



Redcar Community College

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number 111755
LEA Redcar and Cleveland

Inspection number 274855
Inspection dates 5 - 6 May 2005
Reporting inspector Gillian Salter-Smith

Inspection deemed to have been carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996 according to section 12(3) of the same act.

Type of School	Comprehensive	School address	Kirkleatham Lane
School category	Community		Redcar
Age range of pupils	11-16		TS10 4AB
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01642 289211
Number on roll	897	Fax number	01642 489202
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs S D Cooper
Date of previous inspection	30 October 2000	Headteacher	Mr S Rees

Age group	Published	Reference no.
11 - 16	May 2005	274855

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Introduction

The inspection was a pilot of the new arrangements for inspection announced by Ofsted in its consultation paper of February 2004. It was carried out with the support and co-operation of the staff of Redcar Community College and of the local education authority.

The inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors.

Description of the school

This is an average size community school in Redcar. The school has a high proportion of children who are entitled to free school meals and a large number who have special needs. The school population is relatively stable, there are a few pupils of ethnic minority background, a handful of refugees and asylum-seekers and a small number of children are looked after by authorities other than their own families. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school is well below average.

The school became a Full Service Extended School in October 2003 – a specialist visual and performing arts centre providing many community services and activities. Since then it has gained specialist status for Visual and Performing Arts. There is a designated unit for 25 pupils with moderate learning difficulties and a unit to support pupils at risk of exclusion known as 'SID's Place'. The school has gained Arts Mark, Healthy Schools and Investors in People awards and achieved DfES Award in 2003. The school has experienced difficulties in recruiting staff.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Although providing an acceptable standard of education, the school nevertheless has serious weaknesses in pupils' standards and progress in Years 7 to 9, and in mathematics across the school; there is inadequate teaching in these areas.

The school sees itself as better than this. Though the school has made many improvements, in coming to their view senior leaders have not taken enough account of how much progress pupils make, especially in Years 7 to 9, and the quality of teaching they experience.

In Years 10 and 11, a predicted rise in the 2005 GCSE results should see the school back on its upward trend following a dip in results in 2004.

The care, guidance and support for individual pupils are good. The school works well in partnership with local schools and a wide range of agencies to ensure that every pupil, whatever their background, special needs or circumstances is well supported. Though most pupils enjoy coming to school and want to do well, poor attendance adversely affects the progress of a significant minority. Pupils' behaviour is satisfactory.

The headteacher envisages the school as central to life in the community. The school's work as a Full Service Extended School is outstanding. The recently opened unit, SID's Place, is having an immediate impact on reducing exclusion and improving attendance of a significant minority of pupils. There is a strong commitment to raising standards and improving teaching and learning. Many features have improved since the previous inspection and there is the capacity for more. The recently appointed senior management team has not yet had sufficient time to bring about improvement in some weak areas. Expenditure per pupil is average and value for money is satisfactory.

Most parents responding to surveys of their views are satisfied with the school. A few have concerns about pupils' behaviour, the effect of supply teaching and whether the school listens to their views.

Grade: 4

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards and achievement, especially in Years 7 to 9 and in mathematics across the school;
- Improve rates of attendance and pupils' attitudes towards learning;
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning, particularly in Years 7 to 9 and in mathematics;
- Identify and improve weaknesses in teaching and learning more quickly.

Achievement and standards

Overall standards are well below average throughout the school. Based on the most recent test results, standards in Year 9 were very much lower than those seen nationally and in schools that serve similar areas. The school did not meet its challenging targets. Taking account of the school's most recent teachers' assessments there is evidence that standards are improving in science, but not enough in English and mathematics. The school recognises that just less than thirty per cent of pupils in Year 9 and one in five pupils in Year 8 are underachieving. Inconsistency in the quality of teaching, staffing difficulties, low rates of attendance by a significant minority of pupils and former weak subject leadership are factors that have contributed to inadequate progress. Transition classes in Year 7, made up of pupils considered by the school as likely to have difficulty settling in, are having a very positive effect on pupils' progress and are raising standards. Pupils in these classes are taught by one teacher across a range of subjects.

