



**INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE**

**NORTHCOTE LODGE SCHOOL**

**INTEGRATED INSPECTION**

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## Northcote Lodge School

Full Name of School	<b>Northcote Lodge School</b>
DfE Number	<b>212/6395</b>
Address	<b>Northcote Lodge School 26 Bolingbroke Grove London SW11 6EL</b>
Telephone Number	<b>020 8682 8888</b>
Fax Number	<b>020 8682 8879</b>
Email Address	<b><a href="mailto:j.hansford@northwoodschoools.com">j.hansford@northwoodschoools.com</a></b>
Headmaster	<b>Mr John Hansford</b>
Proprietors	<b>Sir Malcolm and Lady Colquhoun</b>
Age Range	<b>8 to 13</b>
Total Number of Pupils	<b>216</b>
Gender of Pupils	<b>Boys</b>
Inspection dates	<b>05 Mar 2013 to 08 Mar 2013</b>

## PREFACE

This inspection report follows the *ISI schedule*, which occupies a period of four continuous days in the school. The previous ISI inspection was in March 2008.

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Secretary of State for the purpose of inspecting schools belonging to the Independent Schools Council (ISC) Associations and reporting on compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010. The range of these Regulations, which replace those first introduced on 1 September 2003, can be viewed on the website [www.legislation.gov.uk](http://www.legislation.gov.uk). Additionally, inspections will consider the school's accessibility plan under Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 and the ban on corporal punishment introduced by the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

The inspection was also carried out under the arrangements of the ISC Associations for the maintenance and improvement of the quality of their membership.

The inspection of the school is from an educational perspective and provides limited inspection of other aspects, although inspectors comment on any significant hazards or problems they encounter which have an adverse impact on children. The inspection does not include:

- (i) an exhaustive health and safety audit
- (ii) an in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features
- (iii) an investigation of the financial viability of the school or its accounting procedures
- (iv) an in-depth investigation of the school's compliance with employment law.

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 in the published report but will have been considered by the team in reaching their judgements.

Both Ofsted and ISI inspect and report on the Independent School Standards Regulations. However, they apply different frameworks and have different criteria for judging school quality that are suited to the different types of schools they inspect. Both use a four point scale when making judgements of quality but, whilst the ISI terminology reflects quality judgements that are at least equivalent to those used by Ofsted, they also reflect the differences in approach. ISI reports do not provide a single overarching judgement for the school but instead give a clear judgement on each aspect of the school's work at the beginning of each section. **These headline statements must include one of the ISI descriptors 'excellent', 'good', 'sound' or 'unsatisfactory', and where Achievement is 'exceptional' that term may be used for the top grade.** Elsewhere in the report, inspectors may use a range of different adjectives to make judgements. **For EYFS registered provision (for pupils aged under three), reports are required to use the same terminology ('outstanding', 'good', 'satisfactory' and 'inadequate') as Ofsted reports.**

## **INSPECTION EVIDENCE**

The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with senior members of staff and with the proprietors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registration sessions and assemblies. Inspectors visited the facilities for sick or injured pupils. The responses of parents and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined regulatory documentation made available by the school.

### **Inspectors**

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Mrs Daphne Cawthorne

Mr Dougal Philps

Reporting Inspector

Team Inspector (Head, IAPS school)

Team Inspector (Head, IAPS school)

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## 1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Northcote Lodge School is an independent day school for boys from the ages of eight to thirteen. It is situated in the Wandsworth district of south west London, near to Wandsworth Common. It was founded in 1993 by the current proprietors and is part of the Northwood Schools Group. The school aims to provide a positive, caring and safe environment where each boy is supported socially and emotionally. It strives to provide a traditional all-round academic education with ample opportunity for sport, in a strong community where staff, pupils and parents work together. A board of directors, which includes the proprietors and the heads of the schools, runs the limited company, but overall responsibility for the school lies with the proprietors, who are also the principals.
- 1.2 Since the previous inspection there has been a change of headmaster and the school has expanded to three-form entry. A basement conversion has been completed to provide new changing rooms and three new classrooms, and entry is now from Year 4 only. About two-thirds of the pupils join from Broomwood Hall, another school in the Northwood Schools Group.
- 1.3 At the time of the inspection, 216 pupils were on roll. The junior school is for pupils in Years 4 and 5 and the senior school is for pupils in Years 6 to 8. The vast majority of pupils are of white British origin, and come from professional families who live locally and work in London, with a small minority of pupils coming from a range of other ethnic backgrounds. The ability profile of the pupils is above the national average. The school has identified 68 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and, of these, 35 receive learning support. Four pupils have English as an additional language and none of them needs support for English.
- 1.4 National Curriculum (NC) nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school. The year group nomenclature used by the school and its National Curriculum equivalence are shown in the following table.

