

Rye Hills School

Redcar Lane, Redcar, North Yorkshire, TS10 2HN

Inspection dates

5–6 November 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Students' overall achievement requires improvement because over time too few make good or better progress. This particularly applies to the most-able students and those supported by pupil premium funding, which means they have not reached the standards they should, given their starting points.
- While students reach broadly average standards in mathematics, English and history, they do not attain as well in core science and geography.
- The quality of teaching is not yet consistently good in all subjects or for the most-able students. As a result, the proportion of higher GCSE grades (A* and A) in most subjects has not been high enough over time.
- Governance requires improvement because governors do not challenge senior leaders with sufficient rigour.

The school has the following strengths

- This is a rapidly improving school. The headteacher and his senior team are passionate and energetic, and have made rapid improvements to the quality of teaching and to students' achievement.
- The progress of students with special educational needs is good.
- Students make rapid progress in developing their skills in reading.
- Tutor time is used well to support students' personal development and achievement.
- Students behave well in lessons and around the school and feel safe. They are courteous and polite to each other, staff and visitors to the school.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 30 part lessons across a range of subjects and across both key stages. Three lessons were observed jointly with senior leaders.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, other members of the leadership team, and teachers with leadership or management responsibilities. An inspector met with members of the governing body.
- Inspectors talked with students throughout the inspection. They also met with two groups of students, one group from Key Stage 3 and one group from Key Stage 4. Inspectors also listened to students in Year 7 read. A large range of documentation was examined, including school performance data, monitoring records, school improvement documents and evaluations, records of behaviour, attendance and exclusions, and a range of safeguarding documentation.
- Inspectors took account of the views of 25 parents who had responded to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View). Inspectors also took account of the views of 57 staff who returned inspection questionnaires.

Inspection team

Mark Patton, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Lynne Blakelock	Additional Inspector
Colin Scott	Additional Inspector
Barbara Waugh	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Rye Hills is an average-sized secondary school.
- The proportion of students supported at school action is well below average.
- The proportion of students supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational need is above the national average.
- The proportion of students supported by the pupil premium has more than doubled over the last three years and is now nearly twice the national average. The pupil premium is additional funding for those students who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and those students that are looked after by the local authority.
- The majority of students are of White British heritage. There are very few students from minority ethnic groups or for whom English is not their first language.
- The school's Austen Centre supports those students with autistic spectrum disorders. Students travel from across the local authority and neighbouring local authorities to access this provision.
- The school is a member of a local Trust 4 Learning. This is a formal arrangement between six secondary schools, a 3-19 special school and a number of primary schools. This arrangement enables Trust schools to share provision, and so enables students to access qualifications they may not otherwise have been able to.
- The school uses off-site educational providers from the Trust, and also other providers. These are: East Coast Training, Redcar and Cleveland Training, Redcar and Cleveland College and the local authority's EOTAS (Education Other Than At School) Eston Centre for Key Stage 3, and EOTAS Greystones for Key Stage 4.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching in those subjects in which it is not yet consistently good or better, in order to continue improvements in students' overall achievement, particularly that of the most able and those supported by pupil premium funding, by:
 - planning activities and teaching lessons that match the needs and interests of all groups of students, so that students are motivated to learn and close any identified gaps in their learning
 - ensuring that all teachers mark students' work frequently and provide students with very specific feedback that will help students to improve quickly.
- Further strengthen leadership and management by:
 - focusing school improvement plans on a narrower range of main issues that will most rapidly improve achievement in all subjects, including core science and geography
 - ensuring that governors hold school leaders more rigorously to account.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and governance may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Students' overall achievement requires improvement because despite the recent significant improvements in the overall progress they make, too many are not yet reaching the standards they should, given their starting points, by the time they leave Year 11. The achievement of the most able students and those supported by the pupil premium has also improved recently but it still lags behind that of other groups of students, particularly those who have special educational needs, who make good progress overall.
- The good recent improvements in students' achievement are exemplified by their rising standards in English and mathematics over the last year. In both subjects students' attainment is securely average.
- More students made the expected progress and more than expected progress in both English and in mathematics in 2013 compared with 2012. Reliable school tracking data and other inspection evidence indicate that these improvements in progress and standards are set to continue over the next two years. However, this better progress has not yet enabled enough students, particularly the most able, to attain the highest grades in English and mathematics.
- Students are entered for GCSE mathematics examination before the end of Year 11 only when the school and students feel they are ready and that students will achieve at least their target grade. This works well for those students who wish to go on to further education to study mathematics because they begin a bridging course after taking their examination. This gives them a good start to their post-16 mathematics education.
- The standards achieved by students in other GCSE subjects at the end of Year 11 vary from subject to subject. For example in 2012, standards in geography and core science were well below those in mathematics, history, and art and design. This inconsistency has been addressed by subject leaders with the result that this variation between subjects was reduced significantly in 2013, and school data indicate that this gap will continue to reduce.
- Pupil premium funding is used to support a range of activities which contribute to the improving achievement of students. For example, they have access to off-site providers. Students enjoy these courses because they interest them. Students achieve well in the qualifications they gain from these providers. Such off-site courses are closely monitored by school leaders and if students are not successful the provision is cancelled.
- In 2012, students known to be eligible for free school meals attained over a grade lower than their peers did in English and one-and-a-half grades lower in mathematics. Effective action by leaders has led to the gap between the attainment and progress of students known to be eligible for free school meals and other students in the school narrowing. Reliable tracking data indicate that the existing gap will be further narrowed, if not closed, over the next two years.
- The Year 7 catch-up funding is used by school leaders well to support improvements in students' literacy. For example, this additional funding supports the school's Accelerated Reader programme which has led to substantial gains in reading for students who attained below Level 4 in reading at the end of Key Stage 3.
- Breakfast Boosters for English are taught in tutor time. These help all students who have weaknesses in reading and communication to improve their skills quickly.
- Personalised support for students with special educational needs means that these students make good progress in school and achieve well compared with similar students nationally.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching is improving quickly but still requires improvement because it is not yet consistently good across the school. Additionally, teaching does not yet fully meet the needs of the most able students or those students supported by pupil premium funding. This means that students have not achieved as well as they should over time.

