

North Bridge House Senior School

6-9 Canonbury Place, London, N1 2NQ

Inspection dates 12–14 May 2015

Overall effectiveness	Outstanding	1
Leadership and management	Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching	Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils	Outstanding	1
Sixth form provision	Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings

This is an outstanding school.

- The leadership and management of the school are outstanding. The headteacher has made a highly positive impact in establishing high standards in all areas of the school's work. Together with the proprietor, he has ensured that all the independent school standards are met.
- Teaching is consistently good and often outstanding. It is well planned and engages students fully in a wide range of innovative learning activities.
- Students are fully engaged in their learning and achieve exceptionally well from their starting points. Those with additional learning needs or for whom English is not their principal language make rapid progress because work is focused on what they need to learn.
- Sixth form students are well prepared for their future. Highly effective teaching and support from dedicated staff ensure that students' academic and personal development is outstanding.
- The curriculum covers all the required areas of learning. In addition, personal, social and health education, and a well-organised enrichment and extra-curricular programme contribute well to students' excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Behaviour is outstanding in lessons and around the school because the school sets consistently high expectations through the implementation of the rewards and sanctions policy.
- Meticulous attention to detail in all policies and in the implementation of procedures ensures that the welfare, health and safety of students remain a priority. Students report that they feel safe, are well looked after and enjoy school.
- Parents and carers are highly satisfied with the school and appreciate the support their children receive. They recommend the school without hesitation.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets schedule 1 of The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, as amended 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection was carried out with one day's notice.
- The inspector observed 10 lessons, looked at pupils' work, teachers' planning and information about pupils' progress.
- Meetings were held with the proprietor's representative, the headteacher, senior leaders, teaching staff and pupils.
- School policies and other documentation were examined, including for safeguarding, attendance and behaviour.
- The inspectors took account of the responses in 14 staff questionnaires.
- The inspectors took account of 21 responses to the online Parent View questionnaire.

Inspection team

Flora Bean, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- North Bridge House Senior Canonbury is an independent day school for full-time male and female students aged 13 to 18 years in Islington, North London.
- The school opened on 4 September 2014 in refurbished premises with 51 students on roll: 31 in Year 9 and 20 in Year 12 respectively.
- The school will increase its capacity over the next five years as students move through the school. It is registered to take 300 students.
- The school is part of the school's group, Cognita Ltd. It has close links with, but operates separately from, its family of schools in the company's North Bridge House group.
- Cognita Ltd has responsibility for the governance of the school.
- The school has no religious affiliation.
- The school aims to create 'an active learning environment for limitless minds' within 'a secure, happy and active learning environment of the highest quality that celebrates every member of the community'.
- Entry to Year 9 will be from North Bridge House Preparatory School or subject to entry assessments for external candidates.
- Students entering the sixth form are required to have achieved 5 GCSE results A*-C including in English and Mathematics.
- There are no students with a statement of special educational needs.
- There are a small number of students for whom English is not their principal language.
- The school is operating with a small number of key staff and key subject heads of department. Staff numbers will increase as the school grows.
- This is the school's first inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Maintain the current outstanding quality as the school grows.
- Further enhance the quality of the good and often outstanding teaching by providing more opportunities for teachers' professional development in their specific areas of interest or specialism.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are outstanding.

- The leadership and management of the school are outstanding. The headteacher, together with the proprietor, has ensured that all of the independent school standards are met.
- The headteacher and senior leaders have established a firm foundation for the highest standards and expectations for the academic and personal development of students. All staff aspire to this ethos and together they have created an inspirational team whose work is exemplary.
- Students are well prepared for the next stage of their education through effective pastoral support and guidance for academic subject choices or for university or career choices at the appropriate time.
- As a new school, the performance management of teaching is well established and seen as a priority. Senior leaders monitor teaching systematically to ensure that teaching remains outstanding so that students are challenged and engaged in their learning and make consistently rapid progress.
- The curriculum is innovative and well planned with detailed schemes of work which give due emphasis to literacy and numeracy. All the required areas of learning are covered well. In addition, the school has developed a well-planned enrichment programme and a wide range of extra-curricular activities which contribute well to students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Personal, social and health education is an integral part of the curriculum with students receiving weekly lessons on topics such as respect, democracy, tolerance and acceptance of others. The school actively promotes British values so that students are being well prepared for life in modern society. The school has established clear assessment procedures which are effectively implemented by staff. All students have an initial assessment and from this, they are set aspirational targets for their learning. Students' targets are reviewed regularly to ensure they are being met and that all students are progressing well.
- Teachers check students' progress in lessons to identify any students with difficulties. They are well supported in lessons with one-to-one support or in additional small-group sessions to ensure any gaps in learning are addressed. In this way they are encouraged and enabled to make rapid progress in their learning. Students for whom English is not their principal language are equally well supported in additional lessons so that they are enabled to access all areas of the curriculum well.
- Arrangements for the safeguarding of students are rigorous. They fully meet statutory requirements. All staff are trained appropriately, including the designated safeguarding lead and deputy lead. Safe recruitment procedures are followed meticulously. All checks are carried out rigorously for the suitability of staff to work with students. Checks are recorded accurately on the school's single central register.
- The welfare, safety and security of pupils are evident in the implementation of all policies and procedures. Policies are updated as required so that the safety and security of students remain a priority.
- The headteacher ensures that the promotion of extremism in political views is prohibited.
- Policies are well communicated to parents and carers via the school's website and are also available on request from the school in hard copy.
- Parents and carers receive regular reports on the progress of their children and have opportunities to discuss any concerns if the need arises.
- Parents and carers state unanimously in questionnaires their appreciation of staff support for their children and would recommend the school to others.
- Staff questionnaires show unanimously that all staff enjoy working at the school, feel well supported and have opportunities for professional development. A small number of staff would like to have further professional development opportunities.
- Procedures for the handling of complaints meet requirements.
- Heads of department and heads of year are already well established in the school with clear roles and responsibilities. The innovative teaching and learning group, set up as a teacher initiative, supports the development of teaching exceptionally well. The group sustains the consistently outstanding teaching as teachers support and learn from each other.

