



Rye Hills School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 111742
LEA Redcar and Cleveland
Inspection number 278765
Inspection dates 7 December 2005 to 8 December 2005
Reporting inspector Janet Palmer

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

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|------------------------------------|--------------------|---------------------------|------------------------------|
| Type of school | Secondary | School address | Rye Hills School Redcar Lane |
| School category | Community | | Redcar |
| Age range of pupils | 11 to 16 | | TS10 2HN |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed | Telephone number | 01642 484269 |
| Number on roll | 1190 | Fax number | 01642 484961 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body | Chair of governors | Peter Rodda |
| Date of previous inspection | 1 February 2000 | Headteacher | Hamish Joyce |

| Age group | Inspection dates | Inspection number |
|-----------|--------------------------------------|-------------------|
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by a team of two of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Rye Hills School is a mixed 11 to 16 comprehensive housed in new, purpose built accommodation: there is a higher than average student population. The students are mostly white. There are a very small number of refugees and asylum seekers. The students come from a range of social backgrounds with approximately half from relatively deprived areas. The number eligible for free school meals is slightly above the national average. The school was designated a Specialist Sports College in September 2005.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Rye Hills School is providing an adequate education for its students. Standards and achievement are satisfactory although the progress made by some groups of students, particularly the more able, is not as rapid as it could be. The personal development of students is also satisfactory. Attendance and student behaviour around the school is good. Behaviour in lessons is usually good, although occasionally it is unsatisfactory and disrupts learning. The social and moral development of the students is satisfactory but their spiritual and cultural development is lacking in important respects.

A range of initiatives, many of which are linked to specialist status as a Specialist Sports College, have been introduced to raise standards and improve teaching and learning. These are beginning to take effect but the overall management and co-ordination of the developments is not yet effective enough to secure maximum impact. Not all staff demonstrated a shared understanding of the characteristics of good teaching, and practice is variable. Overall teaching and learning are satisfactory.

Arrangements for the support and guidance of students are sound with the exception of academic monitoring. Although pupils with specific learning difficulties are often well-supported by specialist teachers, some pupils with learning needs do not receive consistently good quality support.

The school has made satisfactory progress on the issues identified in the last inspection.

The leadership has a reasonably accurate grasp of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The capacity for improvement is satisfactory, however, the school has yet to secure a coherent approach to improvement planning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure the vision and overall priorities for improvement are clearly articulated and understood by all stakeholders.
- Ensure that all students, particularly the more able, are sufficiently challenged in their learning.
- Ensure the personal and academic needs of all students are being addressed in a sympathetic and sensitive way.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning, including increased opportunities for active and independent learning.
- Implement plans to improve the use of assessment data in order to target support for students and raise standards.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

The inspectors agree with the school's view that overall achievement and standards are satisfactory. The pattern of student performance over the past few years has been

very variable and in 2005, while Key Stage 3 results improved, general certificate of secondary education (GCSE) results fell.

The overall attainment of the students when they arrive at the school is around the national average, with some variation between subjects and year on year.

In 2005, the standards attained by students in the core subjects by the end of Year 9 was in line with the national average representing satisfactory achievement overall. This was a marked improvement on the previous year's results when a significant number of more able students did not achieve well enough in English and science. The achievement of the more able in mathematics was satisfactory. Teachers' assessments of information and communications technology (ICT) in Year 9 showed a marked improvement in standards in 2005.

The 2004 GCSE results were in line with the national average and represented satisfactory achievement overall although the progress made by some groups of students, notably higher ability girls, was less than satisfactory. The 2005 results showed a fall in the number of students achieving five good passes. This partly reflected the lower ability profile of the year group.

There is some variation in the achievement of different groups of students. The achievement by students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly satisfactory.

The school has recognised that standards and achievement in the school are too variable and need to improve across the board. It has put in place a number of strategies to address underachievement, most notably to improve the use made of student data. Some of the strategies are beginning to have a positive impact but at present these are not co-ordinated and integrated sufficiently and not enough attention is being given to improving the performance of more able students.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Students' personal development and well-being is satisfactory. The school works hard to ensure that students attend regularly and in 2004 attendance levels rose to be in line with the national average. Most students interviewed said they enjoy coming to school and attendance in lessons is good. Overall, they feel that bullying between students has reduced and is tackled directly when brought to the attention of appropriate staff.

