

Progress monitoring inspection report

6 March 2026

Handel House Preparatory School

The Northolme

Gainsborough

DN21 2JB

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 does not meet all the relevant Standards that were considered during this inspection. A schedule of unmet Standards is included at the end of the report.

Inspection findings

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

ISSR paragraphs 7(a) and 7(b); 9, 10, 15, 16; EYFS 3.4, 3.5, 3.7, 3.12, 3.13, 3.30, 3.31, 3.32, 3.73, 3.89, 3.91

1. The proprietor does not maintain sufficient oversight of the school's safeguarding policy and procedures to ensure they are robust and effective.
2. Leaders and staff understand when it is appropriate to refer safeguarding concerns to the local authority. Leaders with responsibility for safeguarding make appropriate referrals promptly. However, the school's safeguarding records are not maintained in accordance with current statutory guidance. Leaders do not consistently include the decisions made, and subsequent actions taken, to promote pupils' wellbeing and safety. Records of meetings and related email communication between the school and external agencies or parents are not included in safeguarding files.
3. Since the previous inspection, leaders have ensured that staff understand the procedures for reporting low-level concerns about the conduct of adults. The staff code of conduct contains a section on low-level concerns as required by statutory guidance. Leaders now maintain suitable records of such concerns, monitor them to analyse potential patterns, and take appropriate action. However, the safeguarding policy does not reflect school procedures with regard to the reporting of concerns of allegations about adults, naming a currently non-existent advisory board as a body to whom low-level concerns should be reported under some circumstances.
4. Since the previous inspection, as part of the recruitment process, prospective new staff have completed an application form prior to interview. The headteacher monitors recruitment to ensure correct processes are followed. However, Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) certificates are sometimes retained in staff personnel files, in contravention of current statutory guidance.
5. Since the previous inspection, the proprietor has ensured that the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) is a member of the senior leadership team and has the appropriate authority to act in the best interests of children. Leaders with responsibility for safeguarding are appropriately trained to carry out their roles.
6. Leaders provide all staff with safeguarding training as part of their induction to the school. Ongoing training is regular and takes place at least annually. It reflects the contextual risks to pupils and the requirements of current statutory guidance. Staff confidently identify and report concerns, such as unexplained behavioural changes or patterns of absence.
7. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe both within and beyond school, including when online. This is achieved through personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) lessons.
8. Since the previous inspection, the proprietor has ensured that the DSL maintains effective oversight of the internet filtering and monitoring system. Any breaches are responded to appropriately.
9. The school encourages pupils to feel confident about reporting any worries that they might have and responds appropriately to their concerns.

10. The behaviour and anti-bullying policies are now implemented effectively. Records are kept of any allegations of bullying and incidents of poor behaviour. Leaders maintain a suitable log of serious sanctions.
11. Since the previous inspection, the proprietor has ensured that the admission and attendance procedures meet the requirements of current statutory guidance. The attendance policy names a senior attendance champion and identifies the length of registration periods. Staff formally record pupils' attendance during registration periods using the correct codes. The admission and attendance registers are maintained electronically as required.
12. Since the previous inspection, the school has maintained risk assessments for the premises and accommodation, or for areas of school provision which can carry additional risk. Risk assessments for educational visits and trips are written by the headteacher, and relevant staff are then consulted. Risk assessments consider the particular needs and number of pupils participating in trips and educational visits and identify the staff who will accompany them. The school's risk assessments identify potential risks and measures to mitigate these across all areas of the school's provision.
13. The school does not meet the Standards.

Part 6. Provision of information

ISSR paragraph 32

14. The school now provides and makes available to parents all required information. In particular, the school provides parents with year-round contact information for the proprietor, and information about pupils' academic performance for the previous academic year. The school also publishes information about the number of formal complaints submitted during the previous academic year. Leaders publish the current safeguarding policy on the school's website.
15. The school meets the Standards.

Part 7. Manner in which complaints are handled

16. ISSR paragraph 33; EYFS 3.98

17. Leaders respond to parental concerns in a timely manner. Since the previous inspection, leaders have maintained appropriate records of formal complaints, which include the original communication from parents and any actions taken and resolutions reached.
18. The school meets the Standards.

Part 8. Quality of leadership and management of schools

ISSR paragraph 34

19. Since the previous inspection, the proprietor and leaders have strengthened procedures with regard to behaviour, bullying, admission and attendance, risk assessment, the provision of information, and the management of complaints. As a result, the school now meets the Standards in these areas.
20. However, the proprietor does not ensure that leaders always demonstrate good knowledge and skills or fulfil all their responsibilities effectively in order to promote the wellbeing of the pupils. In particular, leaders do not ensure that the Standards relating to safeguarding are consistently met.
21. The school does not meet the Standards.

Schedule of unmet Standards

The following standards are not met

Paragraph number	Standard
ISSR ¹ Part 3 paragraph 7	The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that -
7(a)	arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school; and
7(b)	such arrangements have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State.
ISSR Part 8, paragraph 34(1)	The standard about the quality of leadership and management is met if the proprietor ensures that persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school –
34(1)(a)	demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role so that the independent school standards are met consistently
34(1)(b)	fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently; and
34(1)(c)	actively promote the wellbeing of pupils.
EYFS ² 3.5	Providers must have and implement policies and procedures to keep children safe and meet EYFS requirements. Schools are not required to have separate policies to cover EYFS requirements provided the requirements are already met through an existing policy. Where providers are required to have policies and procedures as specified below, these policies and procedures should be recorded in writing. Policies and procedures should be in line with the guidance and procedures of the relevant LSP.
EYFS 3.7	Providers must put appropriate whistleblowing procedures in place for all staff (including students and volunteers) to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice in the setting's safeguarding provision. This must include when and how to report concerns and the process that will be followed after staff report concerns. Providers must ensure staff are aware of the setting's whistleblowing procedures and must ensure all staff feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and know that such concerns will be taken seriously by the senior leadership team.

¹ The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('ISSR')

² Early years foundation stage statutory framework ('EYFS')

School details

School	Handel House Preparatory School
Department for Education number	925/6023
Address	Handel House Preparatory School The Northolme Gainsborough Lincolnshire DN21 2JB
Phone number	01427 612426
Email address	admin@handelhouse.com
Website	www.handelhouseschool.com
Proprietor	Mr Mark Raisborough
Headteacher	Mr Mark Raisborough
Age range	3 to 11
Number of pupils	42
Date of previous inspection	14 to 16 October 2025

Information about the school

22. Handel House Preparatory School is an independent co-educational day school situated in Gainsborough, Lincolnshire. The headteacher is also the proprietor of the school.
23. There are six children in Nursery and four children in Reception, taught together in one class.
24. The school has identified four pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities. No pupils in the school have an education, health and care plan.
25. The school has identified five pupils for whom English is an additional language).
26. The school states that its aims are to encourage all pupils to love learning. It endeavours to place importance on personal, social and citizenship education so that pupils develop good manners and a spirit of responsibility towards those in school and in wider society.

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, Early Years Foundation Stage requirements and any other requirements that the school was judged not to comply with at its previous inspection.

Inspection details

Inspection date

6 March 2026

27. Two reporting inspectors visited the school for one day.

28. Inspection activities included:

- scrutiny of a range of policies, documentation and records provided by the school and information available on the school's website
- discussions with the headteacher, also the proprietor, school leaders, managers and other members of staff
- discussions with pupils.

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**.

Independent Schools Inspectorate

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