

North London Grammar School

110 Colindeep Lane, London NW9 6HB

Inspection dates

24–26 April 2018

Overall effectiveness	Outstanding
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Outstanding
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Outstanding
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Outstanding
Sixth form provision	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- The new leadership team has built on the school's previous strengths. As a result, the school provides its pupils with an outstanding education.
- Leaders have created robust systems to check frequently all aspects of the school's work. They use the information extremely well to secure ongoing improvements and to sustain outstanding practice.
- The school is compliant with all the independent school standards.
- Teachers are experts in their subjects. They plan learning to meet the needs of pupils. Pupils quickly gain new knowledge and deepen their understanding across a range of subjects.
- Pupils' behaviour is impeccable. They work diligently and with determination to succeed. They value diversity and respect all people no matter what their culture, faith or lifestyle.
- Pupils make substantial progress from the point at which they join the school. This is because leaders adapt the curriculum to meet their needs, and teaching is highly effective.
- Pupils benefit from a vast range of enrichment activities. Leaders encourage them to take on responsibilities and contribute to the community. They learn about fundamental British values, how to keep themselves safe, and they enjoy debating current affairs. These opportunities promote pupils' personal development and welfare, and prepare them for their future lives exceptionally well.
- Students in the newly established post-16 provision make very strong progress in their university access courses. They benefit from high-quality teaching and pastoral support that prepare them very effectively for the next stages of their education.
- Trustees and governors are knowledgeable about the school's work and support leaders well. They demonstrate effective strategic leadership and have played a major role in securing school improvement.
- On the odd occasion, pupils do not complete the work that their teachers set them. This slightly diminishes their progress.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve outcomes further by making sure pupils consistently complete the work that their teachers set them.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- The new headteacher, senior leaders and governors communicate ambitious aspirations for pupils and members of staff. They strive to ensure that pupils are highly successful academically and that they experience a large number of enrichment opportunities to promote their personal development. They help pupils develop the skills of self-discipline, and actively encourage them to take on responsibilities to contribute to the wider community. Further, they give teachers and support staff many opportunities for professional development. Leaders encourage teachers to learn from best practice and try new things to evolve highly effective teaching strategies. As a result, staff morale is high, pupils' behaviour is exemplary, and excellent teaching and support ensure that pupils' academic and personal development outcomes are outstanding.
- Leaders have designed a robust system for tracking pupils' progress. They arrange joint moderation of work with other secondary schools so that teachers are secure in their judgements of pupils' standards. Leaders regularly collate progress information on each pupil. Teachers analyse the data and prepare action plans to support each of their pupils to raise their standards further. This includes extra support to any underachieving pupils and more challenging work for the most able pupils. Line managers check the plans and hold teachers to account for their pupils' progress. As a result, teaching and pupils' outcomes have substantially improved and are now outstanding.
- Leaders work closely with other local schools and make a strong contribution in educating pupils beyond this school. They have been instrumental in setting up and hosting an annual mathematics competition for schools in the local area. They organise an annual art competition for local schools with a theme related to British values. Leaders invite primary school pupils to the school for science days, for example.
- The key stage 3 and 4 curriculum offers pupils a wide range of subjects, taught by specialist teachers. This means that at the end of Year 11 pupils have the qualifications necessary to continue their post-16 education to support their varied career aspirations. Leaders enrich formal learning through arranging plentiful visits linked to the range of subjects. These broaden pupils' experiences and deepen their understanding across the subject areas. Examples include a visit to Auschwitz and Birkenau concentration camps, The Royal Ballet, The Globe Theatre, an orchestral performance, and a visit to Spain.
- Leaders place much emphasis on promoting pupils' personal development and understanding of British values. They achieve this through a comprehensive programme of personal, social, health and economic education, enrichment activities and visitors. Examples include visits to places of faith, entering business idea competitions and observing a debate in Parliament. Recent visitors included the local Member of Parliament, and Chinese students to celebrate Chinese New Year. There is a very strong emphasis on promoting understanding and respect for all people, especially those with protected characteristics as defined in the 2010 Equality Act. At a recent assembly, the leader of the local fire brigade told pupils how in the past the fire service discriminated against women and did not allow them to be firefighters. He explained how this has changed and how important equality is.

- Parents and carers who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire were overwhelmingly positive about all aspects of the school's work.