Behaviour observed in most lessons was satisfactory but in some lessons a minority of students misbehave and disrupt the learning of others. A significant minority of students and parents have expressed concerns about behaviour in Year 9.

Students understand how to eat healthily and are encouraged to do so by the school. However, despite this, the take up of less healthy options is still popular. Through the citizenship programme students are made aware of the dangers to health from smoking and the abuse of alcohol and drugs. The newly achieved Specialist Sports College status is seen as a way of further encouraging health and well-being.

The school council representatives have made a positive contribution to the life of the school community, through having the opportunity to decide on the new caterers; and supporting the introduction of CCTV to eliminate vandalism. They do, nonetheless, consider their impact to be limited, and it should be noted that they do not represent the full range of pupil groups at the school. Of the parents that expressed a view, almost half thought that the school did not take account of children's views.

Whilst moral and social provision is adequate, there are insufficient opportunities for students to gain experience of cultural diversity within and outside the curriculum and there is little emphasis on spiritual development.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. The best lessons were well planned with challenging and appropriate objectives. In these lessons the students were often engaged in some elements of active, collaborative learning and teachers demonstrated good subject knowledge. Work was set at levels suited to students' needs and resources were used to good effect. As a result students were keen and responsive and made good progress.

However, in some lessons which were satisfactory overall, the progress of some students was limited by unclear and undifferentiated learning objectives, a restricted range of teaching and learning opportunities and lack of pace. These lessons were characterised by the heavy reliance on working from textbooks with few opportunities for students to work cooperatively or develop their communication and enquiry skills. In weaker lessons, planning was insufficient and did not meet the students' learning needs.

Most of the students' written work was marked by teachers and there were some good examples of detailed and informative feedback. However, this was not consistently the case and much of the assessment did not explain to students what they needed to do to improve in the future. The school strategy for assessment is not yet implemented consistently and students' progress is often judged in terms of task completion alone.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum and other activities in the school are satisfactory. Students take a broad and balanced range of subjects that leads to a majority achieving GCSE passes. More recently, some vocational courses have been added and those who choose them enjoy their studies.

Measures are being taken to improve literacy and numeracy to support other areas of the curriculum. The school's sports college status is beginning to have a positive impact

on curriculum enrichment and extra-curricular activities, particularly in sport. There are some subject led activities and an annual large drama production.

The needs of most students with learning difficulties are well met and there is provision for talented students. The personal, social, citizenship and health education (PSCHE) programme covers some aspects that are required but omissions at both key stages make it inadequate.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 4

Care, guidance and support are inadequate in meeting the academic and pastoral needs of some groups of students in the school. Although the majority are cared for satisfactorily, the school does not have effective systems for identifying and tracking the academic progress of particular groups and individuals. The arrangements for providing students with targeted support are therefore inadequate and as a consequence, some students do not make appropriate progress in their learning.

A very small number of parents expressed concern that the support for some pupils with behavioural difficulties is inadequate and their needs are not always addressed sympathetically.

There is suitable support for gifted and talented students and some vulnerable students with additional learning difficulties. Vulnerable students are encouraged to progress at 16 into further education and training following a life skills course. Through careers conventions, older students receive appropriate advice when choosing options and making career choices. Satisfactory links with primary schools contribute to smooth transition into Year 7.

Appropriate child protection procedures are in place and proper attention is paid to health and safety procedures and risk assessments.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management overall, are satisfactory. The school is generally well managed. Daily systems are well understood and the school runs smoothly as a result. However, middle leaders do not play a big enough part in the school's evaluation of the quality of its work. Most know the broad picture for their area, but the quality and extent of their analysis is inconsistent. The leadership team have provided insufficient direction to ensure that the many initiatives for school improvement impact consistently on students' achievements across the school as a whole. However, inspection evidence shows that there is effective practice that the school can draw on.

Monitoring systems have improved since the last inspection. Although different areas of the curriculum are applying their own strategies, examples of good practice are beginning to emerge. Whilst the school leadership is honest about its strengths and weaknesses, it has overestimated its effectiveness in a number of areas of its work. It

has yet to secure a co-ordinated and coherent approach to improvement planning. However, the leadership team have high expectations that its newly acquired Specialist Sports College status will act as a catalyst for renewed improvement and most staff share these hopes and expectations.

