



**ISI** Independent  
Schools  
Inspectorate

**Focused Compliance and Educational Quality Inspection Report**

**Normanhurst School**

**March 2022**

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## School's Details

<b>School</b>	Normanhurst School			
<b>DfE number</b>	320/6059			
<b>Address</b>	Normanhurst School 68–74 Station Road North Chingford London E4 7BA			
<b>Telephone number</b>	0208 529 4307			
<b>Email address</b>	info@normanhurstschool.co.uk			
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Jacqueline Job			
<b>Proprietor</b>	Mr Matthew Hagger			
<b>Age range</b>	2 to 16			
<b>Number of pupils on roll</b>	265			
	<b>EYFS</b>	39	<b>Juniors</b>	106
	<b>Seniors</b>	120		
<b>Inspection dates</b>	22 to 24 and 28 to 29 March 2022			

## 1. Background Information

### About the school

- 1.1 Normanhurst School is an independent co-educational day school situated predominantly in four large Edwardian houses. The school was founded in 1923 and in 1996 it became part of the family-owned Oak Tree group of schools. There are three other schools in the group. The role of proprietor is undertaken by one member of the family as the chair of governors.
- 1.2 Since the previous inspection the school has reviewed its curriculum, invested in more technology and developed the role of a mental health and well-being coordinator.
- 1.3 The current headteacher took up her post in September 2020.
- 1.4 The inspection took into account the circumstances faced by schools during the COVID-19 pandemic and the restrictions imposed by government guidance at various points of the pandemic.

### What the school seeks to do

- 1.5 The school aims to be a secure and safe community in which each child can achieve academically and personally. It seeks to help pupils develop a clear sense of right from wrong and take responsibility for their own actions, and to provide a broad curriculum with a variety of activities that offer stimulating opportunities in which pupils can develop lively, inquiring minds as well as individual talents. It strives to nurture a strong sense of family in which there is care and respect among pupils, parents and staff, and give opportunities to develop leadership skills and encourage independence and cooperation.

### About the pupils

- 1.6 Most pupils come from a range of professional families living within a three-mile radius of the school. Assessment data provided by the school indicate that the ability of pupils is in line with those taking the same tests nationally. The school has identified 28 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), which include dyslexia and dyspraxia, eight of whom receive additional specialist help. No pupil in the school has an education, health and care (EHC) plan. English is an additional language (EAL) for 18 pupils, none of whom require additional support. Data used by the school have identified 26 pupils as being the most able in the school's population, and the curriculum is modified for them.

## 2. Regulatory Compliance Inspection

### Preface

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is approved by the Secretary of State to inspect schools which are, or whose heads are, in membership of the associations which form the Independent Schools Council (ISC) and report on the extent to which they meet the Independent School Standards ('the standards') in the Schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014. Inspections of schools with early years settings not requiring registration also report whether the school complies with key provisions of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework, and for registered settings the full range of the Early Years Foundation Stage provisions is considered. Additionally, inspections report on the school's accessibility plan under Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 and the ban on corporal punishment under section 548 of the Education Act 1996. Inspections also comment on the progress made to meet any compliance action points set out in the school's most recent statutory inspection.

ISI inspections are also carried out under the arrangements of the ISC Associations for the maintenance and improvement of the quality of their membership.

**This is a FOCUSED COMPLIANCE INSPECTION which was combined with an inspection of EDUCATIONAL QUALITY. The FOCUSED COMPLIANCE inspection reports only on the school's compliance with the standards.** The standards represent minimum requirements and judgements are given either as **met** or as **not met**. All schools are required to meet all the standards applicable to them. Where the minimum requirements are not met, this is clearly indicated in the relevant section of the report and the school is required to take the actions specified. In this focused compliance inspection, key standards have been inspected in detail. These are the standards on safeguarding; measures to guard against bullying; arrangements for pupils' health and safety; arrangements to check the suitability of staff; the provision of information; the handling of parents' complaints; and other related aspects of leadership and management. The remaining standards and requirements are deemed to continue to be met unless evidence to the contrary has been found.

Inspections do not include matters that are outside of the regulatory framework described above, such as: an exhaustive health and safety audit; compliance with data protection requirements; an in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features; contractual arrangements with parents; an investigation of the financial viability of the school or its accounting procedures.

