
West Buckland School and the Community

Since its foundation in 1858, West Buckland School has always played a major role in the local community by providing a high quality and distinctive style of education for young people throughout this area and far beyond, by sharing its facilities and expertise with local people and organisations, as a major employer, and as a focus for educational, sporting cultural, and social events in the area.

The school creates opportunities for children from a wide range of backgrounds to benefit from the education provided. In the past this has been achieved principally through the Direct Grant and Assisted Places schemes; today the governors, assisted by the West Buckland School Foundation and a number of other educational trusts, provide means tested bursaries to over 100 children, more than one in ten of the whole school. Three 100% means tested bursaries each year are provided for children entering the school in Year 7. Some of these bursaries are valued at 90-100% tuition fees. This is in addition to the significant number of children who also benefit from academic, music or sports scholarships.

Children benefiting from bursaries include boarding as well as day pupils. The assistance given by the school to children and their families makes a profound difference to their lives and life prospects. The opportunity to board at West Buckland is an important enrichment and extension to many boys' and girls' education. For a number of children whose family circumstances are very challenging, boarding is vitally important to them.

The fact that about 600 children are educated at West Buckland without any contribution from the tax payer means that society as a whole is relieved of a substantial financial responsibility. This would conservatively be estimated at well in excess of £3 million pa, a sum which far offsets any taxable benefits arising from the school's charitable status. Nonetheless, the families of each of the children at West Buckland who are UK citizens, the vast majority, continue to fund the state school education system through their taxes.

The school's beautiful 100 acre campus includes extensive playing fields and some first class facilities for sport, cadets and adventurous outdoor activities, music, theatre and the visual arts in particular. The *Jonathan Edwards Sports Centre*, AstroTurf, the swimming pool and the *150 Building* for Art, Design and Theatre are valuable resources for the people of this whole area. The school recognises that in a rural area such as North Devon and Exmoor, facilities such as these are of particular importance, and is pleased to enable sports clubs, state primary and secondary schools and many groups throughout the area to use these facilities, often at little or no cost. A great many organisations share these facilities with the school throughout the year.

When the Rev Joseph Lloyd Brereton and the Fourth Earl Fortescue founded West Buckland School part of their vision was to create a school firmly established on Christian principles. This has been a consistent theme running through its history. The team chaplaincy contributes to the life of neighbouring parishes, and especially East Buckland where the school continues to hold regular services to which all members of the community are

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welcome. Without West Buckland School, its children and staff, it is hard to imagine that East Buckland Church would be able to continue its work.

Throughout the year, our teachers, support staff and West Buckland pupils work in many different ways with children and adults throughout the area and around the world. The range of activities is extensive and develops from year to year. In recent years this includes:

- Partnership with the Agoro Oyombe School in Kenya which involves pupils and staff from the Prep and Senior Schools throughout the year in a variety of projects to enrich the curriculum and develop the provision in both schools. The school funded a visit by a group of children from Agoro Oyombe to visit the school and UK
- Tree planting schemes on the campus to promote awareness of environmental issues, and in our partner school in Kenya
- Hosting and contributing to staff training for self-employed teachers or those employed in other schools in music and careers
- Hosting numerous sports tournaments and representative matches throughout the year, including cricket rugby, hockey, cricket, swimming, cross country, shooting and orienteering
- Providing use of school's swimming pool for local schools and clubs
- Providing coaching development opportunities for local cricket clubs
- Organising and participating in quiz, debating and public speaking events for maintained and independent schools throughout the south west
- Hosting concerts, book festivals and plays with visiting drama societies, artists and writers for other schools and members of the public
- Holding concerts in local churches and other venues free of charge for the benefit of the community
- Collaborative event for disabled musicians organised in partnership with SHARE
- Hosting of rehearsals for North Devon Sinfonia on school premises
- Contribute to drama, music and other festivals in local community
- Hosting free of charge auditions for Young Musicians Support to create opportunities for children who would not otherwise be able to fund their musical education
- Hosting group from local primary schools to learn skills in and have experiences in specialist areas where provision and expertise is lacking in smaller schools
- Voluntary work in a local care home for elderly people
- Contributing to community projects of all kinds in North Devon and Exmoor, including the Mires Project relating to climate change research
- Through the Duke of Edinburgh's Award and other activities, participate in voluntary work of all kinds
- Charitable fund raising in Prep and Senior Schools for charities, nationally and internationally but especially those focused in this area such as the *Samaritans*, *Action for Charity*, *Care for Kids*, *Calvert Trust* and *Farms for City Children*
- Releasing staff to contribute to an initiative to stimulate physics learning and teaching at a neighbouring community college

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- Providing opportunities for PGCE teachers to have school experience as part of their training to work in schools of all kinds
- Providing opportunities for adults who are considering a career in teaching to gain some prior experience of working in schools
- Release of teachers who are heavily in public examinations work at GCSE and A-level
- Website development for a local sports club
- Hosting meetings of the East and West Buckland Parish Council in the Downward Room
- Holding *Mums and Toddlers Group* for the local community in the Nursery
- Enabling organisations in the local community to hold events and meetings of many kinds on our campus, at little or no charge. Recent examples include ATC and OTC, cyclocross, orienteering
- The school enables the North Devon Astronomical Society to have its observatory on the campus at a peppercorn rent, and to host events at school
- Releasing senior member of staff to serve as magistrate

The ethos of West Buckland School encourages boys and girls to make the most of their own talents and opportunities and to use these for the good of others. We aim to develop an awareness of the needs of the wider community and for our students to become good citizens who will contribute strongly to their communities throughout their lives. This alone constitutes a service to our society, an incalculable public benefit.

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