

School inspection report

13 to 15 January 2026

Burlington House School

Bishops Avenue

Fulham

London

SW6 6EG

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. Leaders have a well-considered vision for the school which they implement effectively. They are clear about what they want the school to provide for pupils, and they ensure that it does so. Leaders share their vision so that it is known and understood by pupils, staff and parents. Leaders make promoting pupils' wellbeing their top priority. They regularly monitor and review the quality of provision and take action so that it continues to develop.
2. The proprietor checks that leaders have the knowledge and skills they need and that they carry out their roles effectively. Governors provide appropriate support and challenge to leaders. As a result, the Standards are met consistently.
3. Leaders are ambitious for pupils and determined that they should achieve well. A suitable curriculum is in place throughout the school, covering a wide range of subjects. Teachers have good knowledge and understanding of the subjects they teach. They work closely with therapeutic and support staff to provide the individualised support that pupils need. Pupils make good progress from their starting points and achieve well.
4. Leaders place great emphasis on the importance of respect. Pupils are expected to treat other people fairly and kindly, and they respond well to these expectations. The personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) curriculum teaches pupils about the diversity in modern society. They learn that everyone should be treated equally and with respect. This helps the school to be a welcoming and friendly place where pupils feel accepted and valued.
5. Health and safety procedures, including those relating to fire safety, are robust. The school is clean and well maintained. However, some recommended actions from the school's most recent fire risk assessment have not yet been carried out and are now overdue. These actions are related to maintenance issues and do not present a safety concern for pupils.
6. Leaders provide a suitable careers programme that includes a range of work experience opportunities. However, the programme is not delivered consistently throughout the school. As a result, some pupils do not receive the good quality provision that they should.
7. The school has a positive safeguarding culture. Leaders and staff receive regular training that provides them with the knowledge and understanding they need. Staff are vigilant and notice possible signs of abuse or neglect. They report concerns about pupils promptly when they arise. Leaders take swift and effective action to protect pupils, where necessary.
8. Safer recruitment practices are robust. All required checks are carried out before anyone is allowed to start work at the school. When checked at the start of the inspection, the school's single central record of pre-appointment checks contained some minor administrative errors. These were rectified fully before the end of the on-site inspection.

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:

- develop systems for completing and checking the single central record of pre-appointment checks to avoid administrative errors
- ensure that actions identified in fire risk assessments are consistently addressed in a timely manner
- ensure that the careers education programme is delivered consistently well throughout the senior school and sixth form so that all pupils receive good quality provision.

Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

9. Leaders have a clear vision for the school, which is widely known and understood. Leaders are committed to enabling pupils to enjoy school and to be successful. They make promoting pupils' wellbeing their highest priority. Leaders understand very well the specific needs and vulnerabilities of the pupils the school caters for. They make sure that provision is suitable to enable pupils to learn effectively, such as through the approach to teaching and the provision of therapies. Leaders are ambitious for pupils and determined that they should achieve their potential, so that they are prepared well for adulthood. They are successful in this aim, and pupils are prepared well for their next steps after leaving school.
10. Leaders throughout the school have the knowledge and skills they need. Leaders have clear roles and responsibilities which they carry out effectively. Their skills and experience complement each other well. The school's three sites are each led and managed well.
11. Leaders put appropriate systems in place for monitoring and developing the school. The leadership team meets weekly to discuss the quality of provision. They regularly analyse all aspects of the school to identify what is working well and areas to develop. Leaders make plans to address the areas they identify which they implement fully.
12. Governance arrangements are robust and well considered. Governors know the school well. It is part of a group of five schools who all provide governance for each other. Governors provide support and challenge to leaders. This enables them to assure the proprietor that the Standards are met consistently.
13. Leaders keep up to date with changes to policy and legislation. They review policies routinely and update them, as necessary, so that they remain in line with current guidance. Leaders share policies appropriately with pupils and staff so that they are widely known and understood. Policies are implemented consistently throughout the school.
14. All required information is made available to parents and others via the school's website. The school reports to parents about their child's progress and attainment. Leaders provide written reports to parents termly, in addition to the provision of information about the curriculum.
15. Leaders put effective arrangements in place to manage complaints. They see communication as the first stage in addressing any parental concerns. Leaders communicate well with parents through phone calls, emails and face-to-face meetings. The school has a suitable complaints process that meets requirements. The school receives few formal complaints. Those that are received are dealt with in line with the school's policy.
16. Leaders maintain positive relationships with the local authorities the school works with. Statutory annual reviews of education, health and care plans (EHC plans) are carried out in a timely fashion. Leaders report to the local authority about pupils' absences, when necessary. They also report when pupils leave or join the school at non-standard transition points, as they are required to do.
17. The school meets its responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010. It has a suitable accessibility plan which is executed well. The plan focuses both on physical access to the school and on access to the curriculum for all pupils. The school is a friendly place where everyone is welcomed.

