

School inspection report

3 to 5 June and 17 September 2025

Burton Hathow School

Saxilby Road

Burton

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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'.

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Summary of inspection findings

1. Burton Hathow School is an inclusive and caring community.
2. At the beginning of the inspection, leaders had not fully implemented all the requirements of the statutory attendance guidance. This was rectified during inspection.
3. The board of directors and advisory committee meet with school leaders and develop a secure understanding of the school. Effective school self-evaluation informs the school's strategic planning and helps leaders ensure that through their work they are actively promoting the wellbeing of pupils and the aims of the school.
4. Leaders have designed a well-structured curriculum. Pupils acquire a broad range of knowledge and skills across a wide range of subjects. Leaders ensure that outdoor learning is a valued component of the curriculum. Teachers provide creative and engaging learning experiences and pupils participate with high levels of motivation. The provision of a broad range of extra-curricular clubs develops pupils' interests and promotes independence and creativity.
5. In the early years, there is a well-considered thematic programme of learning, covering the prime and specific areas of learning and development. An effective partnership between home and school means that teachers know the pupils in their care well. Children in the early years make good progress and are well prepared for the next stage of their education.
6. An appropriate assessment framework is in place. Pupils receive feedback on their work; however, they do not always understand how they can make further improvements.
7. Leaders respond to the individual needs of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and adapt the curriculum effectively when needed. Classroom teachers work closely with parents and specialist therapists to promote the wellbeing and academic development of pupils who have SEND.
8. Leaders and teachers implement the behaviour policy consistently. High expectations are set for behaviour and pupils are respectful of each other and of staff. Leaders monitor pastoral concerns closely and are swift to respond when required. A well-understood system of rewards is followed by teachers. Pupils are well behaved and polite.
9. Leaders have devised a suitable programme of personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) including the appropriate teaching of relationships education to pupils which takes account of their age. Staff foster an inclusive community and communicate the importance of mutual respect effectively. The mixed-age form group system for pupils in Years 3 to 6 contributes to their awareness of the needs of others across the different age groups. Pupils have opportunities to take on leadership roles such as house captain and school council representative, engendering a sense of responsibility and care for others.
10. Health and safety procedures, supervision and medical arrangements are robust, contributing effectively to pupils' welfare and safety.

11. A robust safeguarding policy is in place and staff understand the important role they play in safeguarding children. Staff know how to report concerns. Leaders collaborate effectively with external agencies ensuring vulnerable pupils are given support.
12. Leaders ensure that internet filtering and monitoring systems are in place to protect pupils from unsuitable content. Older pupils understand how to keep themselves safe online.

The extent to which the school meets the Standards

- Standards relating to leadership and management, and governance are met.
- Standards relating to the quality of education, training and recreation are met.
- Standards relating to pupils' physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing are met.
- Standards relating to pupils' social and economic education and contribution to society are met.
- Standards relating to safeguarding are met.

Recommended next steps

Leaders should:

- ensure all elements of the statutory guidance in relation to attendance are fully embedded across the school.

Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

13. The board of directors, advisory body and leaders work together to ensure that pupils at the school receive an effective education.
14. Leadership of learning in the early years is robust. Leaders help practitioners to develop their range of teaching skills and refine their classroom practice. This helps to ensure that the diverse needs of the children are met.
15. Leaders provide a nurturing and inclusive environment where pupils' wellbeing is central. Leaders know their pupils well and respond to their individual emotional needs through effective pastoral care and positive modelling of positive behaviour. This inclusive ethos is embedded throughout the school, fostering positive relationships between pupils and staff and contributing to the promotion of pupils' physical and mental wellbeing.
16. Members of the board and advisory committee have regular contact with school leaders. In collaboration with them, a school development plan has been drawn up, outlining the school's ongoing evaluation and strategic direction. This is reviewed regularly to ensure that the school's aims and ethos are being actively promoted.
17. Staff are well supported by the leadership of the school as they execute their roles and responsibilities. Leaders ensure that the behaviour policy is implemented with a high degree of consistency by teachers including the management of sanctions.
18. The school's accessibility plan identifies and appropriately addresses the needs of pupils who have disabilities and ensures they have access to the curriculum. Leaders ensure the school meets its duties under the Equality Act 2010. The school is an inclusive community which emphasises the importance of meeting the needs of a diverse range of pupils who are well catered for.
19. Leaders with responsibility for safeguarding have established links with outside agencies to promote the wellbeing of pupils. Detailed records are kept of any safeguarding issues that arise, including when leaders decide not to refer to external agencies.
20. Leaders have the necessary skills, knowledge and understanding to manage safeguarding concerns and situational risks. Staff receive regular training and updates in safeguarding matters.
21. Leaders identify risks to pupils' health and safety and mitigate them appropriately, including for on-site outdoor learning, which is a core feature of the curriculum for all pupils. Risk assessments are undertaken by staff who have the skills and knowledge to do so. Detailed understanding of the pupils in their care enables staff to manage risk effectively on educational trips and visits and to address any risks to pupils' safety.
22. Suitable information is made available to parents and carers on the school's website, as required by legislation. Leaders share with the local authority an annual account of income received and expenditure incurred for pupils with a funded education, health and care plan (EHC plan).
23. The complaints policy is comprehensive, and leaders have effective systems in place to follow up any complaints when they are made, within the specified time frames. Parents receive detailed reports three times per year informing them of their child's progress and areas for further development.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to leadership and management, and governance