■ The governance of the school:

The Cognita group, as proprietor, has responsibility for the governance of the school. It is highly committed in its responsibility and duty of care to ensure that all of the independent school standards are met.

Cognita officers have clear oversight of the school and regularly meet with the headteacher and senior leaders to ensure that students' academic achievement and personal development are the priority of the school.

They ensure that the well-being and safety of students remain a priority. This is highly evident in the rigorous implementation of all policies and procedures. The proprietary body is committed to

maintaining the highest standards in all aspects of the school's work.

They have ensured that the newly refurbished premises are suitable and provide a comfortable working environment for staff and students. The attention to detail in this respect is meticulous. All staff and students report that they are highly satisfied with their newly refurbished school premises.

They ensure that the high quality of teaching and learning is sustained. They are well aware of the headteacher's commitment to high standards and expectations. They wholly support the performance management of teaching, already well established in the school.

Financial resources are appropriately managed so that the school provides well for students to benefit from their time in the school.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- The behaviour of students is outstanding. Through a highly effective rewards and sanctions policy, the school has significantly improved students' behaviour and attitudes to learning over time. Students sustain outstanding levels of behaviour and positive attitudes to learning. They know what is expected of them and respond extremely well. There is no disruption in lessons.
- They are polite, courteous and respectful of each other and the adults who work with them. In lessons they cordially listen to each other and work well together. They are eager to learn and demonstrate mature attitudes to learning. A harmonious and convivial atmosphere prevails and as a result they enjoy their learning. This has a strong impact on their ability to make rapid progress.
- Students' attendance is well above average. They are punctual, respectful and learn to be responsible young people, well prepared for life in our modern society. They understand democracy well; they recently voted for their new school council and are encouraged to promote the principles of equality of opportunity.
- The school has an extensive range of policies in place which are effectively implemented to ensure that the promotion of extremism in political views is prohibited.
- All the independent school standards are met.

Safety

- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is outstanding. As a result students report that they feel safe and parents and carers are highly confident that their children are well looked after.
- Arrangements for the safeguarding of students are rigorous and meet statutory guidance. All staff including the designated lead and deputy lead for safeguarding are appropriately trained including in e-safety.
- The school's work in e-safety is exemplary. Students regularly use computers in different aspects of their learning and teachers ensure that they are safe. Teaching staff work hard so that students have a clear awareness of how they can remain safe from bullying and from any form of cyberbullying. Recent personal, social and health education lessons have included clear guidance on e-safety to ensure the highest levels of safety and security.
- Key staff are suitably trained in first aid and fire safety, and the school carries out all required assessments to manage risk well.
- The proprietor has ensured that all the independent school standards for welfare, health and safety are met.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

- The quality of teaching is consistently good and often outstanding. Through well planned teaching, teachers engage students exceptionally well and support them fully to make rapid progress in their learning.
- Teachers have a clear understanding of students' starting points from initial, accurate assessment. Regular monitoring in lessons of students' work identifies any gaps in students' knowledge in literacy and numeracy. Teachers work with students to ensure any difficulties are overcome. As a result learning progresses and students achieve well.
- Teachers have excellent subject knowledge. Teachers' expertise and skill ensures that students build effectively on previous knowledge so that they make consistently rapid progress.
- In English, teachers work successfully with students to extend their grasp of vocabulary, grammar and spelling to develop further their reading and writing skills. This contributes well to their development in other subject areas.
- Teachers provide help with English as an additional language when required. Students build a secure

knowledge of the structures of the language and key vocabulary so that they are well prepared for lessons.

- In mathematics, there is a strong focus on developing reasoning, conceptual understanding and problem solving. Mathematical concepts are carefully explained so that students have regular opportunities to practise different skills until they are firmly understood. This was evident in lessons observed, for example, when students were measuring the area of a circle. Discussion with students at the end of the lesson ensured that any gaps in knowledge were noted for reinforcement in the next lesson. This reassured students and gave them confidence that there was opportunity to reinforce their learning.
- On-going checks on student progress are thorough and accurate for all subjects. Teachers record students' progress and use this effectively to plan next steps. The curriculum is extremely well planned allowing for some flexibility to extend students' understanding.
- Teaching is monitored well by senior teachers to ensure that the highest standards are consistently maintained. Senior leaders work successfully with teaching staff to ensure that they are preparing students well for the next stage of their learning and in their choice of GCSE subjects.
- Teachers are well supported in their work and in their professional development. A small number of teachers report that they would like to have further professional development in their specific area of interest.
- Leaders have ensured that all the independent school standards for the quality of teaching are met.

