

Inspection of Northcott School and Sixth Form College

Northcott School, Bransholme, Hull HU7 4EL

Inspection dates: 22 and 23 May 2024

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

The quality of education

Outstanding

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Sixth-form provision

Outstanding

Previous inspection grade

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Northcott School and Sixth Form College is a place where pupils flourish. The highly-ambitious curriculum is carefully designed to ensure that all pupils develop important knowledge, regardless of their starting points. Staff are passionate about providing the very best education for pupils.

From the school's youngest pupils in 'Little Blossoms', to those in the sixth form, there is no ceiling to the school's high expectations for what pupils can achieve. Pupils, all of whom have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), achieve highly.

Pupils have a strong sense of belonging at this inclusive school. Pupils enjoy exceptionally strong relationships with adults, who know them very well. This helps pupils feel valued, happy and safe. Pupils are respectful of others, and they behave extremely well.

Regardless of age, the focus on personal development runs through all aspects of school life. Staff work thoughtfully to make sure that pupils, including students in the sixth form, are very well prepared for life beyond Northcott School and Sixth Form College. The extensive range of opportunities, and the carefully planned wider experiences, prepare pupils superbly for their next steps in education, employment or training.

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

Pupils study the full range of subjects expected nationally and make strong progress from their starting points. The school has identified the important knowledge that they want pupils to learn. Pupils practise and apply their knowledge before more complex ideas are introduced. For example, young pupils in 'Little Blossoms' learn about the past and present when they study a topic on pirates. This is the foundation for when pupils go on to develop a more detailed understanding of history, in both primary and secondary phases of the school.

Pupils develop a rich knowledge and understanding across the subjects they study because of the thoughtfully planned curriculum and the expert teaching they receive.

The school supports pupils to develop forms of communication, starting with small sets of symbols and images. These are gradually expanded, to allow pupils to communicate with confidence. Alongside this, pupils learn to recognise the way sounds are represented through letters through the school's phonics programme. Older pupils at the early stages of reading receive expert support to catch up quickly. They swiftly develop secure reading skills which enable them to enjoy books and access the wider curriculum.

Students in the sixth form receive a bespoke curriculum that meets their needs. The quality of this is exceptional. Skilled teaching embeds fundamental knowledge in mathematics and English, and helps students then apply this in everyday life. A carefully designed curriculum allows pupils to achieve well in a range of accredited courses.

Pupils have many opportunities to develop their talents and interests. They take part in an extensive range of activities designed to support them in adulthood, such as working in the on-site salon or cafe. These activities, too, are uniquely tailored to students' needs, talents and ambitions. Careers education is a real strength. Students learn about workplaces, further education and about the community activities they may access in adulthood.

Pupils behave extremely well. They are enthusiastic and fully engrossed in their learning. Pupils demonstrate empathy and understanding towards each other. Staff know their pupils incredibly well. They astutely develop pupils' character, resilience and empathy through carefully crafted interactions, knowing when to support pupils and when to provide more independence.

The school's commitment to the wider development of pupils is impressive. Pupils are ready for life in modern Britain because they learn about important issues such as consent, healthy relationships and finance. Pupils speak and communicate passionately about equality. Pupils, and students in the sixth form, take on numerous leadership roles that all contribute tangibly to the school's inclusive culture. For example, playground buddies facilitate communication and friendships for pupils who find this difficult, so that no pupil is left isolated or alone because of their complex needs. Pupils enjoy a wide range of outdoor and indoor adventurous activities, regardless of physical ability.

The school is supported and challenged by an experienced governing body. They set an ambitious vision and work closely with leaders to ensure that the quality of education that pupils receive is continually improving. Staff value the regular training that they receive so that they can carry out their work effectively as part of a strong and collaborative team. The school extensively supports providers, pupils and families across the local authority through their outreach work. The school's contribution to supporting pupils with SEND is noteworthy.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	118138
Local authority	Kingston Upon Hull City Council
Inspection number	10297299
Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	3 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	171
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	13
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Kevin I'Anson
Headteacher	Katherine Johnson
Website	www.northcottschool.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	1 March 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Northcott School and Sixth Form College is a special school for pupils with SEND aged between 3 and 19 years.
- The school makes provision for pupils with specific learning difficulties, speech, language and communication, moderate learning difficulties and autistic spectrum disorder. All pupils have an education, health and care (EHC) plan.
- The school uses two unregistered providers of alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

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

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and senior leaders responsible for safeguarding, behaviour, attendance, sixth form and personal development.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, communication and English. For each deep dive, inspectors visited lessons, reviewed curriculum plans and spoke with curriculum leaders and teachers. They also talked to pupils about their learning and looked at the work they have completed.
- Inspectors met with the special educational needs and disabilities coordinator. They reviewed pupils' EHC plans. Inspectors visited lessons to see how pupils with SEND are supported to learn.
- Inspectors met with the leader responsible for reading to discuss the support for pupils at the early stages of reading.
- The lead inspector observed pupils reading to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors met leaders to discuss pupils' behaviour and reviewed the school's data on external suspensions.
- Inspectors met with representatives from the local governing body.
- Inspectors scrutinised records relating to attendance and records of pupils who have joined or left the school roll.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted's pupil and staff surveys. They considered responses to Ofsted Parent View, including free-text comments.

Inspection team

Stuart Voyce, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Angela Spencer-Brooke	Ofsted Inspector
Suzette Garland-Grimes	Ofsted Inspector

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