

Material change inspection report

22 May 2026

North Bridge House Nursery and Pre-Prep School

8 Netherhall Gardens

Hampstead

London

NW3 5RR

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 submitted a material change request to increase its age range from 2 to 7 to 2 to 11.

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, 2(A), 3 and 4

1. Leaders provide a curriculum that is well balanced and enables a range of opportunities for pupils to develop their knowledge and skills. Careful consideration is given to both the academic and emotional development of pupils. From an early age in the Nursery, children experience subject areas such as drama, computing, physical education (PE) and games, religious education and philosophy, and lessons in modern foreign languages such as French and Spanish. There is a balance of curriculum areas that promote aesthetic, creative, mathematical, technological and linguistic development. The curriculum is carefully planned so that pupils extend their knowledge and understanding as they move through the school. The detailed curriculum planning ensures that the needs of all pupils are met. This includes for those who have high prior attainment and those who have special education needs and/or disabilities (SEND).
2. Suitable provision is made for pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL). Curriculum planning, particularly for individual units and lessons, shows that teachers understand the importance of utilising different strategies to support English language acquisition.
3. The curriculum is further enhanced through a range of clubs, activities, and trips and visits. There is a particular focus on engaging positively with the area of London in which the school is situated so that pupils build knowledge and experiences to support their integration in their local community. Careful consideration has been given to the continuing development of the curriculum into Year 3 and beyond.
4. Through the personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) scheme of work, leaders place a key focus on how pupils build positive relationships with one another. The content of the programme is shared with parents on a regular basis. In this way, parents can ask questions about topics that might be more sensitive. The scheme has been evaluated and planned carefully, and appropriately detailed age-appropriate content is ready for older pupils in the future.
5. Teachers plan their lessons carefully and in detail. They are cognisant of the need to structure activities that reflect the individual needs of pupils. Teachers are knowledgeable about their subject areas and are sensitive to the needs of pupils according to their age. Specialist teachers bring an added level of knowledge and expertise which strengthens pupils' knowledge and skills base, for example in French and music. Teachers support learning by skilfully using resources that engage pupils throughout lessons. For example, technology is used effectively as a visual stimulus, and hands-on practical equipment is used for topics such as measuring and capacity. Teachers successfully employ a variety of teaching strategies that include paired learning, using appropriate humour and ensuring the lesson progresses at a suitable pace. This broad range of approaches maintains pupil interest and supports the good progress that they make.

6. There is a suitable framework for assessment in place. Leaders have restructured this programme considering the possible extension in age range with a view to creating a framework that provides leaders with assessment data to support next steps in learning for pupils. The assessment programme suitably reflects the aims and ethos of the school. Parents are kept well informed of pupils' progress through regular reporting and formal and informal discussions.
7. 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

8. The programme for PSHE effectively supports pupils' understanding of the importance of their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Through specific modules, supported by a school ethos of respect and tolerance, pupils develop a deep understanding of themselves and the world around them. They develop self-knowledge and self-esteem and understand the importance of treating everyone with kindness and respect.
9. Leaders are key role models in areas such as understanding right from wrong, and this is reflected in the moral choices that pupils make. Through effective links with the local community, leaders ensure that pupils put their knowledge into practice, for example by supporting local causes and charities. Pupils understand that they have a part to play in supporting and promoting a community where everyone is valued and in which they can play an integral part.
10. Leaders effectively integrate key elements, such as cultural awareness, through both structured and spontaneous activities. Leaders deliberately plan, for example, visits to various places of worship in the locality so that pupils can understand and appreciate backgrounds and beliefs that may differ from their own. This also supports pupils in developing their own spiritual pathways. Values such as understanding democracy and respect are interwoven into the PSHE schemes of work. As a result, pupils develop a clear understanding of what makes an effective, functioning society.
11. The relationships and sex education (RSE) arrangements and the PSHE programme for the proposed older pupils have been carefully planned and considered. This includes appropriate consultation with parents.
12. 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 paragraph 7(a) and 7(b)

13. There is a suitable safeguarding policy which appropriately reflects statutory guidance and is implemented effectively. Staff, including the safeguarding team, are suitably trained. The safeguarding team undertake training led by the local authority. This ensures they understand local thresholds for referrals and deepen their understanding of contextual safeguarding matters. Leaders ensure that there is a suitable induction programme in place for newly appointed staff. Safeguarding leads provide regular update training for all staff to ensure everyone is kept up to date with any changes or circumstances. As a result, staff are knowledgeable about their roles and understand that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. There are also online training modules that staff complete. These include training on the concerns of potential radicalisation and extremism. Leaders create a safeguarding culture in the school where staff are well trained to carry out their roles and are well supported. Staff appreciate the support and guidance that is provided.

