

West Heath School

West Heath School, Ashgrove Road, Sevenoaks, Kent TN13 1SR

Inspection date

17 September 2025

Overall outcome

The school is likely to meet the relevant independent school standards if the material changes relating to the school provision are implemented

Main inspection findings

Part 1. Quality of education provided

Paragraphs 2(1) to 2(2)(b), 2(2)(d) to 2(2)(e)(ii), 2(2)(g) to 4

- The school has made a request to extend the current lower age range down from 10 to nine years of age. This means that pupils who join the school in Year 5 will be able to start at the beginning of the academic year. Currently, pupils wait to join the school until their tenth birthday, meaning that they join during the school year. As such, the material change request will not mean changes to the current curriculum offer. It is worth noting that the quality of education the school provides was judged to be good at its last standard inspection in April 2025.
- The curriculum offer is based on the national curriculum. It fully meets the requirements set out in part 1 of the independent school standards (the standards). The school uses a mix of commercially available programmes of study, including for mathematics, reading and personal, social, health and economic education (PSHEE).
- Classroom visits during the inspection showed pupils following the school's intended curriculum across each phase of education. Staff know pupils well. They plan learning that meets the needs of pupils, all of who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Careers education has a high profile at the school. This is often very bespoke for individual pupils. It includes opportunities for work experience, both on and off the school site. A programme of relationships and sex education is in place.
- The school's PSHEE programme actively promotes the fundamental British values of democracy, individual liberty, the rule of law and mutual respect and tolerance. Other aspects of the school's curriculum offer also promote British values, including a range of visitors to the school or off-site educational trips.
- The school uses a range of strategies to assess the academic progress and personal development of pupils. This ensures that the needs of pupils are taken into account as they move through the curriculum.

- The school is likely to meet the relevant standards in this part if the material changes requested are implemented.

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

Paragraph 5 to 5(d)(iii)

- The school's work to support the personal development of pupils is strong. It is underpinned by a personalised PSHEE programme that builds pupils' understanding of the world around them. It is tailored to individuals or groups of pupils when required. It actively promotes pupils' understanding of right from wrong.
- Pupils benefit from a range of experiences in and out of school, to help them develop their understanding of different faiths and cultural traditions. Trips out of school to different places of worship are common. A cultural diversity club is available. Aspects such as understanding the protected characteristics are built into the wider curriculum offer.
- The school places high importance on developing pupils' self-confidence and self-esteem. Building resilience and developing team work also has a high priority here. As a result, pupils behave well and are positive about their school.
- The school is likely to meet the relevant standards in this part if the material changes requested are implemented.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Paragraphs 7 to 7(b), 11, 12, 14, 16 to 16(b), 32(1) and 32(1)(c)

- The welfare, health and safety of pupils, staff and visitors to the school have a high priority here. Staff at all levels understand their responsibilities when it comes to safeguarding pupils. Communication is open and timely. Staff are reflective and vigilant. As a result, the culture to safeguard pupils is strong.
- Experienced and appropriately qualified staff are employed in key positions to ensure that policies, systems and processes to keep pupils safe are up to date and meet current guidelines. This includes the safeguarding policy which is published on the school's website.
- Pupils feel safe and well supported in the school. They are very confident that staff will deal with any concerns or worries that they may have. Pupils have an appropriate understanding of online safety and have good recall of what they have been taught in this area.
- A specialist team ensures that the school is a safe environment. Ongoing checks are monitored and recorded well. Elements such as fire risk assessments and servicing of fire alarms and extinguishers are completed by external specialists. Appropriate risk assessments are in place for other aspects of provision. This includes for off-site trips, as well as different areas of the school site such as the forest school or use of the swimming pool.
- Ratios of staff to pupils are high here. Pupils move between lessons in an orderly fashion. Routines are well established. Expectations of pupils' behaviour are communicated clearly by staff. Levels of supervision, witnessed during a tour of the school's accommodation and during classroom visits by inspectors, were appropriate.

- The school is likely to meet the relevant standards considered in this part if the material changes requested are implemented.

Part 4. Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

Paragraphs 18(2) to 18(2)(e), 18(3), 19(2) to 19(2)(e), 19(3), 20(6) to 21(7)(b)

- Checks on adults who visit or work at the school are completed diligently. Recruitment procedures are managed by dedicated staff who have a clear understanding of their responsibilities and current statutory guidelines.
- Records linked to staff recruitment are sound. Leaders, including those in positions of governance, have good oversight of aspects such as the single central record. Key leaders have completed specialist training to support their work in recruiting appropriate staff.
- The school also has a well-planned induction process to ensure that all staff receive the training and key information they need to be successful in their roles. Suitable arrangements and checks are in place for agency supply staff. Checks on trustees, including those relatively new to their role, are in place.
- The school is likely to meet the relevant standards in this part if the material changes requested are implemented.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

Paragraphs 23(1) to 24(1)(b), 24(2) to 29(1)(b)

