

# North London Grammar School

Wisdom School

110 Colindeep Lane, London NW9 6HE

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this boarding school

This private, non-denominational international school provides education for up to 300 children and young people, with boarding accommodation for 29. The educational and living accommodation is based in modern buildings located in Barnet, North London.

During this inspection, there were 145 children in the school and 26 in the single, modern boarding house. Many of the boarders come from abroad. The boarding house is wheelchair-accessible and has appropriate resources for children with a physical disability.

**Inspection dates:** 13 to 15 May 2019

**Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account**                      **good**

How well children and young people are helped and protected                      good

The effectiveness of leaders and managers                      good

The boarding school provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** good

**Date of last inspection:** 4 October 2016

## Inspection judgements

### **Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good**

Boarders enjoy a rich learning experience at this school. They come from a broad range of cultures and settle quickly into school life. One parent said, 'I have seen real improvements in terms of maturity and self-discipline.'

Boarding staff offer a large range of activities, which they skilfully link to learning. Recent trips to museums and a seaside holiday support the development of independence skills and a knowledge of British values.

Boarding has a positive impact on academic attainment and attendance. Boarders benefit from structured routines which limit distractions and they make progress across all subject areas. Every boarder that left the school last year progressed onto a planned college course.

Boarding staff are proactive. They offer extra support and guidance in key subjects such as mathematics and reading. Progress is carefully monitored, and boarders are pushed to reach their academic potential.

Boarders feel listened to by staff. They work with staff to arrange activities and offer feedback on issues such as planning the weekly menu. This helps to maintain a strong sense of community.

Behaviour management is effective. Staff use a mobile phone application which is open to boarders, parents and day staff. The system records and monitors behaviour and allows for staff to take prompt action when concerns arise.

### **How well children and young people are helped and protected: good**

Boarders trust staff and feel safe. They form close relationships with staff and each other. One boarder commented, 'Staff are really kind and look after us, we all get along really well.'

Safeguarding is strong. Staff work closely with day staff and key professionals, such as therapists, to support boarders. Comprehensive risk assessments ensure that concerns are regularly reviewed and monitored.

Boarders learn how to keep themselves safe. They learn important strategies such as limiting mobile phone use in public and remaining alert when out in the community.

The school's safeguarding policy and relevant staff training requires updating. The existing policy does not reflect the current government guidance. In addition, staff remain unaware of the potential risk posed by criminal gangs grooming boarders to sell drugs.

Internet safety is variable. Despite a rigorous internet filter, boarders can access the internet throughout the night.

### **The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good**

A new head of boarding was promoted from within the existing staff team in September 2018. He is supported by the former head of boarding, who has moved to a new role. The new head of boarding is yet to begin any relevant management training.

Management monitoring systems are effective. Regular communication with day staff assesses boarders' behaviour and attendance. When difficulties occur, such as a boarder feeling tired, managers act quickly to address these concerns.

Staff morale is good. Staff report regular and effective supervision and performance appraisal. At present, performance appraisals do not reflect the views of boarders or other staff members, limiting their effectiveness.

Managers assess potential admissions regularly. International boarders are assessed via Skype and given the opportunity to attend a summer school programme, to assess suitability.

Managers advocate strongly for boarders. They liaise effectively with the headteacher to support boarders who are struggling. In one case, the head of boarding visited a boarder's family abroad to discuss his concerns and seek the support of parents.

Managers understand the strengths and weaknesses of the boarding service. They have acted quickly to address some concerns outlined in this inspection, such as the content of the school website.

## **What does the boarding school need to do to improve?**

### **Recommendations**

- Ensure that access to the internet is safely controlled.
- Ensure that the head of boarding commences a formal management qualification to support him in the role.
- Performance appraisals should consider using feedback from boarders and other professionals to offer a more comprehensive assessment of performance.
- Ensure that staff receive regular updating safeguarding training, with reference to the risk posed to boarders by criminal gangs grooming boarders to sell drugs, otherwise known as 'running county lines'.
- Ensure that the school's safeguarding policy is updated to include the latest government guidance.

### **Information about this inspection**

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people using the 'Social care common inspection framework'. This inspection was carried out under the Children Act 1989 to assess the effectiveness of the service, how it meets the core functions of the service as set out in legislation, and to consider how well it complies with the national minimum standards.

## **Boarding school details**

**Social care unique reference number:** SC485109

**Headteacher:** Mr Fatih Adak

**Type of school:** Boarding School

**Telephone number:** 0208 2050052

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## **Inspector**

Barnaby Dowell, social care inspector



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