

Redcar Academy - A Community School for the Performing and Visual Arts

Kirkleatham Lane, Redcar, North Yorkshire, TS10 4AB

Inspection dates 19–20 June 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected
	This inspection:	Requires improvement 3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement 3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement 3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement 3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement 3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- The progress of students in the academy is variable. Students in Years 7, 8 and 11 are not currently making good progress.
- The quality of teaching is variable. Although some is outstanding, too much requires improvement to enable students to make consistently good progress and a very small minority is inadequate.
- Recent developments to improve students' basic skills in literacy and numeracy have yet to improve their achievement across all of their courses.
- The work of subject leaders is not yet good because many are developing the skills required to lead others and drive improvements in the progress of students.
- The standards of safety are weaker within design and technology than the rest of the academy.
- When teaching is not good enough, minor misbehaviour by a few students disrupts the learning of others.

The school has the following strengths

- The new senior leadership team is very effectively driving improvement across all aspects of the academy.
- The new board of directors is good because recent appointments have enabled it to more robustly evaluate the work of the academy and hold leaders to account.
- Recently introduced systems to closely monitor the progress of students are of the highest quality. Now, staff at all levels, are able to identify underachievement.
- The progress of students currently in Year 10 is good.
- Very good systems to support staff development and to manage performance are now in place and are already improving the quality of teaching.
- Staff are ambitious to achieve as well as they can for their students. Most staff say they are very well supported by senior leaders.
- Students are cared for and guided very well.
- This is a cohesive community where students respect each other and adults.
- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors worked with senior staff while observing teaching and learning and reviewing work previously completed by students. Inspectors observed 30 lessons taught by 29 different teachers. They also made several shorter visits to lessons. Inspectors spoke to many students during breaks, lunchtimes, and during lessons. They also spoke to groups of students, discussing their work in their books.
- Inspectors observed activities taking place during form and registration time and they attended an academy assembly.
- Meetings were held with three members of the board of directors, senior leaders and with staff. A discussion was held with a professional who offers the academy an external evaluation of its work.
- Inspectors looked at a wide range of documentation, including internal and external data about students' attainment and progress, behaviour and attendance records and students' work. They scrutinised safeguarding procedures and records.
- When planning the inspection, there were no responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View). Fifteen responses were made during the inspection and all were taken into account. Forty two staff responses were made to a questionnaire, all of which were taken into account.

Inspection team

Neil MacKenzie, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Clive Petts	Additional Inspector
Stephen Rodchester	Additional Inspector
Nigel Drew	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Redcar Academy opened in December 2012 and replaced a school that existed on the same site. When its predecessor school, Redcar Community College - A Specialist Visual and Performing Arts Centre was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good. The academy is not part of an academy chain.
- It is a slightly smaller than average secondary school.
- The current headteacher was appointed to the academy's predecessor school in September of 2012. In January 2013, four new senior leaders were appointed and more than a quarter of the teaching staff has changed.
- The proportion of students who are supported by the pupil premium is significantly higher than the national average. The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and those children that are looked after.
- Most students are White British. The proportion of students from minority ethnic groups is significantly smaller than average. English is believed to be an additional language for very few students.
- The proportion of students supported through school action is similar to that found nationally. The proportion of students supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is significantly greater than the national average.
- The academy is part of the Trust4Learning. This is collaboration between six local secondary, three primaries and one special school. The Trust's aim is to provide more extensive opportunities to students and to staff than they would normally have from within their individual schools.
- Within the Trust, some students attend a wide range of part-time courses at other institutions. They are Redcar and Cleveland College; five students studying beauty therapy, seven studying construction, six studying engineering and four studying hairdressing. Five students study engineering at Bydales School, five study psychology at Sacred Heart School and six study sociology at Rye-Hills School.
- In addition to courses provided through the Trust, three students also attend part-time courses at Redcar and Cleveland training centre where they take courses in construction and basic motor vehicle maintenance. Eight attend Fairbridge, where they learn how to work effectively in teams and three attend Imagine You Can where students develop social skills. Two students attend EOTAS full time which develops students' basic skills.
- The academy has not yet produced a set of results from which a comparison could be made with the government's current floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- The academy does not use early entry for GCSE examinations in English or in mathematics.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good and more is outstanding so that students make good progress in all subjects and particularly in Years 7 and 8, by ensuring all teachers:
 - plan lessons closely which match learning activities to the specific needs of individual students
 - increase the opportunities for students to become fully active in lessons and develop the skills they require to learn both collaboratively and independently

