

# Inspection of West Heath School

Ashgrove Road, Sevenoaks, Kent TN13 1SR

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Inspection dates: 19–21 November 2019

## **Overall effectiveness**

**Outstanding**

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The quality of education

**Outstanding**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Outstanding**

Personal development

**Outstanding**

Leadership and management

**Outstanding**

Sixth-form provision

**Outstanding**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Outstanding

Does the school meet the independent school standards?

**Yes**

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Leaders have high ambition to provide a first-rate educational experience for their pupils. Their vision to 'rebuild lives through education' is a reality for pupils at this school. Parents are very pleased with the school and how it has transformed their children's lives; as one parent said, 'West Heath school is a saviour.'

Pupils feel happy and safe at this school. Staff make sure that pupils' well-being is at the forefront of all they do. Pupils learn to understand each other and build positive relationships. They say that bullying is rare and any concerns are dealt with well by staff.

Staff understand pupils' special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) exceptionally well. An expert range of therapists work seamlessly with teaching staff to support pupils. Staff expectations of what pupils could achieve are very high. Pupils benefit considerably and make great strides in managing their own behaviour.

Leaders prepare pupils very well for their future lives. Students are supported exceptionally well to take their next steps into education or the workplace.

Pupils have plenty of opportunities to take part in experiences and school trips including foreign travel. Staff make sure that pupils gain life skills.

## **What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?**

Leaders are highly skilled with strong moral purpose. They are determined that pupils receive the best education possible. Leaders ensure that all pupils thrive whatever their need, ability or interest. They make sure that teaching is of a very high quality. Staff unlock pupils' potential at this school.

Most pupils have experienced disjointed education in the past. Many have significant gaps in their learning. Pupils are provided with a comprehensive and ambitious programme of work across a broad range of subjects and therapies. Pupils catch up quickly and regain a love of learning.

Pupils benefit greatly from a wide variety of therapeutic services. Pupils who need a higher degree of therapeutic support learn in a specialised provision (HEART), where they blossom. The immediate availability of expert support is a key feature of this school. Therapists and mental health professionals add much to pupils' lives. An additional provision (EOS) provides highly effective education for pupils that find it difficult to participate fully in school.

Pupils take part in specialised courses such as leadership training or animal welfare. Those with special interest in the arts have ample opportunity to study art, take part in public performances and play musical instruments. Others may take vocational courses such as catering or construction. Sports facilities, including a large sports hall and swimming pool, enable sports courses to be followed. Pupils also study a

large range of academic subjects. Leaders design individualised programmes of study to fit pupils' aspirations.

Teachers think carefully about the steps pupils need to take to learn well. They guide pupils precisely so that they remember what has been taught before. Pupils learn new skills and knowledge that flow from previous learning. Because of the care taken to sequence learning in detail, pupils grow in confidence and achieve very well.

Leaders make sure that reading is very important across the school. Pupils develop a love of reading, especially in Year 6. Staff choose texts and excerpts of books that inspire pupils. Should any pupil have fallen behind in their reading skills, they are helped with extra sessions tailored to help them catch up.

Since the last inspection, the school has started to take pupils from Year 6. Pupils settle in quickly because of the in-depth arrangements that support them. An exciting and varied curriculum inspires pupils of primary age.

The sixth form is based in a local college. Staff support students very well so that they can take part in college courses while also attending the sixth-form base that is located in the college building. Students become more independent so that they can then leave the school sixth form and follow further courses or work placements. Sixth-form students are glowing in their praise for the school.

Pupils of all ages have the highest regard for what the school does for them. Staff teach pupils to understand themselves and find ways to self-regulate their anxieties and behaviour. Staff are adept at restoring calm should a pupil become unsettled or have an occasional outburst. Consequently, pupils can concentrate on their work with minimum distraction.

Numerous overnight and off-site visits, including foreign travel, extend pupils' learning. For example, the school visits Auschwitz in Poland and First World War memorials in Ypres. Pupils work together well, develop leadership skills and adopt a resilient attitude. They learn about the world around them and understand others with different beliefs and views.

Staff are appreciative of the support and training that are provided by leaders. Staff members' professional development is highly focused and very effective. Leaders take care of their staff and make their well-being a priority.

Trustees are highly skilled and committed to the pupils and staff at West Heath School. They meet regularly to check that leaders are doing well and visit the school to see it working for themselves. They make sure that the school meets independent school standards consistently and all government requirements, including equality duties.

## Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders make sure that a strong safeguarding culture is at the heart of the school's work. Staff are very knowledgeable about safeguarding matters and watch out for any signs that a pupil may be at risk. Staff report promptly their concerns and leaders follow them up diligently.

Staff know pupils and their families very well. Leaders provide information and support to families. Parents, pupils and staff all report that pupils feel safe at this school.

## How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you're not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	131611
<b>DfE registration number</b>	886/6079
<b>Local authority</b>	Kent
<b>Inspection number</b>	10103846
<b>Type of school</b>	Other independent special school
<b>School category</b>	Independent residential special school
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	10 to 20
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in the sixth form</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	123
<b>Of which, number on roll in the sixth form</b>	42
<b>Number of part-time pupils</b>	16
<b>Proprietor</b>	West Heath 2000 Ltd
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Stuart Crookshank, OBE
<b>Principal</b>	James Nunns
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	£52,500–£82,500
<b>Telephone number</b>	01732 460553
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.westheatschool.com">www.westheatschool.com</a>
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:principal@westheatschool.com">principal@westheatschool.com</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	14–16 March 2017

## Information about this school

- West Heath School provides residential or day provision for up to 150 pupils in the age range 10 to 20 years. The school started to take pupils in Year 6 in September 2018.
- All pupils have an education, health and care plan. Pupils experience behavioural, emotional and social difficulties associated with their individual needs. Many of

the pupils have autistic spectrum disorder. Some pupils have been excluded from mainstream education prior to joining West Heath School.

- The principal has been in post since 2016. A new deputy principal was appointed in September 2019.
- The school uses a number of external and alternative providers to extend the school's curriculum. These include West Kent College and Hadlow College.
- The previous school inspection was in March 2017, when the school was judged to be outstanding.

## Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008. The purpose of the inspection is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

The school meets the independent school standards. These are the requirements set out in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

- We met with the principal, deputy- and vice-principals, other leaders and the chair of trustees.
- We did deep dives in the following subjects: English, mathematics, personal, social and health education, and art. After a meeting with subject leaders, lessons were visited and pupils' work was scrutinised. Meetings were held with pupils and their teachers to discuss pupils' learning.
- We visited the school's sixth-form base in West Kent College.
- We considered the responses from Ofsted's online questionnaires completed by staff, parents and pupils.
- Staff recruitment records and safeguarding documents were checked. We conducted discussions with teachers and pupils about keeping safe. We held a meeting with the school's designated safeguarding lead.
- A range of school documents were scrutinised including curriculum plans. We reviewed the school website.

## Inspection team

Sue Child, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Catherine Old

Her Majesty's Inspector

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