

# Rise Carr College

Rise Carr College, Eldon Street, Darlington, DL3 0NS

**Inspection dates** 1–2 October 2013

|                                |                      |              |          |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|--------------|----------|
| <b>Overall effectiveness</b>   | Previous inspection: | Satisfactory | 3        |
|                                | This inspection:     | <b>Good</b>  | <b>2</b> |
| Achievement of pupils          |                      | Good         | 2        |
| Quality of teaching            |                      | Good         | 2        |
| Behaviour and safety of pupils |                      | Good         | 2        |
| Leadership and management      |                      | Good         | 2        |

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- On arrival, students quickly re-engage with their learning. They make good progress in English and mathematics and achieve well.
- Students make rapid progress in their social and emotional development and well-being. This prepares them well for the next stage of their education, employment or training.
- Teaching is good. Many lessons capture and hold students' interest well, because tasks are very well matched to their individual ability and needs.
- Students' behaviour is good. In lessons, students are keen to learn and exhibit often high levels of commitment and hard work.
- Students report that they feel safe and enjoy the calm, happy and friendly atmosphere. They display great pride in their achievements and those of the college.
- The high aspirations, drive and clear direction of the resolute headteacher have ensured improvement in almost all aspects, especially achievement and the quality of teaching. The strong governing body checks performance thoroughly and holds staff to account in positive ways.
- Parents are correct to highly praise the exceptional quality of care and support their children receive.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not enough teaching is inspiring and thought-provoking to ensure rapid and sustained progress, especially in mathematics.
- Demands made of students are not always high enough, such as in the accuracy and quality of their work presentation.
- Staff are not equally skilled at using questions relentlessly to check students' knowledge and understanding. Marking does not always provide well-defined steps for improvement.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed eight lessons including one lesson observed off-site at K9 Pursuits Limited. Seven of these lessons were observed alongside the headteacher. In addition, the inspector made a number of short visits to lessons to check the quality of what is provided for students and to talk to students about their views and opinions.
- The inspector held discussions with students, two members of the governing body, college staff, including leaders and managers and the college development partner.
- There were not enough responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) to make a contribution to the inspection. As a result, the views of the college's own parental surveys were taken into account. In addition, the inspector spoke to two parents on the telephone.
- The inspector observed the college's work and examined a range of documentation, including the college's records of student's current progress, records from the observation of lessons, student's books, self-evaluation and the college's improvement planning. Records relating to behaviour, racist incidents, complaints and attendance and documents relating to safeguarding were also taken into consideration.