- extend the opportunities for students to explain their thoughts in detail and justify their opinions and decisions
 - improve students’ reading and literacy skills across all subjects
 - check and test students’ understanding throughout lessons, and adjust activities or strategies when the rate of progress slows
 - consistently apply agreed approaches to the marking of students’ work providing well-defined guidance for improvement and making certain that all students follow that advice
 - consistently apply agreed approaches to managing behaviour.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by ensuring that leaders of subjects hold teachers to account for the progress of their students.
- Ensure that the high standards of safety seen across the academy are consistently applied, particularly within design and technology.
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Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- The attainment of students on entry to the academy is significantly below average. When students join the academy, they do not read as well as other students their age. Their literacy skills are below average.
- The attainment of students currently in Year 11 is below average. However, the numbers of students attaining grades of A and A* are increasing. From their starting points, rates of progress are best in Years 9 and 10. The achievement of students in Years 7 and 8 is not good because their weak literacy and numeracy skills and too much teaching that requires improvement and some teaching that is inadequate hinder their progress.
- The academy has introduced regular sessions during tutor time to develop students' reading, literacy and numeracy skills. Students are gaining confidence and are beginning to enjoy reading. The quality of literacy and numeracy development is variable because some teachers are less skilled than others at teaching these basic skills. Too few teachers systematically develop literacy skills through their subjects.
- Skills in information and communication technology (ICT) for some students are well developed. The academy's curriculum is currently being adapted to enable a greater proportion to benefit from computer-based courses.
- Students attain well in the academy's specialism of performing and visual arts and in vocational courses, health and social care, sport and ICT. Students do not achieve well in modern foreign languages or in geography. There have been some recent improvements in students' achievements in English and mathematics, although overall, these are not yet good.
- Students benefit from equality of opportunity in this academy as no groups perform consistently differently from others. Students who are known to be eligible for free school meals attain and progress as well as others in the academy, but not as well as similar students do nationally. Disabled students and those with special educational needs make similar, variable progress to other students in the academy.
- The progress of students who attend courses off site is monitored well, and they make good progress.
- Despite levels of attainment that are lower than average, a high proportion of Year 11 students have already secured places in education, employment or training for the next academic year. This is due to the high quality of care, guidance and support they receive.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Although teaching is improving it still requires further improvement because its quality is too variable. Some teachers ensure students make rapid progress in their lessons, and the quality of their teaching is outstanding. However, within the same department a very small minority of teaching can be inadequate.
- When teaching is less than good, the pace of introductions and explanations is slow. Students have few opportunities to discuss their ideas with each other and develop skills in explaining and justifying. Teachers tend to direct narrow questions to a limited number of students, and prepare materials that are appropriate for only the middle-ability group of students. In these classes, the most-able students are insufficiently challenged and less-able students do not have the support they need. Consequently, students are unclear about what they are expected to learn and how they are going to learn it.
- In the very small minority of cases where teaching is inadequate, teachers are not sufficiently skilled in testing their students' understanding or recognising when students are not learning quickly enough and, as a result, are not able to adapt their teaching to suit the needs of students.

