

Richard Rose Morton Academy

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	135620
Local Authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	361297
Inspection dates	13–14 October 2010
Reporting inspector	Tom Grieveson HMI

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

Type of school	Academy
School category	Non-maintained
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	586
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	69
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Brian Scowcroft
Principal	Mrs Katie Robinson
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Wigton Road Carlisle Cumbria CA2 6LB
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one additional inspector who joined the team for the first half of day one. Inspectors observed 30 lessons and 30 teachers. Meetings were arranged with staff, groups of students and a telephone conversation was held with the chair of governors. They observed the academy's work, evaluated teachers' planning and assessment files, policies, governance reports and monitoring records. Inspectors analysed the 60 questionnaires completed by parents and carers, the 107 submitted by students, the small number provided by the staff and the lead HMI conducted telephone conversations with two parents.

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

- The extent to which students in all year groups, subjects and all ability groups (including the sixth form) make progress given their capabilities.
- The effectiveness by which teachers use assessment information when planning lessons so that the needs of all students are met.
- The effectiveness by which senior and middle leaders are holding departmental staff to account for their performance and the extent to which this is leading to better teaching and learning and improving standards.

Information about the school

Richard Rose Morton Academy opened in September 2008. It is part of the Richard Rose Federation which also includes the Richard Rose Central Academy and the Richard Rose Sixth Form College. Sixth-form students are taught within the federated academy, with students transported between sites for specialist subject lessons. A new academy building will be complete for September 2011. It is smaller than the average size of secondary schools. The academy serves communities in the west of the city of Carlisle. Almost all students are of White British heritage. The proportion of students known to be entitled to a free academy meal is higher than average. A much higher than average number has special educational needs and/or disabilities. The academy's first year of operation witnessed a substantial change to its staffing base. Eighty per cent of the teaching staff had previously been on the roll of the predecessor school. During the course of the year this had reduced to about one quarter. Initially this change caused significant disruption to students' education, mainly due to the very high number of supply teachers employed to cover for those staff who had left and before new appointments could take up their posts. Almost all of the senior leadership team are new appointments to the academy.

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

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Richard Rose Morton Academy provides its students with a satisfactory and improving education. It has notable strengths in the quality of its senior leadership and governance and the care, guidance and support which it offers students.

Capacity for sustained improvement is good. Self-evaluation is accurate and the academy is increasingly effective in tackling long-standing student under-achievement. Attainment levels are rising and while much remains to be accomplished there is a secure trend of improvement. Provisional 2010 GCSE examination results show a marked increase in the proportion of students gaining five or more good GCSE passes. These compare favourably with national levels, although when English and mathematics are included in this measure standards remain low, but these too are improving. Progress in English is however much better than in mathematics. The large majority of students are making satisfactory progress, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Progress is most evident amongst the younger year groups.

Teaching is mostly satisfactory although the proportion of good teaching is increasing. The academy's assessment information is detailed, providing teachers with accurate information about students' achievements. While some use it effectively to plan learning this is not commonplace and where its use is weak students' make only limited progress. In addition, a minority of teachers use a narrow range of teaching and learning styles. This is restricting students' opportunities to engage fully in lessons or to work cooperatively with their peers. The curriculum is satisfactory and improving. An increasingly wide range of courses are offered to support students. They are appreciative of this expanding provision and this is reflected in better rates of progress, higher attendance, less persistent absence and far fewer exclusions. The quality of care which students receive is good and particularly for those who are least confident about coming to school and those facing particularly challenging circumstances.

Safeguarding requirements are good and met in full, with particular care taken to ensure students' safety during the period of extensive building work. Relationships with parents have developed well and there are increasingly productive partnerships with local key agencies.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- To continue to work on raising attainment in all subjects but particularly in English and mathematics.
- To continue to increase the amount of good and outstanding teaching so that this becomes the norm. In particular:

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- to make sure that teachers use assessment information effectively when planning lessons so that the work provided meets the needs of all students
 - ensure that teachers use a wider range of teaching and learning styles so that lessons are more interesting and help students learn more effectively
 - provide more opportunities for students to work cooperatively and independently with less direction from the teacher.
- About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