## Inspection team

Clive Petts, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Rise Carr College, formerly known as The Phoenix Centre, is a pupil referral unit for Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 students. It provides individualised programmes of learning and support to young people who have a range of vulnerabilities and specific needs.
- Students who attend are either at risk of exclusion or have been permanently excluded from mainstream school. A very few are anxious students unable to cope in mainstream. All have complex social, emotional and health needs or have behavioural difficulties. Most students have a history of persistent absence and non-attendance.
- Currently, just under half of the students are known to be eligible for pupil premium funding. (The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children who are looked after by the local authority). None is eligible for the Year 7 catch-up pupil premium.
- All students are supported through school action plus or have a statement of special educational needs, relating to their behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. Three students are currently in the care of the local authority.
- Six students are on the roll of the college and the remainder are dual registered, remaining on the roll of their mainstream school. At the time of the inspection, there were 24 Key Stage 4 pupils and six Key Stage 3 students. All students are White British.
- When appropriate, students work with an alternative provider, K9 Pursuits Ltd, to enable the college to meet the individual needs of a student.
- Rise Carr, in addition to the hospital teaching service, forms part of the alternative provision in Darlington. The two are located on the same site. The headteacher line manages this local authority service and they share the governing body.
- The staffing structure has been reorganised since the previous inspection.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the amount of outstanding teaching to ensure students make rapid and sustained progress by:
  - raising the expectations of what students can achieve even higher, particularly in the accuracy and presentation of their work and in mathematics
  - ensuring teachers' questioning relentlessly checks students' knowledge and understanding
  - making certain teachers' written comments in students' books provide well-defined steps for improvement
  - providing even more opportunities for students to practise their reading, writing and calculating skills.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Students arrive with skills and experience at least one year behind that typical for their age. Highly effective care, help and guidance rekindle their interest in learning and good teaching ensures they achieve well in English and mathematics. They display a significant turnaround in their attendance, aspirations and willingness to work hard. Consequently, all students begin to quickly close the gaps in their attainment with those in mainstream schools.
- In 2013, all Year 11 students achieved five GCSE grades A\* to G including English and mathematics. Just under half of the students achieved five GCSE or GCSE equivalents A\* to C, with one in nine students achieving five A\* to C grades including English and mathematics. Although progress and achievement are good in both English and mathematics, progress is a little faster in English. This is because inspired teaching methods motivate students to use their skills imaginatively.
- Alternative provision, such as at K9 Pursuits, helps to foster interest, natural talent and skill well. All students achieve well and progress to education, employment or training. This included two more-able students successfully enrolling on advanced level courses at a nearby sixth form college.
- Students, who arrive in Key Stage 3 at risk of exclusion from their mainstream school, settle speedily with their often complex needs skilfully and sensitively managed by staff. Personalised programmes are thoughtfully assembled, because their abilities and needs are accurately and precisely identified at an early stage. This ensures their good progress.
- Students make good progress narrowing the gaps in their reading, writing and calculating skills with those students in mainstream schools. All groups progress equally well from their individual starting points. An increasing proportion exceeds what is expected of them for their age. This is the result of well-informed teaching and effective classroom support and help.
- Almost all students arrive with underdeveloped reading and comprehension skills. Staff work hard to encourage students to enjoy reading fluently and accurately. Students are increasingly confident and willing to talk about their current reading, such as reading the Harry Potter novels. More and more students are using reading to discover, imagine and question, enhancing the quality of their learning. Although overall progress is good, there is some variability in the extension of individual reading skills.
- Positive action to improve number and calculating skills is resulting in good progress in mathematics. Yet, opportunities are sometimes missed for students to apply their skills to solve problems in all subjects.
- Those students known to be eligible for pupil premium funding, who often start at least two terms behind their classmates in English and mathematics, systematically close their attainment gaps. Inspection evidence and college progress data reveal that current Year 11 students, including those known to be eligible for free school meals make good progress and are on course to reach attainment levels broadly in line with their classmates.
- The firm emphasis upon developing a broad range of higher level GCSE courses in the school, including GCSE physical education and sport, supported by a range of vocational options, is proving to be effective.
- On all courses there is increasing attention given to encouraging students to think for themselves, make decisions and explain their ideas and solutions. Despite enthusiastic and skilled teaching, opportunities are not always fully exploited to practise and reinforce literacy and numeracy skills in all subjects.

**The quality of teaching is good**

- Teaching is good and records and students' progress indicate this is the case over time and across the college.
- In the best lessons teachers set work that is carefully organised to capture individual interests and skilfully matched to each student's ability, needs and interests. Increasingly, teaching is stimulating and thought-provoking. Yet, this is not always the case and opportunities are sometimes missed to adopt imaginative methods that add that extra spark and excitement to learning to accelerate progress and help raise achievement higher.
- A crucial strength of teaching is the staff expertise fostering a happy and purposeful classroom atmosphere. Teachers and teaching assistants are adept at encouraging, supporting and guiding students. Consequently, relationships with staff are excellent. Good levels of independence are established, although there are times when staff do too much for students, including in mathematics, hampering their growing enthusiasm for following up their own ideas.
- Progress is fastest and achievement highest when:
  - teaching methods constantly stretch students' imagination and thinking and encourage them to find things out for themselves
  - staff use their good subject expertise to explain accurately and in great detail their ideas and solutions
  - questioning continuously checks and tests the knowledge and understanding of each student
  - opportunities are provided for students to practise essential skills in all lessons.
- In those lessons when the level of challenge and demands are a little variable:
  - methods adopted lack that essential vitality to add to interest and provoke meaningful debate
  - questioning does not challenge relentlessly students' thinking
  - expectations are not always high enough in mathematics and for the presentation and accuracy of students' work
  - teachers' marking does not consistently provide concise and clear steps for improvement.
- Staff teach reading successfully and foster an enjoyment of reading and writing. Yet, opportunities to include active, lively and fun ways to teach these skills are not promoted fully to extend the accuracy of these skills. This includes in practical subjects.
- When teaching is strongest, students are continually challenged to put their skills to good use, thinking critically and working things out for themselves. For example, considering Albert's rights when care home staff attempt to change his cracked, plastic cup for a new china cup and saucer. Highly effective use is made of specialist support to boost self-confidence and improve students' proficiency in essential skills.

