



Northgate High School

Self-Evaluation and Improvement Planning Summary

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Northgate High School Aims

1. Teaching for Learning: To encourage all learners to engage fully in their learning by developing lively, enquiring minds and valuing achievement.
2. Inclusive Learning: To continue to develop an inclusive learning ethos by seeking to remove barriers and maximise opportunities for all.
3. Behaviour for Learning: To encourage students to be actively involved in their learning and to embrace the Northgate Values of respect, determination and teamwork.
4. Learning Community: To develop a strong school community that works in partnership with parents, the local community and other stakeholders.
5. Learning Environment: To provide a safe, healthy, stimulating learning environment for students and staff, ensuring that appropriate resources are available to support the learning process.

Ofsted action points (November 2019)

1. *Outcomes in modern foreign languages improved considerably last year. However, there is evident capacity for further improvement. Leaders have been working on the languages curriculum to ensure it is better structured to help pupils to learn and remember more. Leaders should consider what other support the teachers of languages might need in order to implement the curriculum as well as they can.*

Progress to date: Languages results are stronger than at the time of the last inspection. Work is ongoing in this area, including changes in curriculum, personnel and leadership structure. Feedback from recent student surveys and targeted learning walks indicate that there is sustained improvement. The Languages department are focusing on recruitment strategies at GCSE and A Level, with Governors supporting small group teaching to grow this area. This includes linking Languages to careers, increasing the number of trips and study visits, developing links with other schools in Ipswich and embedding the opportunity to study two languages from Year 8.

2. *The school makes good-quality extra-curricular opportunities available to all groups of pupils. However, leaders do not check whether there are any groups that are not accessing these opportunities and missing chances to develop their personal interests. Leaders should consider which pupils might need extra support and encouragement to benefit from this work.*

Progress to date: We are using Go4schools and internal spreadsheets to track student involvement in extra-curricular activities; indications are that all groups of learners are accessing these opportunities. Opportunities have been developed to specifically engage students from disadvantaged groups through the provision of a wider range of low-cost activities, easier access to financial support, and the development of a menu of bespoke activities to build cultural capital and address individual need.

Summary Evaluation

Quality of education

- A sharpened focus on curriculum intent through the development of curriculum principles has given greater clarity and coherence to Northgate's philosophy and ambition, underpinning the work of subject areas.
- Subject teams have a clear sense of what they want students to know and be able to do and have developed schemes of work to enable students to build essential core knowledge and skills. The curriculum is designed to help students to remember long term and integrate new ideas into larger ideas and concepts, as seen in curriculum maps, schemes of work and learning materials, having a positive impact on learning. Ofsted November 2019: 'Teachers make sure that they teach subjects in a logical order. They identify the most important subject knowledge and vocabulary that pupils need to learn.'
- 'Teacher knowledge is very strong, with reinforcement of key language and explicit vocabulary teaching evident. Teachers understand that the curriculum and know how to make this come together. There's clear purpose in how one task leads to another, with tasks flowing naturally and sequencing making sense' (Peer Review, October 2024).
- We are committed to high standards for all learners, with appropriate levels of challenge, enabling them to fulfil their potential:
 - Despite challenging financial circumstances, we have maintained a broad, balanced and ambitious curriculum for all learners, for example, the curriculum has not been narrowed, GCSE triple science is available to all, we run three languages at GCSE, an extensive list of option subjects are available at GCSE and A level, all sixth form students can take the Extended Project Qualification.
 - We have reviewed our RSHE/PSHE model and implemented changes to enhance its effectiveness in all key stages, including introducing a taught lesson to our Year 12 students. It is now taught by a skilled team of subject specialists, and it is aligned to our curriculum priorities; student feedback has been very positive.
 - Where additional support is needed to enable students to access the curriculum this is put in place, for example SEMH intervention, Foundation English, strategic use of teaching assistants and our EAL intervention programme.
 - There is a sustained focus on literacy and numeracy to ensure that students can learn effectively and be prepared for their future. We have a number of initiatives in place to create a reading culture, including our extensive school library, Accelerated Reader, STAR testing and Century Read. A programme of interventions is in place to support Key Stage 3 learners in developing their literacy and numeracy skills.
 - A suite of targeted intervention is used to support students who need it, including those with SEND, through the Learning Support department and Foundation Learning programme. Ofsted November 2019: 'Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) experience an ambitious curriculum. They are well supported in lessons by their teachers. Pupils with SEND achieve well.'
 - We made good use of the school-led tutoring programme to support students whose learning has been most impacted by the pandemic. Our data suggests that this had a positive impact for Year 11 in summer 2024.