School	NC name
Shell	Year 4
Form 2	Year 5
Form 3	Year 6
Remove	Year 7
Form 5	Year 8

## **2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL**

### **2.(a) Main findings**

- 2.1 All pupils are highly successful in their learning and personal development. Their achievement is excellent. The school successfully meets its aim to provide a traditional education with particular emphasis on good manners, courtesy and tolerance of others. Excellent teaching contributes to the high standard of achievement and the pupils' attitudes in lessons are highly positive. Self-assessment of their work is at an early stage of development. They are interested in their studies and appreciate the opportunities offered to them, both within and outside the curriculum.
- 2.2 Throughout the school the pupils' personal qualities are excellent. The warm and caring atmosphere in the school fosters pupils who are well mannered and unfailingly polite. In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, parents were overwhelmingly positive. This reflects their strong satisfaction with the education their children are receiving. Almost all pupils reported that they are proud to be at the school, though a majority of them indicated that they do not feel that the system of sanctions and rewards is completely fair. Inspectors agree with this view. All staff, both teaching and non-teaching, provide excellent pastoral care and their example leads to the purposeful atmosphere that pervades the school. Arrangements to ensure the pupils' welfare, health and safety are excellent.
- 2.3 Leadership and management are excellent. Senior leaders have responded to all of the recommendations of the previous inspection. Planning at all levels is now consistent and pupils are provided with precise academic targets and tasks that match their abilities. Independent research is a regular feature of learning and pupils are given more tasks that require them to think for themselves. The proprietors are committed to the school, play a significant part in its development and have a good working knowledge of the day-to-day life of the school.

### **2.(b) Action points**

#### **(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements**

- 2.4 The school meets all the requirements of the Independent School Standards Regulations 2010.

#### **(ii) Recommendations for further improvement**

- 2.5 The school is advised to make the following improvements.
1. Extend pupils' self-assessment of their work.
  2. Improve the system of rewards and sanctions to ensure fairness and consistency.

### **3. THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS**

#### **3.(a) The quality of the pupils' achievements and learning**

- 3.1 The quality of the pupils' achievements and learning is excellent.
- 3.2 Throughout the school, pupils are well educated and extremely successful in their learning across all subjects and activities. The school fulfils its aim to provide excellence of education both in and outside the classroom. Pupils show clear understanding, both in lessons and in their written work, and make progress that is almost always good and often excellent. They have a marked ability to listen to each other. They read and speak well, both in lessons and when conversing with adults. Logical thought is well developed, for example through discussion of the Northern Rebellion in history; pupils presented and argued several different views for its causes. Questions posed to pupils, for example about how it feels to be weightless, promote high level thinking skills. Experiments such as exploring which shape would take longest to sink challenge younger pupils' thinking in science, and in mathematics older pupils work out how to calculate the volume of shapes such as a prism and a cylinder.
- 3.3 The pupils' creative skills are clearly evident in two- and three-dimensional art displays around the school, which provide stimulus and interest. Individual pupils have enjoyed local and regional success in art and design competitions. Pupils have auditioned for and won parts in London theatre productions, and many individuals reach a high level in music and drama examinations. Numerous opportunities exist for musicians to play at a good level in group ensembles, such as the brass band or jazz group, and these enhance their performance skills.
- 3.4 In information and communication technology (ICT), pupils reach high levels of competence. They make good use of the recently introduced individual electronic devices in most year groups and subjects. Pupils display highly developed physical skills across a range of sports. They enjoy a variety of individual successes in sporting activities, winning local, regional, national and international competitions, for example in karate and cross country. Team success is achieved in cricket, rugby and football at local and regional level. When pupils move on to their senior schools, many gain awards for sport, drama or academic achievement, and for the past several years all of them have gained places at their first-choice school.
- 3.5 The pupils' attainment cannot be measured in relation to average performance in national tests but, on the evidence available, it is judged to be excellent in relation to national age-related expectations. This level of attainment, as judged, indicates that pupils of all ages and abilities make good progress when compared with those of similar above average ability. Pupils with SEND benefit from careful planning for their needs in almost all lessons and from the specialist individual help offered. From conversations with these pupils and from scrutiny of their work it is clear that their progress is often rapid. Good individual education plans, which give teachers information about their difficulties, are written and disseminated by the learning support department and are used in almost all lessons.
- 3.6 For the many able pupils, opportunities for extension activities that challenge their thinking are provided within and outside the curriculum. Animated discussion took place in personal, social and health education (PSHE) when older pupils considered what makes up their own individual personalities, and when younger pupils who



entered a public speaking competition had to write and deliver a speech entitled 'Back in time'.

