

Redcar Community College A Specialist Visual and Performing Arts Centre

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111755
Local Authority	Redcar and Cleveland
Inspection number	337732
Inspection dates	17–18 March 2010
Reporting inspector	Ian Richardson HMI

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	733
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Sheila Cooper
Headteacher	Mr David Kennedy
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Kirkleatham Lane Redcar North Yorkshire TS10 4AB
Telephone number	01642 289211
Fax number	01642 489202
Email address	davidkennedy@redcarcc.com

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Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester M2 7LA

T: 08456 404045

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 29 lessons, observed 28 teachers and held meetings with governors, parents and carers, staff and groups of students. They observed the school's work, and looked at the school's development plan, a range of policies, assessment and tracking data, documentation concerning the governing body and communications with parents and carers. The inspection team analysed questionnaire responses from staff and students. A total of 187 questionnaires completed by parents and carers were received and analysed.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the achievement of students across the attainment range to evaluate whether all groups of students are making good progress
- the curriculum provision, such as the Key Stage 3 Learning Experiences, Alternative Education Programmes and the impact curriculum innovation is having on standards and achievement
- the standard of teaching and learning across the curriculum, including the use of performance data in the planning for individual students
- the impact of the range of partnerships and collaboration on the education provided by the school.

Information about the school

The school was designated the full service/extended school in Redcar and Cleveland in October 2003 and was awarded its visual and performing arts specialism in 2004. It gained foundation status and trust status from 1 November 2009. It was re-designated as having Gold Artsmark status in July 2009. The school is smaller than the national average. Students attending the school come from predominantly White British backgrounds. The proportion of students from minority ethnic groups is much lower than average as is the proportion who it is believed speak English as an additional language. The proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is very much higher than the national average. However, the proportion of students with a statement of special educational needs is below average.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**2****The school's capacity for sustained improvement****2**

Main findings

The school is providing a good education for students. It is outstanding in the way it works with other providers, local organisations and industry to bring this about. The views of parents and carers and interviews with other adults who have known the school over several years demonstrate clearly the improvement in standards and outcomes for students. The improvements in the school are seen in many ways. Academic performance and the progress made by students have improved. Behaviour has improved, with the fixed-term exclusion rate dropping from 82 in 2004/05 to four in 2008/09, indicating improved engagement of students. Attendance, while average, has improved significantly against national measures, which indicates students' increased enjoyment of school. The proportion of students who are known not to be in education, training or employment has dropped from 12% in 2003 to 1.5% in 2009 as a consequence of improved aspirations of students and better tracking.

The school has introduced a much more rigorous assessment, monitoring and tracking system to identify the progress made by students on an individual basis. However, one aspect of assessment that varies across the curriculum and is not well developed is the marking of work such that students are informed of what they can do to improve. The senior leadership team has taken effective measures to raise standards, for example in English at Key Stage 3, and recent assessments indicate that these measures are having the desired effect. Not all subjects show similar success. In 2009 mathematics, while improving, continued to perform well below the school's average for all subjects. The school's focus on raising standards is having a positive impact on accelerating the progress students make in lessons.

Pastoral leaders for each year group provide a central source of support for students and many of their families and are highly committed in their care and support for an enormous range of students' and families' needs. They are proactive in developing learning provision for individuals and use whatever routes or resources are most appropriate to enable learning to progress under many difficult circumstances. Pastoral leaders ensure that where students have been absent from school for an extended period they are able to maintain or catch up learning as appropriate and reintegrate successfully into the learning community. Pastoral leaders are vigilant in improving attendance and they work closely with parents and carers, and students, in this respect. Students are making outstanding contributions to the wider community and a very high proportion express, both in interview and in their completed questionnaires, that they feel safe and very well cared for and guided.

The curriculum provided is outstanding. The number of courses and pathways for learning available to students has proliferated over recent years. Aligned with

outstanding care, guidance and support this is making it possible for students to experience courses that are very well matched to their needs. The collaboration with other providers is making a significant contribution to this. The school carries out thorough self-evaluation. It has identified the performance of boys as a concern; strategies are in place for timely measures to improve boys' achievement and the initial impact of these strategies is positive. The higher attaining students make satisfactory progress, but the leadership team and the governing body have identified the progress made by these students to be a priority for improvement.