- We are utilising technology to support key groups of students in accessing learning and developing independence to overcome, and remove, barriers to learning.
 - We have developed a tailored curriculum for the small number of students for whom this is appropriate. A bespoke programme is in place for a group of Year 9 students, with the intention of boosting their engagement with school, developing core skills through the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme and exploring future pathways.
 - In the sixth form, an Aspire programme is delivered to our students by the Careers team. This provides support for students in Year 12 and focuses on continuing in higher education and key transferable skills (such as presentation skills, interviews, debating and critical thinking). This has seen an increase in Oxbridge offers to our students.
 - Parent feedback indicates that 91% of parents think that their child does well at Northgate, and 86% report that their child is happy at school. 91% of parents would recommend our school to another parent (Parent Survey, March 2024). 'The children are never excluded from anything because of money and my child was inspired to believe they could do anything' (IQM Inclusive School Award Report, July 2024).
 - Ofsted November 2019: '[Staff] have high expectations of what pupils can achieve.' 'Disadvantaged pupils are keen learners in lessons. They produce work of a good quality.'
- We are committed to high quality teaching and learning, resulting in a positive learner experience in the classroom and good outcomes:
 - Northgate's Teaching and Learning Principles underpin our day-to-day practice. There is a key focus on Northgate's 5Rs, including in particular revision/recall strategies that help students accumulate knowledge and understanding over time; the emphasis is on encouraging students to take responsibility for their learning through regular reflection and self-regulation, as observed in our learning walk programme and continued development of the Study Centre and targeted homework clubs. We take part in the national Revision Census and worked closely with national experts to review the findings and improve practice.
 - Practice is informed by the work of a number of action research groups who meet regularly to develop strategies that target key areas identified within the School Improvement Plan. Our comprehensive CPD programme is carefully planned to ensure opportunities for staff professional development (see CPD booklet). This work is informed by student voice e.g. through a structured Quality Assurance process that includes regular student perception interviews and surveys, including the Revision Census. This impacts on teaching and learning across the school, as seen in learning walks and lesson observations.
 - A range of different types of assessment are used to ascertain how learners are achieving in acquiring the intended knowledge and skills, enabling staff to intervene as needed e.g. quizzes, verbal questioning, extended writing, as seen in lesson observations and learning walks. 'Regular and multifaceted reporting and sharing ensures there is a sharp focus on pupils always making progress, particularly vulnerable groups' (IQM Inclusive School Award Report, July 2024). Ofsted November 2019: 'Teachers use questioning well to help pupils remember what they have studied.'
 - Our students show a trend to strong improvement in how much of their revision time they spend using highly effective techniques, and they make good use of retrieval practice, getting feedback on their performance and learning from mistakes (Revision Census, 2024).
 - We continue to explore the potential of technology to enhance learning, both in general e.g. use of ProWise boards and OneNote, and for specific groups of learners. The investment in ProWise screens enables learners to revisit prior learning easily and to consolidate their learning through extensive resources.

The school has also invested in revision programmes to support students learning independently at home (see for example homework tasks set via the use of GCSE Pod, EduCake, My GCSE Science and Sparx Maths).

- 'The learning environment is vibrant and well-organised. Displays feature a combination of information aids, student work and key vocabulary'...'The school's implicit and explicit enthusiasm for reading to inspire students can be seen all around the school, not just in the English Department' (IQM Inclusive School Award Report, July 2024).

