

# North London Grammar School

110 Colindeep Lane, London NW9 6HB

## Inspection dates

4 and 5 October 2023

### Overall outcome

**The school meets all of the independent school standards that were checked during this inspection**

### Boarding provision outcome

**The school meets all of the national minimum standards that were checked during this inspection**

## Main inspection findings

### Part 1. Quality of education provided

*Paragraph 2(1), 2(1)(a), 2(1)(b), 2(1)(b)(i), 2(2), 2(2)(g)*

- At the time of the last inspection, in November 2022, the school had not ensured that the curriculum was planned and implemented effectively. The curriculum in several subjects was not well designed and the most important knowledge that pupils needed to know and remember was not identified. Not enough consideration had been given to the curriculum in Years 7 and 8 for the subjects that pupils do not study at GCSE. In the sixth form, the examination specifications were not broken down into smaller steps of learning.
- This inspection found that leaders have taken robust action to improve the curriculum. In each subject, there are detailed schemes of work that identify clearly what pupils need to know, remember and be able to do. The curriculum is broken down into manageable steps so that pupils learn ideas securely before moving on to deeper learning. For example, in English, pupils in Year 5 explore an abridged version of a Shakespeare play as a stepping stone to studying *Much Ado About Nothing* in Year 7. This principle is threaded through the school's curriculum so that pupils are helped to learn the basics before moving on to more complex ideas.
- The revised curriculum takes account of pupils' needs and aptitudes effectively. A range of methods to assess pupils' starting points helps the school to identify gaps in their knowledge and skills. This information is used to adapt the curriculum to meet pupils' specific needs, including for those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. For example, pupils who struggle with reading are given additional support so that they can access the full curriculum.

- Leaders have ensured that there is an appropriately planned curriculum for students in the sixth form. Currently, the school has no sixth-form students on roll.

- The independent school standards (the standards) in these paragraphs are met.

*Paragraph 2A(1), 2A(1)(b), 2A(1)(d), 2A(1)(e), 2A(1)(f), 2A(2)*

- The previous inspection found that the school did not have a written policy for the relationship and sex education (RSE) curriculum and had not consulted with parents and carers on its content.
- This inspection finds that there is now an appropriately detailed written policy for RSE that sets out what pupils will learn and when. The policy is available on the school's website. It provides a logically sequenced programme that enables pupils to revisit important concepts, such as consent, in age-appropriate ways. In addition, the school has consulted with parents on the RSE curriculum. Parents have had the opportunity to request that their children be excused from sex education. Where this has happened, the school has withdrawn pupils from the sex education part of the programme.
- The standards in these paragraphs are met.
- The school now meets all the previously unmet standards in this part.

### Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

*Paragraph 7, 7(a), 7(b), 8, 8(a), 8(b), 9, 9(a), 32(1)(c)*

- The last inspection judged that safeguarding was not effective. Leaders did not ensure the recruitment process was rigorous enough or that pre-employment checks for some staff were recorded carefully. The behaviour policy did not reflect current practice.
- This inspection finds that the school's safeguarding arrangements are now effective. The safeguarding policy refers to the current guidance, including 'Keeping children safe in education, 2023'. The policy provides up-to-date advice to staff about how to recognise safeguarding risks such as online exploitation, cyber-bullying, self-harm and radicalisation. It is available on the school's website.
- The school works closely with external agencies to ensure that help and support are available in a timely manner. To improve arrangements further, leaders have introduced a new online system to manage safeguarding and to record information.
- Pupils were unanimous that they feel safe in school. They said that this was because the school is small and staff know everyone. Pupils were certain that they could raise any concerns with their teachers and that they would be taken seriously.
- The school's procedures for promoting good behaviour are robust. There are detailed behaviour policies for both secondary- and primary-age pupils that reflect current practice. The policies set out the rewards for good behaviour and the sanctions for any misbehaviour. These are displayed prominently in classrooms and understood thoroughly by pupils.
- The standards in these paragraphs are met.