Inspectors may be aware of individual safeguarding concerns, allegations and complaints as part of the inspection process. Such matters will not usually be referred to specifically in published reports in this document but will have been considered by the team in reaching its judgements.

Links to the standards and requirements can be found here: [The Education \(Independent School Standards\) Regulations 2014](#), [Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework](#).

## Key findings

- 2.1 The school meets the standards in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, and relevant requirements of the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, and associated requirements, and no further action is required as a result of this inspection.**

### **PART 1 – Quality of education provided**

- 2.2 In the junior school, the school's own framework for assessment confirms that teaching enables pupils to make good progress in the context of Part 1 paragraph 3(a).
- 2.3 At GCSE in the years 2020 to 2021, performance has confirmed that teaching enables pupils to make good progress in the context of Part 1 paragraph 3(a).
- 2.4 The curriculum is documented, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work for the pupils and covers the required breadth of material. The teaching enables pupils to make good progress, encompasses effective behaviour management and is supported by suitable resources. A suitable framework for the assessment of pupils' performance is in place.
- 2.5 Pupils receive relationships education in the junior school and relationships and sex education in the senior school, except in so far as they are lawfully excused. The school has consulted parents and published a written statement of its policy which has regard to the relevant statutory guidance.
- 2.6 The standards relating to the quality of education [paragraphs 1–4] are met.**

### **PART 2 – Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils**

- 2.7 Principles and values are actively promoted which facilitate the personal development of pupils as responsible, tolerant, law-abiding citizens.
- 2.8 The standard relating to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development [paragraph 5] is met.**

### **PART 3 – Welfare, health and safety of pupils**

- 2.9 Arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils by means that pay due regard to current statutory guidance; good behaviour is promoted; bullying is prevented so far as reasonably practicable; health and safety requirements are met, including those relating to fire safety; provision is made for first aid. Pupils are properly supervised; admission and attendance registers are maintained, as required, and there is a strategic approach to risk assessment. A disability access plan is in place.
- 2.10 The standards relating to welfare, health and safety [paragraphs 6–16], the requirement of Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010, and the ban on corporal punishment under section 548 of the Education Act 1996 are met.**

### **PART 4 – Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors**

- 2.11 The school makes appropriate checks to ensure the suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors, and a register is kept as required.
- 2.12 The standards relating to the suitability of those in contact with pupils at the school [paragraphs 17–21] are met.**

## **PART 5 – Premises of and accommodation at schools**

2.13 Suitable toilet and changing facilities, and showering facilities where required by the standard, and appropriate accommodation for pupils' medical and therapy needs are provided. The premises are maintained to a standard commensurate with health and safety; acoustics and lighting are appropriate; water provision is adequate. Suitable outdoor space is provided for physical education and outdoor play.

**2.14 The standards relating to the premises and accommodation [paragraphs 22–31] are met.**

## **PART 6 – Provision of information**

2.15 A range of information is published, provided or made available to parents, inspectors and the Department for Education. This includes details about the proprietor, the ethos of the school and the curriculum, and of the school's arrangements for admission, behaviour and exclusions, bullying, health and safety, first aid, details of the complaints procedure, and the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year, and the provision for any with education, health and care plans or English as an additional language. It also includes particulars of the school's academic performance during the preceding school year, inspection reports and (for parents only) a report at least annually of their own child's progress. The safeguarding policy is posted on the school's website.

**2.16 The standard relating to the provision of information [paragraph 32] is met.**

## **PART 7 – Manner in which complaints are handled**

2.17 Parental complaints, if any, are handled effectively through a three-stage process, (informal, formal and a hearing before a panel of three, one of whom is independent of the school). Each stage has clear time scales, and at the third stage the panel can make findings and recommendations which are communicated to the complainant. Records are kept appropriately, including of any action taken, whether or not a complaint is successful.

**2.18 The standard relating to the handling of complaints [paragraph 33] is met.**

## **PART 8 – Quality of leadership in and management of schools**

2.19 The proprietor ensures that the leadership and management demonstrate good skills and knowledge, and fulfil their responsibilities effectively, so that the other standards are consistently met, and they actively promote the well-being of the pupils.

**2.20 The standard relating to leadership and management of the school [paragraph 34] is met.**

### 3. Educational Quality Inspection

#### Preface

The **EDUCATIONAL QUALITY** inspection reports on the quality of the school's work. It focuses on the two key outcomes:

- The achievement of the pupils, including their academic development, and
- The personal development of the pupils.

