



SCHOOL INSPECTION SERVICE

INSPECTION REPORT FOR NORTH BRIDGE HOUSE PRE-PREPARATORY SCHOOL

DfE No: 202/6174

The key inspection judgements for this school are:

The quality of education	Good	2
Pupils' personal development	Outstanding	1
Safeguarding pupils' welfare health and safety	Outstanding	1
Leadership, management and governance	Good	2

Compliance with the Independent School Standards:

The school meets the regulatory requirements of schedule 1 of The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

Compliance with the Equality Act 2010:

The school meets the requirements of the Equality Act.

Date of inspection: 1-3 November 2017

SECTION A: SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS

North Bridge House Pre-Preparatory School meets all the independent school standards and its own aims. The headteacher has successfully tackled the weaknesses in the quality of the education identified by the previous inspection of February 2016 and, in a very short period of time, has brought about significant improvement. The quality of education is now good. Pupils' learning and achievement are good and they make very good progress in reading. Outcomes in art are exceptionally high. Teaching and assessment are good. Teachers have benefited from effective professional development which has improved the consistency of the teaching. In most lessons pupils are given good opportunities to apply their knowledge and skills in problem solving tasks. In a minority of writing lessons too much time was spent modelling writing skills that had already been mastered which limited the pupils' progress. A range of standardised tests and assessments in English and mathematics are used effectively to monitor pupils' progress. The feedback provided for pupils in all subjects is exemplary and enables them to improve their work. The curriculum is of good quality and it helps pupils to make good progress in their learning and very good progress in their personal development. Pupils with English as an additional language (EAL) achieve very well because there are very effective systems to assess their stage of development and to monitor their progress. Pupils identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEN and disabilities) including those with an Education Health Care (EHC) plan make very good progress because the management of SEN and disabilities is exemplary and teaching is well matched to their needs. Pupils' personal development is outstanding. They are courteous, confident and care for others. The school's arrangements for safeguarding and ensuring pupils' welfare, health and safety are excellent. The procedures for ensuring the suitability of staff are clear, appropriate and consistently applied. Leadership, management and governance are good.. Leadership has been strengthened by the appointment of new senior and middle leaders. The senior leadership team monitor all aspects of the school's work and collect a great deal of information to inform further improvement, however, the school's self-evaluation of the quality of education was too generous because some information is not analysed in sufficient depth.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT:

Whilst not required by the regulations, the proprietor should:

- provide more consistent opportunities for pupils to write independently; and
- improve the accuracy of school self-evaluation and data analysis by providing training for newly appointed senior and middle leaders.

SECTION B: INFORMATION

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION:

This inspection was carried out by the School Inspection Service (SIS) in accordance with Section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008. It follows the inspection framework agreed by SIS and the Department for Education (DfE).

In reaching their judgements, the inspectors observed lessons, listened to pupils read, attended assembly and held meetings with the chair of governors, headteacher, senior leaders, staff and pupils. They examined the school's website, documents and records, scrutinised pupils' work and reviewed responses to parents' questionnaires completed before the inspection. The inspectors were:

Reporting Inspector:	Mrs Christine Graham
Team inspectors:	Mr David Rzeznik

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL:

North Bridge House Pre-Preparatory School is a non-selective independent co-educational day school for pupils aged five to seven years. Pupils live in the local area. The school is one of five schools in the North Bridge House group. The schools are owned and managed by Cognita. The chair of governors is an assistant director of education (ADE) from Cognita. The headteacher is also headteacher of North Bridge House Nursery School. There are 185 pupils on roll. Nineteen pupils have SEN and disabilities and receive learning support provided by the school. Two pupils have an Education Health Care (EHC) plan. Ninety one pupils have English as an additional language and three pupils are at an early stage of speaking English. There are 21 home languages. The school aims to; *'celebrate each child as an individual, be a happy school with a friendly, family atmosphere, provide a secure and nurturing environment where children learn tolerance, consideration and respect for others, help every child fulfil their potential through dedicated and inspirational teaching and educate the whole child by offering a wide variety of academic, sporting and extra-curricular activities'*.

SECTION C: THE INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

1. THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is good.

Pupils' learning and achievement

Pupils' learning and achievement are good. Work in pupils' books and the outcomes of standardised tests indicate that pupils make good progress. Pupils' achievement in reading is exceptionally high because the teaching of phonics is well planned and pupils have a very good understanding of letters and sounds. Reading skills are taught effectively so pupils can use a range of strategies to tackle unfamiliar words. They read fluently and with expression and their comprehension skills are very good. Their speaking and listening skills are good. Their spelling is accurate and they have a good understanding of punctuation and grammar. Pupils writing skills are good, as can be seen by their work in all subjects. Pupils' achieve well in mathematics. They have a secure understanding of numeracy skills and they can apply their knowledge in practical and problem solving tasks. Pupils' independent learning skills are well developed. They persevere with their work even when it is challenging. They listen carefully to their teachers and participate well in discussion. Outcomes in art are exceptionally high.