The school's application to make a material change to its registration

- Leaders have applied for a material change to the school's registration. They wish to change the age range at the school to expand from the current 11 to 18 range to cater for pupils aged from seven to 18, and to increase their registered roll from 300 to 330. Leaders have produced comprehensive schemes of learning for a broad curriculum for the proposed key stage 2. These include plans for academic learning, enrichment and personal development. The detailed plans aim to ensure that pupils make strong progression in each subject as they move up the year groups. Leaders plan for specialist subject teachers to teach music, computing, Spanish, art and physical education. Pupils will benefit from the specialist facilities that the school already has for teaching these subjects. There is abundance of rooms in the building to accommodate the proposed additional pupils. There are classrooms that are not being used and leaders propose to use other vacant rooms to set up a key stage 2 library and a computer suite. The school is likely to meet the relevant independent school standards if the material change is approved.

Governance

- The two trustees appoint governors, who, together with the trustees, form the governing body. Governors meet regularly with the headteacher and other senior leaders. Leaders share information on the school's work and report to the governors on the progress they are making in implementing the school's improvement plans. Governors commission external consultants to independently check the quality of teaching and other aspects of the school's work. Governors are well informed about all aspects of the school's work and they hold leaders to account.
- Governors have worked with senior leaders to successfully implement several strategic developments since the previous inspection. They appointed a very effective headteacher and other senior leaders. The school is now housed in high-quality premises and there are more pupils on roll across a wider age range. Governors are seeking approval to expand the school to include seven- to 11-year-olds. They have played a key role in working with school leaders to secure outstanding practice in the school.
- Governors want to increase their capacity to support and challenge leaders, especially as the school is growing. Trustees have recently made three new appointments and are seeking three more governors in addition.
- Governors and school leaders make sure that the school meets the independent school standards and other requirements.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The headteacher and three other senior leaders have undertaken training as designated safeguarding leaders. These leaders, in turn, train the rest of the staff.

- The headteacher is an accredited trainer on the 'Prevent' duty to tackle radicalisation and extremism. He trains staff in the school and in other organisations.
- All members of staff are aware of the need for vigilance. Leaders have established robust systems for reporting concerns. Members of staff know that if they have any concerns about pupils' safety and well-being that they must report them to the headteacher immediately. All visitor badges and staff identify badges list the contact details of the designated safeguarding leaders.
- Leaders work closely with external agencies and parents to ensure pupils' safety and well-being. Equally, they work closely with the appointed guardians of the overseas pupils.
- Through the curriculum, pupils learn about danger and how to keep themselves safe in different situations. This includes workshops delivered by the police and other organisations. Recently, the school held a safe internet day.
- Leaders organise workshops for parents to help them understand how to support their children's safety, such as when using the internet.
- The school publishes its safeguarding policy on its website. The policy has due regard to current government requirements.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Outstanding

- Excellent teaching enables pupils to make substantial progress.
- Teachers have very strong subject knowledge. They use assessment information to prepare effective learning plans for each pupil. They prepare activities that interest and challenge pupils to gain new knowledge and deepen their understanding. As a result, pupils, of all ability, make substantial and sustained progress over time.
- Teachers have very high expectations for behaviour and learning. Leaders and teachers have established a culture where pupils are very well engaged, work diligently and waste no time in lessons. Teachers give pupils clear explanations and examples, as well as quality resources and guidance on how to approach their work. They quickly address any misconceptions. As a result, pupils become highly successful learners.
- In line with the school's policy, teachers set homework regularly in all subjects. The homework is highly effective in reinforcing and extending pupils' learning beyond the classroom. Pupils value the homework opportunities to do research and find out new information. In science, for example, the teacher tasked two pupils to research and prepare a presentation on stem cells. Pupils learned a great deal from this research and opportunity to teach their peers.
- Teaching makes a very strong contribution to pupils' personal development. For example, in English pupils studied a poem about a Pakistani immigrant to the UK and how she was adapting to a new culture while retaining her own culture. This was effective in raising pupils' cultural and social awareness about the challenges that immigrants may face.
- Very occasionally, pupils do not complete the tasks teachers provide. When this happens, pupils' learning is not deepened as well as teachers planned for.

