

Inspection of Northfleet Technology College

Colyer Road, Northfleet, Gravesend, Kent DA11 8BG

Inspection dates: 21 to 22 September 2022

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Sixth-form provision **Good**

Previous inspection grade Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils and students are safe, happy and well cared for. They are proud of their school. They are thoughtful and welcoming of visitors. They show respect for one another and contribute to the school community through their leadership roles. Students in the sixth form actively support younger pupils.

Boys are actively encouraged to be 'curious, creative and caring'. Clear routines and systems contribute significantly to pupils' good behaviour and ensure they are 'prepared, polite and productive'. Incidents of bullying are rare. If it does occur, then leaders act swiftly to sort it. The school manages attendance and punctuality very well.

Disadvantaged pupils, and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), receive a good quality of education. They are well known to teachers and support staff. Leaders are determined to offer an ambitious and broad curriculum for all pupils. Parents comment positively on the school's support for pupils' mental well-being.

The curriculum extends beyond the academic and actively supports pupils' broader personal development. The extra-curricular and enrichment offer is extensive. In addition, pupils and students are well prepared for their future education and careers. Support is wide-ranging, including careers fairs, speaker visits and trips to universities.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

The curriculum is well planned and sequenced across all years, including the sixth form. The curriculum is bold and ambitious. Subject leaders have worked hard to create a curriculum that is hierarchical and developmental. The sixth-form curriculum includes level 2 and 3 qualifications, as well as the International Baccalaureate Career-related Programme and the Basketball and Football Academies.

The school enjoys productive links with primary schools, including those within the cooperative trust. This ensures that the curriculum in Year 7 builds cumulatively upon the primary phase. Consideration is given to curriculum continuity into the sixth form with supportive induction sessions. Most students in the sixth form proceed to a range of higher education programmes which are well suited to their aspirations.

Pupils' specific needs are well known. Staff receive clear and helpful information about each pupil. Teachers use this information well to adapt and personalise their lessons. Disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND receive appropriate assistance from teachers and support staff. This support ensures that they make similar progress through the curriculum to their peers.

The curriculum is thoughtfully considered and regularly revisited. The uptake of languages is increasing and there is a determined focus on the arts, especially drama. The personal, social, health and economic education curriculum is well constructed and taught in an age-appropriate way. However, the sixth-form programme for relationships and sex education is restricted because of time constraints.

The English department has created a bespoke set of reading interventions for pupils arriving with low literacy skills. These are individualised depending on whether the need is related to comprehension or fluency. Across other subjects, wider reading and reading for pleasure are not yet widely promoted. Leaders acknowledge that this is an area for further development.

In addition, the humanities curriculum in key stage 3 is not as academically rigorous as that on offer in key stage 4. This is because the project-based approach in these years restricts depth and narrows the focus on disciplinary knowledge. Further work is necessary to ensure that the curriculum matches the breadth and depth of the national curriculum.

Teachers are enthusiastic subject specialists, and pupils confirm that they know their subject well. Content is revisited with an emphasis on retaining knowledge and skills. This is additionally supported through starter activities and regular assessments. These assessments are used very well to identify and address gaps in pupils' knowledge.

Teachers value the training and support they receive. They say there is a culture of high expectations. Teachers also say that workload is high but manageable. Staff survey responses were positive about leadership. Staff are overwhelmingly proud and motivated to work at the school.

Leaders have exceedingly high expectations. They know their staff and pupils well. They are ambitious and supportive of both. Leaders are visible across the school and highly regarded by parents and the community. The recently appointed headteacher loves his job and acknowledges the work of his predecessor. There is a strong sense of community across the school.

Governors are keen and knowledgeable. They have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school because of their regular school visits. In addition, the school is well supported by the Northfleet Schools Co-operative Trust which works to support improvement and share best practice across Northfleet.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The well-being, welfare and safety of all pupils are a high priority for the school. All staff receive regular training, including face-to-face sessions and online learning. They know how to identify risks and report concerns. Additional training has covered e-safety and the 'Prevent' duty, as well as training on safer recruitment.

Pupils say they feel happy and safe. They say that any bullying is dealt with effectively, and they are confident that issues arising are swiftly dealt with. Pupils all know how to report anonymously if they need to do so. They receive detailed guidance about keeping themselves safe from harm.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Reading is not yet fully embedded across the school. As a result, not all pupils have the reading ability needed to access the full curriculum and reading is not fully promoted. Leaders across the school should continue to implement strategies to develop and encourage pupils' fluency, confidence and enjoyment of reading. Actions identified in the school improvement plan need to be quickly implemented.
- A small number of curriculum areas in key stage 3 are not planned coherently and securely over time. This means that it is difficult for pupils to develop and extend their knowledge. Leaders should ensure that the best practice existing across the school is shared across all subjects so that pupils continue to broaden and deepen their knowledge over time.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	118928
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10226865
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Boys
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	921
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	154
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Sue Dunn
Headteacher	Steven Gallears
Website	www.ntc.kent.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	24 January 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Northfleet Technology College is an average-size, non-selective secondary school for boys, with a small number of girls enrolled in the sixth form. The school is situated in an area with selective education.
- The school is maintained by the local authority and is part of the Northfleet Schools Co-operative Trust which is a collaboration of schools located in Northfleet.
- Four pupils attend courses off site at two registered alternative provisions.
- The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors conducted deep dives in English, mathematics, geography, drama and design and technology. For each deep dive, inspectors talked about the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, talked with teachers, spoke to pupils and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors held meetings with leaders, staff and pupils. They looked at the single central record and reviewed the school's safeguarding procedures and practices. Inspectors looked at school policies, curriculum documentation, behaviour logs, attendance records and destination statistics. The lead inspector met with members of the local governing board and spoke to a representative of the Northfleet Schools Co-operative Trust.
- Inspectors considered 69 responses to the Ofsted Parent View online questionnaire and 41 additional written comments from parents. They reviewed the survey returns completed by 64 staff and 65 pupils.

Inspection team

Paul Metcalf, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Nicky Archer	Ofsted Inspector
Steve Baker	Ofsted Inspector
James Lovell	Ofsted Inspector

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