**The headline judgements apply one of the ISI descriptors 'excellent', 'good', 'sound' or 'unsatisfactory'.**

#### Key findings

3.1 The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements is good.

- Pupils are confident and articulate speakers with strong communication skills.
- Pupils of all abilities make good progress because of well-directed support from their teachers in class.
- Most pupils have positive attitudes to their learning.
- Pupils' progress in some lessons is limited because they are not sufficiently challenged.

3.2 The quality of the pupils' personal development is good.

- Pupils are able to articulate a good understanding of themselves and their needs.
- Pupils frequently make clear decisions about how to reach solutions, both individually and in groups.
- Pupils enjoy taking responsibility and contributing to the life of the school and beyond.
- Pupils in some years have struggled to reach solutions in challenging situations, limiting their personal development.

#### Recommendations

3.3 The school should make the following improvements.

- To raise the level of challenge consistently throughout the school so that pupils demonstrate even greater investment in their learning and make more rapid progress.
- To increase the opportunities for pupils' individual views to be accommodated to enhance their personal development.

#### The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements

3.4 The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements is good.

3.5 Pupils' communication skills are particularly strong. Pupils of every age develop effective communication skills as a result of the school's commitment to providing opportunities for discussion within the curriculum. Ideas are shared, discussed and refined. This was seen in a Year 7 English lesson where pupils commented thoughtfully on a poem using mature language to bring out the author's meaning. It was also witnessed in Year 11 Spanish when pupils spoke confidently and fluently in Spanish in answer to questions that they had prepared. Pupils are able to express themselves with fluency and poise, orally and in writing, not least as they are taught these skills from an early age.



Pupils participate well in pair work and discussion and are very willing to listen as well as to talk. Pupils exhibiting strong communication skills also facilitates successful group working to produce effective outcomes, such as in Year 4 Drama and personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE). Pupils' enthusiasm for precise communication was seen in simple and complex sentence forming in Year 3 Spanish, where pupils prided themselves on pronouncing the words with an authentic Spanish accent. In some lessons pupils' achievement and communication were limited by tasks with little challenge for those of average or higher ability. Pupils with additional learning needs are well supported to address and overcome their difficulties. Pupils' presentation of their own work, using information and communication technology (ICT) software packages evidenced through recordings is effective and demonstrates good subject knowledge.

- 3.6 Assessment data provided by the school indicate that pupils' attainment across the curriculum is good, with results at GCSE in line with predictions from base line testing. Pupils are able to make strong progress due to small class sizes and leaders' and proprietors' generous allocation of teaching assistants. Pupils receive much personal attention in their lessons, supplemented by booster sessions before and after school. Pupils of all abilities progress well. Those with SEND and EAL, progress well because the school ensures that teaching is appropriate for all pupils. Pupils are encouraged to achieve their potential through leaders' tracking of data throughout their school career. Pupils in the senior school are well prepared for external examinations. Leavers go on to their choice of further education or training, either in sixth form schools or colleges or vocational colleges in London. Pupils were able to continue to make good progress through the pandemic due to a swift transition to online learning by the school.
- 3.7 Pupils display good knowledge, skills and understanding. They are able to apply their skills to tackle unfamiliar problems across the curriculum. Pupils speak with clarity, using mature vocabulary and demonstrating excellent linguistic skills. Pupils demonstrate a strong ability to deploy technical vocabulary to describe literary devices such as simile, metaphor, personification and pathetic fallacy. They express themselves confidently and with feeling. Pupils' writing skills are showcased by their work in English where Year 11 pupils analyse their set texts. Their writing skills also shown in Year 8 history where pupils write in depth on, for example, the 'New Model Army' or the 'Execution of Charles I'. However, inspectors in the senior school saw few opportunities offered to pupils to write longer pieces, both in lessons and in the work scrutiny undertaken during the inspection. In the pre-inspection questionnaire, almost all pupils agreed that their teachers knew their subjects well and know how to help pupils learn.
- 3.8 Pupils exhibit a good grasp of numerical skills both with mathematical concepts and in their confident application to other subjects such as in science, when working with temperatures using independent and dependent variables. Pupils' development of their numerical skills benefits from the academic departments co-ordinating their teaching so that numerical and mathematical concepts needed in other areas are first covered in mathematics lessons where possible. Pupils' mathematical skills and knowledge are strong at every age group. This is because pupils receive a thorough grounding of the basics at each stage of their development.
- 3.9 Pupils spoke positively about the school's provision of lessons through ICT during the lockdown, some describing it to inspectors as 'fantastic', ensuring that they could still make progress in their learning. Pupils are able to work with have benefitted from investment in a class set of tablets. However, there was little evidence of much further use of ICT within lessons. Pupils confidently presented topics in various subjects using appropriate software through interactive whiteboards. Pupils who spoke with inspectors said that they enjoy using technology in subjects when provided with the opportunity. Pupil work seen during the inspection did not show a wide use of ICT throughout the school.
- 3.10 Pupils are able to work independently across all subjects and levels, which successfully aids their learning. Junior pupils show excellent study skills, undertaking increasingly complex tasks and monitoring their progress against success criteria. Pupils achieve less success where they experience undemanding tasks and therefore insufficient challenge. Pupils from an early age develop strong study

