

# Reddish Vale Technology College

Reddish Vale Road , Stockport, Cheshire, SK5 7HD

**Inspection dates** 12–13 February 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	<b>Inadequate</b>	<b>4</b>
Achievement of pupils		Inadequate	4
Quality of teaching		Inadequate	4
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Inadequate	4
Leadership and management		Inadequate	4

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

**This is a school that requires special measures.**

- Achievement is inadequate because leaders have not addressed weaknesses in the quality of teaching over time. Progress is too slow, particularly for those students with disabilities or special educational needs, those supported by the pupil premium and the most able students.
- Information about students' attainment and progress is not used sufficiently well by teachers to plan activities that match the needs of all students. The challenge provided for most able students does not often enable them to achieve higher grades. The quality and quantity of work produced by too many students is poor; marking and feedback is inconsistent and does not provide enough information for students to know how to improve their work.
- Behaviour in lessons and around the school is inadequate. Students are often indifferent about their learning. Staff do not consistently apply the school's behaviour policy and rates of exclusions are well above the national average.
- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is inadequate. The way students leave the premises is potentially dangerous as many do not consider road safety and respond inappropriately to traffic. The systems for monitoring students' attendance are weak and bullying is not always effectively addressed.
- Attendance is below the national average and is not improving, especially for specific groups of students. The number of students who are persistently absent is well above the national average.
- Leaders, including governors, have an over-generous view of the quality of the school's work. The monitoring of teaching is not robust enough; training for staff and performance management has not had an impact on improving outcomes for students.
- Governors have not ensured all students are safe and that leaders are held to account for outcomes for all students. The finances of the school have been badly managed.

## The school has the following strengths

- The new headteacher and most senior leaders are committed to improvement and are enthusiastic about addressing the weaknesses in the school.
- Teaching in humanities, the performing arts and some aspects of English, is often good or better.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 36 part-lessons. Two observations were also carried out in partnership with a member of the senior leadership team.
- Meetings were held with members of the Governing Body, the headteacher, senior leaders and heads of departments. Inspectors also met with groups of students of differing ages and abilities. Telephone conversations were also held with representatives from the local authority.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documentation, including information about students' progress and attainment, school improvement plans, monitoring documents and records related to behaviour and safeguarding. Inspectors also looked at students' books.
- Inspectors took into account the views expressed by parents through Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, where 50 responses had been registered. Inspectors also considered letters and emails sent to the team and conducted a telephone conversation with one parent.
- During the first day of the inspection, the school was operating an alternative programme, involving students in Key Stage 3 completing project work based on particular themes, such as 'carnival', and 'developing skills for learning'. Year 10 students were involved in careers guidance and Year 11 students were having additional revision lessons in English, mathematics and science.
- This inspection was carried out following concerns by Ofsted after outcomes from the 2013 summer examinations.

## Inspection team

Derek Davies, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Christine Kennedy	Additional Inspector
Bernard Robinson	Additional Inspector
Gary Kelly	Additional Inspector
Stephen Rodchester	Additional Inspector

## Full report

*In accordance with section 44 of the Education Act 2005 (as amended), Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.*

### Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized secondary school, although numbers on roll have decreased in recent years.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is above the national average and increasing.
- The proportion of students supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is slightly above the national average.
- The proportion of students eligible for support through the pupil premium is well above the national average. The pupil premium is additional funding for those students who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children of service families and those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- The school has an off-site, alternative provision situated close to the school – the 'mini-school'. Sixty-five students in Key Stage 4 attend this provision, as well as courses with Stockport College and extended work placements. The school has decided to stop this provision at the end of this school year.
- The headteacher took up post in September 2013. The school is currently undergoing a significant staffing restructure.
- The school has recently been supported by a national leader of education (NLE) from Middleton Technology College.
- Reddish Vale Technology College converted to become an academy in February 2012. When its predecessor school, also named Reddish Vale Technology College, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good.

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

- Rapidly improve the quality of teaching to ensure that all students, particularly those eligible for support from the pupil premium funding, those who have special educational needs and the most able students, achieve well, especially in English and mathematics and particularly in Key Stage 4, by:
  - using information that relates to students' progress to plan activities that match the need of all learners
  - providing appropriate support as well as much more challenge so that all students make the progress of which they are capable
  - raising the expectations of teachers as to the quality and quantity of work that should be produced by students
  - consistently providing clear guidance on how students can improve their work and making certain that students respond appropriately to that guidance

- providing more opportunities for students to think for themselves, deepen their understanding and become more enthusiastic about learning.