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding. The mentors and class tutors know the pupils extremely well. They provide excellent pastoral support and take care of pupils' welfare. They help pupils overcome any challenges and difficulties they may face. They have regular discussions with pupils about life in modern Britain, current affairs, staying safe, and preparing for the future. As a result, pupils grow in self-confidence, feel safe and secure, and become extremely successful learners. Pupils leave the school extremely well equipped to make a very positive contribution to society as responsible citizens.
- Pupils have multiple opportunities to make a strong contribution to the community. Pupils who are trained as peer mentors support younger pupils, helping them to deal with social and academic concerns. Prefects and the school council assist leaders in the orderly running of the school and in suggesting and implementing improvements. Pupils run workshops for local primary school pupils, such as in science. At their own initiative, pupils organise fundraising events for national and international charities. Year 9 pupils, for instance, are raising funds to support the digging of a well to supply fresh water to children in Ethiopia. All of these opportunities make an exceptionally strong contribution to pupils' personal development and understanding of social responsibility. By organising fundraising events, pupils also develop skills in planning events and budgeting.
- Pupils benefit greatly from, and enjoy taking part in, the wide range of extra-curricular activities. They have many opportunities to play sport, to participate in competitive fixtures, and to take part in events such as The London Youth Games. In the science, technology, engineering, and mathematics club, for instance, pupils worked on delivering presentations on alternative energy resources as feasible alternatives to fossil fuels. A group of the most able pupils recently took part in 'The Intellectuals' Challenge', a four-day international competition for students aged 14 to 18. Some pupils have registered for the National Citizenship Service camp in the summer holidays.
- Pupils, who come from diverse backgrounds and a range of overseas countries, get on extremely well together. They enjoy learning about different faiths and cultures and they say that there is no bullying in the school. Pupils and staff say that there is a family ethos in the school.
- Leaders give pupils excellent impartial careers guidance. Visitors, including former pupils, share information about their chosen careers. Pupils in Years 9 to 11 attend a London-wide careers and skills guidance event. Key stage 4 pupils undertake work experience in a range of businesses and industries and, in addition, visit colleges and universities. All pupils have one-to-one interviews with senior leaders, and they benefit from workshops that guide them in writing their curriculum vitae and application forms.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Pupils' manners are impeccable. They take great pride in their school and are very neatly turned out. They look after the environment and the school is free of litter.

- Pupils are highly ambitious and determined to succeed. They therefore work extremely hard and try their very best. There is almost no disruption in lessons. During visits to classrooms, pupils were typically fully engrossed in the work that their teachers had set. None were off task. Pupils' very positive attitudes make an excellent contribution to their successful learning.
- Pupils' rates of attendance this year are well above the national average for secondary schools.

Outcomes for pupils

Outstanding

- Overall, pupils make outstanding progress from their starting points at the school, across all subjects. This is because leaders set pupils highly ambitious targets and teachers have high expectations of what pupils are capable of.
- Pupils who join the school in key stage 3 typically make substantial and sustained progress. They consistently reach higher-than-average standards by the end of Year 11, including in English and mathematics. Pupils who join the school from overseas during Years 10 or 11 are usually at the early stages of speaking English. Their progress in learning English is particularly strong. This enables them to be highly successful learners across the subjects, make strong progress and attain a range of good GCSE qualifications.
- Inspection evidence supports the school's assessment information that current pupils are making outstanding progress across the curriculum and year groups.
- Most-able pupils make excellent progress because teachers set challenging work that the students relish. Some of the most able pupils, for instance, complete some GCSE courses at the end of Year 10 and attain very high standards. Teachers then prepare pupils for AS levels, such as in mathematics.
- With their high academic performance, very positive attitudes to learning and exceptional personal development, pupils are extremely well prepared for the next stages of their education. At the end of Year 11, all pupils go on to post-16 education. There are no pupils who are not in education, employment or training. All Year 11 pupils have already secured placements in post-16 schools or colleges.

Sixth form provision

Outstanding

- Leaders have made an excellent start in establishing the sixth-form provision. They have a clear vision of wanting to enable international students to gain the qualifications and skills necessary to secure places at UK universities or colleges. Through thorough preparation and planning, and regular review, leaders have made sure that the first cohort is thriving.
- Leaders have designed the curriculum as an intensive one-year university foundation programme for overseas students. Current students take courses in business studies, marketing, finance, English, mathematics and computing. Leaders have planned other curriculum pathways to offer future cohorts, such as in humanities, law, and social sciences. Although not officially accredited, leaders have successfully negotiated with a number of universities to accept these courses as part of their admissions requirements.