- We invest in staff to ensure that students are taught by those with high levels of expertise:
 - The vast majority of staff teach in their specialism and resources are invested in subject specific CPD, as seen in our CPD records. Staff have strong subject knowledge, and we work closely with subject associations and national experts to ensure that our teaching and learning pedagogy is very strong. A number of staff play a leading role in delivering training for local SCITT providers and this has helped to maintain strong recruitment of subject specialist staff.
 - Where ECTs need support to develop their practice, a detailed programme is put in place, including lesson observation feedback and mentoring/coaching. As a result, staff retention rates are very high and both ECTs and ITTs feel very well supported.
 - Ofsted November 19: 'Teachers have strong subject knowledge. They use this to good effect to plan learning activities. (...) Staff appreciate the opportunities for their training and professional development, which they say are excellent.'

- We work alongside parents to achieve the best for their child:
 - There are in-school events for parent/carer(s) of students in Years 7 to 12; these cover how parents can support learning at home and there is guidance on the school website for parents. 'A parent described how much her high functioning, but vulnerable, autistic child has advanced as a result of the school partnering with her' (IQM Inclusive School Award Report, July 2024).
 - We make use of parental surveys as part of our decision-making processes e.g. review of affordability of school uniform and timing of the school day.
 - We have appointed a Family Liaison Officer who is working with the attendance team to engage with those learners who have significant barriers to attending school and their families.

Student outcomes

Ofsted November 2019: 'pupils achieve well in GCSE and A-level examinations. Leaders know where improvements are still needed.'

Key Stage 4 – 2024

- Progress 8 0.35, with progress above national in English and maths.
- Attainment 8 score 51.2.
- 56.1% of students achieved grade 5 or above in English and maths.
- 17% of students entered the English Baccalaureate (EBacc).

- Average EBacc points score for the English Baccalaureate 4.32.
- In the 2021 Year 11 cohort (most recent data available), 96% continued education or training, or moved on to employment (national 94%).

Sixth Form – 2024

- Average grade C.
- Average attainment score 30.2 points.
- 92.8% of students completed their main study programme (2023, the most up-to-date data available).
- In the 2021 Year 13 cohort (most recent data available), 91% of students progressed to a sustained education or employment place, compared to 83% nationally.
- We are working with subject leaders to develop early identification of student underperformance and strategies to implement to support positive progress and attendance.

Areas for development – SIP 2024

1. Continue to develop and embed classroom-based strategies to enable vulnerable groups of learners in years 7 to 13 to engage in their learning, with a particular focus on:
 - a) Homework
 - b) Reading and writing
 - c) Memory and metacognition
 - d) Supporting students with SEND
2. Continue our drive to ensure the diversity of our school community is reflected in our curriculum and culture.
3. Review our sixth form transition processes and interventions to enable students the best opportunity to achieve.
4. Review our curriculum offer for learners who are disengaged.

Behaviour and attitudes

Strengths

- We have high expectations of student behaviour, as established through the Northgate Values and behaviour framework. Behaviour is managed well across the school and there are clear expectations of students (see posters, assemblies, behaviour policy). Leadership are visible around the site with an increase in leadership duties and support during lessons. Positive behaviour is celebrated, for example through the points system, and we have been working to develop this further e.g. Bronze/Silver/Gold/Platinum awards and reward events. The pastoral team operate a 'golden ticket' reward system where a small number of students each week can be nominated by staff for the award. Students feel that school discipline and celebration and rewarding of achievement is good. As a result, student behaviour is

good and students feel safe – in a recent student survey students said that school is a safe place for them (student survey October 2023). ‘The environment was calm and respectful and, whilst also enthusiastically vibrant, devoid of any raised voices’...’It was clear during this assessment that students with emotional challenges, resulting from a variety of causes, were very well protected and supported’ (IQM Inclusive School Award Report, July 2024). Ofsted November 2019: ‘Pupils respond by working hard and behaving well. Pupils are considerate of each other, for example when moving round the school. Pupils say they feel safe at the school.’

