

Inspection of North London Grammar School

110 Colindeep Lane, London NW9 6HB

Inspection dates: 9 to 11 November 2022

Overall effectiveness

Inadequate

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Inadequate

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Outstanding

Does the school meet the independent school standards?

No

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders, including the proprietor and those responsible for governance, have not fulfilled their statutory responsibilities in several areas, including safeguarding. Weaknesses in the safeguarding systems used mean that pupils are not kept as safe as they should be. Pupils in the secondary phase follow a curriculum that does not consistently match the ambition of what is expected nationally.

Pupils behave well and enjoy attending school. They value the small and diverse environment and are respectful towards each other. Pupils reported that bullying was rare, but if it did occur, they were confident to report it to a teacher. Pupils know how and where to share their worries. For example, older pupils are confident to go to student services for additional support, while primary-age pupils have access to worry boxes. Staff act on these concerns swiftly.

Pupils benefit from attending a wide range of activities that develop their interests and talents in skills such as debating. Opportunities are provided for pupils to take on additional responsibilities. For example, the student council have worked with leaders to improve the range of meals offered.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Pupils study a broad range of subjects. However, the curriculum in several subjects is not well designed. Leaders have not identified the most important knowledge that pupils need to know and remember. In the sixth form, the examination specifications have not been broken down into smaller steps of learning. This means there is a lack of clarity about how students will develop and deepen their understanding over time.

Pupils select their GCSE options from a wide range of subjects at the end of Year 8. However, leaders have not given sufficient consideration to curricular thinking in Years 7 and 8 for the subjects that pupils do not study at GCSE. As a result, pupils' understanding in these areas is limited. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 have limited access to physical education.

In other subjects, the curriculum has been more effectively designed. Where this is the case, pupils are supported to learn and remember more over time. For example, in science, pupils can make confident predictions because they can draw on what they have learned previously. Similarly, in English, pupils created a gothic atmosphere in their writing because they had already studied and analysed texts from this genre.

Teachers check what pupils have understood. However, weaknesses in curriculum design mean that the important knowledge pupils should learn and remember is not always checked. As a result, misconceptions and errors are sometimes missed and persist for pupils over time.

Pupils who struggle with reading have been identified. However, they do not currently receive sufficient support to help them read more fluently. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are swiftly and accurately identified. Teachers use a range of strategies of support these pupils to access the planned curriculum. However, some of the strategies employed do not address pupils' specific needs.

A curriculum is in place for personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education. For example, pupils learn about online safety. However, leaders have not given sufficient thought about how pupils embed and develop their knowledge of these important themes. As a result, pupils do not have a secure understanding in this area of the curriculum. Staff have not received appropriate training in PSHE. This means they do not consistently identify or correct any misconceptions that pupils have.

Leaders do have not a written a policy for, and have not consulted with parents on, the content of the relationship and sex education (RSE) curriculum. Although pupils learn aspects of RSE through the PSHE curriculum, important ideas are not given sufficient prominence. This means that pupils have not developed an age-appropriate understanding on issues such as consent. There is no RSE curriculum in place for students in the sixth form.

Secondary-age pupils and students in the sixth form receive appropriate careers education. Pupils have access to remote work experience. Staff provide additional advice and guidance for pupils with SEND. Students in the sixth form are supported effectively with applications to university. In addition, some pupils are selected to be careers ambassadors who support other pupils with information about their own experiences.

There are different behaviour policies for different phases of the school. While the policy for pupils in the secondary phase reflects current practice, this is not the case for younger pupils. This means that the required independent school standard is not met. Despite this weakness, behaviour around the school is calm and orderly. Pupils are respectful towards each other and to visitors.

Leaders have a broad understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. However, this information has not been consistently shared with those responsible for governance. As a result, they do not have a realistic view of the school's effectiveness and have not identified appropriate priorities for improvement. This means those responsible for governance cannot and do not hold leaders to account effectively. Although some work has started on improving the curriculum, the checks that leaders make on the impact of this are not precise. As a result, there is variability in the quality of education between subjects and year groups.

Members of the proprietor body have not fulfilled their statutory duties. They have not ensured the school meets the independent school standards.

The school is complaint with schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.

Leaders, including the proprietor and those responsible for governance, are not fulfilling all their statutory safeguarding duties. This means pupils are not kept as safe as they should be.