**The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**

- Staff model excellent professional standards and display high levels of care in all aspects of their work. Consequently, students feel happy, safe and valued. Their good and often highly responsible and sensible behaviour is characterised by their friendly and polite responses. Students are well aware of the expectations of them for managing their own behaviour.
- The warm, friendly atmosphere established each morning by staff speaks volumes for the college's success improving students' attitudes towards each other. It contributes strongly to a climate of mutual respect. This is apparent throughout the college day. In lessons, students help and support each other well and respond positively to the firm, consistent and sensitive staff management and direction. In conversations, students describe how well looked after and trusted they are by staff.
- Students are well-informed about different forms of verbal and physical bullying. This includes the use of new technology. They do not see bullying as an issue, because they report that staff are always on hand to deal with any incidents firmly and promptly. The scrutiny of college records demonstrates that any inappropriate behaviour is infrequent. Parents indicated that the

college makes certain students are well-behaved.

- Following their arrival at the college, attendance improves significantly for almost all students. They appreciate the high level of staff encouragement and support and respond positively. Students recognise the benefits that a pattern of regular attendance and being punctual can bring. Currently, attendance is above that of similar schools with persistent absence reduced strikingly.

## **The leadership and management are good**

- The effective headteacher has galvanised staff to sustain and improve teaching and students' progress. This momentum is boosting achievement and enabling students to catch up with their peers. Leaders, managers and staff ensure the school is well placed to continue improvements.
- Senior leaders' relentless focus on improving the quality of learning has led to significant improvements, since the previous inspection. Rigorous systems check students' performance and development. Support is placed accurately where it is most needed reflecting their high aspirations to accelerate progress.
- Teaching is extremely well led and managed and has improved since the previous inspection. The quality of teaching is checked rigorously and development tips closely linked to relevant staff training. As yet, the school has a few aspects to resolve to ensure all teaching is of the same high standard.
- Staff have targets based on their performance and gains in students' progress and achievement. Salary awards are linked to the achievement of these targets.
- Students of all ages, including the potentially vulnerable and those with complex needs, are thoughtfully included in all aspects of college life. Meaningful rewards, such as earning time at lunchtime outside of the college, are appreciated and valued by students. No student is discriminated against, because the college promotes equal opportunities well. This underpins the successful pattern of reintegration of younger students back into their mainstream school.
- The good curriculum, with emphasis upon developing a relevant range of courses on site, is proving to be successful. A programme of GCSE English, mathematics, humanities, catering, physical education and sport, and health and social care is leading to year-on-year improvements in attainment. Clear progression routes are being systematically established. This includes tailoring off-site opportunities, such as at K9 Pursuits, to closely match individual interests.
- An interesting and developing range of enrichment activities, including a variety of sports, add to students' enjoyment of learning. It also boosts participation rates and reinforces the importance of adopting a healthy and interesting lifestyle. The harmonious family atmosphere makes an effective contribution to students' good spiritual, moral and social development. Increasing use of visitors and visits is adding to the richness of their cultural experiences.
- Effective and productive links are maintained with mainstream schools, the local authority and specialist support agencies, including mental health services. Highly successful collaborative working with parents and families supports students' progress and development particularly well.
- Safeguarding arrangements meet requirements, with secure practice underpinning the high quality of care and support provided for students. The college takes all reasonable steps to check that students are safe when attending off-site provision.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The insightfully led and well-informed governing body challenges and supports the college in equal measure. Its members check the quality of teaching rigorously. They review data and have an accurate view of performance and have made certain the issues from the previous inspection have been addressed. Governors manage finance shrewdly and, although not explicitly identified in the college's budget, they maintain a very close watch on the performance of those students known to be eligible for pupil premium to ensure principles are met. They make effective use of performance management to secure further improvements.

## 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

|                                |            |
|--------------------------------|------------|
| <b>Unique reference number</b> | 131629     |
| <b>Local authority</b>         | Darlington |
| <b>Inspection number</b>       | 425713     |

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

|  |                             |
|--|-----------------------------|
| <b>Type of school</b>                      | Pupil referral unit         |
| <b>School category</b>                     | Pupil referral unit         |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                 | 11–16                       |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                    | Mixed                       |
| <b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b> | 33                          |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>               | The governing body          |
| <b>Chair</b>                               | Pat Howarth                 |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                         | Kay Kelly                   |
| <b>Date of previous school inspection</b>  | 1 February 2012             |
| <b>Telephone number</b>                    | 01325 348600                |
| <b>Fax number</b>                          | 01325 348603                |
| <b>Email address</b>                       | kay.kelly@darlington.gov.uk |



Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk). If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit [www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk), or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store St  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

© Crown copyright 2013

