

# Redcar Academy – A Community School for the Performing and Visual Arts

Kirkleatham Lane, Redcar, North Yorkshire, TS10 4AB

**Inspection dates** 17–18 June 2015

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- GCSE results in 2013 and 2014 showed that students had underachieved. In both years, there was a large gap between the performance of disadvantaged students supported by pupil premium and other students.
- Leaders and managers have not acted sufficiently effectively or swiftly to raise the quality of education that the academy provides from requiring improvement to good.
- Recent improvements in teaching have not yet secured progress in English and mathematics in line with national expectations by Year 11, especially for lower ability students.
- Teaching still requires further improvement because it does not always ensure that lower ability students make good progress.
- Homework provision for lower ability students does not lead to sufficient improvements in their work.
- The attendance of students, especially those supported by pupil premium funding, is too low.
- The marking of students' work is of inconsistent quality. Some students do not always receive sufficiently detailed feedback on their work.
- The occasionally poor conduct of students in lower ability groups restricts the learning of others.

### The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher, directors and managers at all levels are now ensuring that the academy is improving in response to initiatives to improve the quality of teaching and students' achievement.
- The most-able students are making good progress.
- The tracking system accurately measures the progress that students are making.
- The school is overcoming the legacy of previous underachievement and many students are catching up towards national average rates of progress.
- In most lessons, students behave well and try to do their best.
- Provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong.
- There are effective arrangements to keep students safe.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 24 lessons, including six jointly with senior managers.
- Inspectors looked at a wide range of students' written work, especially in English, mathematics, science and modern languages. They held meetings with the headteacher, senior and subject managers, members of staff, groups of students, representatives of the board of directors, a representative of the local authority, and a headteacher from another local school.
- Inspectors looked at a wide range of documents, including the school's view of its performance, improvement-planning, records of students' progress, safeguarding procedures and incident logs.
- Inspectors took account of 18 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and questionnaire responses from members of staff.

## Inspection team

John Paddick, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Graeme Clarke

Additional Inspector

David Pridding

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Redcar Academy is smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- The academy is part of the Trust4Learning, which is collaboration between several local schools.
- Most students are White British.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs is above the national average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged students, those supported through pupil premium, is well above the national average. The pupil premium is additional funding for students who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those looked after by the local authority.
- A small number of students attend EOTAS (Education other than at school) full time for basic skills and GCSE courses. Redcar and Cleveland College provides a range of vocational courses for a small number of students in Year 11. Small numbers of students attend Bydales School in Marske or Rye Hills School in Redcar part time for GCSE option subjects in engineering, sociology or psychology.
- The academy meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for students' attainment in English and mathematics by the end of Year 11.

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

- Raise the overall quality of learning over time from requiring improvement to at least good by:
  - quickly implementing the academy's plans to focus more of its resources on improving the attendance of persistent absentees so that they can make much better progress than they do currently
  - reviewing the teaching of lower ability groups to ensure that they make good progress
  - ensuring that all students, especially those of lower ability, complete sufficient homework to enable them to extend learning and master the topics that they study
  - finally eliminating the small amount of poor conduct in the academy so that all students feel that they can study without distraction
  - ensuring that all members of staff follow the academy marking policy so that students in all subjects have a clear idea how to improve their work and have the opportunity to do so.
- Improve leadership and management by ensuring, with urgency, that an even more effective focus on teaching and achievement raises both from requiring improvement to good, by producing an action plan with timescales and ensuring that its targets are met.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management requires improvement