14. Staff understand the importance of reporting any concerns that they may have about the behaviour of other staff members. Leaders keep a detailed record of any such referrals and follow them up appropriately as required. Staff understand the code of conduct that is in place to ensure that they keep the pupils and themselves safe. Leaders have drawn up a suitable whistleblowing policy. Staff know that this should be used if they need to take any safeguarding concerns to the proprietors or outside safeguarding partners.
15. Safeguarding leads liaise effectively with local safeguarding partners. They understand the need to seek support and advice and to work closely to provide support that is in the best interests of the pupils. Leaders keep detailed records of any safeguarding matters. Staff understand the mechanisms for reporting any safeguarding concerns, and their training equips them well to deal with matters appropriately as they arise.
16. Leaders have put in place suitable mechanisms for filtering any inappropriate internet content. They closely monitor how pupils use the internet to ensure their safety. Pupils are well educated about the potential dangers when technology is not used sensibly.
17. Leaders understand the importance of ensuring that pupils' voices are heard. As a result, they actively highlight how pupils of all ages can share any worries or concerns that they have with trusted adults in the school.
18. Due attention is given to the monitoring of pupil attendance. Careful records are kept which are analysed to follow up any trends or for individual pupils whose attendance falls below expected levels. Leaders liaise effectively with parents and families at such times.
19. The safeguarding team has effective oversight of the recruitment process. They ensure that nobody commences employment in the school until all the required checks have been carried out.
20. Careful consideration has been given as to how safeguarding will be managed with the proposed increase in age range and when there are two sites back in full use.
21. 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)

22. An appropriate safeguarding policy is published on the school's website.
23. 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 paragraph 34(1)(a), 34(1)(b) and 34(1)(c)

24. Leaders have strengthened their knowledge and skills to support this material change application. They have the necessary experience to develop and monitor the curriculum content and the quality of teaching and learning for pupils between the ages of seven and eleven. They effectively utilise their experiences of working in similar settings to ensure that the wellbeing of pupils is prioritised.
25. The school is likely to continue to meet the Standards if the material change is implemented.

School details

School	North Bridge House Nursery and Pre-Prep School
Department for Education number	202/6174
Address	North Bridge House Nursery and Pre-Prep School 8 Netherhall Gardens Hampstead London NW3 5RR
Phone number	020 7267 6266
Email address	NPPOffice@northbridgehouse.com
Website	www.northbridgehouse.com/nursery-pre-prep-hampstead
Proprietor	Cognita Schools Limited
Chair	Mr Jacob Polny
Headteacher	Mrs Sarah Cartwright-Styles
Age range	2 to 7
Number of pupils	136
Date of previous inspection	24 to 26 June 2025

Information about the school

26. North Bridge House Nursery and Pre-Prep school is a co-educational day school located in Hampstead, London. The school is part of the North Bridge House group of schools. It is owned by a limited company, overseen by a board of governors. The school is working in partnership with another local independent school. As part of the material change application the school will be reopening a site that is in close proximity.
27. There are 89 children in the early years comprising two Nursery and three Reception classes.
28. The school has identified 17 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities. A small number of pupils in the school have an education, health and care plan.
29. The school has identified 92 pupils for whom English is an additional language.
30. The school states that its aims are to create a dynamic learning environment in which all children discover their individual pathway to academic success; to empower young people to be creative, inspired and to inspire; to equip young people with the confidence, humility and resilience to thrive in everything they do; and to nurture strong relationships within an inclusive, empathetic community.

Purpose of the material change

Inspectors carried out this inspection following an application made by the school to the Department for Education 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 and Early Years Foundation Stage requirements if the material change is implemented.

Inspection details

Inspection dates

22 May 2026

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

32. Inspection activities included:

- scrutiny of a range of policies, documentation and records provided by the school and information available on the school's website
- discussions with the chair of governors
- discussions with the headteacher, school leaders, managers and other members of staff
- discussions with pupils
- observations of teaching and learning
- scrutiny of samples of pupils' work.

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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