Given the improvement seen over recent years; the sound planning for development in the school; the coherence of the recently established senior leadership team; and the coordinated strategies and shared vision for improvements in teaching and learning, achievement and standards, the school shows good capacity to improve. The well-managed financial systems with the effective involvement of governors have resulted in positive balances in the budget. Given the way resources are effectively deployed and the good outcomes for students, the school is giving good value for money.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Develop assessment such that students receive more information about what they need to do to improve, particularly by more consistent marking and written feedback.
- Improve the performance of students in mathematics to ensure that they are well prepared for continuing education, training or employment.
- Develop strategies to promote better progress for the higher attaining students to bring them up to the good progress made by all other groups of students.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

The achievement of students is good and rising. Students enter the school with attainment broadly below average. Results of national tests and examinations at the end of Key Stages 3 and 4 over the last five years show that standards are rising overall. Some subjects, such as mathematics, show standards well below those of other subjects. In their work in class many students show they are making good progress. Good teaching and learning are contributing to this success and students are responding positively to the high expectations being set across the school. Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress and achieve well.

Students feel strongly that they are safe at school. In interview they described how staff in the school respond quickly to any problems: pastoral year managers and teachers are rapidly 'on the case'. Students can describe the actions they can take in the event of any trouble and the systems in place to support and care for them. Behaviour is good both in lessons and around school. There is some time lost in a minority of lessons due to poor behaviour of a minority of students. Students are courteous to others, including visitors, and show maturity, responsibility and pride in their school. It is clear they

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

believe the school is helping them to develop well. For example, they understand well the factors that affect their health. The personal, social and health education programme is very good at exploring health issues. Students, despite knowing about healthy lifestyles, do not always make good choices. However, other evidence, such as the participation in sporting activities outside lessons, has shown an improving picture. Students contribute fully to the life of the school through their involvement in the school council and volunteer activities such as 'meet and greet', training 'buddies' and senior students carrying out dinner duties and break duties. They demonstrate good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. There are well-planned assemblies and collective worship that follow relevant themes and involve students. Focuses such as the Holocaust, Easter, Remembrance, Ramadan, bullying and charity provoke spiritual, moral and social development well.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Students make good progress and enjoy their learning as a result of effective teaching. In the main, teachers have strong questioning skills which are used to evaluate

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

students' understanding and they use this evaluation to adjust learning activities to promote students' progress. In most lessons a good pace of learning is maintained and in some lessons learning is enhanced through good use of a wide range of activities, resources and teaching styles. This was seen to both motivate and interest students. For example, in a science lesson students were engaged by relevant materials related to their experience and effectively displayed using information and communication technology (ICT); they then worked with other students in relevant practical work. In another lesson students used ICT interactively to evaluate their understanding of the topic covered.

Students' learning thrives in this secure environment. A common feature of lessons is the readiness with which students contribute and work effectively together with their fellow students in learning. They work hard in lessons, applying themselves enthusiastically to their learning. In a few lessons students were not as well engaged. Teachers know their students well and plan carefully to meet the needs of most of them. They are able to assess students' understanding in lessons but not all students are clear about what they need to do to improve. Marking of students' written work is variable. In some subjects it is clear what students need to do to improve, but in too many others there is little marking. This results in students not knowing how to improve their learning and progress.

A highly coherent, relevant curriculum has been designed for Key Stage 3 students. A key feature is to provide all students with the opportunity to take part in nine distinct 'learning experiences' and these link areas across the whole range of subjects. For example, a visit to Beamish Museum enriched learning in science, textiles, food technology and history, providing a memorable 'heritage' experience. Over time, the continuing development of this highly relevant and exciting curriculum has resulted in significant improvements in attendance, behaviour and overall engagement of students in learning. The wide range of courses and learning opportunities provided for all age groups are, in part, the result of excellent partnership working with neighbouring schools. Currently, 330 students from the partnership are able to benefit from shared courses, resources and expertise in the schools. Jointly they are able to access highly specialist courses run at local training establishments. Students are delighted with the range of extra-curricular opportunities and participation rates at lunchtimes and after school are very high. The youngest members of the school were both enthusiastic and excited about the enormous range of new experiences they have accessed since arriving at the school. These range from sports to drumming, the youth theatre and art clubs. The school has become a central place for learning in the community, with whole families enjoying learning together. Many courses are available from family reading, Spanish and cooking, to card making and keep-fit activities. Long-term plans are already in place for further developments to enhance the curriculum over the coming years. All students receive their full curricular entitlement and the school has clear strategies to increase the uptake of languages.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