24. All the relevant Standards are met.

Section 2: Quality of education, training and recreation

25. Leaders have designed a well-structured curriculum that enables pupils to acquire a broad range of knowledge and skills across a wide range of subjects. Specialist teaching in Spanish, music and art from the early years, along with mathematics, English, science and the humanities for older pupils, helps pupils to develop new skills and knowledge effectively.
26. In the early years, there is a well-considered thematic programme of learning, covering the prime and specific areas of learning and development. This includes opportunities for children to undertake activities in craft and engineering which foster problem-solving, risk-taking and language development. Teachers' use of skilled questioning deepens children's understanding in mathematical and scientific reasoning. Visual aids support vocabulary acquisition, particularly for those children developing expressive language. Children in Reception can write common words independently. They use their knowledge of the sounds letters make to read unfamiliar words correctly. Well-established routines and modelling by adults support children's sustained focus and the promotion of positive learning behaviours.
27. Children in the early years are confident communicators who engage actively with their learning. Learning is well supported by assessment systems that ensure continuity from Nursery to Reception. Children in the early years achieve a good level of development by the end of Reception and are well prepared for the next stage of their education.
28. Teachers create a purposeful atmosphere through use of thorough and clear guidance, explanations and constructive relationships with pupils. In mathematics lessons, teachers model calculations in clear, staged steps, developing pupils' understanding through guided demonstration. Teachers promote the use of subject terminology, and pupils in Year 6 use the terms 'vertices' and 'co-ordinates' with confidence and accuracy. Teachers' skilled questioning enables them to identify and address misconceptions.
29. Teachers help pupils to develop their speaking and listening skills across the curriculum. Pupils are encouraged to express views, present ideas, ask questions and listen. In English lessons, teachers prompt pupils to develop their ideas through discussion. This approach enables pupils to become confident, articulate communicators who engage respectfully and collaborate with their peers.
30. An assessment framework is in place. Teachers provide feedback to pupils; however, this does not always provide pupils with sufficient understanding of how to improve their work.
31. Teachers plan lessons which involve learning outdoors in order to develop pupils' practical skills. Teachers capitalise on the opportunities to develop cross-curricular links when working in the outdoor environment, for example, through links to the music curriculum. Pupils respond sensibly to the trust placed in them by their teachers and work with tools responsibly, developing new skills.
32. Leaders ensure that provision for pupils who have SEND is well matched to individuals' needs. Leaders prioritise the early identification of pupils who have SEND so that appropriate support can be swiftly put into place. This early additional support, such as through the effective deployment of support staff in the classroom, leads to pupils being able to access the curriculum fully. Teachers adapt lessons to support the needs of pupils who have SEND. Leaders and teachers collaborate with a range of specialist therapists and communicate closely with families. This has a positive impact on pupils' wellbeing and attainment. Pupils who have SEND make good progress.

33. The school maintains a register of pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL) which is shared with teachers. This means that pupils identified as speaking EAL receive specialist support to improve their fluency and understanding in English through a suitable programme.
34. Leaders provide specialist teaching for music, art, and design technology. In music lessons, pupils gain skills and knowledge in musical notation, composing and performance. All pupils have opportunities to perform in the choir and orchestra, whatever their level of ability. In art and design technology, each pupil develops their creative confidence through use of their own sketch book where they can explore their ideas freely. Pupils gain skills in drawing, painting using a variety of media and techniques, as well as collage making, 3D model making and stitching. Teachers provide ambitious target setting and ongoing verbal feedback which motivates pupils effectively.
35. Leaders provide a broad range of extra-curricular activities, in which pupils participate enthusiastically and develop new skills and interests. In gardening club, pupils in Year 1 and Year 2 maintain well-tended beds growing vegetables and flowers. In fashion club, older pupils show self-motivation and independence while working to turn remnants of fabric into an outfit.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to the quality of education, training and recreation