Most students show a positive commitment to their studies and work productively in lessons. The majority enter the academy with below average levels of attainment in English and mathematics. In some years it is well below. Provisional 2010 examination results show that the proportion of students gaining five or more good GCSE passes rose to 71%. This represents a marked increase from 2009 levels and compares well with national outcomes. It is well above the academy's target. When English and mathematics results are included in this measure however, attainment remains low with only 34% of students achieving five or more A* to C passes. Standards in English are much higher than in mathematics and girls outperform boys. Inspection evidence shows that the majority of students are making satisfactory and strongly improving progress. This is most pronounced amongst the younger age groups where intervention work to improve their basic skills is having most impact. The progress of many older students is limited because, despite the academy's efforts, long-standing weaknesses in English and mathematics have not been tackled effectively in the past. Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities also make satisfactory progress. Their needs are well known and understood and intervention work is effective.

Students say they feel safe. Through a range of curriculum and pastoral provision they know about the main risks to their safety. They are confident about adult support. The majority of students show satisfactory behaviour in lessons and around the academy. Most demonstrate a positive commitment to their work, cooperating productively with other students when given the opportunity. Low level disruption is evident in a few lessons and is linked directly to ineffective teaching. Students demonstrate a good commitment to healthy lifestyles, evident through their very high attendance in physical education, sport and dance and voluntary extra-curricular activities. Their contribution to charity fund-raising, the work of junior sports leaders and participation rates in local primary schools are noteworthy. However, students' contribution to the life of the academy via the student council is limited. Students' ability to apply their information and communication technology, literacy and numeracy skills is improving. Efforts to engage more expansively with local businesses are supporting the development of enterprise skills effectively. Attendance rates have improved well and the amount of persistent absence and exclusion levels have reduced noticeably. Students are developing a satisfactory grasp of the beliefs and practices of the major world religions. They know the difference between right and wrong with most conforming to the academy's code of conduct.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	3
Pupils' behaviour	3
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

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

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is predominantly satisfactory although the proportion of good teaching is increasing. Academy leaders have worked hard to promote better teaching and learning. The establishment of a common planning format, the provision of regular and detailed assessment information and access to pertinent training opportunities are underpinning improvements although marked differences in teaching quality between subjects are evident. The most effective teachers demonstrate enthusiasm and display good subject knowledge, which promotes students' interest, engagement and commitment to lesson activities. They adopt different teaching styles, making lessons interesting and varied. Lesson content is matched to students' needs and teachers provide challenge through pertinent questioning and high expectations. These factors combine effectively to promote good learning. Where teaching is least effective, insufficient account is taken of students' prior learning and expectations are not high enough. Students are usually given the same task, limiting their progress. Teaching styles are limited. Too often, teacher talks, students' listen. There is insufficient interaction in lessons with students rarely given opportunities to work collaboratively or independently of the teacher. On occasions this approach leads to low level disruption, this interrupts learning for other students because it is not well managed. The quality of interaction between teaching assistants and students is variable: while support for students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is effective their involvement with other students lacks focus.

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The curriculum is satisfactory and developing well. The range of academic and vocational courses increasingly meets the needs and aspirations of students. The work-related curriculum is a growing strength of the academy and is successfully enhanced through links with local business and industry. Care, guidance and support are effective in meeting students' needs. Intervention to support the most vulnerable in particular is well coordinated. The impact of this work is reflected in students' positive attitudes, their improved attendance and the significant reduction in exclusions. Students are successfully helped at key transition points. At the end of Key Stage 4 for example, almost every student moves in to further education, employment or training.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
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	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Academy leaders have worked assiduously to tackle long-standing student under-achievement and weaknesses in teaching. They have established realistically high expectations of students' capabilities, setting challenging targets and rigorously tackling under-performance. Standards are rising and while there is still too much variation in subject performance, the underlying direction is one of improvement.