Pupils identified as having SEN and disabilities, including those with an EHC plan, make good progress from their individual starting points because the provision made for them is very good and their needs are met with great sensitivity and care. Pupils with EAL make very good progress because they receive very effective support. Most pupils move onto North Bridge House Preparatory School at 7+ but those that do not are accepted into their first choice of school.

The quality of teaching and assessment

Teaching and assessment are good. The school, supported by Cognita, has successfully eradicated the weaknesses in teaching identified at the time of the last inspection. There are consistent approaches to teaching and learning which enable pupils to make good progress. In the best lessons teachers have good subject knowledge which they use effectively in lively and interesting lessons. They have high expectations of all pupils and they provide well planned tasks which help pupils to make good progress. Teachers ask probing questions which deepen pupils' knowledge and understanding and correct any misconceptions. The teaching of phonics and reading is very effective. Writing skills are taught well. The tasks set by teachers are interesting and help pupils to deepen their understanding. Good attention is paid to improving their spelling, punctuation and grammar so writing is technically accurate. Mathematics lessons are well resourced and pupils are encouraged to use practical equipment to consolidate and extend their mathematical knowledge, skills and understanding before they move onto more abstract learning. Where teaching is not as strong, teachers do not always expect enough of pupils or do not adapt the teaching well enough to their stage of development. In some writing lessons teachers modelled writing skills that had already been mastered which reduced the pupils' progress and

limited their opportunities to write independently. In a few lessons in Year 1 teacher explanations were too long so pupils lost interest and could not remember what to do when they started their own work. There is a strong focus on collaborative work in all lessons, this promotes pupils' confidence and extends their thinking. The school has established 'non negotiables', a set of requirements for all lessons. These focus on improving the basic skills of English and mathematics. The success of this can be seen in the good quality of pupils' handwriting and presentation and in their knowledge of the basic skills. Teachers manage pupils' behaviour well. Positive behaviour is recognised and where necessary pupils are given gentle reminders of what is expected. Pupils who need additional reassurance are reminded that all is well and that they are doing the right thing. The work planned for pupils with SEN and disabilities is well matched to their needs and they are supported very effectively by teaching assistants and learning support staff. Pupils with EAL benefit from the focus on discussion and oral work and teachers ensure that their needs are met.

Assessment is good. In reading, writing and mathematics pupils are assessed against subject and age appropriate criteria. The school uses a range of standardised tests and assessments to monitor pupils' progress. Teachers use data from tests and assessments to identify and correct the gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding so all pupils make good progress. The school has introduced new procedures to assess pupils' progress against National Curriculum descriptors. The school believes that a high proportion of pupils reach a greater level of development but as yet there is not enough data to confirm the school's view. The feedback provided for pupils in lessons is exemplary. Teachers' marking provides pupils with very good guidance on how to improve their work. Pupils are given time to read the comments and respond to them. Evidence from pupils' books shows that this is very effective because any misconceptions are corrected very promptly. Pupils also benefit from useful verbal support and guidance during lessons.

The quality of the curriculum

The curriculum is of good quality. It meets the aims of the school and it is well adapted to pupils' needs and interests. It is based on the National Curriculum at key stage 1. Curriculum planning is good and enables the pupils to learn effectively and make good progress. The curriculum is enhanced by specialist teaching in art, music, French and physical education (PE). There is a good focus on physical activities which enhance pupils' enjoyment of school. French is taught in both year groups and there is an extra-curricular French club for native speakers or those who are fluent in the language. The school has recently introduced "Philosophy for Children" and this is helping pupils to develop the language of discussion and to think 'outside of the box'. The school believes it can already see the impact of this in pupils' work. The use and integration of technology into the curriculum is a strong feature of the school's work. It prepares pupils well for their future lives giving them a good understanding of the subject and the ability to use technology as a learning tool. The school has recently adopted some chickens. Pupils, supervised by an adult, are timetabled to take care of them. This initiative helps them to develop new skills and also provides opportunities for quiet reflection during the school day. There is a very good range of extra-curricular activities which are combined with after school care and although these incur an additional cost participation rates

are high. Some clubs provide pupils with the opportunity to develop new skills such as ballet while others promote an interest in science, mathematics and technology or sport. There are day visits to places of interest, usually based on a curriculum theme, including visits to museums, parks and tours of the city. Staff describe how this brings learning to life as, for example, when pupils visited an exhibition about the Great Fire of London. They were able to walk down a street, smell the smoke and experience the increase in temperature as the fire took hold. Visitors to school and 'immersion days' promote pupils' interest. There is an annual Year 1 and Year 2 production and class assemblies to which parents are invited. Pupils benefit from London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art (LAMDA) lessons. LAMDA examination results are very high with more than 75% of pupils achieving merits or distinctions.

2. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

Pupils' personal development is outstanding. Pupils' behaviour is excellent. They are courteous to their peers, staff and visitors and they are thoughtful, pleasant and self-aware. Pupils enjoy learning, their listening skills are good and they discuss ideas with their peers accepting that they may have different views and demonstrating the ability to compromise. They are kind to each other and the very gentle way in which they are spoken to by staff provides them with an excellent model for their own behaviour. Many parents commented on the positive impact the school had on their children, describing children who may have been shy or lacking in confidence before joining the school and who are now thriving and participating in all that the school provides. Pupils care about others, particularly those in their own community. They raise money for local and national charities and have decided to donate their own toys and possessions to help others. The school's provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) education is outstanding. The well-structured personal, social, health and economic education (PSHEE) curriculum ensures that pupils have a good understanding of the main world religions. Pupils have a developing understanding of life in modern Britain. The wide range of nationalities in the school adds significantly to pupils' appreciation of their own and other cultures. Healthy lifestyles are promoted very well. Pupils are taught about sensible eating and this is well supported by the healthy snacks and school meals which are provided. Each class formulates a set of rules and responsibilities at the start of the school year and this provides a consistent means by which pupils can judge their behaviour. They understand that bullying is wrong and they say that it is easy to make friends. Relationships within the school are excellent. Pupils show a great deal of empathy for others and they understand that some tasks or activities may need to be adapted so that everyone can participate. Pupils' receive a well-rounded education and develop a strong awareness of culture in its widest sense through opportunities to develop their own sporting, musical, artistic or creative talents. The opportunity to vote for school council representatives gave them an early insight into democratic processes. Pupils say that they feel safe and that there is always someone to talk to if they have a problem. Their attendance is good and they say that they enjoy school.

3. SAFEGUARDING PUPILS' WELFARE, HEALTH AND SAFETY

The school's provision for safeguarding the pupils' welfare health and safety is outstanding. The promotion of pupils' welfare is a priority. High quality safeguarding procedures and policies are in place to promote good behaviour and keep pupils safe from harm. These are implemented consistently and regularly reviewed. The school's safeguarding policy contains all the necessary information and is available on the school's website. It is updated annually. All staff have been trained in child protection at appropriate levels. The school has clear procedures to follow in the event of a child protection issue arising. All staff are aware of the importance of safeguarding, are familiar with the latest child protection documents and are aware of what to look for in identifying child abuse. Staff, including non-teaching staff, receive timely training in safeguarding as part of their induction and continuing professional development.

The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) is knowledgeable and experienced; she has implemented very robust procedures. She has undertaken advanced safeguarding training in order to fulfil her safeguarding duties effectively. The deputy DSL is also well trained and experienced. Referrals have been made to outside agencies where appropriate. The school maintains careful records of child protection issues and these are retained separately from routine pupil records. Staff are very aware of the importance of e-safety, and pupils are given regular training to ensure they are aware of how to stay safe online. Teachers have had Prevent training and they know that extremist views and radicalisation have no place in the school.

The school's recruitment and vetting procedures are extremely rigorous. School leaders who are involved in the recruitment of staff have undertaken safer recruitment training. The single centre register of staff checks is exemplary. It contains a comprehensive record of all the checks undertaken.

Health and safety requirements are met in full. There are thorough risk assessment policies and procedures for pupil activities on site and during visits out of school, which are implemented consistently. Risk assessments of the premises, classrooms, activities and off site visits are of very good quality. The estates manager provides excellent oversight of fire, gas and water safety. There are regular inspections and maintenance of fire alarms, emergency lighting systems and firefighting equipment. The school places a strong emphasis on the security of the school site and access is carefully controlled. All staff have been trained in first aid and some have been trained in paediatric first aid. First aid procedures and the administration of medicine guidance are followed closely. Pupils with medical needs are identified and their welfare and health needs are closely monitored. Accidents are dealt with appropriately and staff record incidents using an online system which provides an electronic notification for parents. A suitable medical room is available in the event of a pupil being unwell or injured. Pupils are strongly encouraged to adopt a healthy lifestyle through an awareness of sensible eating and opportunities to participate in sport and PE.

