

Reddish Vale Technology College

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	106134
Local Authority	Stockport
Inspection number	355891
Inspection dates	8–9 June 2011
Reporting inspector	Ruth James 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.

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1275
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Andy Verdeille
Headteacher	Jennifer Campbell
Date of previous school inspection	19 September 2007
School address	Reddish Vale Road Reddish Stockport SK5 7HD
Telephone number	0161 477 3544
Fax number	0161 429 9683
Email address	admin@reddish.stockport.sch.uk

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Introduction

This pilot inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four additional inspectors. Inspectors observed different aspects of the school's work including approximately 27 hours of teaching. Fifty three teachers were observed. In addition they held discussions with governors, groups of students, and staff and scrutinised a range of documentation including that relating to safeguarding practices, the school's self-evaluation and development planning. They also evaluated questionnaire responses from 255 parents and carers, 147 students and 99 staff.

Information about the school

Reddish Vale Technology College is a larger than average school serving the communities of Reddish and Brinnington. It is a Specialist Technology College. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. The proportion of students from minority ethnic groups is well below that found nationally. The proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above the national average but the proportion of students with a statement of educational needs is slightly below the national average. Government floor targets have been met for the last three years.

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

Overall effectiveness	2
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Achievement	2
Teaching	2
Leadership and management	2
Behaviour and safety	2

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

- This is a good school where examination results have improved significantly over the last three years. The proportion of students gaining five or more GCSE grades A* to C, including English and mathematics, rose to just above the national average in 2010. Students are making good progress from their below average starting points. The school's well-planned provision to support those with special educational needs and/or disabilities ensures that they achieve well.
- Students enjoy school. There is a friendly school community with good relationships between students and staff. Students behave well both in lessons and around school and they feel safe. They report there is very little bullying and any that occurs is dealt with effectively. Systems for managing behaviour work well.
- Teaching is good and inspectors observed many lessons where students were fully engaged. Students show good attitudes to learning which makes a valuable contribution to their good achievement. Teachers have high expectations and use interesting activities to develop their understanding. Instances of outstanding teaching were seen, especially in specialist provision supporting those students with additional social and emotional needs. There are, however, a small minority of lessons where teaching is not as successful and students are not fully involved. When this happens, some students, particularly those who have not been sufficiently stretched by the learning activity, become bored or distracted. While the marking of some work in books is helpful, in others there are few comments specifying ways to improve the work.

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- The headteacher and her team provide strong leadership and through the use of challenging targets and effective improvement strategies they have successfully raised academic standards. Middle leaders make a valuable contribution to these improvements. Quality assurance systems and procedures are well organised and they are having an impact but have not yet raised the quality of teaching in all lessons to good or better.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching further to increase the proportion of good and outstanding lessons by:
 - modelling and sharing the good and outstanding practice that already exists within the school
 - ensuring that work in lessons meets the full range of abilities, engages all students and is suitably challenging
 - improving questioning to develop and extend students thinking
 - improving the marking of students work and the quality of feedback given.

Main report

Attainment by the end of Key Stage 4 is broadly average and achievement is good. Most aspects of attainment show steady improving trends. Students enter the school with standards that are generally below the national average. They make good progress across a range of subjects and the proportion of students gaining five or more GCSE passes at grades A* to C including English and mathematics has risen significantly from 32% in 2008 to 55% in 2010. The gap between boys' and girls' attainment is narrowing and is smaller than that found nationally. Students known to be eligible for free school meals are doing better than similar students nationally. Students work well in lessons, where they are attentive and motivated. Their good attitude to work is an important factor in the progress they make. They make most progress in lessons where the quality of teaching is good or better but even in lessons which are not as good, they generally behave appropriately and make satisfactory progress. They develop and apply a range of skills well, including the application of communication and mathematics' skills across the curriculum. As a result of the school's strong focus on valuing every student and ensuring that provision meets their needs, those with special educational needs and/or disabilities make similar progress to their peers. In 'Minischool', where students who attend college and work placements study English and mathematics, students in one small group engaged extremely well in an English lesson studying the characters in a novel, sharing their ideas about choice of vocabulary to describe different features. In another similar group, students worked conscientiously on mathematics problems, showing perseverance when they found them difficult. Progression to further education, training and employment is good and the proportion of students who do

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not progress to such provision has fallen and is low.

Students are well behaved and show consideration to their peers and adults. They report that standards of behaviour are generally good and that they feel very safe. Safeguarding procedures are well managed. In lessons, particularly those that are well taught, students' behaviour makes a positive contribution to their learning and they demonstrate good levels of engagement. Students say that instances of bullying are rare. They have confidence in the staff and incidents that are reported are dealt with quickly and effectively. The majority of parents and carers agree that school deals well with instances of unacceptable behaviour. Most students are punctual to school and to their lessons. They respond well to the school's rules of conduct, and say that rewards and sanctions are fair. Behaviour policies were reviewed this academic year as a result of feedback from teaching staff. The school is actively following a policy of inclusion and as a result, exclusion rates are falling year-on-year. Students at risk of disaffection are identified and supported at an early stage. 'Cloisters' is used very effectively as a short-term provision to support students facing difficulties before they return to mainstream lessons. Students understand factors that impact on their safety and well-being. For example, pastoral and curriculum work on internet safety means that students are aware of the risks associated with internet use. Pastoral teams actively monitor attendance which continues to improve. Good systems are used such as first day calling and educational welfare officer support ensures that home visits are made where appropriate.