- Students reported to Governors that they feel safe in school and are able to contact teachers if needed, as there are ‘always a lot of staff around the school site’. They also shared that ‘teachers make me feel safe...they make an effort to talk to us in a non-threatening way’. Students also reflected that the Sixth Form buddy system helps younger students in lessons and improves integration around the site, helping everyone feel safer (Governor Perception Interviews, October 2024).
- Students are aware of types of bullying. Incidents of bullying are low and dealt with swiftly and effectively (see pastoral records on CPOMS). Students are checked up on following interventions to ensure that the problem has been resolved and both the victim and perpetrator are supported to ensure future issues are prevented. Students feel that they are treated fairly and equally, that racial harmony is promoted and the school is a safe place for them (student perception survey 2022).
- Student attitudes to learning are positive and lead to active participation in lessons, as seen in learning walks and lesson observations, through feedback from visitors and in progress check data. There is a highly positive feel to the school site and a highly positive learning environment in all lessons, characterised by calm, and a true behaviour for learning culture. High levels of respect are shown between teachers and students, and between students and their peers (Peer Review, February 2024). Ofsted November 2019: ‘Pupils behave well in lessons. They say their learning is rarely affected by poor behaviour. Pupils respond well to teachers’ requests. This helps learning to flow smoothly.’
- Improved use of data is enabling us to identify individuals and groups where attendance or behaviour is an issue and take action to address this. We have increased capacity in our attendance team and appointed a new Assistant Headteacher from September 2023 with oversight of attendance as part of their role. Evidence suggests that attendance has improved and clear processes and strategies are in place. We continue to work alongside the DfE on an attendance project as part of the Ipswich Priority Area.
- Fixed term and internal suspensions are used appropriately in line with the school’s behaviour policy. There are clear protocols for the support that needs to be put in place for students who are to be reintegrated following suspension. These focus on restorative interventions and making sure there is a focus on supporting the student to reintegrate successfully, as seen in our suspension paperwork.
- Students, staff and governors have been involved in updating our Northgate Values document that identifies what each of us need to do on a daily basis to build the positive and respectful culture that we all want to maintain (September 2024). These values form the basis of all conversations with students about their behaviour and progress.

Areas for development – SIP 2024

5. Continue to embed and refine our behaviour system, with a view to developing greater consistency in its application.
6. Continue to develop strategies for monitoring and improving the attendance of learners in years 7 to 13, with a particular focus on disadvantaged students and those with EAL.

7. Evaluate the effectiveness of our early help offer to maximise opportunities to develop student wellbeing.

Personal Development

Strengths

- We are committed to giving students opportunities to develop personally as well as academically, both through an ambitious curriculum offer and a range of extracurricular opportunities. The Northgate Values of Respect, Determination and Teamwork underpin our work, as evidenced in our rewards system, staff training and assemblies for students. We view these values as key to success both within and beyond school.
- We offer a robust RSHE/PSHE curriculum, planned and delivered by subject experts; the curriculum is delivered principally through humanities at Key Stage 3 and is delivered as part of a core curriculum of weekly lessons for years 10, 11 and 12. Lesson content builds upon and goes beyond statutory requirements, responding to local and national need, as well as providing students with opportunities to develop key transferable skills (RSHE policy, schemes of work).
- There is a broad range of extra-curricular opportunities for students in the form of clubs, activities and visits, enabling them to have new experiences and develop their interests and talents. Following disruption due to the pandemic, we are committed to establishing a rich extra-curricular offer for all students. Financial support is offered where this might be a barrier to access. We have expanded our range of extra-curricular activities to further contribute to improving students' cultural capital. Systems have been developed to record and monitor student participation in extra-curricular activities and clubs, with a focus on identifying an efficient method for using this data to aid social prescribing within the school.
- We have a strong pastoral team, with Assistant Heads of Year who do not teach, so are available throughout the day to support students. We have invested in this area to ensure that there is an Assistant Head of Year for each year group, in addition to a Study Support Officer in the sixth form, and an expanded safeguarding team through the appointment of a new safeguarding practitioner. We have an early help offer which draws on both internal and external sources, meaning that students are supported effectively; this includes a model of social prescribing.
- There is a range of support for students to help them to develop resilience, independence and social skills, for example homework club. SEMH intervention is available to our most vulnerable students who need specialist expertise and a nurturing environment.
- Students are encouraged to play an active role in the school and local community - for example, through Community Day, helping in lessons, peer mentoring, student support ambassadors, volunteering in the local community - meaning that they develop a sense of their responsibilities as a member of society. In addition, our students have taken a proactive role in promoting Human Rights and have been specially commended for their work in this area by the University of Essex. In Sixth Form, we have developed an extensive ambassador programme, which involves students volunteering within the school or local community and provides them with opportunities to develop leadership skills.
- Our in-house careers team support students in preparing for their future. We are working to the Gatsby benchmarks (Gatsby benchmark audit) and have introduced a careers fair and university visits as part of our offer. 'The strong relationships the school has created with local employers are evident in the work experience offered' (IQM Inclusive School Award Report, July 2024). Clear careers links are embedded through PSHE delivery and whole school events, such as post-16 pathways events for both students and parents. Careers input is delivered by our specialist careers lead. Our Year 10 students undertake a week of work experience in June.