- 3.7 Pupils thrive in the atmosphere of hard work, enjoyment and effort. Their attitude to their work is excellent and they take pride both in their own achievements and those of others. They sustain high levels of concentration during lessons, maximising all opportunities presented to them. Pupils work very well together.

### **3.(b) The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision**

- 3.8 The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision is excellent.
- 3.9 The broad curriculum and the extended school day help the school to fulfil its aims to provide an all-round education with ample opportunity for sport and extra-curricular activities. The curriculum is stimulating and suits pupils of all ages and abilities. It enables them to reach high standards of achievement. It covers all the required areas of learning, with the addition of karate for the younger pupils and Latin for the oldest. Setting arrangements enable the curriculum to be effectively matched to the pupils' abilities. Pupils with SEND receive excellent support through withdrawal and in-class help using the targets identified by the learning support staff and communicated to all teachers.
- 3.10 A comprehensive games programme meets the needs of all, and all pupils are included in sports teams that are appropriate to their ability. The curriculum is enriched by many educational visits such as those to mosques, synagogues, temples, museums and art galleries. Every pupil has the opportunity to participate in a drama production each year.
- 3.11 The provision and use of ICT have developed and a more consistent approach to planning has been implemented since the previous inspection. Individual electronic devices are used by pupils in many lessons. In geography, pupils carried out an investigation on volcanoes and in French they recorded question-and-answer conversations. Documentation is thorough and the monitoring of the curriculum is carefully managed.
- 3.12 The curriculum is supported by an excellent range of extra-curricular activities and by community links, both in Britain and overseas. Visits to an outdoor activity centre, to France and to Sri Lanka to play cricket, an exchange to South Africa and a trip to New York all provide exciting and enriching opportunities for the pupils. During the inspection, a production of *Peter Pan* by younger pupils was much enjoyed by parents and friends. Extra-curricular activities include pottery, cookery, golf, woodwork, table tennis, karate, running and handwriting.
- 3.13 Links with the local community are strong, with a weekly service attended in the local church. A wide-ranging programme of visiting speakers is organised to encourage pupils to broaden their horizons. Senior pupils participate in the Northcote Award, which encourages them to help in the local community and to be ecologically aware.

### **3.(c) The contribution of teaching**

- 3.14 The contribution of teaching is excellent.
- 3.15 This enables pupils to develop their academic potential, in line with the school's aims to deliver an all-round academic education and to prepare pupils for senior school. Teachers are well qualified and have excellent knowledge of their subjects. Enthusiasm and the use of a stimulating variety of resources foster in the pupils a keen interest and a desire to learn. Lessons are planned well, and incorporate a wide range of strategies. Across the curriculum a range of high quality resources is used effectively. The use of individual electronic devices, although in its infancy, has extended these opportunities. In the best lessons the pace is brisk, with frequent changes of activity to enhance learning. The very few less successful lessons are overly directed by the teacher and have limited momentum. Teachers have high expectations, which contribute to the pupils' good progress. Excellent relationships between teachers and pupils ensure that lessons are characterised by an air of mutual respect.
- 3.16 Teachers know their pupils very well and in most lessons take time to ensure that the needs of every individual, including pupils with SEND and the most able, are met, resulting in high achievement. Since the previous inspection, the use of skilful open-ended questioning to encourage independent thinking and discussion has developed. Tasks are now matched more effectively to the differing abilities of pupils. They are given many opportunities to learn independently and to develop their creativity, with high level critical thinking skills particularly evident in the older year groups. Teachers are generous with their time outside lessons, assisting pupils' academic development. A small minority of pupils felt that they do not receive individual help when it is needed. Inspectors found no evidence to support this view. The use of rewards and positive encouragement helps pupils to remain focused and excellent behaviour is the norm.
- 3.17 Marking is regular and thorough, and constructive comments are made so that pupils understand how to improve the quality of their work. The best practice ensures that targets are set at the end of individual pieces of work and peer assessment is also evident in some subjects. Occasionally, marking is less effective and of a cursory nature. The pupils value the information they receive in constructive comments and the system of rewards for good work. However, pupils' self-assessment is under-developed. The results of regular assessments are used effectively by teachers to track pupils' progress. They provide useful information to target the most able. Specific effort has been made to identify these pupils and to provide appropriate additional activities and levels of challenge. In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaires, a minority of pupils felt that homework does not help them to learn. Inspectors investigated this thoroughly in conversations with pupils about their work and found that homework does support learning.

