

# Inspection of West Heath School

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

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Inspection dates: 1 to 3 April 2025

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
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The quality of education	<b>Good</b>
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Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Good</b>
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Personal development	<b>Outstanding</b>
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Leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
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Sixth-form provision	<b>Good</b>
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Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Outstanding
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Does the school meet the independent school standards?	<b>Yes</b>
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## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils arrive at West Heath School at different points in their education. Staff get to know each pupil well and work to understand their needs. Most pupils speak positively about school. They feel safe and secure. They appreciate that they have adults to talk to about any worries. The school carefully supports pupils who have behavioural needs. Classrooms are generally calm and settled.

The school is ambitious for every pupil. It recognises that when pupils first arrive, they need time to settle and build positive relationships with staff and other pupils. The school invests this time and effort carefully, gradually integrating pupils into full-time learning. This approach enables pupils who were at risk of disengagement from education to learn successfully and achieve the qualifications needed for their next steps.

Pupils' personal development is constantly championed. Pupils learn to better understand themselves and others. They learn how to keep themselves safe and how to look after their own mental health and well-being. An ambitious programme of trips and visits supports pupils' social and emotional development, as well as building their knowledge of the world.

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

Since the last inspection, the school has appointed several new teachers and leaders. The curriculum in a number of subjects has been, or is being, reviewed to ensure that it continues to meet the needs of pupils.

The school offers pupils a very broad and rich curriculum. Overall, the curriculum is well sequenced, so that pupils build their learning gradually over time. Typically, teachers know what the key knowledge pupils should learn is in each subject. However, in the primary curriculum the school has not set out the most important learning as clearly. This means some pupils are not as ready for their next steps as the school would like them to be.

The school has ensured that staff are able to identify and support pupils who are not yet reading fluently and confidently. Staff ensure that pupils gain the knowledge and skills they need to become proficient readers. Alongside this, staff focus on supporting pupils to develop positive attitudes towards reading. This work is particularly effective in the primary phase of the school.

For many pupils, the school's approach to supporting behaviour is transformative. Support is provided to help pupils develop an understanding of themselves and the impact of their behaviour on other people. This results in long-term, positive change for many. The school has recently strengthened its approach to behaviour management, so that it can meet the increasingly varied needs of pupils joining the school. During this transitional phase, there are inconsistencies in the approaches taken in different parts of the school. These occasionally result in challenging

behaviour from a small number of pupils. The school's systems for checking how well the new approach to behaviour is working are not as effective as they should be.

A large proportion of pupils need additional support to attend well. Some pupils do not attend regularly due to their physical and/or mental health needs. The school works closely with pupils and their families to ensure that pupils who are not well enough to be on site can learn at home, if that is appropriate. Sometimes, pupils come to school but struggle to attend lessons. Generally, the school ensures that these pupils complete the same learning as their peers in a quiet space.

Pupils' personal development is exceptionally strong. Staff work to identify pupils' talents and interests and provide each pupil with a bespoke offer that supports and builds upon the school's curriculum. Subjects such as physical education (PE) and the creative arts have been developed to support pupils' wider development. For example, all pupils learn to play an instrument and are encouraged to form a band with peers. Pupils develop the confidence to perform at school events as well as to wider audiences. The school has developed an extensive programme of purposeful trips and visits. Pupils' knowledge of different world religions, for example, is supported through visits to a range of places of worship.

Pupils learn about the ways difference can lead to discrimination, and why it is important to protect people from this. The school recognises that many pupils can be especially vulnerable to harmful online content, and work to ensure that pupils learn to stay safe online as well as in their day-to-day lives. In 'self-science', pupils learn to understand their own diagnoses, their unique strengths, and the particular challenges they might experience. Pupils are supported to develop greater understanding and empathy for others.

Support and preparation for pupils' next steps is very effective. The school provides all pupils with effective careers guidance and support. Pupils feel well informed about potential pathways into further education. The school uses a range of further education providers to supplement the education of students in the sixth form. It ensures that students are working towards appropriate and ambitious qualifications.

School leaders and the proprietor know the school, and its pupils, very well. They want the best for every pupil. Overall, they ensure that the school has a positive impact on pupils' education and life chances. Many staff feel well supported in their roles. The school provides them with opportunities to develop their practice as part of its drive to improve pupils' experiences at school.

Together with leaders, the proprietor ensures that the independent school standards remain consistently met. The school complies with the requirements of schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

## **What does the school need to do to improve? (Information for the school and proprietor)**

- The curriculum for primary aged pupils, and older pupils who are not ready for the secondary curriculum, does not set out the key knowledge pupils should learn precisely enough. As a result, teachers do not always focus on the most important learning and pupils' readiness for the next stage is hindered. The school should ensure that the curriculum sets out key learning at all stages, so that pupils learn as well as they should throughout the school.
- The school's systems for oversight of the new approaches to behaviour management are not as effective as they need to be. Inconsistencies in the application of the approaches have not been addressed and, occasionally, these lead to challenging incidents. The school should strengthen its oversight of behaviour management, supporting staff through on-going training and promoting a consistent response to behaviour incidents throughout the 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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	131611
<b>DfE registration number</b>	886/6079
<b>Local authority</b>	Kent
<b>Inspection number</b>	10342026
<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>	147
<b>Of which, number on roll in the sixth form</b>	26
<b>Proprietor</b>	West Heath 2000
<b>Chair</b>	Pauline Knutton
<b>Headteacher</b>	Photini Bohacek
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	£52,500 to £82,500
<b>Telephone number</b>	01732 460553
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.westheathschool.com">www.westheathschool.com</a>
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:whs.reception-team@westheathschool.com">whs.reception-team@westheathschool.com</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	10 to 12 May 2022

## Information about this school

- The school uses a range of registered and unregistered alternative provisions 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 (EHC) plan. The school specialises in supporting pupils with a social, emotional and mental health need. 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.
- The school is a residential special school, with the residential provision also operated by the school's proprietor, West Heath 2000. The residential provision was inspected in November 2024. The residential provision is scheduled to close at the end of this academic year.

## Information about this inspection

Inspectors 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.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with headteacher and the school's wider leadership team. Inspectors met with trustees, including the chair of trustees.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, PE, creative arts and technologies. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. For the early reading deep dive, inspectors listened to some pupils reading.
- Inspectors also looked at curriculum plans and spoke to leaders about some other subjects.

- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors considered behaviour and attitudes throughout the inspection. They observed behaviour in lessons and around the school, discussed behaviour and attendance with leaders, staff and pupils. They reviewed behaviour records and leaders' analysis of behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors discussed personal development with leaders, staff and pupils.
- Inspectors discussed the independent school standards with leaders, and checked the school's compliance.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents submitted through Ofsted's online parent survey, Parent View. Ofsted's staff and pupil surveys were also taken into account.
- The inspectors only inspected the education provision at this school.

### **Inspection team**

Alice Roberts, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Caroline Clarke

Ofsted Inspector

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