

Buckswood School

Broomham Hall, Rye Road, Guestling, Hastings, East Sussex TN35 4LT

Inspection dates

28–30 March 2017

Overall effectiveness	Inadequate
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Inadequate
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Inadequate
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Sixth form provision	Inadequate
Overall experiences and progress of children and young people in the boarding provision	Inadequate
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- The proprietor has not ensured that the independent school standards and national minimum standards for boarding schools are met.
- Safeguarding is not effective. Essential systems to keep pupils safe, including those in the sixth form, are not in place. Risk assessments and supervision are insufficient.
- Leaders have an inaccurate understanding of the school's effectiveness. Improvement planning is ineffective.
- Leaders and staff are not held to account. Teaching and boarding provision are not good.
- In some lessons, tasks do not match pupils' different needs well.
- Not all leaders check pupils' progress well enough. Assessment systems do not enable staff to track the progress of all pupils across the school and across subjects.
- Not enough pupils achieve well, particularly in mathematics. In all subjects, the least able pupils' progress is weakest.
- Systems to identify, monitor and reduce bullying and poor behaviour are not in place.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities do not receive support that enables them to make good progress.
- Not all teachers use assessment well enough to check pupils' understanding and use this to improve their learning.

The school has the following strengths

- Extra-curricular activities add further breadth to the wide-ranging curriculum.
- Most students in the sixth form achieve well to progress to further education or employment.

Compliance with regulatory requirements and national minimum standards for boarding schools

The school must take action to meet the requirements of the schedule to The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, and the national minimum standards for boarding schools and associated requirements. The details are listed in the full report.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make rapid improvements so that safeguarding is effective by ensuring that:
 - all required checks on the suitability of staff and the proprietor are completed
 - arrangements for safeguarding meet the latest requirements and include clear procedures to manage allegations against staff
 - staff understand fully their roles in keeping pupils safe in a range of situations, including when using physical intervention
 - the supervision of pupils is effective in all aspects of the school's work
 - risk assessments are thorough and appropriate action is taken to reduce identified risks.
- Improve the leadership, management and governance of the school by ensuring that:
 - leaders at all levels are held to account for their work, particularly in relation to safeguarding
 - self-evaluation is accurate, based on a sound knowledge of all requirements and informs effective school-improvement planning
 - effective systems to track pupils' progress across the school, including that of different groups, are used to improve pupils' achievement
 - provision to support pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities enables them to make good progress
 - staff appraisal leads to improvements to the quality of provision so that it is consistently good or better
 - all of the independent school standards and national minimum standards for boarding schools are met.
- Improve teaching, learning and assessment to secure good progress across the curriculum by ensuring that:
 - staff develop their skills and expertise to provide effective support for the least able pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities
 - teachers provide tasks that meet pupils' different needs and abilities
 - regular, accurate checks on pupils' learning are used to ensure that they make good progress, particularly in mathematics.
- Improve pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare by ensuring that:
 - incidents of bullying and poor behaviour are identified, recorded, monitored and action taken to ensure that these are rare
 - effective strategies to support pupils with challenging behaviour are shared between boarding and educational provision
 - boarding staff implement risk assessments that demonstrate full consideration has been given to the compatibility of boarders residing together.