*Paragraph 16, 16(a), 16(b), 32(1), 32(1)(b)*

- At the previous inspection, the school admitted students over the age of 18, which was outside of its registration agreement with the Department for Education. Leaders had not completed sufficient reference checks or risk assessments for these students.
- The school no longer admits students at age 18.
- Leaders have ensured that there are appropriate risk assessments covering a variety of situations. For example, there are risk assessments for trips out of school and for fire safety. These are suitably detailed with identified risks and mitigating actions. The fire risk assessment is carried out by external experts.
- The standards in these paragraphs are met.
- The school now meets all the previously unmet standards in this part.

#### Part 4. Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

*Paragraph 18(2), 18(2)(a), 18(2)(e), 18(3), 21(1), 21(3), 21(3)(a), 21(3)(a)(ii), 21(3)(a)(viii)*

- The previous inspection found that there were weaknesses in the school's procedures for vetting the suitability of staff. Leaders were not rigorous in following up on safer recruitment processes, for example ensuring that references were from appropriate sources. There was also a lack of clarity about which pre-employment checks had been carried out for which staff.
- This inspection confirms that the school has ensured that gaps in its record-keeping have been rectified. References for new staff are followed up carefully and the single central record of staff vetting checks meets statutory guidance. Checks on those staff responsible for the boarding provision are suitably rigorous and are in line with the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools.
- The standards in these paragraphs are met.
- The school now meets all the previously unmet standards in this part.

#### Part 6. Provision of information

*Paragraph 32(1), 32(1)(b), 32(3), 32(3)(d)*

- The previous inspection judged that leaders, the proprietor and those responsible for governance had not ensured that there was enough information about how they met the standards. This related specifically to behaviour, an anti-bullying strategy, health and safety, and first aid.
- This inspection found that this information is now readily available on the school's website. There are detailed policies for behaviour, anti-bullying, health and safety, and first aid. These reflect current practice and statutory guidance.
- The standards in these paragraphs are met.
- The school now meets all the previously unmet standards in this part.

#### Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

*Paragraph 34(1), 34(1)(a), 34(1)(b), 34(1)(c)*

- At the previous inspection, leaders, including the proprietor and those responsible for governance, were not fulfilling all their statutory safeguarding duties. They had not

ensured that there was a written policy for RSE or that parents were consulted about the content of the curriculum.

- This inspection finds that leaders, including the proprietor and governors, have taken firm action to ensure that they meet their statutory duties consistently. All the school's policies have been updated to include the most recent government guidance, including those for RSE and safeguarding. These are easily accessible to parents and prospective parents on the school's website.
- Following an audit of the governing body, new governors have been appointed to ensure that there is a suitable range of experiences and skills. For example, governors with educational leadership experience have been recruited to help ensure greater capacity to hold the school to account. The governing body has ensured that it receives up-to-date information about the quality of education. All governors have received training about their role. They carry out their responsibilities consistently, including promoting the well-being of pupils.
- The independent school standards in this part are met.
- The school now meets all the previously unmet standards.

#### Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

- The proprietor, and those responsible for governance, ensure that the requirements of schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 are met. There is a detailed accessibility plan available on the school's website.

#### The national minimum standards that were assessed during this inspection

##### *Standard 8.1, 11*

- The previous inspection found that leaders' follow-up of safeguarding concerns in the boarding provision were not robust enough. Pre-employment checks for staff did not routinely take place in a timely manner and references were not secured from appropriate sources. Appropriate risk assessments and references were not in place for students admitted at age 18.
- The school has addressed the concerns raised at the last inspection. Boarding staff files have been audited to ensure they follow safer recruitment and employment practices. Senior leaders have a clear understanding of the recruitment process. The school is now following safer recruitment procedures to prevent unsuitable people from working at the school and to promote pupils' safety.
- Comprehensive safeguarding systems are now in place. Boarding staff know their responsibilities and report concerns effectively. These are followed up with the appropriate agencies and ensure that pupils are protected from harm. Boarding staff undertake a range of safeguarding training, including training on child exploitation, radicalisation and e-safety.
- The school has effective links with the local safeguarding partners. For example, boarders' induction includes them meeting with the police to hear about the risks in London and about the best ways to keep themselves safe. The school has also developed its own presentation for boarders on keeping safe in London and online.
- Boarders said that they feel safe at the school and in the surrounding areas. Staff help them to understand risks and keep themselves safe. Boarding staff know their pupils well.

