

Richard Rose Morton Academy

Wigton Road , Carlisle, Cumbria, CA2 6LB

Inspection dates 18-19 September 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- In some subjects and in particular English and mathematics, the attainment of students at the end of Key Stage 4 is low.
- In some lessons teachers talk for too long and their questions fail to capture the interest, imagination and engagement of learners. Consequently, students are passive recipients of information and opportunities for collaborative learning are limited.
- Teaching does not always sufficiently challenge the most able or sufficiently support the least able students.
- Despite sustained endeavour, attendance, including in the sixth form, while improving slowly, is still low and needs to improve further and faster.
- The academy has seen high staff turnover and a reduction in staff numbers in recent restructuring. This has resulted in a lack of continuity in learning for some students and many relatively inexperienced teachers with new leadership responsibilities are yet to establish themselves in their roles.
- The sixth form requires improvement to enable more students to achieve the highest grades on GCE Advanced level courses.

The school has the following strengths

- The senior leadership and leaders at all levels, including governors, share a strong commitment to the success of the academy. They are passionate to help their students do the best they can and are demonstrating the capacity to do this, as seen in improvements in achievement, teaching and behaviour.
- The proportion of students achieving five or more GCSE grades C and above has risen from below to above average over the past three years.
- Teaching is characterised by high aspirations.
- Students show respect for fellow students and staff. This is in direct response to the implementation and promotion of the academy's behaviour policy and helped by the spacious accommodation.
- The quality of teaching is improving through rigorous monitoring supported by leaders' commitment to professional development.
- The academy is proving popular within its local community. It is expanding, attracting increasing numbers of students into both Year 7 and the sixth form.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 34 lessons, three of which were joint observations with senior leaders. In addition, inspectors made a number of other short visits to lessons.
- Meetings were held with groups of students, three representatives from the governing body, including the vice-chair, and academy staff, including senior and middle managers.
- Inspectors considered the 18 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) and the 48 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- They observed the work of the academy and looked at a number of documents, including the academy's own data on students' current progress, its self-evaluation, development plan, a range of federation policy statements and minutes of governing body meetings.