The school must meet the following independent school standards

- The proprietor must ensure that a written policy on the curriculum is drawn up (paragraph 2(1), 2(1)(a)).
- The proprietor must ensure that the teaching at the school:
 - enables pupils to acquire new knowledge and make good progress according to their ability so that they increase their understanding and develop their skills in the subjects taught
 - involves well-planned lessons and effective teaching methods, activities and management of class time
 - shows a good understanding of the aptitudes, needs and prior attainments of the pupils, and ensures that these are taken into account in the planning of lessons
 - demonstrates that a framework is in place to assess pupils' work regularly and thoroughly and uses information from that assessment to plan teaching so that pupils can progress (paragraph 3, 3(a), 3(c), 3(d), 3(g)).
- The proprietor must ensure that a framework for pupil performance to be evaluated, by reference to the school's own aims as provided to parents or national norms, or to both, is in place (paragraph 4).
- The proprietor must ensure that arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school; and such arrangements have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State (paragraph 7, 7(a), 7(b)).
- The proprietor must ensure that arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of boarders while they are accommodated at the school; and such arrangements have regard to the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools (paragraph 8, 8(a), 8(b)).
- The proprietor must promote good behaviour amongst pupils by ensuring that a written behaviour policy is drawn up that, amongst other matters, sets out the sanctions to be adopted in the event of pupil misbehaviour; and the policy is implemented effectively (paragraph 9, 9(a), 9(b)).
- The proprietor must ensure that bullying at the school is prevented in so far as reasonably practicable, by the drawing up and implementing of an effective anti-bullying strategy (paragraph 10).
- The proprietor must ensure that pupils are properly supervised through the appropriate deployment of school staff (paragraph 14).
- The proprietor must ensure that the welfare of pupils at the school is safeguarded and promoted by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written risk assessment policy; and appropriate action is taken to reduce risks that are identified (paragraph 16, 16(a), 16(b)).
- The following checks must be made as to the suitability of persons appointed as members of staff at the school, other than the proprietor and supply staff:
 - that no such person carries out work, or intends to carry out work, at the school in contravention of a prohibition order, an interim prohibition order, or any direction made under section 128 of the 2008 Act or section 142 of the 2002 Act or any

disqualification, prohibition or restriction which takes effect as if contained in either such direction

- the person’s medical fitness
 - that in the case of any person whom, by reason of that person living or having lived outside the United Kingdom, obtaining such a certificate is not sufficient to establish the person’s suitability to work in a school, such further checks are made as the proprietor considers appropriate, having regard to any guidance issued by the secretary of state; and
 - in the case of staff who care for, train, supervise or are in charge of boarders, the proprietor checks that Standard 14 of the National Minimum Standard for Boarding schools is complied with (paragraph 18(2), 18(2)(b), 18(2)(c)(ii), 18(2)(e), 18(2)(f)).
- The proprietor must ensure that checks are completed before a person’s appointment (paragraph 18(3)).
 - The proprietor keeps a register which shows a check was made to establish whether staff are subject to any direction made under section 128 of the 2008 Act or section 142 of the 2002 Act or any disqualification, prohibition or restriction which takes effect as if contained in either such direction and that in the case of any person whom, by reason of that person living or having lived outside the United Kingdom, obtaining such a certificate is not sufficient to establish the person’s suitability to work in a school, such further checks are made as the proprietor considers appropriate, having regard to any guidance issued by the secretary of state (paragraph 21(1), 21 (3)(a)(iii), 21(3)(a)(viii)).
 - In order to meet the standard about the premises and accommodation of the school, the proprietor must ensure that the temperature of hot water at the point of use does not pose a scalding risk to users (paragraph 28(1), 28(1)(d)).
 - To meet the standard about the provision of information the proprietor must ensure that the following information is published and maintained on the school’s website:
 - a copy of the report of an inspection carried out under section 108 or 109 of the 2008 Act
 - a copy of the report of an inspection under section 87(1) of the 1989 Act
 - the name of the headteacher
 - where the proprietor is an individual, the proprietor’s full name, address for correspondence during both term-time and holidays and a telephone number on which the proprietor may be contacted
 - particulars of the school’s policy on and arrangements for exclusions
 - particulars of educational provision for pupils with education, health and care plans and pupils for whom English is an additional language
 - the curriculum policy
 - particulars of the school’s academic performance during the preceding school year, including the results of any public examinations
 - the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year(paragraph 32(1), 32(1)(d), 32(1)(e), 32(2)(a), 32(2)(b)(i), 32(3)(a), 32(3)(c),

32(3)(e), 32(3)(f), 32(3)(g)).