■ Urgently improve the safety of students, by:

- ensuring there are robust and accurate systems for tracking attendance, both at the start of the day and within lessons
- increasing students' attendance and reducing persistent absence, particularly for those who attend alternative provision, those students supported by the pupil premium and those with special educational needs
- ensuring safeguarding arrangements for those students whose circumstances make them vulnerable to bullying and discrimination, for example, and/or attending off-site provision are secure, including ensuring that students have sufficient regard for their safety when they leave the site at the end of the school day
- making certain that all groups of students, including those whose circumstances makes them vulnerable to bullying, and their parents, are confident that bullying is dealt with robustly.

■ Improve the behaviour of students in lessons and around the school and reduce exclusions by:

- encouraging students to have a positive attitude to their learning, including being punctual to the start of lessons
- ensuring that staff consistently apply the school's behaviour policy, both inside and outside the classroom.

■ Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management, including governance, by:

- using information that the school has on students' progress and outcomes more accurately in order to check and understand exactly how well the school is doing
- ensuring the procedures for checking the quality of teaching are robust and that everyone has a clear understanding of what good and outstanding learning looks like
- making certain that the performance management system is having sufficient impact on improving the quality of teaching and that pay progression for staff is robustly linked to the outcomes for all students
- making senior leaders more accountable for the outcomes of students
- ensuring governors understand data so that they can accurately check the progress of all key groups for themselves
- improving the way that governors and senior leaders check and understand the financial situation of the school.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and governance may be improved.

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

Ofsted will make recommendations on governance to the authority responsible for the school.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### is inadequate

- Achievement is inadequate because key groups of students who are currently in the school, including disabled students and those with special educational needs, those who are supported using the pupil premium and the most able students make inadequate progress in English and mathematics. The progress of these groups of students shows no immediate signs of improving. There is significant variation in students' achievement in different subjects; science, physical education and technology are particularly weak.
- The number of students in Year 11 in 2013 who achieved five or more good GCSE passes, including English and mathematics, improved. However, these improvements reflected the higher starting points for this group of students at the beginning of Year 7, rather than any substantial improvement to progress, especially the progress of students in particular groups.
- In 2013, students who were eligible for support through the pupil premium, including those known to be eligible for free school meals, made insufficient progress especially in mathematics. Those students who were known to be eligible for free school meals left school almost a grade behind their peers in GCSE English and more than a grade behind in GCSE mathematics.
- The progress of the most able students except in English is generally inadequate. Too few gain GCSEs at the highest grades in a number of subjects. Predictions for the most able in 2014 indicate that this group of students continue to underachieve with relatively few likely to gain A\* and A grades at GCSE.
- Disabled students and those with special educational needs do not achieve as well as other students in the school, especially in mathematics. Likewise, the progress made by students with special educational needs in science is too slow. The target grades set for students are not always appropriately challenging and do not create high enough aspirations, particularly for the most able students. Some students know that they are capable of more.
- The school's policy for early entry in GCSE mathematics in 2012 and 2013 prevented some students from achieving higher grades. The school has reviewed this policy to ensure more students have the opportunity to achieve A\* and A grades in the 2014 examinations.
- Students who attend the school's off-site 'mini-school' do not do well enough and achieve below what would be expected given their starting points. The curriculum for these students does not give them sufficient opportunities to gain important qualifications. For example, most students are studying for just two or three GCSE examinations.
- The promotion of equality of opportunity and prevention of discrimination are ineffective because of the significant variation in the progress of different groups of students within the school.
- The quality and quantity of work that students produce is inconsistent. Many books contain work that is too superficial and there are limited opportunities for students to produce long pieces of writing. Likewise, there are gaps, due to non-attendance, that are affecting the overall progress that students make. Presentation of work is variable, showing that students do not always have sufficient pride in their work.
- Information from the school shows that there is some improvement in the progress that students are beginning to make in Key Stage 3, although there remain significant gaps in performance in both the current Year 10 and Year 11.
- The school is using the Year 7 catch-up funding effectively to improve reading skills. Students who entered the school with reading ages well below their actual age, as a result of this additional support, make exceptional progress, as much as 14 – 27 months in just one term.