skills and are confident in assimilating and analysing information from a range of sources. Pupils showed excellent ability for their age to expand their knowledge of phrases and hypothesise about how to adapt these to negatives in a language lesson. Pupils in year 5 spoke confidently about recent independent project work that they had completed. Children in the EYFS display confidence in their learning appropriate to their age as seen in their understanding of seed growth.

- 3.11 Pupils achieve well in external competitions, such as with the Independent Schools Association (ISA) group of schools or within the proprietorial group of schools through projects, such as the Oak Tree Challenge. Most pupils gain the bronze award for The Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme. Pupils benefit from using a number of high-quality external facilities for their physical education (PE) needs, both indoor and outdoor. The playground on site is used for the youngest pupils PE lessons. Pupils who met inspectors spoke about their enjoyment and inclusion of drama at the school and some of playing an instrument. Pupils enjoy celebrating the successes of their peers which are shared with them and with the wider school community.
- 3.12 Most pupils approach their studies with enthusiasm and display focused attitudes towards their learning. In the EYFS the children were constantly engaged and excited with their activities. Pupils are generally keen to acquire, develop and display their learning to others. In the questionnaire, most pupils said their lessons were interesting. Pupils respond the best where the challenge is the greatest. In these circumstances, pupils display excellent attitudes and desire to succeed, leading them to produce more imaginative work. Pupils listen carefully and respectfully to their teachers and peers, particularly where the teacher has high expectations. Pupils often display determination and persistence to succeed in their studies as seen in many lessons. Pupils experiencing less challenge become less engaged and some displays of low-level disruptive behaviour can be seen. Pupils with SEND showed positive attitudes in overcoming their difficulties, exhibiting real pride in their work.

### **The quality of the pupils' personal development**

- 3.13 The quality of the pupils' personal development is good.
- 3.14 Pupils have a good understanding of themselves. They are able to describe clearly their strengths and what they feel less accomplished at. During the inspection pupils were able to effectively articulate their emotions in particular situations. Those who spoke to the inspectors explained how they have sought to manage their feelings when they have been less positive or confident. Pupils acknowledge the difficulties they encountered during lockdowns and also the way they worked to manage these. Most senior pupils are self-confident and exhibit high self-esteem but a few present as less communicative and reluctant to participate. Pupils show self-discipline in the approach to their studies, being punctual, engaging in tasks quickly and without fuss. For example, pupils in Year 6 confidently delivered an interactive and self-reflective assembly for the junior school based on the 'power of me'. Pupils of all ages in the junior school had the confidence to join in this collaborative event, successfully fulfilling the school values.
- 3.15 Pupils are very effective decision-makers when working collaboratively in groups or as individuals. This was seen throughout the school from the EYFS choosing letters and objects from a basket to the senior school in directing their own work in Art and Graphics. They are excellent at listening to one another and making thoughtful decisions with care and consideration. Pupils are prepared to make important decisions about their futures with strong guidance from the school. Pupils are very clear about working with online platforms and through regular guidance understand from a young age that their online activities can have serious repercussions. The children in the EYFS are confident in their decision making for themselves and each other.
- 3.16 Pupils in the junior school enjoy reflecting on what they are grateful for in life and why they are grateful for it, this is noted in a 'gratitude book' which is passed from year group to year group. Pupils of all ages understand about religious difference and that people pursue different religious practices and worship in different ways. However, there was little evidence of pupils' engagement with

questions of faith or philosophy, such as about the creation the world. In the EYFS children showed an excellent understanding of the need to care for plants and seeds to enable them to grow. They developed this understanding into an awareness that things could only grow well if they are nurtured. Pupils discuss the presence of God in war situations when they arise in the curriculum. Pupils who spoke to the inspectors conveyed an emerging awareness of the importance of non-material aspects of life.