- The proprietor must ensure that a revised complaints procedure is drawn up and effectively implemented which deals with the handling of complaints from parents of pupils and which:
 - sets out clear timescales for the management of a complaint
 - allows for a complaint to be made and considered initially on an informal basis
 - where the parent is not satisfied with the response to the complaint, establishes a formal procedure for the complaint to be made in writing
 - where the parent is not satisfied with the response to the complaint, makes provision for a hearing before a panel appointed by or on behalf of the proprietor and consisting of at least three people who were not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint
 - ensures that, where there is a panel hearing of a complaint, one panel member is independent of the management and running of the school
 - allows for a parent to attend and be accompanied at a panel hearing if they wish
 - provides for the panel to make findings and recommendations and stipulates that a copy of those findings and recommendations is provided to the complainant and, where relevant, the person complained about; and available for inspection on the school premises by the proprietor and the headteacher
 - provides for a written record to be kept of all complaints that are made and whether they are resolved following a formal procedure, or proceed to a panel hearing
(paragraph 33, 33(c), 33(d), 33(e), 33(f), 33(g), 33(h), 33(i), 33(i)(i), 33(i)(ii), 33(j), 33(j)(i)).
- The proprietor must ensure that persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school:
 - demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role so that the independent school standards are met consistently
 - fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently; and
 - actively promote the well-being of pupils
(paragraph 34(1), 34(1)(a), 34(1)(b), 34(1)(c)).

The school must meet the following national minimum standards for boarding schools

- The school must ensure that:
 - arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school; and
 - such arrangements have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State (NMS 11.1).
- The school has and consistently implements a written policy to promote good behaviour

amongst pupils. This policy includes:

- measures to combat bullying, including cyber bullying, and to promote positive behaviour;
 - school rules
 - disciplinary sanctions
 - when restraint, including reasonable force, is to be used and how this will be recorded and managed; and
 - arrangements for searching pupils and their possessions (NMS 12.1).
- The policy complies with relevant legislation and has regard to guidance, and is understood by staff and pupils (NMS 12.2).
 - The school's governing body and/or proprietor monitors the effectiveness of the leadership, management and delivery of the boarding and welfare provision in the school, and takes appropriate action where necessary (NMS 13.1).
 - There is clear leadership and management of the practice and development of boarding in the school and effective links are made between academic and residential staff (NMS 13.2).
 - The school's leadership and management demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role (NMS 13.3).
 - The school's leadership and management consistently fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the standards are met (NMS 13.4).
 - The school's leadership and management and governance actively promote the well-being of pupils (NMS 13.5).
 - The records specified in Appendix 2 are maintained and monitored by the school and action taken as appropriate (NMS 13.8).
 - The issues specified in Appendix 3 are monitored, and action is taken to improve outcomes for children as appropriate (NMS 13.9).
 - The school operates safe recruitment and adopts recruitment procedures in line with the regulatory requirement and having regard to relevant guidance issued by the Secretary of State (NMS 14.1).
 - Any staff member or volunteer employed or volunteering in a position working with boarders has a job description reflecting their duties, receives induction training in boarding when newly appointed, and receives regular reviews of their boarding practice, with opportunities for training and continual professional development (NMS 15.1).
 - Staff working within the school know and implement the school's policy in relation to boarders going missing and their role in implementing that policy. Staff actively search for boarders who are missing, including working with police where appropriate (NMS 15.6).
 - The school has, and follows, an appropriate policy on recording and responding to complaints that is compliant with the relevant regulatory standards (NMS 18.1).

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Inadequate
Impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers in the boarding provision	Inadequate
How well children and young people are protected in the boarding provision	Inadequate

- The headteacher, who is also the proprietor, has not ensured that the school meets the minimum requirements set out for independent boarding schools. There are serious deficiencies in safeguarding, aspects of health and safety, the provision of information and the way that complaints are managed. There are also other shortcomings in the provision of education and boarding. As a result, pupils do not receive a safe and effective education at Buckswood School.
- The proprietor and the senior leadership team do not provide effective oversight and monitoring of the quality of the boarding provision. There is no evidence of robust scrutiny or evaluation of practice and no development plan identifying the boarding provision's strengths and weaknesses with the actions required to address shortfalls. Inadequate levels of scrutiny and a lack of monitoring systems, particularly in relation to safeguarding, are not promoting the well-being of boarders.
- The supervision of pupils is insufficient. At breaktimes, staff do not oversee pupils well enough in the extensive grounds. As a result, pupils' welfare is not actively promoted at all times.
- Leaders do not monitor bullying, work to improve pupils' behaviour or ensure that there is a consistent approach to supporting those with the most challenging behaviour. This restricts the school's ability to keep pupils safe, prevent bullying and improve pupils' behaviour.
- Risks are not well identified, understood or managed to support the effective safeguarding of pupils. Staff do not use robust risk assessment as an effective tool to determine and minimise risks to safeguard the welfare of pupils. There are serious failings in systems, processes and management that result in the potential of pupils to suffer harm.
- Leaders have not kept up to date with current expectations. For example, there is no curriculum policy available or published on the school's website. Consequently, leaders have an inaccurate understanding of the school's effectiveness. Plans to improve provision lack precision and do not address shortcomings well. This has led to a significant decline in the school's effectiveness.
- The policy relating to complaints is ineffective. It does not comply with the independent schools standards. While the school responds to complainants, the outcome of complaints is not always clear. There is no monitoring of complaints that identifies lessons learned and therefore improves practice in the boarding provision or school.
- Leaders have not placed enough emphasis on securing good progress for pupils as they move through the school. There is currently no effective system in place to show the progress that different groups of pupils make across the curriculum. In key stage 4 and

