

# Northfield School and Sports College

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	111731
<b>Local Authority</b>	Stockton-on-Tees
<b>Inspection number</b>	368242
<b>Inspection dates</b>	8–9 June 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	James Kilner HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 under pilot arrangements; it was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1617
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Les Wadey
<b>Headteacher</b>	Craig Walker
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	26 November 2008
<b>School address</b>	Thames Road Billingham County Durham TS22 5EG
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<b>Age group</b>	11–16
<b>Inspection date(s)</b>	8–9 June 2011
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## Introduction

This pilot inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and five additional inspectors. Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 49 lessons, taught by 47 different teachers. Of these, four were observed jointly with senior leaders from the school. Inspectors held meetings with representatives from the local authority, groups of students, the Chair of the Governing Body, governor representatives and staff. They observed the school's work, scrutinised a range of documentation provided by the school and examined evaluations undertaken by the school to ensure that it meets statutory requirements in relation to safeguarding. In addition, 253 questionnaires from parents and carers were scrutinised. Also, inspectors looked carefully at questionnaires returned by staff from the school and those from a representative sample of students.

## Information about the school

In 2009, the original Northfield School and Sports College, judged outstanding in their Ofsted report, was enlarged to accommodate the staff and 620 students from the nearby Billingham Campus, a school which had been placed in special measures. The current school is 30% larger than at the time of the last inspection and operates over two sites with one headteacher, who took up post in September 2010, and one governing body. The school has a specialist unit for students with a visual impairment. The large majority of students are of White British heritage. None of the remaining groups speak English as an additional language. The proportion of students known to be entitled to a free school meal is above that found nationally. The proportion of students with a statement of special educational needs is average and the proportion of those with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average. The school has Training School Status for initial teacher education and has gained many awards including High Performing Specialist School status for a second time and the Artsmark Gold award. The school met the government's floor targets for academic performance in the first year of its enlargement in 2010.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Achievement</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety</b>	<b>2</b>
Does the school adequately promote the pupils' well-being?	Yes
Does the school adequately promote community cohesion?	Yes
Does the school provide value for money?	Yes

## Key findings

- Northfield School and Sports College is a good school. The headteacher and Chair of the Governing Body, with the full support of staff from both sites, have successfully eradicated previously identified weaknesses.
- During the transition period results at Northfield held steadfastly at previous levels despite the deep-seated challenge faced in bringing two sites under the direction of one school. Notable dips in performance appeared for the first set of GCSE results in 2010 for the combined school. Improved quality of teaching, coupled with accurate assessment procedures across both sites have ensured that current rates of progress and achievement for all students are good. All students are now on target to reach above average levels of attainment by the end of Key Stage 4.
- The majority of teaching is good with around 20% of lessons observed being outstanding, although a small minority remains satisfactory. The College's Training School status is a key factor in the unrelenting drive to raise the quality of teaching to a consistently good standard across the two sites.
- Students from both sites feel safe, enjoy their life at school and share a common respect and care for one another and their community. Students' good behaviour both in lessons and around school ensures a harmonious and calm atmosphere on both sites. Of the minority of parents and carers responding to the questionnaire, a few perceived that there was disruption to lessons caused by poor behaviour. The school recognises that it should gather views more widely from parents, carers and students to achieve its 'one-school' aim.
- The school's specialism as a Sports College provides many high quality

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opportunities for students to develop their own healthy living and leadership skills.

- All this has been achieved as a direct result of leadership and management which are outstanding and the school demonstrates an outstanding capacity to improve further.

### **What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Ensure teaching is consistently good and that much is outstanding by ensuring that:
  - teachers make more effective use of the wealth of information about students' progress to plan challenging tasks that are closely matched to their precise learning needs
  - teachers' questioning more deeply probes students' understanding during lessons to check on how well their teaching is achieving the learning intentions.
- Gather the views of all parents, carers and students and use this information to inform strategic priorities for development to ensure the fulfilment of the ambition for 'one school'.