- 3.17 Pupils' behaviour is good and there is mutual respect for their teachers and each other. In the questionnaire, most pupils agreed that pupils were kind and showed respect to each other. Older pupils who spoke to the inspectors said this was less pronounced in the senior school. Pupils articulate a strong sense of right and wrong and they are indignant if they feel the right thing has not been done. Pupils listen carefully to others, respect different opinions and work hard to avoid hurting the feelings of others. Pupils have a clear understanding of the importance of saying sorry and then moving on, and also of accepting an apology gracefully. Pupils have a strong understanding of the law and spoke about the importance of keeping to it, particularly with regard to banned substances and social media age restrictions.
- 3.18 Pupils have a strong ability to work together and to support one another in and outside of lessons. Pupils show a willingness to focus on tasks, even with pupils with whom they have less close friendships. Pupils are keen to solve problems together and provide strong encouragement to each other. Senior pupils effectively guide younger pupils as mentors or coaches, particularly in house events. Pupils have a strong appreciation of the value of respect and subscribe strongly to the school's six core values as a template for how to live. Pupils typically forge tight relationships with each other, reflecting the family ethos in the school. However, inspectors found that these are not always maintained strongly as the pupils reach the top of the school.
- 3.19 Pupils' contribution to others is very strong. Pupils are naturally giving of their time and engage in many activities both collectively and individually. For example, pupils enjoy preparation and planning of cake sales and coffee mornings, clothes collections and Easter egg collections. Senior pupils volunteer through the Oak Tree challenge to work with local care homes and collect rubbish from places of natural beauty. Children in the EYFS benefit from involvement in charity fund raising events and understand that there is sadness in places and they want to help as seen in their participation in a sponsored walk to the forest raising money for Ukraine. Pupils are keen to apply for positions of responsibility as prefects, heads of house and posts on the school council. They take pride in showing their school to prospective parents and are able to support younger pupils in their development. Pupils value helping others less fortunate than themselves and the school encourages them to participate in the Oak Tree Challenge and The Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme.
- 3.20 Pupils spoken to during the inspection have a very good appreciation of the fact that they come from different religious and racial backgrounds and this is not a barrier to them being friends. Pupils enjoy sharing information about how they live and features of life from their own cultures from the earliest years at school. Pupils spoken to during the inspection commented that it is okay to be different at their school and it is 'not an issue'. Pupils say that any issues raised to staff are dealt with quickly. Pupils benefit from topical and up-to-date information through an easily adaptable personal social health citizenship education (PSHCE) programme and external groups and providers who are brought in to support the pupils.
- 3.21 Pupils have a very good understanding of how to keep safe and healthy. From an early age, pupils are able to articulate the importance of making healthy choices with food or balancing consumption of unhealthy food with appropriate exercise. Pupils show considerable enthusiasm in engaging in different kinds of sport and exercise. In the questionnaire, all parents agreed that their children were in a safe environment at school. Pupils spoken to during the inspection are clearly aware of the importance of maintaining healthy relationships with others and managing their own mental health by sharing their concerns and worries with a trusted adult. Pupils benefit from and spoke positively about the newly created 'hub' full of mental health resources and teacher support.

## 4. Inspection Evidence

- 4.1 The inspectors observed lessons, had discussions with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with members of staff and with the proprietor, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended assemblies. Inspectors visited the facilities for the youngest pupils, together with the learning support and educational resource areas. Inspectors considered the responses of parents, staff and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires. The inspectors examined curriculum and other documentation made available by the school.

### Inspectors

Miss Sue Duff	Reporting inspector
Mr Norman Patterson	Compliance team inspector (Bursar, SofH school)
Mr Bill Chadwick	Team inspector (Former senior deputy head, HMC school)
Mr Michael Clennett	Team inspector (Former acting head, GSA school)