the sixth form, leaders can show the progress that individual pupils make in the range of subjects. However, the system in key stage 3 is insufficient and there is no link across all key stages. As a result, some pupils in key stage 3 and key stage 4 are not achieving well enough over time.

- Boarding and school staff, including the designated safeguarding leader, are not held to account. There is no system in place to challenge them to improve their work. Although some checks on teaching and learning and the boarding provision take place, these have not been rigorous enough to halt a serious decline in the school.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities do not achieve well. The support that they receive does not address their learning needs precisely enough. Leaders do not ensure that it is effective and that teachers plan lessons that enable pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities to make good progress.
- The heads of key stage 4 and the sixth form provide some challenge to middle leaders. Some middle leaders have responded well to this and made use of recent training to devise plans to improve the quality of teaching and learning in the subjects for which they are responsible. However, it is not yet possible to see the impact of this work.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced. Across the school, pupils have access to a wide range of subjects. Languages are a particular strength. Pupils have the opportunity to study for qualifications in languages such as Chinese, German or Spanish.
- The school places a clear emphasis on securing positive attitudes to learning and nurturing pupils' talents. For example, students in the sixth form spend 'free' time studying in the library. Extra-curricular activities are wide ranging. Staff tailor these to support pupils' interests and provide clubs such as dance, fishing, golf and debating. These provide further opportunities for pupils to broaden their learning.
- Pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development and British values are promoted well throughout the curriculum. The school's international community provides a range of reasons to celebrate, such as Iranian New Year, and learn about other cultures. Pupils from the United Kingdom and overseas benefit from the English and culture programme. This shows them British customs and helps them to learn about democracy through visits to Parliament.
- The overwhelming majority of parents who responded to Parent View were positive about the school. Parents appreciate the good level of information that they receive about their child and the way that the school provides experiences, such as trips to Prague and Italy.

Governance

- The headteacher is the proprietor. There are no effective systems in place to hold leaders to account for their work, particularly in relation to safeguarding. As a result, the school does not provide a safe environment for pupils and they are not achieving well enough.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.
- Leaders have not made good enough arrangements to supervise pupils at breaktimes. It is not always clear to staff where pupils are. This places pupils at risk.