18. Risk management procedures are robust. Staff receive appropriate training in risk assessment. This helps them to identify, consider and mitigate risks, including those that are not immediately obvious. Suitable risk assessments are in place covering, for example, off-site visits and the day-to-day life of the school. Specific risk assessments are put in place to support individual pupils, when necessary. These assessments are reviewed regularly and updated as necessary.

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

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

Section 2: Quality of education, training and recreation

20. Leaders think carefully about the curriculum and what they want it to achieve. They regularly review the curriculum and adapt it to ensure that it meets pupils' needs well. Leaders check that schemes of work and other curriculum plans are suitable. They understand the challenges that pupils' special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) can present in terms of their learning. Leaders address these effectively so that pupils make good progress. Leaders' high expectations encourage pupils to achieve well.
21. The prep school curriculum is based on the national curriculum. Leaders place particular emphasis on English, mathematics and computing but the curriculum remains well balanced and is suitably broad. Subjects taught in the prep curriculum include science, drama, art, history and Spanish. Pupils in the prep school benefit from sharing some of the senior school's resources, such as the food technology room. The school uses well-chosen schemes of work, including for mathematics and phonics.
22. Pupils continue to experience a broad curriculum as they move into the senior school. At GCSE level, pupils study a core of English, mathematics and science alongside a range of other options. The curriculum also includes entry level and functional skills qualifications to meet pupils' individual needs. In addition, the senior school curriculum includes 'skills for learning' sessions where pupils learn specific study skills.
23. The sixth-form curriculum is devised to be bespoke to pupils' needs. It includes courses at a range of levels, including GCSE, BTEC firsts and A level. Subjects offered include information technology, media, child development, history, sociology and psychology, alongside English, mathematics and the sciences (biology, chemistry and physics). The curriculum also includes a level one 'work skills' course matched to pupils' needs. About half of pupils go on to university courses after leaving the sixth form, a quarter go on to further education colleges and the remainder to supported internships, such as in the hospitality industry.
24. Teachers throughout the school deliver the curriculum effectively. They have good knowledge and understanding about pupils' specific needs, such as dyslexia and dyscalculia. Teachers give pupils a clear message that making mistakes is part of learning. This helps pupils to gain confidence so that they are prepared to 'have a go' and to try new things. Teachers have high expectations about behaviour and make these clear to pupils. Pupils show good attitudes to learning and work hard in lessons.
25. Teachers work together with speech and language therapists, occupational therapists, counsellors and emotional literacy support assistants to provide what each pupil needs to enable them to access the curriculum successfully. Staff understand that approaches need to be adapted to suit each pupil. They do this well, including by using carefully selected resources. Pupils are provided with well-focused individual support that helps them to make good progress.
26. Provision for pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL) is suitable. Pupils are assessed so that their needs are identified accurately. Staff provide support that enables pupils who speak EAL to access the curriculum fully and develop socially. For example, pupils are taught specific words in a structured way to ensure that they are able to use key vocabulary, when needed, in lessons. Pupils who speak EAL make good progress from their starting points.

27. The approach to assessment is appropriate and well developed. Pupils are first assessed as part of the admission process, to ensure that the school can provide effectively for their needs. Teachers routinely check that pupils understand and remember what they are taught. More formal assessments are carried out periodically. Leaders use assessment information to monitor the progress pupils make. They identify where changes to teaching approaches or additional support are required. Staff provide pupils with carefully targeted feedback, including 'next steps' to improve their work. This helps to ensure that pupils make good progress.
28. The school provides a range of enrichment opportunities to promote emotional and intellectual development as well as creative and physical skills. For example, pupils take part in The Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme (DofE) at bronze, silver and gold level. Other enrichment activities include art, board games, sports coaching and statistics. The curriculum is organised so that all pupils can participate in their chosen activities twice a week. In the sixth form, pupils are offered activities that are matched to their stage of development. Some activities are aimed at preparing pupils for their adult lives, such as sessions about the driving theory test.