- We have a Diversity, Equality and Inclusion lead and we work closely with student focus groups and the local community in order to make sure that our curriculum reflects the diversity of our school community. In the autumn term our school hosts a Diversity, Equality and Inclusion showcase at The Hold in Ipswich; this involves feeder primary schools and over 60 students from the school. We also play a lead role in organising the Holocaust Memorial Day at the University of Suffolk. In 2022 we were one of just a few schools in Suffolk that were chosen by the Association for Jewish Refugees as a site to plant a tree to recognise our contribution to Holocaust Education. We host an annual Service of Remembrance in school and we have encouraged students to become ‘agents of change’ through volunteer working and their support for local charities (see recent press releases). This includes working with local care homes and hospitals, as well as raising money for wells and cataract operations in Bangladesh.
- In the autumn term 2023, teachers at our school have received awards for their work promoting Diversity, Equality and Inclusion from BBC Radio Suffolk, the Historical Association, and the Bangladeshi Support Centre & Multicultural Services. We continue to work closely with the University of Essex on the Dora Love Prize for human rights and have been praised as a ‘beacon school’ for our work in this area. We continue to support and promote UK Disability History Month and involve our students in local projects that celebrate migration to Ipswich (see the upcoming exhibition at The Hold) and the contribution of the Windrush generation (our students recently had their poems published in a book to commemorate the event). Finally, we have worked closely with the police school liaison team on establishing the Suffolk ‘Hope Awards’ and recently received an award that we received recognition for our work around Hate Crime Education (work that is embedded in our Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 RSHE & PSHE curriculum). We were highly commended runners-up in the 2024 National Queer Schools Award in ‘School of the Year’ category. We received multiple, independent nominations from a variety of organisations in response to standing up to hate. Our commitment to this work saw us achieve the Centre of Excellence award from the Inclusion Quality Mark in July 2024.
- We are committed to offering a robust EAL provision within school, which supports our students and families that come to Northgate with little or no English. We have a dedicated EAL Coordinator. Support starts from admission and continues throughout the student’s time at Northgate, with a focus on their social-emotional integration and academic progress. We offer a variety of different support opportunities to parents/carers, including coffee mornings, English acquisition courses and trips to the local university. We keep regular contact with the families and perform home visits when appropriate.

Areas for development – SIP 2024

8. Continue to develop systems to ensure that students in vulnerable groups are engaging in extra-curricular opportunities.

Leadership and management

Strengths

- Our ambition for the education that we provide to students is clearly set out in our Curriculum Principles and Northgate Values. The curriculum is broad and balanced and under regular review. Opportunities to develop students’ understanding of behaviour and safety and SMSC, including British Values, are integrated into our RSHE/PSHE programme, as well as being an extra-curricular feature. Ofsted November 2019: ‘Leaders are proud of the wide, ambitious curriculum that they offer to pupils. The curriculum leads to qualifications that pupils need for the future.’