- The designated safeguarding leader has not completed the relevant Local Safeguarding Children Board training. She is not fully aware of the responsibilities attached to the role in safeguarding children, up to date with current developments or trained in managing allegations against staff in accordance with statutory guidance. Although the proprietor liaises with the designated safeguarding leader regarding safeguarding concerns, he has not undertaken relevant safeguarding training to provide the necessary scrutiny and challenge to safeguard pupils' welfare.
- Up-to-date information does not inform safeguarding practice. Leaders have not recognised the need to amend the safeguarding policy in the light of the most recent changes to the guidance, 'Keeping children safe in education'. The policy, which is published on the website, does not reflect the new requirements. It has inaccurate information about external safeguarding agencies and the current designated safeguarding leader within the school. Procedures to manage allegations against staff lack clarity and rigour. Details regarding child sexual exploitation are insufficient to protect pupils. The policy for whistle-blowing that has been shared with staff is inaccurate and is not fit for purpose.
- Staff training in child protection is not effective. Not enough staff know what to do if they are worried about a pupil. There is currently no deputy designated safeguarding leader. Staff are not aware of the guidance, 'Keeping children safe in education'. Arrangements to protect pupils from abuse are inadequate.
- The use of the restraint policy does not safeguard pupils as it indicates a number of inappropriate strategies not compatible with keeping pupils safe. While staff offer assurances that physical intervention is not used, this is not supported by evidence. Leaders and managers do not have a clear understanding of what constitutes physical intervention. They are not fully implementing policies and procedures to ensure that pupils are protected and that staff employ safe techniques when using physical intervention.
- There is no clear policy to safeguard pupils who may go missing and that takes account of the requirements outlined in the statutory guidance for children missing from home and/or education. Risks associated with pupils who go missing are not understood fully, and, thus, pupils are not effectively safeguarded.
- The arrangements for recruiting and vetting staff are insufficiently rigorous to prevent unsuitable adults gaining access to pupils. References are not verified, some are not in evidence and some are not addressed to the person requesting the reference. Checks to ensure that staff are not prohibited from teaching are not in place. Not all staff who have worked overseas are subject to appropriate checks. Application forms and job descriptions were absent from most of the files examined.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Teachers do not have a clear enough understanding of the progress that pupils make in their subjects over time. Each teacher uses a different way of checking pupils' achievement in their subject. As a result, they are not always able to identify when pupils underachieve and take action. This reduces the progress that pupils make.
- During lessons, not all teachers check pupils' understanding and use this to adjust their

teaching. In some classes, teachers ask questions of all pupils but accept too readily responses from the most confident. Consequently, teachers sometimes miss opportunities to identify pupils' misconceptions and accelerate their learning.

- Some teachers do not provide pupils with activities that match their different learning needs closely enough. This includes those who speak English as an additional language or find learning more difficult. Not all teachers make the best use of resources to provide extra support for these pupils. As a result, the less able pupils, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, do not achieve well enough.
- In mathematics, teaching does not address the differences in pupils' achievement. For example, pupils' mathematics books showed that some pupils are not reaching the standards expected for their age; this was particularly the case in Year 8. However, the most able pupils' books showed that they are mostly making good progress.
- Parents and some pupils appreciate 'access time' – an hour each day when pupils can voluntarily seek individual support with aspects of their learning from teachers. However, not all pupils take advantage of this extra support, so the impact is mixed.
- Pupils apply themselves well to learning when teachers provide lessons that are interesting and challenging. For example, Year 13 students were able to apply their understanding of the social chapter and workers' rights in a discussion about Britain's changing relationship with the European Union.
- Teachers across the school demonstrate strong subject knowledge. For example, in a Year 9 Chinese lesson, a teacher used her understanding of the structure of the language to explain to pupils how to describe most and least favourite foods and sports. Using this, pupils were able to say in Chinese, 'He most likes to play volleyball.'

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Inadequate

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is inadequate.
- Pupils are not safe at school. Systems to promote pupils' safety and well-being are insufficient.
- Senior leaders and staff are unable to recognise and/or acknowledge that bullying occurs in boarding houses or the school. Consequently, pupils are at risk. Pupils do not always receive the help and support needed in a timely manner to safeguard them from bullying.
- Pupils say they feel safe and that they are supported through safe use of the internet and social media. However, they are not sufficiently protected because they have limited awareness and knowledge of sexual exploitation, radicalisation and extremism. There is a lack of a strong, robust and proactive approach to support pupils in keeping themselves safe in these areas.
- Staff, parents and pupils value their multicultural school. Staff encourage pupils to celebrate their different backgrounds and demonstrate pride in their home nations as well as their school. One pupil said, 'The emphasis is on being citizens of the world as well as being British.'

