

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 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 70 children, more than one in ten of the whole school. 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 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 700 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, theatre and the visual arts in particular. The recent additions of the *Jonathan Edwards Sports Centre* and the *150 Building* for Art, Design and Theatre have the potential to become 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, other 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. Today, the Christian Union is active within the school community and also shares its activities with local church groups. At no cost to the school, the Chaplain greatly assists the team ministry and makes a major contribution to worship at nearby East and West Buckland parish churches and the area's spiritual life. 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. It currently includes:

- Participation in a partnership with local maintained schools and the Branton Biosphere
- Partnership with a school in Kenya
- hosting and contributing to staff training in music and careers
- hosting numerous sports tournaments and representative matches, including cricket rugby, biathlon, hockey, swimming, cross country
- organising and hosting modern language events for schools throughout the south west,
- organising and participating in debating and public speaking events for maintained and independent schools throughout the south west
- hosting concerts and plays with visiting artists for other schools and members of the public
- taking groups of children to others schools to share their experience of Chinese New Year
- voluntary work in a local care home for elderly people
- through the Duke of Edinburgh's Award and other activities, participate in voluntary work of all kinds
- charitable fund raising for charities, especially those focused in this area such as Devon Air Ambulance
- West Buckland students visiting local primary schools to raise awareness of climate change issues
- 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
- Collaborative event for disabled musicians organised in partnership with SHARE
- Initiating and running *Jungle Voices*, a free musical event for local primary school children in the Jonathan Edwards Sports Centre
- Releasing staff to contribute to an initiative to stimulate Physics learning and teaching at a neighbouring community college
- 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
- Tree planting schemes on the campus to promote awareness of environmental issues, and in our partner school in Kenya
- Website development for a local sports club
- Providing teaching and resources for GCSE Astronomy course for members of the local community
- Enabling local groups to hold meetings of many kinds on our campus.

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.