ISI Independent Schools Inspectorate

Material change inspection report

06 Jun 2025

North Bridge House Senior School - Hampstead

65 Rosslyn Hill

Hampstead

London

NW3 5UD

The Independent Schools Inspectorate is appointed by the Department for Education to inspect association independent schools in England. Our inspections report on the extent to which the statutory Independent School Standards and other applicable regulatory requirements are met, collectively referred to in this report as 'the Standards'.

Inspection outcome

The school has requested a material change request to admit 16- to18-year-old pupils from September 2025.

The school is likely to meet the relevant independent school Standards if the material change is implemented. It is recommended that the material change be approved.

Inspection findings

Part 1. Quality of education provided

ISSR paragraphs 2(1)(a), 2(1)(b)(i), 2(1)(b)(ii); 2(2)(a), 2(2)(b), 2(2)(c), 2(2)(d)(i), 2(2)(d)(ii), 2(2)(e)(i), 2(2)(e)(ii), 2(2)(e)(iii), 2(2)(g), 2(2)(h), 2(2)(i); 2A(1)(a), 2A(1)(b), 2A(1)(d), 2A(1)(e), 2A(1)(f), 2A(1)(g), 2A(2); 3(a), 3(b), 3(c), 3(d), 3(e), 3(f), 3(g), 3(h), 3(i), 3(j) and 4

1. The school has a comprehensive curriculum programme in place for 11- to 16-year-old pupils, which appropriately includes the requirements for the teaching of relationships and sex education (RSE) for secondary aged pupils. Teaching enables pupils to make good progress. Pupils receive targeted additional support should they require it. Tracking and monitoring systems enable teachers to carefully identify where pupils are underperforming to prompt suitable interventions. Teachers use a wide variety of resources and demonstrate an effective knowledge and understanding of their subject areas which promotes pupil progress.
2. Leaders and staff have high expectations in terms of pupil behaviour and, in support of this, leaders ensure that the fundamental principles of democracy, rule of law, mutual respect and tolerance are key components of topics covered in the personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) programme. Pupils are well motivated, show an interest in their work and are determined to succeed. Leaders plan to ensure that their new sixth-form cohort should develop these attributes.
3. Planning work is well advanced to develop a curriculum for the admission of sixth-form pupils from September 2025. The proposed sixth-form curriculum will offer a suitable choice of A-levels and will include the extended project qualification (EPQ) as a part of this offering. Course outlines, including curriculum maps, methods of assessment and subject career directions, have been communicated to parents and potential pupils and are available as a sixth-form prospectus.
4. In addition to the A-level academic programme, pupils will take part in timetabled PSHE lessons and engage in enrichment activities, to include physical education. Further options include outdoor activities such as the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme, a sports leaders award and other creative and aesthetic options, such as music, drama and volunteering opportunities. The proposed sixth-form programme includes weekly pupil mentoring sessions as a part of the timetable and also has an appropriate careers education component. There has been appropriate consultation with both parents and pupils regarding the proposed sixth-form curriculum and a number of school-based information evenings have taken place.
5. Sixth-form PSHE lesson plans are already in place, including a life skills component, which further develops relationships and sex education (RSE) themes, in an age-related context. The programmes appropriately reflect the school values and promote British cultural values and diversity. The intention is that, as at present, the pupils, including the new sixth-form cohort, will continue to lead school assemblies on themes such as diversity, religious festivals, cultural diversity, fund-raising events and volunteering, as part their enrichment experience.