The quality of teaching is good overall and a number of outstanding lessons were seen. A minority of satisfactory and occasionally inadequate lessons were observed. In the better lessons, effective planning ensures that learning activities are well matched to students' needs and abilities. Lessons proceed at a rapid pace, and learning activities offer both variety and challenge. These motivate students who engage well, work conscientiously and make good progress. Learning is regularly reviewed, and questioning is effective in checking understanding and deepening thinking. Peer and self-assessment are often used very effectively, helping students to understand how to improve their work. The quality of the teaching in 'Cloisters' and 'Minischool', is a notable strength and is highly effective in helping students facing barriers to learning to overcome these. Teachers in these areas are particularly adept at building students' self-esteem and confidence, through highly supportive and encouraging relationships, and skilled subject teaching. Weaker lessons within the school as a whole are often teacher dominated and slower paced, resulting in students being less engaged. Activities are more mundane, and the work is less well matched to different abilities with little to stimulate and challenge, especially for the more able. Question and answer sessions are not as well managed and low-level inattention is sometimes evident. The quality of marking and feedback in students' books is variable. While good examples were seen, in other cases books had been marked only sporadically and there were few helpful comments. The whole-school centralised assessment system is very effectively used, with challenging targets set and individual progress towards these monitored at regular intervals. Meetings of senior and middle leaders help to ensure that any issues identified are acted upon.

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The headteacher provides strong and effective leadership, and is ably supported by her senior team. They have established a clear and ambitious focus on improving outcomes and the impact of their work is clearly evident in the very significant improvement in results in recent years. Challenging targets are set and these have been used well to support the drive to raise standards. Middle leaders also make a valuable contribution to school improvement and the school's capacity to improve is good. The school's commitment to equal opportunities extends to all groups and is shown in the carefully planned provision and good teaching with the result that gaps in attainment such as that between boys and girls are narrowing. Quality assurance is well organised and systematic. The governing body contributes well, supporting the school but asking pertinent questions, and governors are appropriately involved in the life of the school.

The curriculum is carefully adapted to ensure that all students are engaged, and the personalised options available to those at risk of disaffection in Key Stage 4 are a particular strength, enabling them to overcome the many barriers to learning they face. Partnership arrangements, for example with colleges and training providers, are excellent and targeted work to encourage parental involvement is valuable in helping to raise aspirations. Provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is effective. Assemblies offer appropriate opportunities for reflection. Social and moral development is strong, and through charitable fund-raising, students show empathy and support for others in different situations. As well as relevant aspects of the curriculum, opportunities for cultural development include trips abroad and performances. The school's engagement with the wider community is excellent.

Self-evaluation is accurate. Monitoring and quality assurance processes include thorough analyses of data, lesson observations and work scrutiny. The outcomes are used to plan further improvements. Staff training has a high priority and effective use is made of advanced skills teachers. Areas of underperformance, such as weaknesses in the quality of teaching, are tackled. However, strategies to improve teaching have not yet succeeded in completely eradicating inadequate teaching, and there remains a minority of satisfactory lessons.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Reddish Vale 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 255 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1275 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
Q1 My child is happy at school	86	34	151	59	11	4	5	2
Q2 My child feels safe at school	83	33	153	60	14	5	4	2
Q3 The school helps my child to achieve as well as they can	86	34	139	55	21	8	4	2
Q4 The school meets my child's particular needs	80	31	148	58	19	7	2	1
Q5 The school ensures my child is well looked after	83	33	148	58	16	6	2	1
Q6 Teaching at this school is good	66	26	171	67	10	4	3	1
Q7 There is a good standard of behaviour at this school	34	13	156	61	52	20	7	3
Q8 Lessons are not disrupted by bad behaviour	22	9	109	43	99	39	15	6
Q9 The school deals with any cases of bullying well	64	25	134	53	30	12	10	4
Q10 The school helps me to support my child's learning	66	26	151	59	30	12	3	1
Q11 The school responds to my concerns and keeps me well informed	59	23	138	54	42	16	6	2
Q12 The school is well led and managed	65	25	154	60	19	7	7	3

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).

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"> ■ The achievement of all pupils. ■ Behaviour and safety. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The effectiveness of leadership and management. <p>and taking into consideration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ how well the school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
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 Reddish Vale Technology College, Stockport, SK5 7HD

We would like to thank you for welcoming us to your school recently. As you know we observed lessons, talked to staff and examined questionnaires from some of you, your parents and carers, and staff. We found that your school provides you with a good education.

We were impressed by your behaviour in lessons and around school and by your good attitudes to learning. You told us that rewards and sanctions are fair. We were pleased to hear that bullying is rare and that when it does occur it is dealt with effectively. The school's results have improved a lot in recent years. You make good progress reaching broadly average standards by the time you leave. Teaching is good overall and the school takes care to provide all of you with subjects and courses that meet your interests and needs. The school provides especially well for those of you with particular needs that need more support to achieve. Your progress is tracked well, and most of you know how well you are doing in your work.

The headteacher, senior leaders and staff have a good overview of the work of the school and have worked extremely hard to bring about improvements. We have asked them to make all your lessons as good as the best by ensuring that work in lessons is always interesting and suitably challenging, that you are involved in questions that encourage you to think deeply, and ensuring that your books are marked regularly and include helpful advice about improving your work.

We are confident that you will continue to work hard to achieve your best and we wish you every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Ruth James
Her Majesty's Inspector

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