## **4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT**

### **4.(a) The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils**

- 4.1 The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent.
- 4.1 The spiritual development of the pupils is excellent. Through religious education lessons and the PSHE programme, pupils develop an excellent understanding of non-material aspects of life, and show well-developed aesthetic awareness. Displays around the school reinforce these values and pupils' understanding of behaviours learned in school as skills for life. Pupils benefit from the strong Christian ethos that underpins the school. This is enhanced by the weekly church services, where the values of tolerance, care, forgiveness and empathy are highlighted. Pupils are at ease in expressing their opinions, knowing that their views will be respected.
- 4.2 Pupils show exceptional moral awareness. They have a strong sense of right and wrong. Clear school rules, known as the Northcote Way, are respected because pupils understand that they are there to ensure the school runs smoothly and safely. A strong sense of fair play and the right of everyone to be respected as a person are highly evident throughout the school.
- 4.3 Pupils' social development is excellent. They are confident and have secure self-awareness and self-esteem, being able to express their views clearly. They are aware that their actions affect others and are products of the happy environment in which they work and learn. Pupils spoke with pride about the positive effect that good manners and friendship bring to the school community. The excellent relationships within the school, between pupils and staff and amongst the pupils themselves, make a strong contribution to pupils' social development. Older pupils accept responsibility as prefects, or sport or house captains, and take their roles seriously. Throughout the school, pupils are given responsibility as members of the school council or food committee or, within each class, as monitors. A small minority of pupils reported in pre-inspection questionnaires that they are not offered the chance to take on responsibility. Inspection evidence did not support this view. Pupils contribute to the wider society in which they live through charitable fund raising. A visit from a Paralympic athlete enhanced the pupils' understanding of the charity that they are supporting and how the money they raise can help those less fortunate than themselves. They develop an understanding of civic responsibility through mock elections and visits from the local mayor.
- 4.4 Cultural development is excellent. Pupils develop their understanding of faiths and cultures other than their own through opportunities to visit different places of worship and museums, galleries and historical sites. The geography, PSHE and religious education curricula enhance their understanding of the lives of people in other countries. Residential visits to Wales, an exchange programme with schools in South Africa, the drama trip to New York and the cricket tour to Sri Lanka all add to the pupils' appreciation of diversity in the world around them.
- 4.5 Pupils have an excellent level of personal development by the time they are ready to transfer to their next school at the age of 13.

#### **4.(b) The contribution of arrangements for pastoral care**

- 4.6 The contribution of arrangements for pastoral care is excellent.
- 4.7 The care and support provided for the pupils by all members of staff enable the school to achieve its aim to provide a positive, caring and safe environment where each boy is supported socially and emotionally. Relationships between staff and pupils are excellent. Efficient and conscientious form teachers and tutors ensure that all pupils' progress and pastoral care are given close attention. The detailed pastoral care systems are well supported by policies and clear guidance, and are implemented effectively. Successful lines of communication amongst all staff mean that care is carefully co-ordinated.
- 4.8 The school is highly effective in promoting good behaviour by emphasising the positive. A minority of pupils voiced their opinion both in pre-inspection questionnaires and in interviews that the rewards and sanctions system does not always operate fairly; inspection evidence supports this view. Evidence from pupil questionnaire responses indicated that a small minority of pupils feel that bullying is not dealt with effectively and that there is no-one for them to talk to if they are worried. It also suggested that pupils do not have a voice within the school. Extensive investigation found no evidence to support these views. The school has a clear policy to combat any bullying in all its forms, and works quickly and successfully to deal with incidents as they arise. Careful records are kept. Pupils are able to raise issues through the school council. Feedback on their meetings is given to the whole school and a number of suggestions have been acted upon. In addition, the prominently positioned 'worry box', where pupils can post comments, anonymously if they wish, enables concerns to be expressed.
- 4.9 The school ensures that every pupil has regular exercise through an extensive games programme. Considerable care is taken to promote a healthy lifestyle through the PSHE programme. Food at lunchtime, although limited in choice, is healthy, appetising and nutritious. The lack of choice at lunch was a consistent feature of comments in pupils' questionnaire responses and in interviews with them. Although pupils are provided with excellent opportunities to express their views through the food committee, they do not feel that their concerns are being addressed as they would wish.
- 4.10 An appropriate three-year plan is in place to improve educational access for pupils with SEND.