Inspection team

Michael Blaylock, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Julie McGrane	Additional Inspector
Andrew Henderson	Additional Inspector
Graeme Clarke	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Richard Rose Morton Academy is a smaller than average-sized secondary school although the number of students on roll has increased since the academy opened in September 2008, such that there are over 170 students in the current Year 7 cohort.
- The proportion of students supported through school action is well above the national average, whereas the proportion supported by school action plus or identified as disabled or with special educational needs is average. The proportion of students from minority ethnic groups is well below average: the ethnicity of over 95% of the students is White British. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is above average.
- The academy is sponsored by the Richard Rose Trust which also includes the Richard Rose Central Academy. In September 2011, the academy moved into its new spacious and attractive purpose-built premises.
- Sixth-form students are taught on both campuses with students moving between sites for specialist subject lessons.
- The academy does not currently meet the government's current floor standard, which is the minimum expected for students' attainment and progress.
- An Ofsted monitoring visit in March 2012 judged the academy to have made inadequate progress in making improvements and in improving students' behaviour since its previous inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching to increase students' progress and raise attainment particularly in English and mathematics through:
 - a relentless focus on quality learning resulting from teaching that engages and motivates all learners
 - effective questioning where students' responses are well managed to engage all students within whole-class teaching
 - promoting speaking and listening skills to enhance students' engagement, thinking and understanding. For example, by the routine use of paired discussions in response to teachers' questions and students listening attentively to each other
 - ensuring that teaching meets the needs of all students, challenging the most able and providing sufficient support for the least able
 - careful and imaginative planning to structure lessons to maximise students' progress, using creative activities to enhance both collaborative and independent learning.
- Improve students' attendance and behaviour by the persistent application of improvement strategies already implemented.
- Strengthen leadership and management at all levels to ensure stability and sustainable improvement by:
 - providing those staff with new leadership responsibilities the opportunities to develop and flourish in their roles with appropriate support and challenge.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Historically, students entering the academy have done so with standards of attainment that were significantly below average. In recent years this has improved such that these standards are now typical and represent a truly comprehensive intake.
- The proportion of students achieving five or more GCSE grades at C or above including English and mathematics is low, having dropped from 35% in 2011 to 31% in 2012. Factors that have influenced this are: the prior attainment of the 2012 cohort, which was significantly lower than the national average and below that of the preceding 2011 year group; and an unanticipated drop in the proportion of students achieving grade C or above in the summer 2012 English examination.
- The 2012 results did show improvements in the proportion of students achieving five or more GCSEs at grade C or above. This was from a position where the academy was already above the national figure in 2011. Improvements were also evident in the priority area of mathematics both in increasing the proportion of students achieving grades C or above and in increasing the proportion of students making expected progress from broadly average attainment at Key Stage 2.
- Sixth-form results show an improving trend with students making good progress to secure successful outcomes on Level 2 and 3 vocational courses. There was a 100% pass rate at GCE Advanced level in 2012 although not many students achieved the higher grades. Results in AS and A2 courses show variability with some weaknesses in science and mathematics. Generally, students are making expected progress, including those who had not succeeded at GCSE in Year 11.
- The work seen in lesson observations and in students' work show that students are now making better progress in most subjects although it is not yet universally good progress. This improved progress is consistent with the higher aspirations and expectations of teachers. Students make exceptional progress to excel in art and the academy has acknowledged strengths in physical education and in design and technology where attainment is above average.
- The pupil premium funding is appropriately targeted and being used for intervention programmes with small group work and one-to-one support, including mentoring programmes. This intervention support is closely tracked and shows clear evidence of impact. For example, a literacy intervention programme shows improvement in reading ages and all Year 11 students who attended achieved five good GCSE grades. The attainment gaps between students known to be eligible for the pupil premium and their peers are typically smaller in the academy than is the case nationally.
- Provision for disabled students and those with special educational needs is both methodical and diligent with a whole-school priority to improve teachers' planning to differentiate activities appropriately to meet their needs. The progress and attainment of disabled students and those with special educational needs compare favourably with those of other students. There is good support for these students from other adults in the classroom and their progress is regularly reviewed.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Inspection evidence shows teaching has improved. It was at least good in about half of the lessons seen by inspectors and outstanding practice was seen in a small number of lessons. No inadequate teaching was observed but the teaching was judged as requiring improvement in half of the lessons observed.
- Teachers have high aspirations and display good subject knowledge. Relationships between teachers and students are good and behaviour is generally managed well.
- In most lessons planning is sound. However, in some subjects, 100-minute sessions proved

challenging for some students who appeared to be flagging towards the end of a session. Some areas of the curriculum, particularly creative and practical subjects, welcome the 100-minute lessons. In other areas, careful planning and structuring of learning is necessary to provide variety and ensure that a good pace of learning is established to enable students to make good progress throughout the lesson.

- Teachers make good use of assessment for learning strategies for peer and self-evaluation. However, this information is not always used well to inform the next stages in the lesson. There is good practice but the matching of work to student capabilities especially higher-attaining students is not consistently done well. Not all teachers appreciate the need to use accessible language for all students, particularly the least able and those with limited literacy skills, in order to effectively communicate.
- In the best teaching observed, there was excellent use of questioning to develop speaking and listening skills and wider dialogue to engage students in learning. However, this is not universally established as standard practice. In many lessons there was too much teacher direction and too little student responsibility for learning.
- There is good support from teaching assistants in class, particularly for disabled students and those with special educational needs. These students integrate well throughout the school, including the sixth form.