They can spot the early warning signs of pupils struggling and take appropriate action, including working with families or other agencies.

- The boarding accommodation is well maintained and continually improved, of which pupils are proud. Boarders live in a clean and a safe environment. The quality of sleeping accommodation for boarders is good. It is well organised and managed. The bedrooms provide boarders with enough privacy and space to relax. This has had a positive impact on their boarding experiences.
- The school now meets the national minimum standards listed above.

## Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards'), the national minimum standards for boarding schools and associated requirements that were checked during this inspection, as set out in the annex of this report. This included the standards and requirements that the school was judged to not comply with at the previous inspection. Not all of the standards and associated requirements were checked during this inspection.

### The school now meets the following independent school standards

#### Part 1. Quality of education provided

- 2(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if-
  - 2(1)(a) the proprietor ensures that a written policy on the curriculum, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work, which provides for the matters specified in sub-paragraph (2) is drawn up and implemented effectively; and
  - 2(1)(b) the written policy, plans and schemes of work-
  - 2(1)(b)(i) take into account the ages, aptitudes and needs of all pupils, including those pupils with an EHC plan.
- 2(2) the purposes of paragraph (2)(1)(a), the matters are-
  - 2(2)(g) where the school has pupils above compulsory school age, a programme of activities which is appropriate to their needs;
- 2A(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor-
  - 2A(1)(b) ensures that every registered pupil who is provided with secondary education at the school is provided with relationships and sex education, except in so far as the pupil is excused as mentioned in sub-paragraph (2),
  - 2A(1)(d) in making arrangements for the purposes of paragraphs (a), (b) or (c), has regard to any guidance under section 80A of the Education Act 2002 that applies in relation to the provision of education by maintained schools,
  - 2A(1)(e) makes and keeps up to date a separate written statement of its policy with regard to the provision of education as required by each of paragraphs (a) and (b),
  - 2A(1)(f) consults parents of registered pupils at the school before making or revising a statement under sub-paragraph (e).
- 2A(2) Arrangements made by the proprietor for the purposes of sub-paragraph (1)(b) must ensure that where a pupil's parent requests that the pupil is wholly or partly excused from sex education provided as part of relationships and sex education, the pupil is so excused until the request is withdrawn, unless or to the extent that the head teacher considers that the pupil should not be so excused.

#### Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- 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.
- 8 Where section 87(1) of the 1989 Act[11] applies in relation to a school the standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that-
  - 8(a) arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of boarders while they are accommodated at the school; and
  - 8(b) such arrangements have regard to the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools or, where applicable, the National Minimum Standards for Residential Special Schools.
- 9 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor promotes good behaviour amongst pupils by ensuring that-
  - 9(a) a written behaviour policy is drawn up that, amongst other matters, sets out the sanctions to be adopted in the event of pupil misbehaviour;
- 16 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that-
  - 16(a) the welfare of pupils at the school is safeguarded and promoted by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written risk assessment policy; and
  - 16(b) appropriate action is taken to reduce risks that are identified.

#### **Part 4. Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors**

- 18(2) The standard in this paragraph is met if-
  - 18(2)(a) no such person is barred from regulated activity relating to children in accordance with section 3(2) of the 2006 Act where that person is or will be engaging in activity which is regulated activity within the meaning of Part 1 of Schedule 4 to that Act; and
  - 18(2)(e) in the case of any person for whom, by reason of that person living or having lived outside the United Kingdom, obtaining such a certificate is not sufficient to establish the person's suitability to work in a school, such further checks are made as the proprietor considers appropriate, having regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State.
- 18(3) The checks referred to in sub-paragraphs (2)(c) and (except where sub-paragraph (4) applies) (2)(e) must be completed before a person's appointment.
- 21(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor keeps a register which shows such of the information referred to in sub-paragraphs (3) to (7) as is applicable to the school in question.
- 21(3) The information referred to in this sub-paragraph is-
  - 21(3)(a) in relation to each member of staff ("S") appointed on or after 1st May 2007, whether-
    - 21(3)(a)(ii) a check was made to establish whether S is barred from regulated activity relating to children in accordance with section 3(2) of the 2006 Act; and
    - 21(3)(a)(viii) checks were made pursuant to paragraph 18(2)(e).