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

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

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

30. Leaders make clear their expectation that all members of the school's community should treat each other with respect. Leaders and staff model respect in their interactions with pupils and with each other. They put suitable measures in place to support pupils whose special educational needs and/or disabilities make it more challenging for them to understand and respond appropriately to other people's behaviour.
31. PSHE is a key aspect of the curriculum that is taught effectively in all parts of the school. Pupils learn about the ways that people can be different, such as race, religion and disability. They learn the importance of accepting and celebrating those differences. This helps to make the school a respectful place, where pupils are confident to speak about their own needs. The PSHE curriculum includes a range of other important areas such as drugs and alcohol, healthy lifestyles and mental health. These topics are returned to periodically so that pupils build on their previous learning.
32. The physical education (PE) curriculum is planned and delivered effectively by specialist staff. The curriculum enables pupils to acquire new knowledge and develop their skills across a range of sports. For example, pupils take part in yoga and 'mindful movement' as well as gym sessions and traditional striking and fielding games. Pupils are given the opportunity to engage in sports both competitively and recreationally, depending on their ability and motivation.
33. The relationships and sex education (RSE) curriculum is appropriate and taught well. Pupils learn about relationships, starting with friendships and families. They learn about healthy, respectful relationships and contrast these with challenging and abusive ones. Pupils receive suitable, age-appropriate sex education covering important issues such as consent, contraception and managing intimacy. Pupils are provided with the knowledge and information they need for their adult lives.
34. Pupils are encouraged to be reflective. They are given opportunities to think about their own beliefs and their place in the school community and the wider world. The school provides spaces, both indoors and outdoors, for pupils to take time to sit quietly and reflect. Pupils' sessions with counsellors and other therapists provide additional space for them to develop their spiritual and moral understanding. They learn about and celebrate a range of faiths and cultures through assemblies, church services and the curriculum, particularly within PSHE.
35. Health and safety measures are robust across the three sites. The school is clean and well maintained. Regular checks are made about aspects such as electrical safety, storage of cleaning materials and site security. Suitable fire safety measures are also in place. For example, fire extinguishers and alarms are checked and serviced regularly. The school commissions a fire risk assessment to be carried out annually by an external company. Leaders and the proprietor act on the recommendations for improvement from these assessments. However, some actions from the most recent fire risk assessment are yet to be carried out despite recommendations for them to be carried out sooner. These works relate to building maintenance and do not present a safety risk to pupils.
36. First aid is administered in a timely manner by suitably qualified staff. A medical room is available on each site, for first aid to be provided or for pupils to rest comfortably if they are unwell. Suitable

procedures are in place for the administration of medicines. Robust records are kept both of first aid provided and medication administered.

37. Leaders and staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. They work with pupils, where necessary, to help them understand what is and is not acceptable behaviour and how their actions may affect other people. Leaders and staff implement the behaviour policy consistently and fairly. As a result, pupils behave well throughout the school.
38. Pupils are taught about bullying and the forms it can take. They learn about the impact that bullying can have on other people and how it can impact the whole school community. Incidents of bullying are rare. When it does occur, leaders take prompt and effective action so that concerns are sorted out quickly.
39. Admission and attendance registers are well maintained and include all required information. Leaders monitor pupils' attendance closely. They take appropriate action to tackle absence when necessary.
40. Pupils are well supervised in lessons and during less structured parts of the school day. The school is well staffed and there are always adults available to provide help and support.

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

41. All the relevant Standards are met.

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

42. Fundamental British values are promoted across the school to help prepare pupils for life in British society. Pupils' understanding of democracy is fostered through opportunities to vote in elections for the school council and for positions such as head of house. Visits to the Houses of Parliament help pupils to learn about the democratic process and the role of MPs.
43. Pupils are taught that people have different beliefs, values and experiences. They learn to understand and accept that other people's views, beliefs and opinions, while different to their own, should be tolerated and valued. Pupils are taught about the importance of equality and fairness. They learn about the importance of compassion by, for example, talking about the plight of refugees.
44. Leaders prioritise the development of key life skills, so that pupils can move confidently into adulthood. For example, in the sixth form, some pupils work with a travel trainer to help them learn to safely and confidently use public transport. Therapists lead sessions, as part of a sixth-form transition programme, that teach pupils about managing stress, meal planning, independent living and self-advocacy.
45. Pupils learn about the inequalities in society and how people can play a part in addressing them. For example, they learn about homelessness and the necessity for foodbanks. Pupils raise money for the charities that support these areas. Links with a school in Cambodia help pupils to gain a wider perspective about the world. Some pupils study citizenship at GCSE level, which helps them to develop a deeper understanding of rights and responsibilities in the wider world.
46. Pupils learn about the difference between right and wrong through, for example, the consistent implementation of the school's rules. Pupils are given the support they need to understand how their conduct and behaviour may affect other people. They learn that actions have consequences. Pupils learn about laws and the possible results of breaking them in adult life.
47. Economic education is taught effectively so that pupils are prepared well for adult life. Pupils' knowledge and understanding is built up steadily as they progress through the school. For example, pupils in Year 8 learn about banking and how to budget for a trip overseas while in Years 9 and 10 pupils learn about salaries and debts. 'Skills for learning' lessons equip pupils with the knowledge they need about important issues such as mortgages, credit cards and taxation.
48. In the sixth form, pupils are given support to develop their employability skills and their understanding of the world of work. This is supported by a wide range of work experience opportunities. Pupils are supported well with the university application process. However, there is inconsistency in the implementation of the careers education programme across the school. Pupils are not always provided with detailed and specific support about particular career pathways.
49. Pupils are given a range of opportunities to take on responsibilities as they move through the school. For example, each site has an active school council where elected members voice their views and influence the direction of the school.