### The quality of teaching

### is inadequate

- Teaching over time is inadequate. Consequently, too many students have not made the progress

of which they are capable. This is particularly true for students who are eligible for support through the pupil premium, disabled students and those with special educational needs and the most able students. Teachers do not take sufficient account of variations in student's prior attainment when they are planning lessons and activities do not regularly motivate students.

- Learning is weak where teachers do not sufficiently plan activities that enable all students to make the progress of which they are capable. There is a one-size fits all approach, because teachers do not use the information available to match the work to students' capabilities. This often leads to work being too hard for some and too easy for others, resulting in students being bored or easily distracted.
- Expectations, particularly for the most able, are too low, because there is insufficient challenge for these students. Too often the work observed in lessons, or seen in books, does not encourage these students and others to think for themselves, to deepen their understanding and so achieve higher grades.
- Learning activities and the quality of support provided do not address the underperformance of those students eligible for support from the pupil premium funding. Misconceptions by students are not always corrected by teachers. Hence students do not always have a secure understanding of what is being taught. Questioning is sometimes too superficial, resulting in students not being challenged as much as they could be.
- Disabled students and those with special educational needs, including those with a statement of special educational needs, are not provided with work and activities that enable them to make good progress. Sometimes the work provided is too hard and learning is not broken down into manageable small steps. Teaching assistants do not have enough impact on the learning of the students that they support.
- Whilst books are marked, the quality of that marking varies between and within subjects. Comments from teachers are often too general and do not tell students about how to improve their work. When comments are more specific they are not always responded to by students, so they continue to make the same mistakes.
- Where students' learning is better, such as in some English lessons and lessons in the performing arts and in humanities, teachers have high expectations and plan work that specifically enables all students to make good and sometimes better progress. When this happens, there are excellent relationships, behaviour is often good or outstanding and students are keen and enthusiastic to learn.
- Where students are given responsibility, such as observed in a drama lesson, they work with high levels of enthusiasm, respecting each other's opinions and relishing the opportunity to learn from each other.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils are inadequate**

- The behaviour of students is inadequate. Students do not always behave well when they are moving around the school and attitudes to learning are too variable. Attendance is below the national average and the number of exclusions is well above the national average.
- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is inadequate. The safety of students in the school and in the 'mini-school' is inadequate, because the systems for checking attendance are not accurate. The school is not well equipped to produce reliable attendance data; this leads to confusion amongst some parents when they receive text alerts stating their child is not in school, when they are indeed present. Tutors and class teachers do not recognise sufficiently the importance of taking registers and being accountable for the students in their care.
- Students, despite staff supervision, do not act safely whilst they are leaving the school site. For example, they charge across the road on their bikes with little regard for traffic and road safety.
- Students who spoke with inspectors believe that racist and homophobic bullying are very rare in the school and that staff are quick to address the use of derogatory language. Some students believe that bullying issues are usually resolved. In contrast, too many students believe that the way bullying is dealt with is ineffective. A number of students stated that they had been

subjected to some form of bullying and those with circumstances that make them potentially vulnerable appear to be bullied more often than others. Additionally, just over one-third of parents believe that the school does not deal well with bullying.

- Attendance is not improving. The proportion of students who are persistently absent is double the national average. Students who are eligible for support through the pupil premium are absent too frequently, as are those who attend the 'mini-school'.
- The number of students who are excluded from school is well above the national average and is increasing. School records show the number of students excluded who are eligible for support through the pupil premium and those students who have special education needs is particularly high. This impacts on their achievement because they are not in school.
- Behaviour on corridors and outside lessons is inadequate; a significant minority of students act inappropriately and do not demonstrate appropriate attitudes to other students and adults. This behaviour was evident despite there being a high level of supervision by staff on the corridors during the inspection, indicating a lack of respect and self-discipline by some students.
- Students' attitudes to learning are not good enough and are usually dependent on the quality of teaching that they receive and the way in which the school's behaviour policy is applied. In many of the project lessons that were observed on day one of the inspection, many students were losing concentration by the end of the day, because they were bored and became indifferent about their learning.
- A significant number of staff who responded to the staff questionnaire expressed concerns about the behaviour of students and the way in which behaviour is consistently managed in the school. These concerns are supported by what inspectors observed. Parents also expressed concerns, via Parent View, where 40% disagreed, or strongly disagreed, that the school makes sure students are well behaved; indicating that behaviour over time is not good enough.
- Students generally look neat and tidy and keep their uniforms to a good standard. Classrooms are generally tidy, though some poor quality displays and inappropriate graffiti do not support the learning culture that the school is trying to establish.
- Information provided by the school indicates that punctuality at the start of the day and to lessons within the school day has improved. However, it is still not good enough.
- The school provides several opportunities for students to learn how to be safe when they are on-line. During the inspection, an assembly was observed as part of e-safety week that identified the risks with using social networks inappropriately. In this assembly, students were attentive and well behaved.