Management has undergone significant changes since the last inspection. However, temporary and newly appointed members of the senior leadership team have coalesced to provide good management and leadership of the school. They have managed to bring about a clear vision for improvement in the school that is understood and shared by staff at all levels. Roles and responsibilities are clear and understood. For example, the arrangements for child protection and safeguarding are outstanding in their rigour and the coherence of their implementations. A member of the governing body has a specific responsibility for safeguarding and monitors the school's systems. The governing body is providing good challenge and support. For example, governors have challenged the headteacher to raise standards for the higher attainers as seen in the proportion gaining A* or A grades at GCSE. While the work of SID's Place has had a major impact on reducing the impact of the most extreme poor behaviour and improving the attendance and attainment of the targeted group, the governors have challenged management to provide a fuller curriculum for students attending SID's Place. SID's Place and its improvement is a consequence of the school's clear policy on equal opportunities, which is implemented well to ensure that students of all groups have good access to education.

The school has very strong support from parents and carers and the range and quality of ways in which the school communicates with parents and carers are outstanding. Questionnaires returned by staff and students also give very positive views. In the case of the staff they feel they share the vision of the leadership, are well supported in their work and that their views are taken into account. Just as the school collaborates very effectively with other providers, it is also outstanding in looking outward to the local community and the wider world to promote community cohesion. Parents and carers and other adults talk in detail about the excellent service the school provides to the community and students talk of the many activities and experiences that help them to connect to communities and cultures around the world.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2

The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Views of parents and carers

It is clear from the responses seen in the questionnaires completed by parents and carers that they have high levels of confidence in the school. The views expressed in a meeting with parents and carers align completely with the questionnaire responses and they made clear how the work of the school is having a positive impact on the lives of students, their families and the community. More than 90% of parents and carers agree with most of the questionnaire items. For example, 99% agree that the school keeps their children safe and 97% agree that the school meets their children's particular needs. A large majority of parents and carers believe the school is led and managed effectively, their children enjoy school and they are happy with their children's experiences at the school.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Redcar Community College A Specialist Visual and Performing Arts Centre to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school. In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 187 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 733 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	64	34	109	58	8	4	2	1
The school keeps my child safe	77	41	105	56	3	2	1	1
The school informs me about my child's progress	90	48	91	49	6	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	83	44	88	47	13	7	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	64	34	111	59	7	4	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	55	29	105	56	17	9	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	53	28	123	66	9	5	2	1
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	64	34	104	56	12	6	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	61	33	115	61	7	4	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	73	39	95	51	13	7	2	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	49	26	112	60	15	8	4	2
The school is led and managed effectively	67	36	106	57	10	5	2	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	83	44	93	50	5	3	2	1

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

17–18 March 2010

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



18 March 2010

Dear Students

Inspection of Redcar Community College A Specialist Visual and Performing Arts Centre, Redcar, TS10 4AB

Thank you very much for the way you welcomed inspectors into your school. We enjoyed talking with you and seeing how much you enjoy being part of the school's community. You show each other and the teachers good respect and demonstrate what mature and responsible attitudes you have. You work hard and make outstanding contributions to the life of the school. You are to be congratulated on your good behaviour and positive attitudes. We saw no poor behaviour around school but we did see a few students who were not trying their best in lessons. We would encourage all of you to do your best. You have shown excellent personal moral values and good concern for your community and that of the wider world.

The school is providing you with a good education and helping you to develop well and be prepared for life after school. The teaching is good and staff are working hard to make sure you are as successful as possible. You told us you feel very safe in school and you know about the ways in which the school can help you. Your parents and carers agree strongly with you.

We think your school can improve even more by:

- developing assessment procedures such that you receive more information about what you need to do to improve, particularly by more consistent marking and written feedback
- improving your performance in mathematics to ensure that you are prepared well for continuing education, training or employment
- developing strategies to promote better progress for those of you who are more able, in order to bring you up to the good progress made by all other groups of students.

We wish you all the best for your futures.

Yours sincerely

Mr Ian Richardson

Her Majesty's Inspector

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