

Inspection of Northfield School and Sports College

Thames Road, Billingham, Teesside TS22 5EG

Inspection dates: 15 and 16 February 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
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Behaviour and attitudes	Good
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Personal development	Good
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Leadership and management	Good
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Previous inspection grade	Good
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What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils benefit from a broad and balanced curriculum with personal development running through its heart. Leaders and teachers expect the best of pupils. The school's values of 'respect, honesty and resilience' are commonly understood. Pupils are polite and outgoing. They are keen to talk to visitors about life in school. Many of them enjoy the wider opportunities that are on offer. For example, the school production of 'Sister Act' that was taking place during the inspection involved nearly 100 pupils.

Lessons are purposeful. Pupils behave well in classrooms. There is a healthy buzz of positivity on the corridors although there are times when pupils misbehave between lessons. Very occasionally bullying occurs. Whenever either of these happen, leaders manage it well.

Leaders value the views of pupils. For example, the pupils who are part of the 'teaching and learning group' meet with senior leaders to tell them about their experiences in lessons. Leaders use this feedback, along with other monitoring, to continuously improve pupils' experiences in school.

Staff and pupils get on well. Strong and effective pastoral care is available. This helps pupils to be safe and feel safe. Staff help pupils who struggle with their behaviour to turn things around. Pupils value the mental health support that is available in school.

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

Leaders have constructed a high-quality curriculum. Subject leaders have made ambitious choices about what pupils will study. They have designed the curriculum so that knowledge is taught in a sensible order. Staff are knowledgeable about how to best support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Teachers make good use of precise information that tells them how to help pupils with SEND in class. For example, art and design teachers adapt the curriculum successfully for pupils with visual impairment. When learning about perspective, some pupils will produce 3D models instead of drawing. When drawing, pupils who need help with their fine motor skills get useful support from teaching assistants. This means that all pupils can develop an appreciation of art.

Staff teach most lessons effectively and in the main, pupils make good progress. Well-trained staff teach pupils who need support with reading. They catch up quickly. Staff frequently check pupils' understanding in lessons. Where teachers notice that pupils have knowledge gaps, they are quick thinking and adapt their lesson appropriately. Some staff teach subjects such as mathematics, which are not their main specialism. They have subject mentors to help them to improve their knowledge. However, some teachers do not have enough subject expertise. They

find it difficult to respond quickly when pupils have difficulty understanding important concepts.

Pupils behave well. However, last year the number of suspensions and permanent exclusions increased. Some pupils do not attend school frequently enough. Leaders have rightly invested in more pastoral staff to support pupils to behave well and attend more often. Pupils trust the pastoral team and this helps leaders to understand pupils' individual circumstances. Staff put the right strategies in place to overcome any barriers that pupils may have. As a result, incidents of poor behaviour in school have decreased. However, attendance for some pupils remains a challenge.

Leaders place great emphasis on preparing pupils for life in modern Britain. Staff who teach the personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum are well trained. This means that important messages about personal finance and relationships are understood by pupils. The careers programme is well structured. It helps pupils to think about their options for the future. The religious education (RE) curriculum gives pupils a real sense of the importance of diversity. All pupils take a GCSE in RE which deeply develops their spiritual understanding.

Leaders and governors have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and what needs to develop. Together, they have addressed the weaknesses found at the previous inspection. Governors' challenge and support has kept leaders focused. The COVID-19 pandemic has presented new challenges. Leaders have galvanised staff relationships to overcome these. Several staff have accessed training to become a mental health first aider. Staff appreciate that this support is available should they require it.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Discussions with pupils about how to stay safe are frequent and relevant. Safeguarding leaders regularly liaise with the local police community support officer to understand emerging safeguarding issues in the local area. Together, they work to design and deliver sessions for pupils on topics such as knife crime, so that pupils are fully aware of the risks that they may face away from school.

Safeguarding leaders have developed effective systems for pupils and adults to pass on any concerns that they might have. Both make good use of these channels. Leaders act quickly when they receive information about individual pupils who are at risk. Leaders ensure that these pupils are protected from harm.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- A small minority of staff teach subjects that are outside of their main subject specialism and lack the necessary expert knowledge needed to teach these subjects with consistent effectiveness. This means that some pupils' knowledge is not deepened in some lessons. Leaders need to develop teachers' expertise so that those teaching outside of their main area of expertise can implement the curriculum effectively.
- Some pupils do not attend school as regularly as they should. Consequently, these pupils have some gaps in their learning. Leaders and those responsible for governance need to ensure that recent initiatives to improve attendance are closely monitored and where necessary enhanced to secure regular attendance from all pupils.

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	111731
Local authority	Stockton-on-Tees
Inspection number	10255603
Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,488
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Miriam Stanton
Headteacher	Richard Henderson
Website	http://northfieldssc.org/
Date of previous inspection	14 and 15 January 2020 under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school operates a specially resourced provision for pupils with SEND. At the time of this inspection, there were five pupils with sensory impairment accessing this provision.
- A small number of pupils access alternative provision. The school uses five registered providers and three unregistered providers.

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 that the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, senior leaders and middle leaders throughout the inspection. The lead inspector met with a representative from the

local authority as well as members of the local governing body, including the chairperson.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, mathematics, science, religious education and art and design. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also visited a range of lessons in other subjects and visited sessions where pupils were being supported with reading.
- To inspect safeguarding, inspectors met with the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and a deputy DSL to discuss safeguarding arrangements and review the safeguarding record, including the single central record. Inspectors spoke to staff and pupils throughout the inspection about their safeguarding knowledge.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of school documentation, including behaviour and attendance records, the school's improvement plan and minutes from meetings of the local governing body.
- Inspectors spoke to staff and pupils, formally and informally, throughout the inspection. This includes pupils who have been suspended from school.
- An inspector visited a registered alternative provision used by the school and spoke with pupils attending the provision. They also spoke to representatives from three other alternative providers.
- Inspectors also considered the views of staff, parents, and pupils that were received through Ofsted's surveys.

Inspection team

Graham Findlay, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Bernard Clark	Ofsted Inspector
Christine Durand	Ofsted Inspector
Christina Jones	Ofsted Inspector
Toni Spoons	Ofsted Inspector

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