#### **Part 6. Provision of information**

- 32(1) The standard about the provision of information by the school is met if the proprietor ensures that-

– 32(1)(b) the information specified in sub-paragraph (3) is made available to parents of pupils and parents of prospective pupils and, on request, to the Chief Inspector, the Secretary of State or an independent inspectorate.

■ 32(3) The information specified in this sub-paragraph is–

– 32(3)(d) particulars of arrangements for meeting the standards contained in paragraphs 9, 10, 11 and 13.

## ■ **Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools**

■ 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 well-being of pupils.

## **The school now meets the following national minimum standards for boarding schools**

### Standard 8

8.1 The school should ensure that:

- arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school; and
- such arrangements have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State.

### Standard 11

11.1 There is an appropriate process of induction and guidance for new boarders and that process includes information covering the standards 11.2 through 11.6.

11.2 The school should make arrangements, with parents and carers, which are clear about who is responsible for the collection and transport of boarders (including arrangements for international pupils) at the start and end of the school term and where there is any temporary absence from school.

11.3 Boarders are able to contact any member of staff with personal, academic or welfare concerns. All staff should know what to do if a boarder approaches them with a concern. There are amendments which are not relevant to these standards.

11.4 The school identifies at least one person other than a parent, outside the staff, and those responsible for the leadership and governance of the school, who children may contact directly about personal problems or concerns at the school. This person may be known as the 'independent person'. Children know who this person is, know how to contact them and feel comfortable talking to them. The person is easily accessible.

11.5 Boarders are also provided with details of two or more child-specific support services, such as Childline or the Children's Commissioner's Help at Hand service, to contact in case of problems or distress.

11.6 Boarders are provided with appropriate advocacy support where necessary and are made aware of what advocacy services are available, how they may access such support and any entitlement they may have to advocacy provision, and that advocacy provision adheres to the National standards.

## School details

Unique reference number	134764
Social care unique reference number	SC485109
DfE registration number	302/6086
Inspection number	10309459

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.

The inspection of boarding provision was carried out under the Children Act 1989, as amended by the Care Standards Act 2000, having regard to the national minimum standards for boarding schools.

Type of school	Other independent school
School status	Independent boarding school
Age range of pupils	7 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	225
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	0
Proprietor	Wisdom School Ltd
Chair	Rustam Aliyev
Headteacher	Huseyin Fatih Adak
Annual fees (day pupils)	£11,700 to £17,550
Telephone number	020 8205 0052
Website	<a href="http://www.northlondongrammar.com">www.northlondongrammar.com</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:info@northlondongrammar.com">info@northlondongrammar.com</a>
Dates of previous standard inspection	9 to 11 November 2022

### **Information about this school**

- North London Grammar School is an independent co-educational day and boarding school for pupils aged from 7 to 18. Currently, there are no students in the sixth form.
- The school has recently become a member of the Independent School's Association.
- The previous standard inspection took place in November 2022, when the school was judged to be inadequate. The standard inspection in April 2018 judged the school to be outstanding. The previous inspection of the boarding provision took place in May 2019.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- From September 2015, the school took in boarders. There are currently eight boarders on roll.

## Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out at the request of the registration authority for independent schools. The purpose of the inspection was to monitor the progress the school has made in meeting the independent school standards and other requirements that it was judged to not comply with at its previous inspection.
- This inspection, in October 2023, took place with no notice. The DfE asked inspectors to evaluate the school's performance against a number of the standards for independent schools and the national minimum standards for boarding provision.
- After the November 2022 inspection, the school submitted an action plan and this was evaluated by Ofsted in August 2023. The DfE subsequently rejected the school's action plan. This inspection was the first progress monitoring inspection following the inspection that took place in November 2022.
- Inspectors met with leaders, including the headteacher and the head of boarding, and the designated leaders for safeguarding. Inspectors met with the chair of the governing body, who acts on behalf of the proprietor. Inspectors also met with groups of pupils to assess their views about the school's work to safeguard their welfare.
- Inspectors reviewed the school's policies and records. They made a tour of the boarding provision and the school premises.

## Inspection team

Brian Oppenheim, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Dorothy Thompstone

Social Care Regulatory Inspector

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