There was an upward trend in GCSE results up to 2003. They dipped in 2004 when the results were well below the national figure and well below those attained by pupils in similar schools. The school did not meet its challenging targets. Higher attaining and average attaining pupils did not achieve as well as they could. Based on teachers' predictions for 2005, standards appear to be rising in most subjects except mathematics where standards remain low. The school is set to reach its targets and regain its upward trend. The improved choice of courses at age 14 is helping to meet individual needs. Underachieving pupils are being targeted for additional support, as are higher attaining pupils. Evidence suggests that the proportion of pupils gaining A* or A grades will improve. Pupils with special educational needs, those learning English as an additional language and those in public care make good progress because they are well supported and tasks, activities and courses are matched to their needs.

The school evaluates pupils' achievement as satisfactory but this does not take enough account of the limited progress made in Years 7 to 9 and in mathematics throughout the school.

Grade: 4

Personal development and well-being

The school evaluates pupils' personal development as good, but the inspection evidence demonstrates that it is satisfactory with some strengths and clear areas for improvement. Attendance is well below average and, though improving through the school's strenuous efforts, it is a significant factor in holding back pupils' progress. Most pupils are willing to learn, but many do not display a great deal of enthusiasm for learning.

Pupils' spiritual development is underpinned by a good programme of religious education and good opportunities in expressive arts and English. Moral and social issues are well taught so that pupils know right from wrong. The school is working towards widening pupils' understanding of those who come from different cultures and backgrounds, but more could be done to develop pupils' understanding of other cultures in this country. A very small minority demonstrates racist attitudes towards pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds. Pupils develop a sound understanding of how to develop a healthy lifestyle. The well planned personal, social, health and citizenship curriculum emphasises health related issues successfully. Some pupils show good levels of care and concern for one another, for example where older pupils take care of younger pupils in the form groups.

Grade: 3

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

The school judges the quality of teaching and learning to be satisfactory but evidence showed teaching to be inadequate overall. It is inconsistent and does not result in enough progress in Years 7 to 9 and in mathematics. Senior leaders are aware of inconsistencies and action is being taken to support or eliminate weaknesses.

In most lessons, teachers establish good relationships and manage pupils' behaviour well. Consequently, lessons proceed according to plan and pupils make reasonable progress. Teachers know their subjects well enabling them to set challenging and achievable tasks. Information and communication technology (ICT) is being used well to support learning. However, in lessons where not enough learning takes place, tasks are not challenging enough and the pace of learning is slow. Lessons lack a clear structure and pupils are not always sure of the purpose of activities, or how much they have achieved in a lesson. Tasks are not always well matched to pupils' needs, so higher attaining pupils are not challenged. Teachers do too much for the pupils and do not encourage them to find things out for themselves.

Recently introduced systems of assessment and target setting are used well, for example, in art and design, Year 10 English and Year 11 food technology. In these lessons pupils know how well they are doing, have clear targets and know what steps they have to take to reach them. In other subjects, information about progress is not shared with pupils and so they are not as clear about how well they are doing or how to improve.

Pupils with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language are identified early and receive good support to enable them to make good progress.

Grade: 4**Curriculum and other activities**

Inspectors agree with senior managers that the school offers a satisfactory curriculum with some good features. Specialist Arts College status has enabled pupils to achieve well in drama and expressive arts. The recently broadened range of optional courses at age 14 includes many vocational courses and well-planned work-related learning. Most pupils find courses that interest them and suit their needs, and the numbers going on to further education or training have increased. A wide range of extra-curricular activities is provided in expressive arts and sports in particular. Pupils enjoy these activities but the numbers involved are not always high. The statutory requirement to provide pupils with the opportunity to learn a modern foreign language is not met for all pupils in Years 8 and 9 where the school has made the decision to offer alternative courses aimed at improving achievement in basic skills.

Grade: 3**Care, guidance and support**

Inspectors agree with the school that the care, guidance and support given to pupils, many of whom have complex home circumstances, are good so that pupils grow in self-esteem and can benefit from the school's provision. The pastoral system through form groups, the work of learning mentors, the provision for pupils in the special unit designed to help pupils overcome barriers to learning, are all making a good contribution to pupils' well-being and progress. As a result, behaviour and attendance are improving and the number of exclusions is reducing. Pupils receive good information and guidance for their futures through the programme of personal and social education, the careers service and well-planned work experience and work-related learning opportunities. Child protection arrangements are in place. Health and safety procedures are adequate but provision for first aid needs improving.

Grade: 2**Leadership and management**

The school judges leadership and management to be good, but this does not take enough account of their effect on pupils' progress and achievement. The inspection team found leadership and management to be satisfactory.