6. The school is likely to continue to meet the Standards if the material change is implemented.

Part 2. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

ISSR paragraph 5(a), (b), (c) and (d)

7. The school has in place a pastoral and wellbeing curriculum for 11- to 16-year-old pupils that appropriately promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development (SMSC).
8. School leaders have developed a suitable SMSC curriculum for sixth-form pupils, the content of which meets statutory guidance. The course appropriately supports the pupils' code of conduct and enables pupils to develop a heightened awareness of their responsibilities, whilst promoting appropriate and respectful pupil relationships.
9. Leaders propose to extend existing pupil forum groups to include sixth formers. This will allow pupils to contribute to the SMSC programme content, allowing leaders to tailor programmes to the pupils' needs. Beyond the taught curriculum, pupils will engage in enrichment activities and projects which will consider sustainability, leadership and cultural understanding, to broaden pupils' horizons beyond the UK.
10. Pupil committees currently promote awareness of cultural diversity. Through regular meetings and activities, pupils' understanding of democracy is promoted. Additionally, sixth-form pupils will have the opportunity to take on leadership roles within the school promoting their self-esteem and self-confidence levels, as they will be encouraged to become involved with and make a positive contribution to the school community.
11. The school is likely to continue to meet the Standards if the material change is implemented.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

ISSR paragraphs 6; 7(a) and (b); 11; 12; 14; 16(a) and (b)

12. School leaders and managers ensure that safeguarding arrangements are effectively managed and implemented. With the admission of sixth-form pupils in September 2025, which will initially only be for Year 12 pupils, the school has appointed a head of Year 12 and a head of sixth form, to support the safeguarding and welfare needs of the pupils. They will work closely with the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and other members of the pastoral team. There is a nominated board member for safeguarding who is the governor representative. Senior managers, the safeguarding team and staff all undertake annual training that is appropriate and in accordance with locally agreed procedures. Training within the school also includes regular 'Prevent' duty awareness training, which is undertaken by all staff members.
13. Staff know the pupils well, and are well informed about the needs of pupils, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). There is accurate recording of concerns relating to pupils, including concerns that pupils raise themselves. Staff listen to pupils and undertake appropriate actions to help and support them when concerns arise. There is regular and effective communication with external agencies, including with local authority children's services, when required. Pupils have access to and know how to use anonymous reporting procedures. Senior leaders liaise appropriately and promptly both with parents and the local safeguarding partnerships. The current arrangements are likely to be sufficient to meet the needs of any sixth-form pupils admitted to the school.

14. Staff understand the types of child-on-child abuse that can occur and the need to react to, and appropriately report, such behaviours. Appropriate measures are in place to handle any allegations against adults working in the school. Staff understand the procedures and know how to report any concerns they may have without delay, including any low-level concerns raised by staff, which are monitored by the DSL.
15. The school undertakes an annual review of safeguarding with due diligence and a termly audit of provision. The current arrangements are likely to be sufficient to meet the needs of any sixth-form pupils admitted to the school.
16. Leaders ensure that the health and safety policies are implemented effectively across the school. The school group estates manager works closely with the school's facilities manager and the health and safety committee to check that the relevant health and safety laws are complied with. The school uses an online system for reporting maintenance requirements, which prioritises potential health and safety concerns. Records demonstrate that all required testing is systematically and rigorously undertaken. Training for staff is comprehensive throughout the school, including for non-teaching staff. Any health and safety concerns are identified through effective monitoring and are quickly addressed in order to mitigate risk. The current arrangements are likely to be sufficient to meet the needs of any sixth-form pupils admitted to the school.
17. The school meets the requirements of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. The school operates a robust fire prevention strategy, which is based on ensuring that each building is suitably evacuated and checked in the event of a fire. Staff and pupils understand the fire evacuation and emergency lockdown procedures, which are reinforced through suitable training. All staff are currently both fire safety and fire warden trained and there are regular fire and lockdown practices during the school year. Qualified external consultants conduct suitable fire risk assessments of all buildings, and this gives reassurance to the school group that the required fire regulations are appropriately met. Any recommended actions from annual audits are implemented promptly and effectively. The current arrangements are likely to be sufficient to meet the needs of any sixth-form pupils admitted to the school.
18. Suitably qualified and trained school staff supervise pupils at all points during the day, including at times before and after the school day. The recent internal appointment of staff with specific sixth-form responsibilities will further increase the number of staff available for sixth-form supervision duties. Staffing numbers, although currently able to meet the proposed extended age range will be subject to annual review. The current arrangements are sufficient to meet the needs of the proposed increase in age range at the school.
19. An efficient and effective approach is taken to managing risk. An appropriate risk assessment policy is in place and staff have received training in assessing risk for their respective areas and for organising school outings. Risk assessments are detailed and include consideration of the needs of vulnerable pupils. Risk assessments are subject to ongoing review by leaders and managers to ensure they are suitably focused on the needs of individual pupils and pupil groups, as required. Suitable risk assessments have been undertaken with regard to the admission of sixth-form pupils, particularly in terms of welfare and rooming requirements. The current arrangements are likely to be sufficient to meet the needs of any sixth-form pupils admitted to the school.
20. The school is likely to continue to meet the Standards if the material change is implemented.