- Where teaching is less effective, teachers' expectations of what students can do are not high enough. The work can be too easy or too difficult because teachers do not use the school's tracking data well enough to ensure that the work matches students' abilities, and builds quickly on their prior learning. Additionally, the tasks that are planned for the most able students do not make them think hard enough or challenge them sufficiently.
- Most teachers mark students' work frequently and write comments about what students have done well. However, not all teachers write comments that make it very clear what students must do in order to improve their learning or to achieve a specific grade in their examination. Some good examples of this were seen during the inspection in English and art, but this is not consistent across all subjects.
- Some examples of good and outstanding teaching were observed in subjects such as physical education (PE), catering and music. In the very best lessons, expectations and enthusiasm are high and the work that students are asked to do develops quickly from their individual prior learning. This ensures that in these lessons students make rapid and sometimes outstanding progress.
- An example of this was observed when two students were asked to take an inspector to the best lesson in the school. On showing the inspector into a catering lesson, one of the students said, 'Mind, if you go in there it's not easy. It's really hard, but it's great!' Students were working enthusiastically on individual tasks with the excellent assistance of the school's professional chef and their teacher. They were very keen to talk about how much they had learned and the new skills they had been taught. They made outstanding progress and achieved the demanding goals they had set themselves.
- The personalised and specialist teaching for students with special educational needs, including those autistic students supported in the Austen Centre and in mainstream lessons, means that these students achieve well. Until comparatively recently, the same successful teaching and support for students in receipt of pupil premium funding has been less evident.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Students' behaviour overall is good, and sometimes it is outstanding. They move around the school calmly and are polite and helpful to visitors. The overwhelming majority of parents who completed the on-line survey believe their children are safe and happy in school, and that the school promotes good behaviour. However, sometimes students are not motivated to learn because the work the teacher has planned fails to hold their interest, meaning that very occasionally students lose concentration and become distracted, leading to some low-level misbehaviour. This is the reason why students' behaviour and safety are judged to be good rather than outstanding.
- In a good PE lesson, students were working on improving their skills in vaulting. They cooperated with each other very well in small groups, coaching one another in how to improve their skills using established success criteria. Students accepted praise and constructive criticism equally well, and made good progress during the lesson.
- Students say that they feel safe in school and they know about the possible dangers on the Internet. They say that bullying is rare in school. When it does happen they know which adults they can go to for help, and they know that the school will resolve problems quickly. Parents agree that the school deals with bullying effectively.
- Overall attendance has been broadly average for the last three years. In the past, the attendance of girls, those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and some students with special educational needs had been a concern. The school has worked successfully with parents, and used the support of the Education Welfare Officer, to tackle these issues. Now these groups of students attend as well as others.
- The school has not permanently excluded any student in the past two-and-a-half years. This is because of the flexible curriculum the school offers to those who have switched off from education, including off-site training. Also, the strong partnerships amongst the schools in the

Trust 4 Learning enable students to have a 'fresh start' at another school when this is necessary.