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

50. All the relevant Standards are met.

Safeguarding

51. The school has an effective safeguarding culture. There are safeguarding leaders on each of the three sites, who work together well as a whole-school team. There are always well-trained leaders available for pupils and staff to talk to when concerns arise.
52. Staff receive suitable safeguarding training as part of their induction when they join the school. They receive detailed annual training so that they are made aware of changes to statutory guidance and local safeguarding practices. Staff are also provided with regular updates about specific aspects of safeguarding, such as the 'Prevent' duty. As a result, staff are knowledgeable and well trained.
53. Leaders understand the school's particular contextual risks well. For example, leaders recognise that the internet can present particular risks for pupils at the school. Leaders address this through ongoing teaching to help pupils recognise these risks and to provide strategies to help them to tackle them. Where necessary, leaders put clear and specific risk assessments in place to protect individual pupils.
54. Staff report concerns about pupils promptly, using the school's agreed processes. Leaders take appropriate action in a timely fashion in response to the concerns raised. They work closely with local safeguarding partners including children's social care, the police and child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS).
55. Leaders put systems in place for staff to report any low-level concerns or allegations about adults in the school. Staff report concerns promptly when they arise. Leaders take suitable action in response to any concerns raised.
56. The school has robust processes in place to ensure that only suitable people are employed to work with pupils. All required checks are completed before anyone is allowed to take up their post. However, when checked, the school's single central record of pre-appointment checks contained minor administrative errors. These were rectified before the end of the on-site inspection.
57. Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe through the PSHE curriculum, assemblies and tutor time. They learn about the importance of online safety, such as being cautious about giving out personal information to people they do not know. Suitable systems are in place to filter the online content that pupils have access to and to monitor their use of the internet. Leaders take prompt and appropriate action to address any issues that arise.
58. The proprietor operates a suitable protocol for addressing any serious incidents that occur. Leaders know how to activate the serious incident protocol and do so without hesitation, when necessary. When such incidents occur, they are dealt with promptly and effectively as a result.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to safeguarding

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

School details

School	Burlington House School
Department for Education number	205/6395
Address	Burlington House School Bishops Avenue Fulham London SW6 6EG
Phone number	020 7610 9018
Email address	headteacher@burlingtonhouseschool.com
Website	www.burlingtonhouseschool.com
Proprietor	Cavendish Education
Chair	Aatif Hassan
Headteacher	Mrs Nicola Lovell
Age range	7 to 21
Number of pupils	183
Date of previous inspection	22 to 24 November 2022

Information about the school

60. Burlington House is a co-educational day school in Fulham, London. It is a special school that caters for pupils who have dyslexia and other learning difficulties. The school is owned by a limited company, who form the governing body. The school operates on three sites. The prep and senior school departments are a short walk apart in Fulham. The sixth form provision is located in Hammersmith.
61. The school has identified all pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities. One hundred and sixty-one pupils in the school have an education, health and care plan.
62. The school has identified six pupils as speaking English as an additional language.
63. The school states its aims are to understand that every one of its pupils is different and to adapt teaching accordingly. It aims to offer a mainstream curriculum with specialist provision and integrated therapy. The school states it aims to provide a safe, warm, caring and stimulating environment that enables pupils to develop their skills, talents, resilience and self-confidence so that they realise their full academic potential and live independent lives. The school states it aims to provide an education for young people who struggle in mainstream schools in order to prepare them with the skills they need for the future.

Inspection details

Inspection dates

13 to 15 January 2026

64. A team of four inspectors visited the school for two and a half days.

65. 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
- a discussion with the chair of governors
- discussions with the headteacher, school leaders and other members of staff
- discussions with pupils
- scrutiny of samples of pupils' work
- scrutiny of a range of policies, documentation and records provided by the school.

66. 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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