The headteacher, ably supported by senior leaders, provides clear leadership that is well focused on developing the school as a vital service in the community. The school aims to support families and individuals, and promote personal development and achievement for all. Much success has been achieved in realising this ambition, in particular through the success of the Full Service Extended School which makes an excellent contribution to the lives of many families and people in the community. The school's success in implementing many initiatives aimed at supporting pupils, for example: the work of learning mentors; the re-organisation of the pastoral system; the development of the work of behaviour specialists with pupils in SID's Place; the success of the transition classes in Year 7 and the primary classes for gifted and talented pupils on Saturday mornings shows a strong focus on improvement. Improvement is also evident in the positive effect of specialist status for Visual and Performing Arts on raising standards in drama and expressive arts.

The recently appointed senior leadership group is helping to bring about improvement at a rapid rate, working to a well focused development plan. Where initiatives have had time to be taken on by staff across the school then there are clear signs of success, for example, in the development of positive behaviour management. More recent initiatives such as the introduction of a whole school approach to track pupils' progress, use of assessment information and development of teaching and learning have not yet had time to have a significant effect on weak areas of the school. The performance management of staff is rigorous and has recently been linked to the school's priorities. Self-evaluation is not fully embedded and is not focused enough on outcomes for pupils. However, the school regularly surveys parents' and pupils' views and takes action as a result.

Governors know the school well through plenty of direct involvement and good information received from senior leaders. They hold the school to account well, for example, through rigorous performance management arrangements and close financial control. Their duty to fulfil statutory requirements is not fully upheld; the daily act of collective worship is not fully in place; and not all pupils in Years 8 and 9 learn a modern foreign language.

The school has had difficulty recruiting staff in key areas and to posts of responsibility, in particular in mathematics, which has had an adverse effect on pupils' progress. Good recruitment through the Graduate Teacher Training scheme has helped to raise the overall profile of teaching. A committed teaching staff is complemented by learning mentors, teaching assistants and other support staff.

Grade: 3

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INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Key to judgements: Grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate.	School Overall	
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OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	4	
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	N/A	
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	4	
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Y	
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Y	

ACHIEVEMENT AND STANDARDS

How well do learners achieve?	4	
The <i>standards</i> reached by learners	4	
How well learners' make <i>progress</i> , taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	4	
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT AND WELL-BEING

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3	
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3	
The behaviour of learners	3	
How well learners enjoy their education	4	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3	
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community.	3	
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3	

THE QUALITY OF PROVISION

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	4	
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3	
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	
How well does the provision promote the well-being of learners?	2	

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3	
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	4	
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Y	

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	Yes/No/NA
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Y
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Y
Learners are taught about sexual health risks	Y
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Y
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe.	Yes/No/NA
Procedures for Child Protection meet the requirements of <i>Working Together to Safeguard Children</i>	Y
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Y
How well learners enjoy and achieve	Yes/No/NA
Support is given to learners with poor behaviour and attendance	Y
Learners' personal and academic development are monitored	Y
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	Yes/No/NA
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Y
Learners, individually and collectively, are consulted when key decisions affecting them have to be made and their views are listened to	Y
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Y
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	Yes/No/NA
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Y
Learners have opportunities to develop their enterprise and financial skills, and work in teams	Y
Education and training for all learners in 14-19 is co-ordinated to give experience of work based learning	Y

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Redcar Community College
Kirkleatham Lane
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9 May 2005

Dear Pupils

Many thanks for the welcome that you gave to the inspectors. We appreciated the opportunity to talk to you in lessons and around the school, and to see your school council in action. We looked at the survey the school had carried out on your views.

I have listed below what the inspection team found to be the best features of your school and what needs most improvement.

Main strengths

- Your school works hard to take care of and support you, whatever your age, background or ability. They do a great deal to help you to feel safe and happy and most of you are ready to learn. This includes the positive experiences some of you have in SID's Place.
- The Specialist Status for Visual and Performing Arts is helping you to achieve well in these areas and to meet and work with pupils from other schools.
- The Full Extended School Service in the Compass Centre is helping you and your families in many different ways.

Improvements are needed in these areas

- In Years 7, 8 and 9, you do not make as much progress as you could.
- You do not do as well as you could in mathematics.
- The school's checks on teaching and how well you are learning have not led to improvement quickly enough in these areas.
- Not enough of you attend school regularly and some of you are not enthusiastic about learning.

Yours sincerely

Gillian Salter-Smith
Lead Inspector