- We have high expectations of all staff, and leaders and managers lead by example. Leaders and managers at all levels regularly evaluate and plan to continue to secure continuous improvement and department reviews are undertaken as necessary. Our quality assurance model is enhancing our evaluation and planning processes by facilitating more regular conversations about learning and improvement between leaders at all levels.
- Leaders and managers at all levels are committed to continuous improvement in teaching and learning and assessment, to ensure that all learners are able to fulfil their potential; this is underpinned by an effective CPD programme and our initial work on Walkthrus in order to facilitate the exchange of best practice, including specific programmes for ECTs. We are supporting a number of staff in completing NPQs.
- Performance management of teaching and support staff links to teaching and learning to ensure that this vital area continues to move forward. Our performance development review system links closely with action research models from the EEF, recent educational research and our School Improvement Plan. A comprehensive programme has been put together, allowing staff to access resources online and to fully participate in action research groups.
- Northgate contributes to improvement across the wider education system through our involvement with our primary pyramid and links with local universities - Cambridge, Essex, East Anglia and Suffolk. We have worked hard to extend our links with Norfolk Suffolk Essex Teach Training, East SCITT and UEA. We have developed an internship programme to encourage new entrants to teaching in shortage subjects and offer school experience days via the Get School Experience website. We are also a placement school for trainee counsellors from University of East Anglia and social workers from University of Suffolk.
- Recruitment and retention of staff is a key area of strength. Positive links with a range of ITT providers means that we have been able to recruit subject specialists in all curriculum areas. A CPD programme that offers lots of opportunities to develop the skills and knowledge needed for promoted posts has meant that staff who have left posts have moved on to promoted posts within the school or other local schools (see RQT, ESfML, NPQL, NPQS, NPQH programmes). The percentage of staff who leave the profession is significantly lower than other national trends (see Recruitment & Retention Review).
- Staff wellbeing is monitored through an annual survey and appropriate action taken to respond to feedback, for example the introduction of a weekly coffee morning which rotates day of the week to ensure that part-time colleagues are able to attend. The percentage of teachers with at least one period of sickness absence was significantly below national in 2021/22 (IDSR).
- Governors provide both support and challenge to help drive improvement, as seen in the minutes of meetings and their participation in monitoring visits. Ofsted November 2019: 'Governors are committed to the school. They play an active role in the life of the school. For example, they meet with subject leaders regularly to check what leaders are doing in their departments with pupils. Governors are clear about the strengths and weaknesses of their school.'
- Governors and key staff strive to meet the needs of the school within constraints imposed by strict financial management, evidenced in the work of the governors' finance committee.
- Safeguarding arrangements are in line with statutory requirements (safeguarding policy). CPOMS has been rolled out for use by the whole school staff, having initially been trialled by the safeguarding and pastoral teams – this has enhanced our ability to share information about students in a secure way. We commissioned an independent review of our safeguarding arrangements in May 2022 and made refinements to our processes and procedures in response to this. Ofsted November 2019: 'The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. All of the necessary checks are carried out on adults who work at the school. Staff are appropriately trained and know how to recognise the signs and symptoms of pupils who need help. The designated safeguarding leads work well with external agencies. This ensures that pupils get extra support when they need it. Leaders and governors understand the specific risks that are present in the local area.' 'The special educational needs coordinator works well with outside agencies. This supports pupils' well-being.'

- We work effectively with a wide range of services to ensure the wellbeing of the young people in our care.
- Staff are professional in their approach to work and their conduct towards colleagues, students and others, linking to the Northgate Values.

Areas for development – SIP 2024

9. Continue to develop and implement strategies to recruit and retain staff.
10. Embed, review and refine the PDR model for teaching staff.
11. Provide the best education we can with the funding available.
 - a) To explore avenues to increase school income.
 - b) Continue to plan for the replacement of the school management information system.
 - c) Continue our drive to make the most effective use of the school site, expanding our accommodation and improving site safety and security.
 - d) Continue to review the efficiency of the curriculum and school operations through the refined use of Integrated Curriculum & Financial Planning.

Updated November 2024