The behaviour and safety of pupils requires improvement

- The behaviour and attitudes to learning displayed by students vary by student, subject and age. In some cases students are enthusiastic and engaged in learning whereas in other lessons, more often at Key Stage 4, students are passive recipients of learning.
- A more robust approach to challenging poor attendance and rewarding good attendance is having an impact. However, although attendance figures show an improvement since the last inspection they are still low, reflecting a higher than average number of persistent absentees. Similar approaches taken to improve punctuality are showing early signs of impact. Attendance in the sixth form follows the same pattern; it is low but shows clear improvement. Rewards and sanctions have contributed to generally more positive student behaviour. The number of merits awarded is increasing while demerits are decreasing. The number of fixed-period exclusions has risen in the last year as a consequence of a more stringent approach to behaviour and is seen as contributing to the improving behaviour in the academy.
- Students say that they feel safe. They are aware of the various forms of bullying and know who to refer any concerns to, confident that these will be followed through. Students are aware of e-safety issues. The academy has explicitly addressed homophobic bullying such that this is not an issue among students.
- The majority of parents responding to the Parent View questionnaire agreed or strongly agreed that their child feels safe and that the academy deals effectively with bullying. This was consistent with inspection findings. The majority of staff also agreed with parents that behaviour was good although a significant minority showed concerns about behaviour in the staff questionnaire. Inspectors found that students' behaviour around the academy is generally good although there is still some low-level disruption in some lessons. This is being tackled through a more rigorous implementation of the academy's revised behaviour strategy and the support of teaching assistants. Students recognise improvements in behaviour and teaching over time.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- While many aspects of leadership and management are good it is not good overall because students' achievement at the end of Year 11 and their progress in English and mathematics are low.
- Senior leaders, middle leaders and governors are passionate in their quest to improve outcomes for students. Their vision for improvement in achievement, the quality of teaching,

behaviour and attendance is clearly communicated and shared by all staff. Questionnaire responses showed all staff agreeing and most strongly agreeing with the statement 'I am proud to be a member of staff at this school' and almost all 'know what we are trying to achieve as a school'.

- The academy has increasingly robust self-evaluation with rigorous monitoring of the impact of the academy's work in all areas. This includes the sixth form which is evolving well across the federation and is proving increasingly popular with students.
- Performance management is proving effective in improving the quality of teaching. Senior leaders are accurate in their assessment of teaching and the identification of strengths and areas for development in feeding back to staff. There is a strong commitment to continuing professional development. Links have recently been established with a nearby teaching school to support further developments in teaching. This has the potential to prove mutually beneficial. Linkage between appraisal and salary progression is clear. The academy has been able to offer leadership responsibilities to attract able practitioners.
- An innovative curriculum provides rich opportunities for students in Key Stage 4 through some one year GCSE courses for mixed Year 10 and 11 groups. This has resulted in a broader curriculum offer that includes separate sciences, Spanish and a range of vocational courses. The sixth form provision provides well-matched curricular opportunities and includes strong vocational links.
- The leadership and management of the academy have demonstrated the capacity and shown itself to be sufficiently strong to secure improvements in all areas during a period of considerable change in staffing and associated disruption in some students' education. There is recognition that much more remains to be done and that there is no room for complacency. The determination and commitment of the headteacher and the governing body are driving developments with altruistic intent for wider community benefit within Carlisle.
- While the large majority of students are White British the academy prepares students well for life in modern democratic Britain and a global society. This is achieved through the promotion of core values, including equality objectives, via tutor groups, assemblies as well as through the curriculum and is reinforced by posters emphasising respect for others. The impact of this is evident in the respectful relationships between staff and students. Evidence of global awareness is seen in the academy achieving the International Schools Bronze Award.
- The academy's safeguarding policies and practice meet statutory requirements.
- **The governance of the academy:**
 - The single governing body has responsibility for the Richard Rose Federation and for the two academies within the federation. A real strength of the governing body is that it includes community leaders, sponsors and educational experts with a shared passion for improving outcomes for young people in the academies. The governors are keenly involved in all aspects of the academy's work. They have an astute awareness of both strengths and shortcomings and have provided systematic and robust challenge for senior leaders through the recent period of considerable change.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	135620
Local authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	406612

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

Type of school	Academy sponsor-led
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	735
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	103
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Brian Scowcroft
Headteacher	Katie Robinson
Date of previous school inspection	13 October 2010
Telephone number	01228 822644
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Email address	katie.robinson@rrma.org.uk

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