- Fixed-term exclusions have been falling over recent years. A temporary rise in exclusions in 2011-12 occurred when the new headteacher arrived and set the highest expectations for students at Rye Hills.
- Students cooperate well with each other in their tutor groups during tutor time. The mixed-age tutor groups, together with the type of work that students do during this time, make a good contribution to developing students' social skills. Moreover, because the academic work students do as part of the tutor time programme is personalised, this time also makes a good contribution to students' academic achievement. For example, younger students were observed working on their reading programme in a number of tutor groups while, in the same tutor groups, older students were discussing how to improve their independent learning skills.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher, supported by governors, has successfully managed significant changes in the school's staffing structure recently. These changes have made a strong contribution to improving the quality of teaching and hence improving students' achievement. Reliable school tracking data and other inspection evidence indicate that this trend of rapid improvement is set to continue.
- The headteacher, very ably assisted by a relatively new leadership team, has secured a new ethos in the school, epitomised by the school's Climate for Learning policy. Staff morale is good.
- Senior leaders have worked diligently to tackle the areas for improvement identified at the school's recent last inspection. They have had much success in most areas but will not be satisfied until all are completely met.
- Subject leaders and managers who responded to the inspection staff questionnaire unanimously praised the new systems for improving their accountability. In meetings with inspectors they said that, for example, the regular challenge meetings help them and subject teachers to focus their efforts more precisely on those things that will improve students' progress and attainment most rapidly. This has led to students' rapidly improving achievement this year.
- Leaders evaluate the work of the school accurately. They know the strengths and weaknesses in individual subjects and teachers. The school's improvement plans focus on the right things but try to do too much, too quickly. The programme of professional development and training for all staff is highly personalised. Staff who responded to the inspection questionnaire thought this was much better than previous training programmes, and that it had improved their teaching.
- The local authority has directly supported the school through its recent leadership restructure. It has also brokered support for the school's leaders, managers and teachers from other schools in the authority, and also from a nearby National Support School. This external support for the school is slowly dwindling because the skills and expertise of the staff are improving.
- The local authority has high regard for the school's inclusive ethos and, in particular, uses the school's Austen Centre as part of the authority's provision for students with a statement of special educational need for autism.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced, and is widened further because of the school's involvement in the Trust 4 Learning. The school is committed to promoting equality of opportunity. All students have equal access to all the subjects offered, including off-site learning, as well as school visits and the variety of after-school clubs and activities that are on offer. Students from the Austen Centre and those in wheelchairs join mainstream classes wherever possible.
- The school makes a strong contribution to students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through a wide range of curricular and extra-curricular activities. Some examples of this include examining class differences and moral dilemmas when visiting the theatre to see 'Blood Brothers'; opportunities to be creative in art and in musical performances; and exploring social, cultural and ethical issues through the school's link with Uganda.
- Careers education, information and guidance are promoted in a methodical way. There is a clear programme of activities throughout the school. The support and guidance given to students

increases proportionately from Year 9 onwards, as students think about option choices and future pathways into education, training or employment. Key Stage 4 students feel well-informed about their choices when they leave school, and feel ready for that next step. Only two students that left the school in the summer 2013 are not in education, employment or training. This compares extremely well with the national picture.

- The school's arrangements for safeguarding students meet all current statutory requirements, and go above and beyond requirements in some areas.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governors are very supportive of the school and have complete confidence in the new leadership and management structure that has been created.
- Governors understand the importance of improving the quality of teaching in the school and good teachers are rewarded through the school's performance management processes.
- The headteacher is the main channel of information for governors. The governing body knows that this is a weakness and is seeking training to help itself to develop a deeper, first-hand understanding of the school's performance, for example, in interpreting comparative data. Governors' understanding of additional school funding, such as the pupil premium and Year 7 catch-up, is only just developing, as is their knowledge of the impact this funding has on outcomes for students. These are weaknesses in the school's current governance.

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	111742
Local authority	Redcar and Cleveland
Inspection number	429527

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	910
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Iain Fuller
Headteacher	Neil Appleby
Date of previous school inspection	21 March 2012
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