- Leaders and managers have a gap to close between where the academy wants students to be and where they are now in terms of attainment, which is still not high enough. Measures taken by the academy to improve attendance have so far only been only partially successful and this has contributed to attainment not being as high as it should be.
- The leadership and management of behaviour throughout the academy, adherence to the agreed marking policy and provision of sufficient homework for all students still require some improvement. These areas of the academy's provision are not yet good.
- Governors and leaders have considered carefully how to provide a curriculum which best fits the needs of students of all abilities. Consequently, students have the opportunity to choose from a wide range of options in Years 9, 10 and 11. The curriculum arrangements they have made have been partially successful. For example, the programme for disabled students or those who have special educational needs enables them to make adequate progress while the most-able students are doing well. There is still a considerable amount of work to do in ensuring that lower ability students make good progress.
- Nevertheless, the academy is improving because the headteacher, senior team and governors have focused more, with some success, on improving behaviour and the quality of teaching, and raising students' achievement, particularly in English and mathematics. Most members of staff are keen to improve their classroom skills and play their part in ensuring that the quality of education continues to improve. Students say that the academy is improving and that they now have a far better idea about their targets and the progress they are making.
- The academy now has good procedures for measuring how well it is doing, so managers know what is going well and where improvements still need to be made. The very good system for measuring students' attainment and progress is a key feature, which enables managers to respond to slippage or any underachievement as soon as it becomes evident.
- Better management of teaching coupled with good quality professional development for teachers and their assistants is increasing the amount of good classroom practice. The strong promotion of students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is firmly embedded into the curriculum in all year groups. Students learn all about democracy and the way that people from different cultures make up the population of the UK. They have a good understanding of the differences between these cultures and their distribution across Britain.
- Equal opportunities have a high profile in the academy's work. There have been notable successes in the partial closing of performance gaps between disadvantaged and other students through increasingly successful use of pupil premium funding. Leaders acknowledge that there is still work to do in respect of students of lower ability who are not yet progressing as quickly as other students. In the academy, relationships between staff and students are good and there is no evidence of discrimination of any description.
- Middle managers, several of whom are relatively recently appointed, play their part in the drive for improvements well. They are keen to ensure that their subject results at GCSE continue to rise and that the tracking data on students' progress that they supply to senior managers is even more accurate.
- The academy is well supported by the local authority through the provision of advice and guidance on how to make further improvements. Frequently, this incorporates assistance from successful local schools.
- Arrangements for the safeguarding of students meet statutory requirements and are effective. The academy monitors the progress, attendance and behaviour of students who also attend other establishments well.
- It is to the academy's credit that that almost all students transfer either to sixth form college, further education or directly to the world of work when they leave Year 11. This is because they receive very good careers guidance.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governance has become increasingly effective over the past year. Governors play a full part in the formulation of audits and action plans and keep up to date in relation to the progress made. They understand what the academy is doing to educate its students about tolerance and the cultures and ethnic minorities that make up the UK.
  - Governors fully understand why the academy's recent GCSE results have not been good enough and have a good grasp of the importance of the current student tracking data provided for them.
  - As a group, governors have a good understanding of the current quality of teaching the academy provides and how it uses the pupil premium funding. They challenge managers when appropriate,

ensure that performance management arrangements are effective and that any salary progressions are fully merited.

## The behaviour and safety of pupils

## requires improvement

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of students requires improvement. Although there have been recent improvements, some members of staff, parents and students still have concerns about it. Behaviour in lessons is often good but there is still a small but significant amount of poor conduct interfering with learning, especially in lower ability groups.
- In the great majority of lessons, students conduct themselves well and fully respect their teachers and classroom assistants. It is when teaching fails to interest them that students become restless and inattentive.
- When moving around the site and socialising, students normally conduct themselves in a mature and sensible manner. Evidence strongly suggests that the good behaviour of most students observed during the inspection is typical of the day-to-day life of the academy and that it is only a small minority of students who let themselves down.
- Exclusions for poor behaviour are low and the use of internal exclusion is reducing from the relatively high levels it reached following the introduction of the new code of conduct.

### Safety

- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is good. Students say that they feel safe in the academy and know where to get help when they need it. They fully recognise the efforts that members of staff will make to ensure that personal issues do not interfere with their education. Site security is very good and there are robust checks on the identities of all adults who have access to students.
- Students know how to keep themselves safe and understand potential risks to their health and welfare, for example alcohol, smoking, gambling and drugs. They understand that there are different types of bullying, both physical and verbal. They say that instances of bullying are relatively rare and that they are confident members of staff would intervene effectively should they occur. The academy's records confirm that students' views are accurate and that effective action is taken.
- The academy checks carefully to ensure that students who leave the site for alternative provision are kept safe, attend regularly and behave well.
- Attendance is below average and the proportion of students who are regularly absent is above average. The academy recognises that levels of absence are affecting its targets for students' attainment and progress. New plans have recently been formulated to address the issue by allocating more staff time to contacting families with whom it has so far been more difficult to communicate.