#### **4.(c) The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety**

- 4.11 The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety is excellent.
- 4.12 Safeguarding procedures are thorough and have regard to official guidance. All staff are trained at the required level in child protection. Throughout the school, safeguarding and pupils' safety are seen as priorities. Their welfare, health and safety are assured through the consistent implementation and regular review of suitable policies and procedures. Close and effective relationships are maintained with children's services locally.
- 4.13 All necessary measures are taken to reduce the risk of fire and other hazards, with thorough risk assessments covering all areas of school life. Risk assessments for all outings are rigorous and comprehensive. Regular fire drills are held and suitable

records are kept. Staff receive clear guidelines on fire safety. A health and safety committee meets regularly. Electrical testing is regular and recorded appropriately.

- 4.14 Pupils who are sick or injured are very well cared for by suitably qualified medical staff in a purpose-built medical room. Appropriate records are kept. Some of the teaching staff are qualified in first aid.
- 4.15 The admission and attendance registers are suitably maintained and correctly stored.

## **5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

### **5.(a) The quality of governance**

- 5.1 The quality of governance is excellent.
- 5.2 The proprietors and board of directors enable the school to fulfil its aim of combining a traditional approach whilst embracing modern developments in education. The structure of the board provides an effective forum for discussion of strategic issues and almost all financial matters; decisions on major capital expenditure are taken by the proprietors. They take responsibility for the premises, which are maintained to a high standard. They bring vision and guidance to the school and play a supportive role in staff appointments. They meet weekly with the school's leaders and visit frequently to ensure that they have first-hand knowledge of the daily life of the pupils and staff. A yearly three-day seminar provides the opportunity for the school development plan to be analysed and discussed.
- 5.3 The proprietors are fully aware of their legal responsibilities. They review the policies and procedures for safeguarding and welfare, health and safety at least annually.

### **5.(b) The quality of leadership and management, including links with parents, carers and guardians**

- 5.4 The quality of leadership and management is excellent.
- 5.5 Staff, parents and pupils respect the deep commitment shown in the way the school is led. The senior leaders ensure that the school fulfils its aims to maintain a strong community where self-discipline and confidence, together with a sense of duty and responsibility, are paramount. Pupils are inspired to reach the highest standards they can. The excellent personal qualities of the pupils and the high level of their achievements are a direct result of the ethos that has been created, and the example which has been set by the senior leadership team. In responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire and in interviews, pupils reported that they enjoy being at the school.
- 5.6 A sharp focus exists for future and continuous improvement and the school's leadership provides clear educational direction. Priorities have been identified through self-evaluation. Leadership has ensured that the recommendations from the previous inspection have been implemented. Planning at all levels is now consistent and pupils are provided with precise academic targets and tasks that match their abilities. Independent research is a regular feature of learning and pupils are given more tasks that require them to think for themselves. Appropriate and robust systems are in place to monitor teaching and learning within the school. Opportunities for professional development for staff are identified through the annual review system and this process is part of the robust appraisal procedure.
- 5.7 All staff receive the appropriate training in safeguarding, welfare, health and safety. Safe recruitment procedures are followed when new staff are appointed and checks are recorded accurately on the single central register. Safeguarding and pupils' safety are seen as priorities. This results in an environment which is welcoming, safe and stimulating. Staff are well qualified and induction procedures for new staff are thorough.

- 5.8 The quality of links with parents, carers and guardians is excellent. In their responses to questionnaires, parents were overwhelmingly supportive of the school. Inspection evidence confirms this view. A very small minority of parents expressed dissatisfaction regarding information about their children's progress. The inspection team found no evidence to substantiate this. Effort and attainment grades are sent to parents every half term. Full, informative reports from all subject teachers are issued twice each year and in the remaining term a report is written by pupils' tutors. Curriculum evenings are held at the start of each year and a parents' consultation evening is held once a year for each year group. Staff are available by email and parents are contacted should there be need for discussion about progress. Parents are offered numerous opportunities to attend sports matches, concerts, assemblies and plays, and thus to be fully involved in their children's education.
- 5.9 The school has a strong parents' association that organises social and fund-raising events and also plays a key role each year in welcoming parents of new pupils. Parents' concerns are handled with care and a suitable complaints policy is in place. Parents of current and prospective pupils are provided with the required information about the school, and the useful website has a dedicated parents' area. Parents receive regular newsletters that record school events and successes and provide current news.

**What the school should do to improve is given at the beginning of the report in section 2.**