ISI Independent Schools Inspectorate

Progress monitoring inspection report

1 December 2025

Buckswood School

Broomham Hall

Rye Road

Guestling

East Sussex

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 regulatory 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 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

ISSR paragraphs 7(a), 7(b), 8(a), 8(b), 9, 16; NMS 8.1, 9.3, 11.4

1. The school meets the Standards.
2. The school has an appropriate policy for safeguarding, whistleblowing and the staff code of conduct, which include suitable arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school. The policy is now effectively implemented, particularly with clear and understood actions for staff wishing to report safeguarding concerns about pupils, staff and the proprietor. Training for all staff on these aspects has been highlighted since the previous inspection.
3. Leaders have appointed a new designated safeguarding lead (DSL) who is highly trained and responds swiftly to any potential concern, taking the required action. They lead on boarding within the school and are supported by additional boarding leaders who have all received appropriate induction and training. They demonstrate sufficient knowledge of safeguarding requirements to ensure there is an effective culture of safeguarding across the school and in boarding.
4. Leaders work with external agencies, when necessary, to protect pupils at risk of harm to ensure that the individual needs of pupils are met. Low-level concerns are managed by the DSL and overseen by the principal. Training in what constitutes a low-level concern has been delivered to all staff by external professionals since the previous inspection. Staff are clear about what to report, and to whom they should report their concerns.
5. Pupils are supported in learning how to keep themselves safe, including online. Monitoring and filtering of technology is effective and overseen by the DSL. Training has been provided in the appropriate methods of communication between staff and pupils. There is now no use of any encrypted application by any staff or the proprietor to communicate with pupils. Records are detailed and thorough and are kept securely.
6. Pupils can identify a range of staff and trusted adults they can talk to within the school if they have a concern. The independent person, whose details are displayed around the school and in boarding houses, is independent from the school and its employees.
7. The head of boarding manages concerns from boarders relating to boarding. This is overseen and monitored by the senior leadership team, who discuss any new issues, in regular meetings.
8. Leaders have introduced software to support the health and safety and facilities management at the school. There is an overall digital risk register which is supported by the professional advisors to the proprietor. There are regular weekly meetings to ensure effective policy implementation. There are daily checks on the premises. Leaders ensure that all pupils and staff who join the school from a nearby international school have received all appropriate information and training. All details required to keep visiting pupils and staff safe have been shared with the school.
9. The professional advisors, providing support to the proprietor, are specialists in safeguarding, boarding and adherence to the Standards. Their monitoring is effective.

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Part 6. Provision of information

ISSR paragraph 32(1)(c)

10. The school meets the Standards.

11. The school meets the requirements for providing information relating to safeguarding to parents by publishing the safeguarding policy on the school's website.

Part 7. Manner in which complaints are handled

ISSR paragraphs 33(i)(ii), 33(j)(ii); NMS 14.1

12. The school meets the Standards.

13. The school's complaints policy and procedures have been implemented consistently. All complaints are now logged, managed and monitored by the principal in a timely manner. The log contains suitable details including if it is relating to the boarding provision. The external advisors are not involved in the management of complaints and the complaints log.

Part 8. Quality of leadership and management of schools

ISSR paragraph 34(1)(a), 34(1)(b), 34(1)(c); NMS 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 2.6, 2.7, 2.8

14. The school meets the Standards.

15. The leadership structure and the roles and responsibility of the proprietor and the professional advisors is clear and in line with those outlined on the website. The professional advisors have supported and trained the staff and proprietor since the previous inspection. Minutes of meetings indicate effective communication between leaders, demonstrating that they have good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role so that the independent schools Standards are now met.

16. Leaders and managers including those in boarding have worked closely with a selection of professional advisors to ensure that they are clear about their responsibilities. This has helped them meet the Standards, and ensure that the wellbeing of pupils is actively promoted.

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School details

School	Buckswood School
Department for Education number	845/6031
Address	Buckswood School Broomham Hall 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 Ltd
Director	Mr Giles Sutton
Headteacher	Mr Kevin Samson
Age range	10 to 19
Number of pupils	198
Number of boarding pupils	145
Date of previous inspection	26 and 27 March 2025

Information about the school

17. Buckswood School is a co-educational boarding and day school located in a rural site close to Hastings, East Sussex. The school is owned by Buckswood School Limited, whose director is responsible for the oversight of the school with the assistance of professional advisors. The school is led by the headteacher, supported by academic and pastoral deputies. The school is organised into three sections: the junior school, for pupils up to Year 9; the senior school, for Years 10 and 11; and the sixth form.
18. There are seven boarding houses within the school campus. Most boarders are from overseas.
19. The school has identified 25 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities. No pupils in the school have an education, health and care plan.
20. The school has identified 143 pupils for whom English is an additional language.
21. The school states that its aims are to enable pupils to be the best that they can be, discover where their talents lie and explore the world around them.

Purpose of the progress monitoring inspection

Inspectors carried out this inspection under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008. This inspection was an unannounced progress monitoring inspection which was carried out at the request of the Department for Education. The purpose of this inspection was to monitor the progress the school has made in meeting the Independent School Standards and National Minimum Standards for boarding schools that the school was judged not to comply with at its previous inspection.

Inspection details

Inspection dates	1 December 2025

22. Two reporting inspectors visited the school for one day.
23. Inspection activities included:

- scrutiny of a range of policies, documentation and records provided by the school and information available on the school's website
- tour of the school site for orientation
- discussions with the director who is also the proprietor
- discussions with a professional advisor to the school
- discussions with the headteacher, school leaders, managers and other members of staff
- discussions with pupils
- visits to the boarding houses accompanied by 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**.

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