### **Main report**

Under the astute guidance of the headteacher and Chair of the Governing Body, staff and students across both sites are unanimous in their ambition to bring two school communities together. Through a rigorous programme of monitoring and intervention, the previously recognised outstanding features of Northfield School and Sports College have been instrumental in bringing about the necessary changes required at the former Billingham Campus. Underlying weaknesses in teaching and learning are being successfully tackled, most notably through systems and procedures devised with the Training School. Consequently, the school now successfully fulfils its vision for 'one school-two sites' and all students and staff see themselves as 'Northfield School'.

The 2010 end of Key Stage 4 results were the first for the newly enlarged school. During this time the profile of student's attainment on entry to the school altered significantly with a number of students having underachieved at Key Stage 2. While the school has held steadfastly to previous good results, students did not make gains on previous years' achievements. This was most notable in the number of students gaining five or more GCSE grades A\* to C, including English and mathematics which were disappointingly low and gaps appeared in the performance of students in comparison with similar students nationally in mathematics. Indications are that these gaps are now closing rapidly, although the school has identified that gains in mathematics, although improving, are not as rapid as they should be. The school has

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already spotted this weakness in mathematics and has put measures in place with immediate effect this term and a revised curriculum and syllabus for this subject from September 2011. Students' literacy skills are well developed. For example, older students were able to use inference and deduction skills to demonstrate clear understanding of two contrasting poems depicting the end of the world. One student was able to speak eloquently about the 'hope' in one compared to the 'despair' in the other. The school monitors carefully the performance of all groups of students in order to ensure equality of opportunity for all. The results are used to provide support and intervention where required. For example, high quality support in lessons, coupled with good and outstanding teaching, enables some groups of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities to make rapid progress and achieve highly. Achievements for students in receipt of free school meals, which were low in end of Key Stage 4 results in 2010, are now improving rapidly. Students with a visual impairment are successfully integrated in to the full life of the school and are making equally good progress as their peers. For example, students from the visually impaired unit represent their country at national level in football. The school meets their needs well with subtle adaptations to the building and corridors so that the students are confident and integrated successfully. All students and staff are clear that racism or discrimination will not be tolerated. Guest speakers provide opportunities for students to meet groups and individuals who have been subjected to intolerance because of their race or sexuality.

Leaders make full and effective use of the Training School in a bid to improve the quality of teaching with some notable success. Following classroom monitoring and scrutiny of work and students' progress, all staff, including support staff, are offered the opportunity for professional development. Consequently, the profile of teaching across the two sites is good and some outstanding teaching is now well embedded. In the majority of cases, teachers ensure that students have a thorough understanding of their academic targets and are guided successfully to reach the next levels both in written feedback and through marking. Relationships and behaviour in lessons are good and, in the main, teachers plan lessons which fully match the needs of their students, whatever their ability. In an outstanding drama lesson, students displayed a good understanding of techniques required to depict key words from 'The Caucasian Chalk Circle' through building on learning from a previous lesson. However, the quality of teaching overall is not yet outstanding because there are still pockets where teaching is less successful. In these lessons students are not fully aware of what it is they are to learn, teachers do not check students' learning through appropriate questioning and activities are not well matched to individual students needs. As a result, progress stalls and behaviour can become unacceptable. However, most students are polite and relationships across the school are harmonious. Students show respect for one another, for example in a lesson discussing differing views of the afterlife they listened with interest to the views of their peers. They say behaviour is good, they feel safe in school and free from any harassment, should it ever occur they understand what to do and who they should see. On the rare occasions when students fall out, the incident is confined to the few involved with the majority of students making the correct choice to walk away and allow teachers to deal with any problems. The majority of students take pride in their

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work with impressive artistic work displayed throughout both sites. Opportunities to discuss the needs of their peers through the school council ensure that students have a hand in key decision making. However, currently the opportunities for all students to be involved in such activities are limited so that the school does not necessarily have the full perspective of differing views among the student population. Attendance is average and the school has been highly successful in reducing the proportion of students who are persistently absent. A large number of students are involved with the local community through participation in sports both regionally and nationally. Over 500 students are registered and active as Sport Ambassadors undertaking voluntary work in the local primary schools and community. An impressive £15,000 has already been raised for charities so far this year. A group of Year 9 and Year 10 students are embarked on enterprise initiatives designed to raise money for their forthcoming 'World Challenge'.