- 36. All the relevant Standards are met.**

Section 3: Pupils' physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing

37. Leaders and teachers know pupils well and prioritise pupils' wellbeing, creating a nurturing environment where pupils feel secure, both physically and emotionally.
38. Leaders had not fully implemented all aspects of the statutory guidance on attendance. This was rectified by the end of the inspection. The admission register is recorded accurately, and the school informs the local authority when pupils leave or join the school at non-standard transition points.
39. Leaders promote an inclusive community. Pupils demonstrate that they understand the importance of mutual respect. Staff act as positive role models and support pupils to take responsibility for their actions. Adults within the school forge respectful relationships with pupils, contributing to the development of pupils' confidence and self-esteem.
40. Leaders deliver PSHE through dedicated lessons as well as in form times, assemblies and a programme of visiting speakers. Pupils learn about different types of drugs, their effects on the body and mind, and the broader social, legal and emotional implications of drug use. Pupils also learn about how to stay safe, for example, pupils in Year 3 identify common hazards in the home and how to protect themselves. Pupils in Year 2 develop their understanding of road safety as well as how to stay safe when around deep water.
41. The relationships education curriculum is delivered appropriately and is taught as part of the PSHE curriculum. Pupils explore what is different and special about each of us, the importance of treating others with respect, what makes a healthy friendship and how relationships can change as we get older. The teaching of relationships education is in accordance with statutory guidelines and takes into account the ages of the pupils.
42. Pupils respond positively to their teachers' high expectations regarding behaviour and conduct. Pupils show kindness and respect for each other in lessons and as they move calmly around the school. When minor disagreements do occur, these are handled thoughtfully and skilfully by teachers who employ a restorative approach, which encourages pupils to repair relationships and put things right. Pupils' wellbeing is promoted further through them having easy access to a school counsellor who offers one-to-one support.
43. Leaders have put in place comprehensive policies for behaviour and anti-bullying, which are followed consistently by staff. Regular reviews of behaviour logs enable rigorous oversight of pastoral matters by leaders and the swift identification of any patterns and trends so that appropriate action can be taken. Pupils can distinguish between bullying and unkindness and know they can approach staff for support when needed. Pupils are motivated to do their best. Pupils take genuine pleasure in the achievements of others.
44. Subject specialists teach the physical education (PE) and games curriculum to pupils. Pupils develop skills and knowledge in a range of sports such as football and netball. The use of practical demonstrations and step-by-step guidance allow pupils to build their technique progressively, resulting in noticeable improvements in form and consistency, for example in a lesson focusing on the development of ball skills for pupils in Years 3 to 6. Pupils have frequent opportunities to

participate in sporting fixtures and events at both a local and national level, building teamwork and confidence in their abilities.

45. The physical development of children in the early years to pupils in Year 6 is promoted through daily opportunities to play in dedicated spaces, and through a varied and stimulating outdoor learning programme. Teachers enable pupils to take part in outdoor activities which develop a variety of skills, with an emphasis on the safe use of tools and the safe management of fire. Supervision is effective throughout the school, including during break and lunchtime.
46. The appropriate staff-to-child ratios are maintained in the early years. The warm and empathetic approach by staff fosters a nurturing environment where children in the early years feel safe and confident to engage in activities and try new things. Targeted praise and rewards promote self-esteem and motivation, while clear routines promote emotional security and good behaviour. Roles such as 'special helper' encourage children to take responsibility for themselves and care for others. An appropriate programme of activities for those below school age promotes their physical, mental and emotional wellbeing.
47. Health and safety measures are implemented appropriately and in accordance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. Pupils know what to do in the case of fire. Regular fire drills are recorded appropriately. Staff are adequately trained, and suitable fire precautions are in place. The premises is maintained to the required standard, with risks identified in a timely and effective manner.
48. Suitable facilities and arrangements are in place to care for pupils who become unwell or who have specific medical needs. Staff receive regular training in first aid, including paediatric first aid training for those who work in the early years, with a suitably qualified member of staff always available.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to pupils' physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing

- 49. All the relevant Standards are met.**

Section 4: Pupils' social and economic education and contribution to society

50. Leaders know pupils well across the school community. Teachers support pupils in building positive and supportive relationships with one another. Assigning pupils from different age groups into form groups across Years 3 to 6 promotes pupils' friendships and understanding across the age range. The 'buddy' system also enhances this sense of belonging, by encouraging older pupils to support and engage with those who are younger.
51. Leaders cultivate pupils' personal development further by providing pupils of all ages with formal and informal roles of responsibility, such as school council representatives, house captains and school counsellors, enhancing their confidence, decision-making capacity and interpersonal skills.
52. Leaders provide opportunities to develop pupils' career aspirations. For example, pupils visit the home of the Red Arrows and Formula One gaining an insight into careers relating to science, technology, engineering and mathematics.
53. Pupils build their knowledge and understanding of different cultures through a range of experiences at the school. Leaders organise visits to local museums and public institutions, including places of worship. Teachers help pupils to understand religious observances and celebrations in religious education (RE) lessons. Pupils learn to respect different beliefs and practices. Pupils engage in presentations and activities on 'International Day', highlighting cultural customs from around the world.
54. Leaders develop links with the local community which supports pupils' social awareness and development. Pupils engage in visits to a care home which helps to develop a sense of their place within a wider community and begins to foster a greater sense of social responsibility.
55. Pupils develop their understanding of the democratic process by voting for leadership roles among their peers. Teachers also arrange visits from external speakers which help to broaden pupils' knowledge of democracy, for example when a parent delivered a talk on the American election system, expanding understanding of political and cultural issues beyond those in the UK.
56. Leaders ensure economic education is embedded through practical experiences. Pupils are equipped with an understanding of financial concepts and budgeting skills. In food technology lessons, pupils must manage a fixed sum of money as they plan and make items on a menu. On their residential trip, pupils in Year 6 take responsibility for their spending money when using pre-paid cards and cash.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to pupils' social and economic education and contribution to society

57. All the relevant Standards are met.

Safeguarding

58. The board of directors and advisory body have effective oversight of the school's safeguarding arrangements, holding regular meetings with the headteacher and other senior leaders to check that the safeguarding policy is being put into practice. This includes undertaking an annual safeguarding review.
59. Those with designated safeguarding responsibilities are suitably trained for their role. They identify and respond promptly and appropriately to safeguarding matters involving pupils. Leaders make referrals as needed. They act on the advice of appropriate safeguarding partners and maintain records in line with statutory guidance.
60. Staff receive training in safeguarding during induction, annual staff development days and through regular updates throughout the school year. A log of staff training is maintained, and staff understand their obligations and the important role they play in keeping pupils safe.
61. The staff code of conduct includes guidance on how low-level concerns about adults working with children should be managed. Staff know how to report these concerns. Records are held centrally and reviewed regularly.
62. Pupils know how to report concerns to adults in school. Adults follow up all concerns promptly and take appropriate action.
63. Older pupils know how to keep themselves safe online at home and in school. They know to whom they should report any online concerns. Robust internet filtering and monitoring systems are in place, and these are tested regularly.
64. A comprehensive safer recruitment policy is in place which is followed. Members of the board, advisory committee and leaders have clear understanding of their responsibilities in the safer recruitment of staff. The required checks are carried out before any person starts work at the school and are recorded in the single central record of appointments (SCR).

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to safeguarding

65. All the relevant Standards are met.

School details

School	Burton Hathow Preparatory School
Department for Education number	925/6004
Address	Burton Hathow Preparatory School Saxilby Road Burton Lincoln LN1 2BB
Phone number	01522 702657
Email address	info@burtonhathow.co.uk
Website	www.burtonhathow.co.uk
Proprietor	Burton Hathow Preparatory School Ltd
Chair	Mr Simon Robinson
Headteacher	Mr Reece Murphy
Age range	2 to 11
Number of pupils	104
Date of previous inspection	28 June to 1 July 2022

Information about the school

66. Burton Hathow Preparatory School is an independent day school for male and female pupils aged between two and 11 years. It is located near Lincoln, Lincolnshire. The school was founded in 2013 and is governed by the board of directors of Burton Hathow Preparatory School Ltd, supported by a local advisory group, and owned by a small group of founding shareholders, which includes the board of directors. A new headteacher was appointed in January 2025.
67. There are 49 children in the early years, comprising three classes, including one in Reception, one in Nursery, known as Butterflies, and one in the pre-nursery, known as Caterpillars.
68. The school has identified 15 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Four pupils in the school have an education, health and care plan (EHC plan).
69. The school has identified English as an additional language for two pupils.
70. The school states its aims are to give children the best possible start in life, through offering a happy, fun and stimulating education. It endeavours to extend learning beyond the classroom to promote each child's personal, social and intellectual development, through the provision of a broad and specialist educational experience. The objective is that high academic standards combined with real life skills will ensure that pupils are fully prepared for the next step in their education and for life itself.

Inspection details

Inspection dates

3 to 5 June and 18 September 2025

71. A team of three inspectors visited the school for two and a half days in June. The quality assurance of the inspection identified that further evidence was required to secure the inspection judgements. One inspector returned to the school for one day to gather additional evidence in September.

72. Inspection activities included:

- observation of lessons, some in conjunction with school leaders
- observation of registration periods and assemblies
- observation of a sample of extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection
- discussions with the chair of the board of directors
- discussions with the headteacher, school leaders, managers and other members of staff
- discussions with pupils
- visits to the learning support area and facilities for physical education
- scrutiny of samples of pupils' work
- scrutiny of a range of policies, documentation and records provided by the school.

73. The inspection team considered the views of pupils, members of staff and parents who responded to ISI's pre-inspection surveys.

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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