- When teaching is good or better, students learn quickly because they enjoy their work and find topics interesting. Teachers are able to make the students think deeply about what they are learning by asking questions that require students to give carefully considered answers and explanations. All students in these lessons enjoy being challenged and the teachers' expectations of what their students can achieve are high. Relationships between students and teachers are consistently positive and productive.
- Some teachers know how to systematically improve students' literacy skills. They skilfully plan learning activities which develop student's basic skills as well as their subject specific skills. However, too few teachers currently do this well enough to rapidly accelerate student's skills across all subjects.
- The academy has recently developed and implemented a policy to help teachers assess students' work and guide students how to improve. When this is fully applied by teachers, students' learning improves because misconceptions are quickly identified and teachers can check to see if students have fully understood their teacher's guidance. This policy is not yet consistently applied by all teachers and so the effectiveness of assessment is variable.
- Student support staff work hard to ensure students who need emotional, physical, behavioural or language support feel confident and able to learn effectively. All adults who work closely with this wide range and large group of students aim to reduce their dependency on support so the students can fully integrate in lessons and enrichment activities.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

- Child protection procedures fully meet requirements. Systems and procedures to ensure safety are good throughout the academy with the exception of the design and technology department where they need to improve. There, teachers do not always model good enough routines for safety nor do they set high enough expectations of their students to safely use some items of equipment. Students, however, are currently not at risk as the headteacher has already taken decisive action to improve safety within this department.
- The behaviour of students is improving because teaching is improving. The academy has recently introduced a revised behaviour policy which is effective. This policy is closely linked to a system of rewards and sanctions which students say is very effective in motivating them to behave and to achieve well.
- The number of occasions when temporary exclusion is used as a consequence of poor behaviour is reducing. The behaviour of students who attend off-site provision is monitored and they behave well. The academy has only one recorded racist incident which was dealt with well.
- Generally, students behave well in lessons, and when teaching is good, they engage enthusiastically with their activities. Where teaching is weaker, most students tend to become passive. In the few lessons where low-level misbehaviour of a few students slows learning, teaching is weak and these teachers are ineffective in applying the academy's behavioural policy.
- Student behaviour is the biggest concern of parents, however, between classes and during social times, students move around the academy calmly, they integrate well and are polite. Students say that bullying is rare in the academy and the 'buddying' system helps them feel safe around the academy. On the few occasions when bullying does occur it is dealt with quickly and effectively. Students understand different forms of bullying.
- Attendance has also improved and it is now average. The academy has had particular success in improving the attendance of those students who tend to be persistently absent. Students are generally punctual.

The leadership and management

requires improvement

- The recently formed team of senior leaders has worked quickly and effectively to develop and implement systems that are already leading to academy-wide improvement. The overall quality of academy leadership is not yet good because the leadership skills of class teachers and subject leaders need to improve. They are keen to develop but do not yet have the skills to initiate improvements that will eliminate inadequate teaching and ensure quickly improving rates of student progress across all year groups.
 - High quality procedures for ensuring safety have not been systematically applied across all departments.
 - The academy's new system to track students' progress is very good. It enables teachers and academy leaders to quickly analyse the progress students are making compared to their expectation. Senior leaders are skilled in using this system and teachers are able to evaluate the effectiveness of their own work.
 - The academy's accurate evaluation of the quality of teaching and departmental reviews help set good developmental targets for staff and enable academy leaders to provide training which is tailored to the needs of individuals. There is a positive culture of self-improvement and support. If, however, individual teachers are not able to improve their performance, the headteacher and board of directors will use formal procedures to improve the quality of teaching.
 - The curriculum provided by the academy currently meets the needs of the majority of students through a combination of GCSEs and vocational courses. The academy is presently implementing improvements which will increase the number of students taking a qualification in ICT and in religious education.
 - The academy promotes students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. The academy's arts specialism makes a strong contribution to student's spiritual development and their understanding and appreciation of a wide range of cultures, locally and globally.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - The academy has a good board of directors. They have negotiated the change of school status to an academy very successfully and been able to attract high quality senior leaders to join the new academy. The board has recently appointed three new members which has both broadened and deepened the board's experience. It is now better able to accurately evaluate student progress, the quality of the teaching and leadership. The directors can account for the effective spending of academy income, including additional funding to support students known to be eligible for the pupil premium. The directors ensure all statutory duties are maintained, including effective systems to ensure child protection and financial probity.
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What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	139028
Local authority	Redcar and Cleveland
Inspection number	412873

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Academy converter
School category	Non-maintained
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	697
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sheila Cooper
Principal	Christine Parker
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01642 289211
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