Pupils are well supervised. The school has a very positive and effective approach to behaviour management. Pupils are given gentle reminders about their behaviour, where necessary, and they respond well to this encouragement. The

pupils say that they feel very well cared for and they know who to talk to if they have any issues saying that the headteacher and DSL would be their first port of call. An effective anti-bullying policy is in place. Pupils are confident that if any bullying did occur it would be dealt with quickly. They appreciate the confidential worry boxes, which allow them to express any concerns. Attendance and admissions registers are kept carefully and meet requirements.

4. LEADERSHIP, MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE

Leadership, management and governance are good. The headteacher has successfully tackled weaknesses in the quality of the education provided previously by the school and, in a very short period of time, has brought about significant improvement. She has created a culture within which every child is important and all have equal opportunities to thrive and achieve well. The senior leadership team is committed to excellence. Performance management is effective and has brought about improvements in teaching. Induction procedures for new staff are very thorough. Senior leadership has been strengthened by the appointment of a second deputy headteacher and there have been changes to middle management. Newly appointed senior and middle leaders understand their roles and responsibilities but would benefit from further training in self-evaluation and data analysis as these skills are not secure. The senior team check the quality of education and pupils' attainment very carefully and they use information from monitoring activities to bring about further improvement. They have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development and they have created a culture of continuous improvement. Judgements made about the quality of education in the school's self-evaluation, provided for inspectors, were too generous because the senior team did not analyse some information in sufficient detail. The school has introduced a new system to measure the progress made by pupils, at this early stage it does not provide enough information to confirm the school's view that a high proportion of pupils are working at a greater level of development. The leadership and management of provision for pupils with SEN and disabilities and EAL are exemplary. The progress made by both groups of pupils is carefully checked and the support provided for them is highly effective. The management of safeguarding is excellent. Safeguarding is an integral part of the school and there is a culture of vigilance where pupils' welfare is actively promoted. The day-to-day management of the school is very good. There are systems in place to ensure that the school is well managed when the headteacher is off site. The school's policies are regularly reviewed and take account of all statutory guidance. The school is very well resourced, the building is attractive and it provides a safe and welcoming learning environment for pupils.

The partnership with parents is very effective. The responses of parents to questionnaires completed before the inspection were positive, indicating a high degree of satisfaction with the education and care their children receive. Parents are kept well informed about school policies and activities and their views are sought and acted upon. The school has a website which provides a full range of information about the school. There are regular newsletters and parents receive updates about school events. Written reports and consultations

with teachers ensure that parents are well informed about their children's progress. The complaints policy is made available to parents of pupils and prospective pupils on the website. There were no formal complaints in the last year.

Governance

Governance is good and effective. The chair of governors, an ADE employed by Cognita, joined the school in July. He knows the school well and has been involved in checking the progress that has been made in recent months. He has a good understanding of the independent school standards and his work, together with that of Cognita, has ensured that they are met. He is well placed to provide effective challenge and support to the school. The school has benefitted from the work of an independent safeguarding expert who has carried out rigorous reviews of the school's safeguarding procedures and provided detailed feedback for school leaders. This has had a very positive impact on the school's procedures.

SCHOOL DETAILS

Name of school:	North Bridge House Pre-Prep School			
Address of school:	8 Netherhall Gardens Hampstead London NW3 5RR			
Telephone number:	0207 2676266 opt 2			
Email address:	preprep@northbridgehouse.com			
Web address	www.nothbridgehouse.com			
Proprietor:	Cognita			
Person registered with DfE as proprietor under paragraph 20 of Part 4:	Chris Jansen			
Head Teacher:	Christine McLelland			
Early Years Manager	Not applicable			
DfE Number	202/6174			
Type of school	Independent school			
Annual fees	£17,595			
Age range of pupils	5 yrs to 7 yrs (Year 1 and Year 2)			
Gender of pupils	Co-Educational			
Total number on roll	full-time	185	part-time	0
Number of children in registered nursery				
Number of children under-5	Boys:	0	Girls:	0
Number of compulsory school age pupils	Boys:	108	Girls:	77
Number of post-compulsory pupils	Boys:	0	Girls:	0
Number of pupils with statements of special educational need	Boys:	1	Girls:	1
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	Boys:	56	Girls:	35
Type of inspection	Section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008			

This report has been prepared by the School Inspection Service, which provides independent professional inspection of all schools affiliated to the Focus Learning Trust, and members of the Steiner Waldorf Schools Fellowship or Cognita group. The report is available from the School Inspection Service website: www.schoolinspectionsservice.co.uk.