The governance of the school is satisfactory, with a number of committees to address different areas of their work. Individual governors work hard to support the school, although they are not sufficiently focussed on the overall quality of provision. Furthermore, they rely heavily on information provided by the headteacher and do not have a complete view of the areas in need of improvement. The majority of parents speak well of the school and the education received by their children.

The school has established effective links with other schools and colleges, which enhance the transition for students. It has made good use of these links to support its specialist school bid. The new school building is used effectively and offers exciting opportunities for further development. The school has been successful in recruiting and retaining staff and has an effective mix of youth and experience. Support staff are generally well deployed in individual areas, but the school is aware of the need to review the efficiency of their overall deployment.

Inspection judgements

| | | |
|--|-----------------------|--------------|
| <i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i> | School Overall | 16-19 |
|--|-----------------------|--------------|

Overall effectiveness

| | | |
|--|-----|----|
| How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners? | 3 | NA |
| How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being? | 3 | NA |
| The quality and standards in foundation stage | NA | NA |
| The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation | 3 | NA |
| The capacity to make any necessary improvements | Yes | NA |
| Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection | Yes | NA |

Achievement and standards

| | | |
|--|---|----|
| How well do learners achieve? | 3 | NA |
| The standards ¹ reached by learners | 3 | NA |
| How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners | 3 | NA |
| How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress | 3 | NA |

Personal development and well-being

| | | |
|---|---|----|
| How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners? | 3 | NA |
| The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | 4 | NA |
| The behaviour of learners | 3 | NA |
| The attendance of learners | 2 | NA |
| How well learners enjoy their education | 3 | NA |
| The extent to which learners adopt safe practices | 2 | NA |
| The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles | 3 | NA |
| The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community | 3 | NA |
| How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being | 3 | NA |

The quality of provision

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

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

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

| | |
|---|-----|
| The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy | |
| Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily | Yes |
| Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise | Yes |
| Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse | Yes |
| Learners are educated about sexual health | Yes |
| The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe | |
| Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements | Yes |
| Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place | Yes |
| Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism | Yes |
| Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them | Yes |
| The extent to which learners make a positive contribution | |
| Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships | Yes |
| Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them | Yes |
| Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community | Yes |
| The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being | |
| There is provision to promote learners' basic skills | Yes |
| Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams | Yes |
| Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form | Yes |
| Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy | Yes |

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

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Mr Hamish Joyce
Headteacher
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9 December 2005

Dear Students

Thank you for the contribution you made to the recent inspection of your school. We enjoyed the chance to visit lessons and talk to many of you. We also read carefully the questionnaires completed by your parents. These were very helpful to us.

This is a summary of our main findings, which I hope will interest you.

We think the school provides you with a satisfactory education. The attractive, modern accommodation and new Sports College status mean that the school has the potential to improve to become better.

Standards achieved in some examinations and tests are improving and are around what we would expect to see. We think most students are making satisfactory progress. Your teachers have recognised that some students, particularly those of higher ability, could be helped to do better.

Teaching in the school is satisfactory and many of the lessons we saw were good. Your school is trying to make sure more of the teaching reaches a good standard and you are given more opportunities to learn in exciting and interesting ways.

Sometimes the behaviour of a small minority of students in lessons is not good enough and this makes it hard for others to learn. One way you can help the school improve is by trying to ensure behaviour in lessons is better.

Staff do a good job in caring for you and ensure you are safe and supported. However, the school needs to make sure that it is well aware of and providing good support for the needs of every single pupil, which is not the case at present.

The school is developing ways it can support your progress by giving you better and more individual guidance and targets.

The school supports your personal development satisfactorily. Attendance and your behaviour around the school are good. We think you should have more opportunity to find out about different cultures and that the school could do more to help you become more inspired and excited about your learning.

We have asked the school to:

make sure all pupils make better progress, particularly the more able

improve the quality of your learning and the guidance you get about how to do better

make sure the academic and personal needs of all students are addressed sensitively.

Yours faithfully

Janet Palmer

Her Majesty's Inspector