## The quality of teaching

## requires improvement

- There have been recent improvements in the quality of teaching but the 2014 GCSE results show that it has not been consistently good over time. The legacy of underachievement that is still evident in the assessment data of several groups confirms this.
- Not all teachers mark students' work in accordance with the academy policy. This is intended to identify errors and ask for students to respond to enable them to master topics and consolidate and extend learning. It means that gaps in work are sometimes not challenged and key errors not being identified.
- The setting of homework lacks structure. The result is that many of the middle ability and the most-able students receive regular homework, which consolidates and extends learning, while the lower ability students have far less expected of them.
- In mathematics, not all teachers challenge untidy geometrical and trigonometrical diagrams or graphs drawn with a pen. If students at GCSE replicate this practice, they will lose marks and achieve less than they otherwise might.
- The teaching of literacy, reading and mathematics is improving for all students as it is a major focus in the academy's development programme. It still has some way to go if it is to overcome the legacy of previous underachievement and enable all groups of students to achieve well over time.
- Teaching is having a stronger impact on learning and achievement than previously because academy managers monitor classrooms and written work rigorously. Instances of weaker teaching trigger bespoke

support packages, so there is a constant upward trend. However, leaders recognise that there is still work to be done in ensuring that teachers motivate lower ability students to do well.

- An improving quality of education for students means that the large majority of teaching is now supporting much better rates of progress, particularly in English and mathematics, where the use of pupil premium funding to create smaller teaching groups enables disadvantaged students to have more individual attention. In many instances, teaching is enabling the students to achieve more highly than previously and substantially close the gap on national expectations for attainment.
- Teachers normally manage students well and generate an atmosphere for learning where students can answer in class, write and discuss their work without distraction. Sometimes, good teaching enables students to reach very high standards. For example, in a higher ability group in mathematics in Year 10, students have very good numerical and algebraic skills and can apply the sine and cosine rules to calculate angles and distances in scalene triangles. This group, who enjoy mathematics because teaching really motivates them, are all on track to achieve the highest grades at GCSE.

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- Students enter the academy with attainment that is below average. When they join Year 7, they do not read or write as well as typical students of their age. The 2013 GCSE results reflected considerable underachievement for many groups of students. In 2014, the academy only just met the government's minimum expectation for attainment. Lower and middle ability students underachieved while higher ability students and those who were disabled or had special educational needs tended to match national progress rates for their groups.
- In 2014, there was a large gap between the English and mathematics GCSE performance of disadvantaged students and other students. In English, the gap between disadvantaged students and other students in the academy was a whole GCSE grade; between these students and other students nationally the gap was a grade-and-a-half. In mathematics, the gaps were a grade-and-a-half and two grades respectively. From their starting points in Year 7, disadvantaged students of all abilities made less progress than other students in the academy and nationally.
- Effective use of the academy's pupil premium funding and Year 7 catch-up funding to create smaller classes and to provide individual tuition has meant that the gaps in performance in English and mathematics between disadvantaged and other students are disappearing quickly for those who attend regularly. It is the persistent absentees who are doing substantially worse than other students.
- Although the attainment of the current Year 10 and 11 students is still below average, it is considerably better than standards reached in 2014. Reliable academy data is showing a substantially improving picture. Predictions for GCSE in 2015 and 2016 are much better and there is strong evidence to show that the considerable proportion of students in all year groups previously not making expected progress in English and mathematics is reducing substantially in response to much better teaching. The school's predictions from its assessment data on students have been moderated and verified externally, and the scrutiny of students' work carried out during the inspection confirms an improving picture.
- The most-able students are doing well. Their work is extensive, set out well and of a high standard. Frequently, in Years 10 and 11, it is consistent with the highest grades at GCSE. Disabled students and those who have special educational needs are making good progress in Years 7 and 8, but it is more variable and broadly average for the group as a whole in Years 9 to 11.
- Students demonstrate generally good skills with information and communication technology because they are used to using computers widely in many subjects that they study.
- Students attain well in the academy specialism of visual and performing arts and those who follow vocational courses at college make generally good progress to achieve worthwhile qualifications. Students who attend EOTAS develop personal skills well and tackle with some success a wide range of GCSE courses. The small numbers who attend Bydales and Rye Hills schools for extra option subjects achieve in line with national averages in them.

## 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>	139028
<b>Local authority</b>	Redcar and Cleveland
<b>Inspection number</b>	462211

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

<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>	590
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	David Gallagher
<b>Headteacher</b>	Christine Parker
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	19 June 2013
<b>Telephone number</b>	01642 289211
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