Appropriate pre-employment checks are carried out. However, leaders are not rigorous in following up on safer recruitment processes, for example ensuring references are from appropriate sources. There is also a lack of clarity about which pre-employment checks have been carried out for which staff.

Students over the age of 18 are admitted to the school roll. This is outside the registration agreement the school has with the Department for Education. Although pupils behave positively and appropriately towards one another, leaders have not completed sufficient reference checks or risk assessments for these students.

Staff have received appropriate safeguarding training. This means they recognise the signs that a pupil might be at risk of harm. They report any concerns they have to leaders. Although advice and guidance are sought from external agencies, this is not always requested swiftly enough. This means pupils and their families do not always receive the support they need quickly. Records of the advice sought and provided are not always well organised. As a result, actions to be taken by the school are missed or delayed.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- Leaders, including the proprietor and those responsible for governance, have not fulfilled their statutory responsibilities to keep pupils safe. This puts pupils at increased risk. Leaders must ensure that all pre-employment checks take place in a timely manner and references are secured from appropriate sources. They must also ensure they are more vigilant in following up safeguarding concerns that come to their attention. Appropriate risk assessments and references must be in place for students who are aged 18 when admitted to the school.
- In several subjects, the curriculum is not well designed and does not match the ambitions of what is expected nationally. As a result, pupils are not well supported to learn and remember more. Leaders must ensure they identify the knowledge that pupils should learn. This should be cumulatively sequenced so that pupils revisit, practise and embed their understanding of important ideas. This will ensure they are better prepared to tackle more challenging ideas later on.
- The strategies teachers use to help some pupils with SEND are not well matched to their specific needs. As a result, some of these pupils do not receive the

support they need to access the planned curriculum. Leaders must ensure that any planned support for pupils with SEND is sufficiently focused on their specific needs.

- Leaders do not have an appropriate policy or curriculum in place for RSE. This means pupils do not have a clear and age-appropriate understanding of important issues. Leaders must ensure that they develop a policy and curriculum in this area that matches statutory requirements. They must also consult on the content of the policy and curriculum with parents.
- The proprietor and those responsible for governance do not have an accurate view of the school's effectiveness. As a result, they have not identified the right priorities for improvement. Leaders must ensure that the proprietor and those responsible for governance have the information and training needed to hold the school to account. This will help to ensure that the weaknesses identified as a result of this inspection are addressed and the school meets the independent school standards.

How can I feed back my views?

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The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

School details

Unique reference number	134764
DfE registration number	302/6086
Local authority	Barnet
Inspection number	10226760
Type of school	Other Independent School
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	7 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	246
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Wisdom School Ltd
Chair	Rustam Aliyev
Headteacher	Huseyin Fatih Adak
Annual fees (day pupils)	£11,025-£16,500
Telephone number	020 8205 0052
Website	www.northlondongrammar.com
Email address	info@northlondongrammar.com
Date of previous inspection	24 to 26 April 2018

Information about this school

- North London Grammar School is an independent co-educational day school for pupils aged from 7 to 18. The school opened in 2006.
- Some students join the school who are already aged 18. This means leaders have admitted students above the registered age range of the school. The school has not informed the Department for Education of this change to their registration agreement.
- This was the school's fourth standard inspection. The previous inspection took place in April 2018, when the school was judged to be outstanding.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- From September 2015, the school took in boarders. The boarding provision is subject to a separate inspection.

Information about this inspection

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

The school has failed to meet the independent school standards. These are the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The headteacher was not on site during the inspection. Inspectors met with the deputy headteacher and other school leaders.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: art, English, PSHE and science. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of their work.
- Inspectors also looked at the curriculum in other subjects.
- To inspect safeguarding, inspectors spoke with the designated leader, reviewed the single central record of pre-employment checks, reviewed records and spoke with staff and pupils about safeguarding. Inspectors spoke with representatives of the governing body, including the chair of the board of proprietors.
- Inspectors reviewed responses from pupils, parents and staff to Ofsted's online surveys.

Inspection team

Sophie Healey-Welch, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Nick Hitchen

Ofsted Inspector

Annex. Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school failed to meet 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; and
 - 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), and
- 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(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;
- 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(3) The information referred to in this sub-paragraph is-
 - 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;

Part 6. Provision of information

- 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.

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