Part 4. Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

ISSR paragraphs 18; 19; 20 and 21

21. Senior leaders and managers ensure that the required checks on all staff are appropriately undertaken and completed before staff start employment. There is an accurate single central record (SCR), recording the dates on which staff checks were carried out. The current arrangements are sufficient to meet the needs of the proposed extended age range of pupils.

22. The school is likely to continue to meet the Standards if the material change is implemented.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

ISSR paragraphs 23; 24; 25; 26; 27; 28 and 29

23. School leaders and managers have strategically considered the admission of sixth-form pupils from September 2025 in terms of the modifications required to existing school buildings to accommodate older pupils. The overall school maximum roll number will remain at 500 pupils and initially, in September 2025, a relatively small Year 12 cohort will be admitted to the school to allow for a managed induction of sixth-form pupils into the school.

24. Several existing classrooms are being converted to allow for use by sixth-form pupils in the form of bespoke classrooms, seminar rooms, study and common room facilities. The building works to make this possible will be completed over the summer holiday period, at which point, contractors will sign them over to the school, with the assurance that current DfE educational standards and requirements will be met. There is already appropriate provision for any pupils who have a disability, and separate facilities are available for staff and visitors to the school.

25. Suitable toilet, washing and changing facilities are currently available to all 11- to16-year-old pupils and planning is in place to include the availability of appropriate sixth-form facilities from September 2025. The proposed arrangements are likely to be sufficient to meet the needs of any sixth-form pupils admitted to the school. While no immediate change will be required to accommodate the extended age range of pupils, the school intends to keep this provision under review to meet the needs of all pupils.

26. Medical provision is already satisfactory for all pupils attending the school, with a qualified nurse, based in the medical room, supported by a number of trained school first aiders who assist when required. Medicines are securely stored, and an appropriately equipped room is available in the main school building for pupils who require medical attention. Suitable first aid provision is made available by the nurse for all sporting and off-site activities. This current provision is likely to meet the needs of older pupils.

27. Maintenance is currently effectively managed by the facilities manager in conjunction with the school group estates manager, who has oversight of the school premises on behalf of the governing board. This extends beyond maintenance matters and encompasses security, health and safety matters, electrical and fire prevention systems and the water supply to all school buildings. Detailed logs of regular inspection checks are maintained and the estates manager overseas any training that staff may require. Both staff and pupils know how to report any maintenance issues, and any reported defects are promptly addressed. It is anticipated that no immediate change will be required to meet the needs of the sixth-form pupils, other than the school will take over the maintenance arrangements of the new sixth-form facilities once they are handed over by the contractors.

28. Suitable acoustic, internal and external lighting arrangements are in place throughout the school. Water supplies are available across all areas of the school with hot and cold water as required, including ready access to clearly marked drinking fountains for pupils. These facilities will currently

meet the needs of the proposed increase in age range in September 2025, including the new facilities provided for sixth-form pupils.