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Leaders cannot explain the impact of their work to improve pupils' behaviour. This is particularly the case for a few pupils who demonstrate challenging behaviour. Records show that these pupils do not receive extra support and experience high rates of exclusion.
- In lessons, pupils do not always behave well, particularly when activities do not meet their different needs. Too many pupils are passive in lessons and do not always complete set tasks. This reduces their learning.
- Around the school, most pupils are polite and well behaved. They greet adults with respect and demonstrate good manners at lunchtime. The school is orderly.
- Pupils attend school very well. Rates of absence are lower than in other secondary schools nationally. Leaders set and maintain high expectations for pupils' attendance.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Not enough pupils make good progress across the curriculum. This is because the quality of teaching is variable in some key stages and subjects.
- In key stage 3, pupils do not make good enough progress in most subjects. Staff expectations have not been high enough and insufficient attention has been paid to pupils' achievement in this key stage over time.
- The least able pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities do not achieve well. Some lessons and extra support do not meet pupils' individual needs well enough.
- Last year, pupils' overall attainment in GCSE examinations was broadly similar to the national average. However, achievement in mathematics and business studies was not good enough and has been lower than in other subjects for some time. Leaders of these subjects acknowledge that teaching has not enabled some pupils to succeed. In Chinese, French, Spanish and science, pupils made good progress to reach higher standards.
- The most able pupils make good rates of progress. Lessons are better matched to the needs of this group and they are supported effectively to achieve well in GCSE and A-level examinations and in the International Baccalaureate.
- Pupils who join the school with few spoken or written English skills make good progress to acquire essential language for learning.
- In the sixth form, students' attainment is similar to or better than national averages. Since 2011, all students have been successful in passing the International Baccalaureate. Last year, attainment in the International Baccalaureate was above national and global averages. The large majority of students reached the higher level in the International Baccalaureate. In 2016, students' attainment in A-level examinations was close to that of others nationally.

Sixth form provision

Inadequate

- The sixth form provision is inadequate because there are serious failings in safeguarding and many of the independent school standards are unmet. These failings have a negative impact on the personal development and welfare of students in the sixth form.
- The leaders of the sixth form have high expectations of students and teachers. They carry out regular checks on teaching and learning that enable them to identify important improvements. Teachers benefit from training that helps them to understand the requirements of the different examinations that students take. As a result, students achieve well in the sixth form.
- Students make good progress in the sixth form. Leaders have devised a system to check that students are on track to meet their high expectations. They provide extra support to students and challenge staff to realise their aims.
- Students develop mature and positive attitudes to their learning. They make the best use of resources available to support their studies. Many spoke of how they appreciated the information in the school's extensive, online 'virtual learning environment'.
- Teachers in the sixth form have deep subject knowledge. They use this well to enable students to make good progress. For example, in a Year 12 geography lesson students were able to answer complex questions about the spread of disease because the teacher had equipped them with knowledge of illnesses, such as malaria and polio.
- The curriculum provides students with a range of different pathways to secure qualifications that match their current needs and long-term aims. Students can choose from a range of different A-level courses, including languages such as Chinese or German, or study a broader range of subjects in the International Baccalaureate. Some students complete an access course that enables them to develop their written and spoken English.
- The school sets high expectations for all students and is committed to enabling them to move into sustained education or employment after Buckswood. Students receive personalised careers guidance and have opportunities for extra-curricular activities that enable them to develop wide-ranging skills. Students value the careers-based societies, memberships of 'fraternities' and work experience. Last year, all students remaining in the United Kingdom progressed to further education or employment.

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people in the boarding provision

Inadequate

- Safeguarding practices are not robust and serious weaknesses have the potential to affect the welfare of boarders and place them at risk of harm. The school's proprietor and the senior leadership team do not provide effective oversight and monitoring of the quality of the boarding provision. Widespread failures in leadership and management result in the safety and welfare of boarders being inadequately promoted.
- Boarders are mostly positive about their experience. Staff aim to create an environment where boarders develop an awareness, understanding and respect for different cultures. Most boarders are polite and courteous. However, pupils are not safe from bullying in the school or the boarding houses.

- Relationships between staff and boarders are warm and friendly and based on mutual respect. Staff seek actively to recognise and value the individuality of boarders and support them to develop their own talents and skills. They grow in confidence and independence and strive to achieve their potential. Parents who responded to Ofsted's survey, Parent View, unanimously agree that their child enjoys their boarding experience and that boarding helps their child's progress and development.