A rich seam of high quality opportunities to develop students' spiritual moral, social and cultural development pervades the entire curriculum. Students articulate their feelings well and an impressive array of partnerships, both academic and pastoral, ensures students are enabled to blossom in a safe and caring environment. One parent wrote, 'I have noticed a great improvement with the school sites implementing consistent strategies....I am confident that (my children) will continue in to adulthood enriched by the education they have received during their time at Northfield'. While the majority of parents and carers feel the two sites operate successfully as one school, some would welcome more formal opportunities to be consulted on proposed changes. Indeed, links with parents and carers are successful but some responding to the questionnaire feel that more could be done to listen to their views in general. As the school embarks on the aim for 'one school' inspectors agree that this is an appropriate time to seek a more in-depth view of proposed changes from all parents and carers across both communities.

Expert leadership and management of the school have brought about rapid improvements to the provision and outcomes for students in a very short space of time. All is securely in place to ensure that the school continues to close any gaps in performance of students. This is due largely to a thorough tracking system based on accurate assessments of students' progress towards challenging targets. The vision and ambition of the headteacher and Chair of the Governing Body are shared by all with an unrelenting drive to achieve an outstanding school on one site. The senior leaders from both sites form a cohesive group under the direction of the headteacher. Opportunities for middle leaders and subject leaders to shadow their senior team give opportunities to those aspiring to take on more responsibility. In this way, the school ensures there are high-calibre staff in leadership roles and a sufficient number in-waiting to take on senior roles. Governors hold the school to good account and ensure safeguarding procedures at both sites are effective with appropriate checks made on all staff wishing to work with the students.

### Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Northfield School and Sports College to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 12 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 253 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1617 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
Q1 My child is happy at school	101	40	146	58	5	2	0	0
Q2 My child feels safe at school	109	43	139	55	4	1	0	0
Q3 The school helps my child to achieve as well as they can	98	39	136	54	14	5	2	1
Q4 The school meets my child’s particular needs	84	33	148	59	13	5	2	1
Q5 The school ensures my child is well looked after	102	40	139	55	9	4	1	0
Q6 Teaching at this school is good	96	38	147	58	6	2	2	1
Q7 There is a good standard of behaviour at this school	58	23	167	66	17	7	6	2
Q8 Lessons are not disrupted by bad behaviour	34	13	150	59	54	21	7	2
Q9 The school deals with any cases of bullying well	91	36	129	51	14	5	4	1
Q10 The school helps me to support my child’s learning	81	32	147	57	15	6	5	2
Q11 The school responds to my concerns and keeps me well informed	79	31	135	53	11	9	10	4
Q12 The school is well led and managed	86	34	137	54	17	7	4	1

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.



## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

### Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 December 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The achievement of all pupils.</li> <li>■ Behaviour and safety.</li> <li>■ The quality of teaching.</li> <li>■ The effectiveness of leadership and management.</li> </ul> <p>and taking into consideration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ how well the school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.</li> </ul>
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



10 June 2011

Dear Students

### **Inspection of Northfield School and Sports College TS22 5EG**

Thank you so much for the warm welcome you extended to us when we inspected your school recently. Many of you were interested in the outcome and here is what we found.

- Northfield is a good school and its leadership and management are outstanding.
- You are now achieving well and on target to reach your full potential no matter what your starting points in life.
- You take full advantage of the opportunities offered by the Sports College and many of you keep fit and lead healthy lifestyles.
- You get on well together and the two sites work very effectively as one school.
- You are taught well and the curriculum enables you to explore the world in many exciting ways.

We think that these are some ways in which your school can become even more successful:

- We have asked the leaders of your school to consider your views and your parents and carers views more widely, particularly when they are making key decisions about the future of the school.
- We want the teachers to use information about your progress more effectively in planning lessons and ask you more in-depth questions to find out if you fully understand your learning.

We wish all of you every success in the future as you move towards 'one school'.

Yours sincerely

James Kilner  
Her Majesty's Inspector

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