29. The school has a number of satisfactory outdoor spaces for physical education, recreation and relaxation. These are supplemented by an indoor fitness training suite and a sports hall. For major sports the school has access to a variety of local grass pitches and indoor sports facilities. It is anticipated that this provision will cater adequately for the extended age range of pupils. The school is, however, developing an enrichment programme that will enable its sixth-form pupils to access the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme and other leadership activities as part of its life skills programme.
30. The school is likely to continue to meet the Standards if the material change is implemented.

Part 6. Provision of information

ISSR paragraph 32(1)(c)

31. Particulars of the arrangements for safeguarding are published appropriately on the school's website and are accessible to parents.
32. The school is likely to continue to meet the Standards if the material change is implemented.

Part 8. Quality of leadership and management of schools

ISSR paragraphs 34(1)(a), 34(1)(b) and 34(1)(c)

33. The governing board, through the school group, and senior leaders manage safeguarding, welfare and mental health support arrangements effectively. Together they monitor the school's provision to ensure that the Standards are met and all provision meets statutory requirements. They ensure that policies and procedures are appropriate and relevant to the school's needs, are effectively implemented by staff and suitably audited by the school group.
34. Regular and detailed meetings of senior leaders in conjunction with the Cognita group and a number of partnership schools have enabled a staged management of the process of admitting sixth-form pupils to the school in September 2025 to take place. The provision of sixth-form classrooms and support facilities, as a result of an ambitious building and refurbishment programme, has been carefully considered. When complete, this will enable the school to provide for the admission of Year 12 pupils in September 2025. The ongoing development planning envisages a two-year sixth form by September 2026.
35. The school is likely to continue to meet the Standards if the material change is implemented.

School details

School	North Bridge House Senior School - Hampstead
Department for Education number	202/6269
Address	North Bridge House School - Hampstead 65 Rosslyn Hill Hampstead London NW3 5UD
Phone number	020 7267 6266
Email address	seniorschool@northbridgehouse.com
Website	www.northbridgehouse.com/senior-hampstead/
Proprietor	Cognita Schools Ltd
Chair	Mr James Carroll
Headteacher	Mr Christopher Jones
Age range	11-16
Number of pupils	430
Date of previous inspection	17 to 19 January 2023

Information about the school

36. North Bridge House Senior School is a co-educational day school located in Hampstead, north London. The school is one of a group of five schools educating pupils from two to eighteen years in the London region. The school belongs to the Cognita Group of schools and is governed by the educational executive arm of Cognita.
37. The school has identified 176 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and eight pupils in the school have an education, health and care (EHC) plan.
38. The school has identified 73 pupils for whom English is an additional language.
39. The school states that its aims are to create a dynamic learning environment in which all children discover their individual pathway to academic success which enables young people to be creative, inspired and to inspire.

Purpose of the material change inspection

Inspectors carried out this inspection following an application made by the school to the DfE to make a material change to the school's provision. The purpose of the inspection is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about whether the school is likely to meet the Independent School Standards if the material change is implemented.

Inspection details

Inspection dates	6 June 2025

40. One reporting inspector visited the school for one day.

41. Inspection activities included:

- scrutiny of a range of policies, documentation and records provided by the school and information available on the school's website
- tour of the school site to observe new and proposed sixth form pupil accommodation
- discussions with the chair of governors and proprietorial group.
- discussions with the headteacher, school leaders, managers and other members of staff
- discussions with pupils and staff
- scrutiny of a range of policies, documentation and records provided by the school
- scrutiny of information published on the school's website.

How are association independent schools in England inspected?

- The Department for Education is the regulator for independent schools in England.
- ISI is approved by the Secretary of State for Education to inspect independent schools in England, which are members of associations in membership of the Independent Schools Council.
- ISI inspections report to the Department for Education on the extent to which the statutory Independent School Standards, the EYFS statutory framework requirements, the National Minimum Standards for boarding schools and any other relevant Standards are met.
- For more information, please visit **www.isi.net**.

Independent Schools Inspectorate

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