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- Students achieve exceptionally well. They are well settled in the school and eager to learn. They respond well to challenge and expect to work hard because teachers' highly effective planning engages them fully in an extensive range of activities. They work well towards achieving the aspirational targets set for them.
- Students join the school in Year 9 with knowledge and skills that are broadly typical for their age. Outstanding teaching and assessment procedures ensure that students make rapid progress in all areas of the curriculum.
- Consistently outstanding support encourages students' self-confidence and self-esteem so that they make rapid progress from their starting points. They enjoy learning and work well together so that there is a strong cohesive approach in lessons and as a result they achieve well.
- Those who are most able are effectively challenged through well-planned work which extends their achievement across the curriculum.
- Students who require additional help in their learning make above expected levels of progress because they are given good support in lessons to match their identified needs. Progress is carefully monitored to ensure that they progress well.
- Students extend their literacy and communication skills well through participation in discussion and debate, learning to reason and to analyse their thinking. For example, in a drama lesson when presenting their prepared dialogues the teacher stopped students in mid-flow to ask for the 'thought track'. Students responded exceptionally well, demonstrating increasing awareness of their reasoning and analytical skills.
- Students' mathematical and scientific skills show increasing knowledge and understanding. They reason, analyse, complete experiments, write clear hypotheses and conclusions exceptionally well and demonstrate clear conceptual understanding of a wide range of topics.
- There is compelling evidence that students make well above expected levels of progress over time. Scrutiny of a wide selection of students' past and current work demonstrates an exceptional range and volume of work covered, with overall outstanding progress across all subjects.
- Students' creative, aesthetic and physical skills are well developed through art, music, drama and physical education, the enrichment programme and a wide range of extra-curricular activities.

The sixth form provision

is outstanding

- Sixth form provision is outstanding. The headteacher and senior leaders have established the sixth form provision, setting high standards and expectations for sixth form students. All of the independent school standards are met by the sixth form provision.
- The school provides the appropriate specialist teaching for students to meet their individual choice of subjects. Additional lectures on a range of appropriate topics ensure they are being well prepared to make choices for their future.
- Year 12 students join the sixth form with varying levels of success in their previous examination results.

Senior leaders and teaching staff work tirelessly to ensure that students progress well. Results show that in the majority of cases the students have made exceptional progress.

- Students' attitudes to learning are mature and positive. There is no disruption in lessons as they are eager to achieve well. Relationships between staff and students and between students themselves are highly positive and contribute well to students' learning. As one student said, 'We are treated like adults and so we are able to work well with teachers.'
- Teachers' knowledge of their subject areas is excellent. Teaching is highly effective in planning for students' learning and inspires them to work independently when required.
- Any gaps in students' learning are addressed to ensure that they progress well.
- Teaching regularly monitors students' progress and provides additional support when required. Assessment procedures are followed rigorously so that students know how well they are doing and the areas to improve in their work.
- Highly effective, tailored support for those with any learning difficulties enables students to build improved levels of confidence in their learning ability and this results in marked improvements in progress.
- The most able students are encouraged well and extend their learning through additional support from teachers and through extension work.
- Personal, social and health education ensures students continue to develop age-appropriate understanding and awareness of how to remain safe. They have high levels of awareness of e-safety and safeguarding.
- Students' learning is extensively enhanced through participation in a well-organised enrichment programme. Sixth form students also take on increasing roles of responsibility. They have a leading role throughout the school which develops their leadership skills and sense of responsibility.
- In discussion, students report that they are pleased to be in the school and are exceptionally well looked after. They can ask for help if required from teaching staff who are prepared to give willingly of their time.
- Students are given clear guidance and help with future plans. Teachers' advice and guidance are appreciated by students.
- Students make significant progress from their starting points. Results in mock examinations show that they are achieving above expected levels from their previously predicted grades and performance.

What inspection judgements mean

School	
Grade	Judgement
Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Requires improvement
Grade 4	Inadequate

Detailed grade characteristics can be viewed in the *Non-association independent school inspection handbook* which is published on the Ofsted website: www.gov.uk/government/publications/non-association-independent-school-inspection-handbook.

School details

Unique reference number	141250
Inspection number	462906
DfE registration number	206/6001

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Type of school	Day school
School status	Independent
Age range of pupils	13–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	51
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	20
Number of part time pupils	0
Proprietor	Cognita
Chair	Mr Rees Withers
Headteacher	Mr Jonathan Taylor
Date of previous school inspection	First inspection
Annual fees (day pupils)	£15,615–£16,860
Telephone number	020 7267 6266
Email address	jonathan.taylor@northbridgehouse.com

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