ISI Independent Schools Inspectorate

Additional inspection report

16 to 17 June 2026

Buckswood School

Broomham Hall

Rye Road

Guestling

TN35 4LT

The Independent Schools Inspectorate is appointed by the Department for Education to inspect association independent schools in England. Our inspections report on the extent to which the statutory Independent School Standards and other applicable requirements are met, collectively referred to in this report as 'the Standards'.

Inspection outcome

The school meets all the relevant Standards that were considered during this inspection.

Inspection findings

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

ISSR paragraphs 5(a), 5(b); NMS 3

1. In the effective personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) programme, teachers ensure that pupils develop a secure understanding of fundamental British values. Teachers of PSHE plan the timing of topics carefully for pupils new to the country, with lessons on democracy, tolerance and the rule of law at the start of the year. PSHE enables new and existing pupils to understand systems that underpin British society, such as civil and criminal law, and public institutions and services. The programme is also suitably arranged to meet the needs of short-stay pupils. Pupils gain practical experience of the democratic process when contributing to meetings of the school council, known as the 'Student Xchange'.
2. Pupils develop respectful relationships with each other and staff. Leaders have embedded the school's values, known as 'pillars', effectively, emphasising the importance of being polite and considerate. The values are well understood by pupils through staff promoting one of the pillars each week.
3. Leaders provide opportunities for pupils to develop an appreciation of each other's backgrounds and to understand different cultures. Leaders of boarding encourage sharing of rooms by different nationalities to promote inclusion. This is complemented by inclusive social events and international celebrations.
4. Pupils understand the factors which make up an individual's identity. Leaders ensure that pupils learn about characteristics such as gender, race and sexual orientation and the legal issues surrounding them. This is carefully managed in an international context of various backgrounds and beliefs. Leaders pay regard to the Equality Act 2010 to ensure that pupils and boarders are not discriminated against.
5. Staff teach an effective curriculum for relationships and sex education (RSE), based on statutory guidance. They adapt lessons appropriately according to pupils' needs. The content of the RSE curriculum is shared with parents. Staff are suitably trained in teaching and assessing RSE. Pupils show age-appropriate understanding about key topics such as the basis of safe relationships.
6. Leaders promote pupils' development of self-knowledge, self-confidence and self-esteem. They encourage pupils to speak and read at events to promote their confidence. Leaders provide a range of opportunities for pupils to pursue and develop their talents and interests, to enable them to see themselves as capable learners. Leaders have established a culture across the school which recognises the talents of each pupil, promoting self-esteem.
7. Leaders provide opportunities for pupils to make a social contribution by engaging in activities that benefit society, the community and environment. Pupils volunteer to clean the beach and pick apples to raise funds for local charitable projects. Pupils learn about global issues as part of the school's sustained relationship with a school in Eswatini which is visited annually by pupils. Leaders ensure that pupils know how the money they raise is used so that they can see how their efforts benefit others.

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8. Staff encourage pupils to develop qualities of leadership through opportunities for pupils to undertake roles such as house captains and, in boarding, for older boarding pupils to work supportively with younger ones as part of a buddy system. This promotes pupils taking responsibility for their behaviour and showing initiative. Leaders further promote pupils taking initiative to organise events, such as a fashion show as part of their project work.
9. The school meets the Standards.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

ISSR paragraphs 7(a), 7(b), 8(a), 8(b), 9, 10, 14, 16; NMS 8.1, 8.2, 8.4, 9.3, 9.5, 15.1, 15.2, 16, 19, 20.1, 20.2, 20.3, 20.4, 20.5, 20.6, 20.7, 20.8

10. Leaders have developed a robust culture of safeguarding and strive for continuous improvement of this provision. Staff understand how safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. They recognise signs of possible harm and are alert to noticing changes in pupils' behaviour. Staff respond quickly to a concern about pupils or adults working with the pupils.
11. Leaders with responsibility for safeguarding work well with external agencies such as the East Sussex safeguarding team and the police. They arrange for external audits of the school's safeguarding processes, acting on external recommendations and seeking advice as appropriate. Leaders ensure that any extended absences are reported to the local authority as required.
12. Safeguarding training is suitable. All staff are trained as part of their induction so that they understand the school's procedures for safeguarding. Staff understanding of safeguarding is assessed through mandatory quizzes. Staff understand contextual risks, including the particular vulnerabilities of boarders and the risks associated with pupils sharing overnight accommodation.
13. Leaders manage low-level concerns effectively. They take appropriate action, keeping records and taking advice if required. Staff know the code of conduct and understand the importance of sharing a concern about others or making a self-referral.
14. Leaders ensure that they listen to pupils if they have a worry to share. Pupils know that they can talk to trusted adults or go to 'the hub' to speak to a member of the safeguarding team or one of the medical staff. Boarders know how to contact the independent person, and leaders ensure pupils and boarders have ready access to contact details for external support from organisations such as Childline. Pupils can share concerns anonymously if they wish.
15. Leaders ensure that pupils understand the importance of online safety and know how to apply protective behaviours when online. Pupils' use of the internet is protected by effective filtering and monitoring. Staff are alerted immediately and respond swiftly should anyone try to access unsuitable material. Boarding staff have established effective routines for pupils to have access to their devices during defined periods of boarding time. At other times, staff disable the internet and boarders understand the reasons these restrictions are in place.
16. Leaders ensure that all necessary recruitment checks are completed before an adult begins work, volunteers at the school, or lives on the school site. Staff maintain a single central record of appointment checks (SCR) appropriately, with well-managed staff files.
17. Pupils and boarders behave well because staff implement the behaviour policy effectively. Leaders ensure close communication between academic, pastoral and boarding staff to support consistently positive behaviour. Pastoral leaders ensure that they maintain detailed records of any incidents, including information about ongoing support. Pupils understand the sanctions which can follow a behavioural incident. Leaders ensure that parents are kept well informed, as appropriate.

