive and open culture of safeguarding across all aspects of school life, to which all can contribute. All concerns are listened to and acted upon swiftly. Matters such as online safety, including the monitoring and filtering of technology, are handled effectively by the school and overseen appropriately by the designated safeguarding lead and proprietors. Pupils confirmed that the school provides clear guidance to help them to keep safe online.
- 2.7 The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) has a secure oversight of safeguarding arrangements and ensures that the safeguarding team keeps detailed confidential records of any concerns. These confirm that senior leaders work within locally agreed inter-agency procedures and that any referrals of safeguarding concerns are made to the appropriate agencies in a timely manner.
- 2.8 There is suitable oversight of the school’s safer recruitment procedures. Scrutiny of records confirms that all required checks, including those against the barred list and the list of those prohibited from teaching, are now completed for new appointments in a timely manner, before the person starts work. Suitable references are received for all staff before they begin work at the school. In the event that an enhanced criminal record certificate is late, the school undertakes suitable contextual risk assessments before a person begins regulated activity; reviews these assessments regularly; and now ensures that appropriate supervision is in place where needed until a satisfactory certificate is seen.
- 2.9 The designated governor for safeguarding ensures that an annual review of the school’s safeguarding arrangements is carried out and shared with the governing board. The review, conducted jointly with

safeguarding officers from the local authority, is sufficiently detailed to meet local safeguarding partnership requirements.

- 2.10 All staff, including leaders, governors and those with specific safeguarding responsibility, are trained appropriately in safeguarding. Staff show confident understanding of the training they receive, including that regarding signs of abuse, child-on-child abuse and areas such as mental health, sexual violence and harassment. Regular updates to training supplement the ongoing annual training received by all staff. There is appropriate induction for new staff. Training is supported by assessments which ensure a sufficient audit of staff safeguarding understanding. Staff have a confident understanding of the process for referral should there be any concerns. They understand the school's code of conduct for staff and the whistleblowing policy. They know how to contact children's services directly, should the need arise.
- 2.11 There is an appropriate Prevent strategy in place which is suitably implemented.

### **Provision of information [ISSR Part 6, paragraph 32(1)(c) and (f)]**

- 2.12 The school meets the standards.
- 2.13 The school meets the requirements for providing information relating to safeguarding to parents. Particulars of the arrangements for safeguarding are published on the school's website.
- 2.14 A suitable annual written report on pupils' attainment and progress is provided to parents. This supplements additional grade and target reports, as well as face-to-face parent consultation meetings with their child's subject teachers.

### **Quality of leadership and management [ISSR Part 8, paragraph 34; NMS 2]**

- 2.15 The school meets the standards.
- 2.16 The school's leadership and management now demonstrate the required skills and knowledge to ensure that all standards are met consistently. They have ensured that the action plan required following the previous inspection has been fully implemented. In particular, they now ensure that effective arrangements are implemented for the oversight of recruitment checks. Leaders take appropriate action, supported by effective proprietorial oversight and challenge. They apply these skills and knowledge effectively to ensure that they fulfil their responsibilities effectively, so that the wellbeing of pupils, including boarders, is actively promoted.

### **3. Regulatory action points**

For the regulations which were the focus of this inspection, the school meets all of the requirements of the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools 2022 and requirements of the Early Years Statutory Framework, and no further action is required as a result of this inspection.

## **4. Summary of evidence**

- 4.1 The inspectors held discussions with the head, senior leaders and other members of staff and met with members of the board of governors. They visited different areas of the school and talked with groups of pupils. They scrutinised a range of documentation, records and policies.