Quality of care and support in the boarding provision

Requires improvement

- An 'open door' approach enables boarders to contact boarding staff easily with any concerns or to put forward their views. Staff consult with boarders at various times through surveys and boarders provide weekly feedback on their activities. However, a significant number of pupils stated in a survey conducted during the inspection that the school does not take account of their views.
- Boarders receive good support to maintain their physical health and lead a healthy lifestyle. Qualified nurses and health care assistants, who work proactively with boarding staff to meet boarders' specific health needs, run the new medical centre. Nevertheless, the emotional and psychological health needs of boarders are not addressed as effectively. Staff are identifying concerns about boarders' well-being, but individualised plans and risk assessments to guide staff in providing appropriate support are not in place.
- Accommodation is comfortable and some refurbishment has taken place. Staff do not complete risk assessments when boarders share rooms. Meals are social occasions in the dining room. The chef caters for specific dietary needs, including those related to cultural or religious needs. However, a number of pupils commented in the survey during the inspection that they do not like the food.
- A rich and varied programme of activities on-site, in the local community and further afield provides opportunities for boarders to relax, enjoy their leisure time and extend their social experiences.
- Most boarders say that they are happy residing at the school and enjoy their boarding experience. Some stated that they benefit from opportunities to develop their confidence, their independence and the experience of living with others from diverse backgrounds. Boarders enjoy the opportunities that the school offers to foster and express their individuality.

School details

Unique reference number	114656
Social care unique reference number	SC050170
DfE registration number	845/6031
Inspection number	10020905

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school. The inspection of boarding provision was carried out under the Children Act 1989, as amended by the Care Standards Act 2000, having regard to the national minimum standards for boarding schools.

Type of school	Other independent school
School category	Independent boarding school
Age range of pupils	11 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	448
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	54
Number of part-time pupils	0
Number of boarders on roll	250
Proprietor	Giles Sutton
Headteacher	Giles Sutton
Annual fees (day pupils)	£12,900
Annual fees (boarders)	£20,400
Telephone number	01424 813813
Website	www.buckswood.co.uk
Email address	achieve@buckswood.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	1–2 December 2011

Information about this school

- Buckswood School is a co-educational school for day and boarding pupils aged between 11 and 19 years. The school is not selective and admits pupils from over 45 different countries. Approximately one third of pupils speak English as an additional language. Pupils join the school at different times and with varying abilities in written and spoken English.
- The school's motto is, 'Ad Vitam Paramus' – 'We are preparing for life.' The headteacher seeks to recognise the range of talents that pupils bring and offers a broad curriculum that can nurture these abilities.
- The school is based in attractive surroundings on the edge of Guestling, a village three miles north-east of Hastings. The school has a range of facilities including a swimming pool, stables, a vineyard and ponds. The school has recently opened an outdoor activity centre, where pupils can experience a range of adventurous activities.
- Just over half of pupils board in one of eight boarding houses. Seven are on the school site and one is about half a mile away and accessed by school transport.
- The previous inspection of the school took place in December 2011. At this time, the school was judged to be good. The last inspection of boarding provision took place in November 2012 and this was also judged to be good.
- No pupils have an education, health and care plan.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was an integrated standard inspection. Education and social care inspectors checked compliance with all of the independent school standards and the national minimum standards for boarding schools.
- Education inspectors observed 38 lessons or parts of lessons across all key stages and spoke informally to pupils. Several observations were carried out jointly with senior leaders. Pupils' work was also scrutinised.
- The social care regulatory inspectors visited the boarding accommodation at different times of the day, including evenings, to observe the provision. They spoke with pupils and staff.
- Inspectors met with senior leaders, middle leaders, teaching and boarding staff.
- There were 40 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. An inspector met with some parents. A group of pupils met with an inspector. Inspectors also took into account the high number of responses to Ofsted's pupil questionnaire.
- Inspectors examined a wide range of documents relating to the education and boarding provision. This included the school's improvement planning, minutes of meetings, information about the curriculum, safeguarding documents, records of behaviour incidents and pupils' achievement information.

Inspection team

Caroline Dulon, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Lesley Corbett	Ofsted Inspector
Sue Bzikot	Ofsted Inspector
David Powell	Ofsted Inspector
Jan Hunnam	Social Care Regulatory Inspector
Lolita Rascagnares	Social Care Regulatory Inspector
Sophie Wood	Social Care Regulatory Inspector Manager

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You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

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