- Leaders have high expectations, set students challenging targets and make sure that they benefit from excellent teaching and pastoral care. As students need to rapidly develop their mastery of English, leaders arrange for them to have six hours of extra English language support every week. Leaders prepare individualised learning plans to make sure that they meet the needs of students and challenge them to reach their full potential. Leaders give the most able students opportunities to study for more advanced qualifications, such as A-level mathematics in one year. As a result, students make substantial progress across the subjects.
- Students benefit from a comprehensive programme of impartial careers guidance, including learning about apprenticeships and other career pathways. The mentors support students in applying to universities and colleges. Sixth-form students are fully integrated into the whole school and benefit from the same enrichment and personal development opportunities enjoyed by younger pupils. They too make a very strong contribution to society such as in raising funds for charities. Some students volunteer their time, working for charities like Oxfam, or teaching a foreign language to younger pupils in the community. As part of their course they visit businesses, thus learning about the range of roles and responsibilities that employees have. These opportunities help students to develop their employability skills effectively.
- Leaders make sure that students learn about British culture, how to stay safe, and how to benefit from all that London has to offer. They take sixth-form students to visit many of the capital's landmark sites, places of culture and even restaurants. Leaders and external speakers give students sound advice on how to stay safe when out and about. Although the guardians with whom students live have had safeguarding checks, the school's mentors visit their homes to double-check that students' well-being and safety is secure.
- All students, including those who joined in January, have remained on the course. All have secured conditional offers to study business and mathematics at university, art foundation courses at college, or to proceed to full A-level studies.

School details

Unique reference number	134764
DfE registration number	302/6086
Inspection number	10026294

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 the school's provision in relation to the material change that the school has applied to make was carried out under section 162(4) of the Education Act 2002, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's likely compliance with the independent school standards relevant to the material change that the school has applied to make.

Type of school	Co-educational day and boarding school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	144
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	9
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Wisdom School Ltd
Chair	Ziya Kocabiyik
Headteacher	Hakan Gokce
Annual fees (day pupils)	£7,500
Telephone number	020 8205 0052
Website	www.northlondongrammar.com
Email address	info@northlondongrammar.com
Date of previous inspection	27–29 November 2013

Information about this school

- North London Grammar School is an independent co-educational day school for pupils aged from 11 to 18. The school opened in 2006 with provision for 100 students.
- The school is located in Hendon, in the London Borough of Barnet.
- There have been substantial changes since the previous Ofsted inspection. The new headteacher took up his post in November 2014. There have been many other changes to leadership, staffing and governors. The school changed its name from Wisdom School to North London Grammar School. Its registered age range was extended from 11 to 16 to 11 to 18. From September 2015, the school took in boarders. The boarding provision is subject to a separate inspection. Two years ago the school changed its entry criteria from mixed ability to selective.
- This was the school's third standard inspection. The previous two were in February 2008 and November 2013.
- In October 2016, the school had a social care inspection of its boarding provision. Inspectors judged that the overall experiences and progress of children and young people were good.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The school's motto is 'bonitas, scientia, disciplina' (Latin for 'goodness, knowledge, and instruction').

Information about this inspection

- This full standard inspection was carried out with one day's notice at the request of the school's registration authority.
- Inspectors observed learning in 20 classrooms, most of which were visited with senior leaders.
- Inspectors scrutinised samples of pupils' work. They checked the school's information about pupils' progress.
- Inspectors spoke with the headteacher, other leaders, teachers and other members of staff. They also met with the chair of trustees and a governor. Inspectors had formal discussions with two groups of pupils and various informal discussions with pupils during social times and lessons.
- Inspectors took account of the 45 responses to Ofsted's questionnaire for parents and parents' additional written comments. Inspectors considered the 14 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors checked documentation, policies and all aspects of the school's work for compliance with the independent school standards.
- Inspectors considered the school's application to the Department for Education to make a material change to its registration. School leaders seek to expand the age range at the school from the current 11 to 18 to seven to 18, and to increase their registered roll from 300 to 330.

Inspection team

David Radomsky, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Helen Bailey

Ofsted Inspector

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