Subject leaders enjoy greater autonomy in the management of their subjects. The monitoring of their performance by senior staff is nonetheless rigorous and is leading to more effective practice. Much further work is still required though to improve the effectiveness of all subject leaders in promoting better teaching and in raising student outcomes. The governing body play an expansive role in shaping the direction of the academy and their priorities are clearly reflected in all strategic decisions. Governors receive a timely and accurate flow of information so that academy targets and priorities are sharply focused on where progress is most required. While they are appreciative of the work of senior leaders they are highly expectant about the academy's performance. Safeguarding is good; procedures amply meet requirements and are routinely monitored. Pertinent and detailed information about students' performance and the manner in which the academy strives to meet their interests and aspirations reflects satisfactory and improving equality of opportunity. While much important work has been introduced and extensive further work is being planned, the academy's contribution to community cohesion is satisfactory. Engagement with parents and carers is good. Effective systems ensure that parents and carers are kept well informed about their child's progress. Partnership working in promoting learning and well-being is satisfactory and is developing well. Work with a range of agencies is effective in supporting the attendance and progress of the most vulnerable students. Value for money is satisfactory.

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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	3
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	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Sixth form

Students are making good progress with no variation between different groups. Attendance and retention rates are good. Students are gaining much higher grades and outperforming their targets. Teaching and learning are also good. Teachers are using prior learning and attainment information to provide learning experiences which meet individual needs effectively. The curriculum has improved and is good at meeting students' aspirations and interests. It is sufficiently broad and includes a suitable range of academic and vocational subjects. Individual care and support is also effective, offering students a range of strategies to help tackle difficulties and overcome barriers to their improvement. Leadership and management are good because ambition is embedded in all aspects of sixth-form work and key areas for development are being tackled effectively. Plans are suitably in place to further extend the scope and range of courses. Capacity to sustain improvement is good.

A very good feature is the productive links with local employers through work placements, visiting speakers and projects. Movement between the two academy sites is well organised with a high level of evident care.

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

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These are the grades for the sixth form

Overall effectiveness of the sixth form	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	2
The quality of provision in the sixth form	2
Leadership and management of the sixth form	2

Views of parents and carers

Although the return rate was very small, the overwhelming number of parents and carers who responded to the inspection questionnaire were supportive of the academy's work. There were two areas where a small proportion of parents and carers expressed concerns: the extent to which the academy takes account of parents' views, and the manner in which unacceptable student behaviour is dealt with. The academy provides a good level of information for parents and carers although the academy recognises that providing all parents and carers with the opportunity to contribute ideas about its development will be further considered. Student behaviour was found to be satisfactory but in a small number of lessons, low level disruption did occur and was not well managed.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Richard Rose Morton Academy 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 60 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 586 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	22	37	35	58	3	5	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	22	37	37	62	1	2	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	31	52	26	43	3	5	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	21	35	33	55	2	3	1	2
The teaching is good at this school	18	30	37	62	2	3	1	2
The school helps me to support my child's learning	17	28	36	60	4	7	1	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	16	27	39	65	3	5	1	2
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)	17	28	36	60	3	5	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	16	27	39	65	2	3	1	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	14	23	36	60	6	10	2	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	16	27	30	50	7	12	1	2
The school is led and managed effectively	16	27	39	65	2	3	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	23	38	32	53	4	7	0	0

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 all 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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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 pupils' 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.

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.



15 October 2010

Dear Students

Inspection of Richard Rose Morton Academy, Carlisle, CA2 6LB

Thank you for your engagement during the recent inspection of your academy. Your comments were most helpful in our evaluation of its performance.

We have judged the academy to be providing you with a satisfactory and improving education. It has a number of strengths, notably the quality of its leadership and governance and the care, guidance and support which it offers. The underlying direction is one of improvement and although most aspects of its work are now satisfactory further improvement is still required to ensure you meet your targets in all subjects and achieve as well as you can. The details of our findings are contained in the report.

We consider that the academy governors, leadership and staff need to concentrate on improving the following two areas in particular.

- To continue to work on raising standards in all subjects but particularly in English and mathematics.
- To increase the amount of good and outstanding teaching so that this becomes the norm. In particular:

- to make sure that teachers use assessment information well when planning lessons so that the work you are given always meets your needs

- that teachers use a wider range of teaching and learning styles so that lessons are more interesting and help you learn more effectively

- provide more opportunities for you to work cooperatively with other students and ensure that you have the chance to work independently with less direction from the teacher.

We found that most students show satisfactory behaviour and that many of you behave well. A small number of students however disrupt lessons and this interferes with the learning of others. Staff will be working hard to ensure this does not occur, your support will help ensure they are successful.

Please accept the very best wishes of the inspection team for your future success.

Yours sincerely

Tom Grieveson

Her Majesty's Inspector

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