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18. Staff implement the suitable anti-bullying strategy appropriately and ensure that it is understood by pupils, boarders and parents. Should an incident occur, staff respond effectively. All incidents are recorded in detail, and leaders look for any patterns and ways to mitigate the recurrence of a problem. Leaders ensure that pupils and boarders are taught about positive relationships and how to respond to any bullying proactively.
19. Leaders ensure that there is effective supervision in school and in the boarding houses. Staff are vigilant and pupils can contact them at all times. Pupils are familiar with the school's 'red and blue zone' system which shows where they may or may not go unless accompanied by an adult. Leaders ensure that evenings, weekend events and educational visits are supported with appropriate ratios. Boarding and day pupils feel safe in school.
20. Staff maintain a comprehensive range of risk assessments, including for the site, boarding, activities, and educational visits. These show suitable regard to appropriate action to reduce risks. Pupils, including boarders, sign to show that they have read and understood relevant risk assessments so that they can follow the mitigating actions. Staff with responsibility for health and safety review risk assessments regularly. They keep a log of any 'near misses' to inform future practice.
21. The school meets the Standards.

Part 6. Provision of information

ISSR paragraph 32(1)(c)

22. Policies which explain the school's procedures for safeguarding are published on its website.
23. The school meets the Standards.

Part 8. Quality of leadership and management of schools

ISSR paragraph 34(1)(a), 34(1)(b) and 34(1)(c); NMS 2

24. The proprietor knows the school well and is able to oversee and support leaders' work, including the leadership of boarding, effectively. The proprietor and leaders review practice to ensure that policies are appropriately implemented.
25. Leaders have the skills and knowledge to ensure that the school meets the Standards consistently. They fulfil their roles effectively and promote pupils' wellbeing as the central focus of their decision-making.
26. Leaders of boarding have established a welcoming boarding environment with clear processes and routines for pupils. As a result, pupils feel safe and understand their responsibilities as boarders. Leaders have a clear oversight of boarding and ensure effective links are made between boarding and academic staff. Training for boarding staff is frequent and ensures their familiarity with changes to current practice. All required documentation for boarding is well kept and shared appropriately.
27. The school meets the Standards.

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School details

School	Buckswood School
Department for Education number	845/6031
Address	Buckswood School Rye Road Guestling East Sussex TN35 4LT
Phone number	01424 813813
Email address	achieve@buckswood.co.uk
Website	www.buckswood.co.uk
Proprietor	Buckswood School Limited
Chair	Mr Giles Sutton
Headteacher	Mr Kevin Samson
Age range	10 to 19
Number of pupils	191
Number of boarding pupils	133
Date of previous inspection	1 December 2025

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Information about the school

28. Buckswood School is a co-educational boarding and day school located close to the village of Guestling, near Hastings, East Sussex. The school is owned by Buckswood School Limited, whose director is responsible for the oversight of the school. He is supported by an advisory board.
29. There are five boarding houses on the main school site. Three are for male pupils and two are for female pupils.
30. The school has identified 30 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities. No pupils in the school have an education, health and care plan.
31. The school has identified 104 pupils who speak English as an additional language.
32. The school states that its aims are to enable pupils to be the best they can be, to discover where their talents lie and to explore the world around them.

Purpose of the additional inspection

Inspectors carried out this inspection under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008. This inspection was an unannounced additional monitoring inspection which was carried out at the request of the Department for Education.

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Inspection details

Inspection dates	16 to 17 June 2026

33. Two reporting inspectors visited the school for two days.

34. Inspection activities included

- scrutiny of a range of policies, documentation and records provided by the school and information available on the school's website
- discussions with the director
- discussions with the headteacher, school leaders, managers and other members of staff
- discussions with pupils
- visits to the boarding houses accompanied by pupils and staff.

How are association independent schools in England inspected?

- The Department for Education is the regulator for independent schools in England.
- ISI is approved by the Secretary of State for Education to inspect independent schools in England, which are members of associations in membership of the Independent Schools Council.
- ISI inspections report to the Department for Education on the extent to which the statutory Independent School Standards, the EYFS statutory framework requirements, the National Minimum Standards for boarding schools and any other relevant Standards are met.
- For more information, please visit **www.isi.net**.

Independent Schools Inspectorate

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