## **The leadership and management are inadequate**

- Leadership and management are inadequate because leaders have failed to secure the safety of the students and essential improvements in teaching and to students' achievement. They have not ensured that there are accurate records of students' attendance, robustly addressed issues with students' behaviour nor made sure that students leave school safely at the end of the day.
- Leaders do not have a realistic view of the school's performance. Although more rigorous systems have been introduced for tracking the progress of students, leaders have not made enough use of information about students' attainment and progress to inform their view of the school's performance. The targets for students' progress are insufficiently challenging. Staff, including leaders and managers, do not always have a clear understanding of what good and outstanding teaching and learning look like. Additionally, leaders and managers do not recognise the link between the quality of teaching and its impact on students' progress, both within the lesson and over time. Consequently, their judgements on the quality of teaching are over-generous.
- Subject leaders are becoming much more responsible for the standards within their department and improving the quality of teaching, so that outcomes are improved for all students. Senior and subject leaders have carried out reviews of the different departments but the judgements on how well each is performing are sometimes over generous and do not take full account of the

progress of key groups.

- Leadership of the provision for disabled students and those students with special educational needs is inadequate. There is insufficient focus on monitoring how well these students are doing. Likewise, the additional support for these students is not of a high enough quality and is not always appropriately deployed. Therefore, it does not have sufficient impact on improving outcomes for students.
- The curriculum, especially within the 'mini school', does not enable enough students to gain the qualifications they ideally need for the future. Leaders are in the process of changing the qualifications studied by students attending the 'mini-school'. The curriculum does, however, provide opportunities for students' cultural development, such as in Year 7, where students explored the cultural significances of carnivals throughout the world. It also provides guidance that enables students make appropriate choices for the next stages in their education.
- The whole-school leadership of reading, writing and communication demonstrates a clear view of how improvements are to be made. The work of leaders in this area is having an impact on standards of literacy within Key Stage 3. The school plans to develop this approach for the development of numeracy.
- The school should not seek to appoint newly qualified teachers.
- The relationship with the local authority has improved since the appointment of the new headteacher. Although the local authority recognises that achievement in the school is a concern, they have not yet been able to influence outcomes for students. The report from the National Leader of Education (NLE) also clearly identifies the issue of significant gaps in outcomes for key groups and the impact of the 'mini-school'. In contrast, the school commissioned another external review, which does not recognise how the poor outcomes of key groups have a significant and detrimental impact on the school's effectiveness.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors have not held senior managers sufficiently accountable. Those governors who are new to the governing body are improving the way in which the governing body monitors the progress of students. Nevertheless, governors' explicit understanding of how well students are doing, especially regarding checking the outcomes for different groups of students, is still not as secure as it should be.
  - Financial resources made available to the school have not been effectively managed. Governors have now put in a plan to reduce the budget deficit. The way in which the pupil premium funding is spent is not properly monitored because this additional funding has not had the desired effect on outcomes for those students who are eligible for such support.
  - Governors have adopted a new performance management system, linked to Teachers' Standards. However, this is not having sufficient impact on improving the quality of teaching and any increases in salary for staff are not robustly linked to the outcomes for students.
  - Inaccurate systems for checking on attendance mean that the Governing Body has not ensured the safeguarding and security of students.



## 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>	137885
<b>Local authority</b>	Not applicable
<b>Inspection number</b>	440914

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1,136
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Andy Verdeille
<b>Headteacher</b>	Colin Short
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Telephone number</b>	0161 477 3544
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