- The school site is extensive and set in 32 acres of wooded and landscaped grounds. Teaching accommodation is provided within a mix of older and more modern buildings that provide excellent facilities for pupils across all year groups. The school has recently closed its residential accommodation. Some of this has already been repurposed as teaching space.
- The school has benefited from a rolling programme of renovation and modernisation over the years. Classrooms are of varying sizes, including science laboratories, teaching kitchens and facilities for the arts. All are well resourced and fit for their intended purpose.
- The school has dedicated medical facilities run by the school's qualified nurse. There is ample space for the extensive range of therapeutic input on offer to pupils.
- Appropriate toilet and washing facilities are available for pupils and staff. These are accessible in all buildings across the site. Other aspects such as labelled drinking water and external lighting all meet the requirements of the standards in this part.
- The school has extensive grounds and outdoor spaces which are maintained well. These are accessible for pupils to enjoy their recreational time in pleasant surroundings.
- The sports centre provides excellent facilities, including a well-maintained and sizeable swimming pool, a gymnasium and a large sports hall.
- The school will easily accommodate the additional number of pupils requested. The school is likely to meet the relevant standards in this part if the material changes requested are implemented.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Paragraph 34(1) to 34(1)(c)

- Trustees and leaders at all levels have a clear vision for the school. Their rationale for the material changes requested are sound and have been well thought through. Importantly, they take into account the impact any changes might have on pupils currently at the school, who are themselves positive about the proposed changes.
- Leaders are experienced and have a clear understanding of the requirements of the standards. They have a clear track record in ensuring that the standards have been met over time. This includes at the recent standard inspection when the overall effectiveness of the school was judged to be good, and all of the relevant standards were found to be met.
- Arrangements for governance are sound. Trustees come from a range of backgrounds and bring different expertise and skills to their work in supporting the school. This includes in their oversight of key aspects such as safeguarding and promoting the well-being of pupils and staff at the school.
- The school is likely to meet the relevant standards in this part if the material changes requested are implemented.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school is likely to meet the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements that are relevant to the material change.

School details

| | |
|-------------------------|----------|
| Unique reference number | 131611 |
| DfE registration number | 886/6079 |
| Inspection number | 10412085 |

This inspection was carried out under section 162(4) of the Education Act 2002, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's likely compliance with the independent school standards relevant to the material change that the school has applied to make.

| | |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| Type of school | Other independent special school |
| School status | Independent day school |
| Proprietor | West Heath 2000 Ltd |
| Chair | Pauline Knutton |
| Headteacher | Photini Bohacek |
| Annual fees (day pupils) | £64,210 to £100,901 |
| Telephone number | 01732 460 553 |
| Website | www.westheathschool.com |
| Email address | principal@westheathschool.com |
| Date of previous standard inspection | 1 to 3 April 2025 |

Pupils

| | School's current position | School's proposal | Inspectors' recommendation |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Age range of pupils | 10 to 20 | 9 to 20 | 9 to 20 |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 139 | Up to 180 | Up to 180 |

Pupils

| | School's current position | School's proposal |
|------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Gender of pupils | Mixed | Mixed |

| | | |
|--|-----------|-----------|
| Number of full-time pupils of compulsory school age | Up to 150 | Up to 180 |
| Number of part-time pupils | 0 | 0 |
| Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities | Up to 150 | Up to 180 |
| Of which, number of pupils with an education, health and care plan | Up to 150 | Up to 180 |
| Of which, number of pupils paid for by a local authority with an education, health and care plan | Up to 150 | Up to 180 |

Staff

| | School's current position | School's proposal |
|---|----------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff | 61 | 64 |
| Number of part-time teaching staff | 7 | 9 |

Information about this school

- The school's last standard inspection took place on 1 to 3 April 2025.
- The school does not use alternative provision. However, it does use other provision to supplement pupils' education. School staff attend these settings with pupils.
- The school operates from a single site, located at: West Heath School, Ashgrove Road, Sevenoaks, Kent TN13 1SR.
- All pupils on roll have an education, health and care plan. The school specialises in supporting pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs. Many pupils have additional diagnoses including autism and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. Pupils often have gaps in their education and may not have attended school regularly before joining West Heath School.
- The school provides additional support for a small number of pupils with additional complex needs in its health, education, assessment, and revitalising therapy (HEART) department.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection was commissioned by the Department for Education because the proprietor has applied to make changes to the school's registration. The proprietor wishes to increase the maximum number of pupils on roll from 150 to 180. The proprietor also wishes to extend the age range of pupils from 10 to 20, to nine to 20. This was the first inspection regarding these material changes.
- Inspectors met with the principal and other leaders, including those responsible for the curriculum, safeguarding and health and safety. Inspectors also met with the chair of the board of trustees.
- An inspector met with a group of pupils to gather their views of the school. Inspectors toured all areas of the school with a specific focus on the suitability of the premises and accommodation it offers. An inspector conducted a learning walk, visiting classrooms, observing teaching and talking to pupils about their work.
- Inspectors considered a wide range of policies, records and documentation in relation to the specific standards that were checked at this inspection.

Inspection team

Clive Close, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Gavin Thomas

His Majesty's Inspector

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