

King Richard School

Allaway Avenue, Portsmouth PO6 4QP

Inspection dates

1–2 December 2015

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Pupils' rates of progress in 2014 were lower than those seen nationally. Overall attainment declined in 2015 and was much lower than that found nationally, including in English and mathematics.
- Pupils' progress in English in 2015 was well below the national average.
- Teaching, learning and assessment are too variable across the school to assure consistently good progress for all pupils in all subjects.
- There are continuing weaknesses in pupils' progress in science, art and English in Years 7 and 8.
- Some teachers do not make good enough use of information about pupils' abilities, needs and prior learning when planning lessons.
- Work is too easy in some subjects and in a few cases, including in English, it does not build upon what pupils have already covered in primary school.
- Staff changes and the challenge of recruiting top-quality teachers to the school have led to inconsistency in teaching and outcomes in some subject areas.

The school has the following strengths

- Leadership and management are good. The headteacher and his senior team have modernised the school, raised aspirations and broadened pupils' horizons. Senior leaders have successfully established the school's well-deserved reputation as a hub of the community.
- Teaching is improving, particularly in mathematics. Some subjects, notably history and dance, are consistently well taught and as a result, pupils' rates of progress are accelerating.
- Governors share the headteacher's ambition for the school, know exactly what the strengths and weaknesses are and assiduously hold school leaders to account.
- Personal development, behaviour and welfare are good. Pupils are polite, smart and keen to learn. They leave school as well-rounded young people who are outward-looking, with a strong sense of community and responsibility.
- Pupils feel and are safe in school. School leaders' devoted partnerships with other agencies ensure that pupils are protected from harm and risks are reduced.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve standards of teaching and increase pupils' rates of progress across the school, by:
 - insisting that all teachers make thoughtful use of the information available about pupils' ability, particular needs and previous rates of progress, in order to plan consistently good learning
 - embedding the highest expectations of all pupils in all subjects, including those who have low prior attainment or who have special educational needs
 - increasing the pupils' rates of progress in all subjects in Years 7 and 8, particularly in English
 - ensuring that work is hard enough and takes careful account of the topics and tasks pupils have covered previously at primary school, including in English
 - ensuring that the time teachers spend on marking and feedback is always worthwhile and leads directly to improved progress
 - supporting pupils' better command of correct spoken English to build their confidence, promote accurate written work and better reflect their thoughts and ideas
 - ensuring that all pupils experience consistently good teaching in science and art.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The headteacher and his team are ambitious, thoughtful and committed to raising pupils' aspirations. They have updated the range of subjects on offer and re-introduced modern languages, music and technology, so that pupils have a similar range of opportunities as pupils have in other schools. Senior leaders are acutely aware of the context in which they are working. Their devotion to promoting achievement for all pupils, including the high number of those who are disadvantaged, shines through all of their work. Leaders are determined that pupils will fulfil their dreams, and compromise is not acceptable.
- A new and ambitious system of assessments and targets has challenged pupils to reach higher goals. In some subjects pupils are demonstrating clearly that they are capable of more than their teachers and themselves might have previously believed possible.
- The headteacher and his team have proved that they have the capacity to bring about the desired improvements. Strong leadership has had a positive impact on pupils' behaviour, safety and personal development. A new school uniform, strict attention to good conduct and the whole school's involvement in decision making have made the school a happy and harmonious place in which to learn.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a real strength of the school. Opportunities for reflection are threaded through the pupils' day. For example, while studying *A Christmas Carol*, Year 10 pupils grappled with what the Christmas spirits might represent and how they could influence choices about right or wrong actions.
- Pupils possess a strong social conscience. They are guardians of the values of community and loyalty to their families and each other. They have many opportunities for leadership within the school through a prefect system and innovative focus groups, such as the 'student attendance group', which is responsible for suggesting and evaluating effective ways of encouraging good attendance at school. School leaders ensure that pupils have opportunities to experience new and different cultures, outside of their immediate environment. A structured programme of well-planned tutor time, the established house system and memorable assemblies ensure that pupils develop a sense of duty and respect. In this way they are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Recent advantageous appointments to middle leadership roles are having a very positive impact on improving progress and teaching. All leaders of subjects or faculties check teaching and outcomes in their areas with developing expertise. For example, the new head of science has an astute awareness of strengths and weaknesses in her team and is monitoring teaching closely and taking firm action to make improvements.
- As a result of wise spending of the pupil premium funding on extra help for pupils to catch up with literacy and numeracy, and a careful evaluation of its impact on pupils' progress, disadvantaged pupils' progress is beginning to accelerate.
- The local authority provides useful support for leadership in the school and is realistic about its strengths and what needs to improve. There is a good relationship between the school and local authority children's services. However, reduced resources in the local authority children's services present additional challenges for the school in its drive to reduce persistent absence and support pupils' physical and emotional health.
- A 'challenge partnership' model of working with other schools has proved to be very beneficial. Leaders are able to share good practice and observe each other's work closely, which has helped to secure improvements.
- The headteacher, senior leaders and governors are realistic about the quality of teaching and outcomes for pupils. They tackle with resilience the undoubted challenge of recruiting staff, making no excuses. They know that some staff changes and the inexperience of newer staff led to shortfalls in examination results and also on getting younger pupils off to a flying start.
- Leaders monitor the quality of teaching closely and provide sensible guidance. Staff appreciate the training and development they receive and know they are held to account for their performance in order to progress through the pay scales. However, because some actions to improve teaching have not been measured precisely by their direct impact on pupils' progress, teaching and outcomes for pupils have not kept pace with the rate of other improvements to the school.

■ The governance of the school

- The governing body is made up of experienced personnel with a range of useful expertise, including in education. They echo the headteacher’s ambition and forward-looking approach. Governors ask difficult questions and challenge school leaders to do better. They possess a deep understanding of safeguarding and the many challenges faced by the school and its community
- The governing body ensures that the financial management of the school is in good hands. Governors have a good grasp of the spending of the pupil premium funding and its impact. They know where the strengths and weaknesses in teaching lie and ensure that progression through the pay scales depends on strong teaching and meeting targets.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. All systems, policies and practice meet requirements. Checks on staff working in the school are meticulous and record keeping is up to date and orderly. Senior staff responsible for child protection and safeguarding lead by example and are highly trained, as are all other staff, including office and site teams. Nothing is left to chance: if anyone working in the school has a concern about a pupil’s safety, it is reported promptly and effective action is taken to reduce the risk of harm. Exemplary work with other agencies in the city and local area supports those pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable. Staff are acutely aware of the risk of child sexual exploitation and extremism and can point to several cases where, because they took prompt action, pupils were protected.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement

- Teaching is not consistently good across all subjects or within some subject areas, including English, science and art. Staff changes and weaker teaching in English in Years 7 and 8 have led to slower progress. While there are examples of strong and improving teaching in science, a previous weaker practice has resulted in too much variation in outcomes for pupils.
- Some teachers do not make good enough use of information about pupils’ needs, ability or prior learning when they plan lessons. Some work for younger year groups is too easy in English. In a few cases they are repeating topics and texts they have covered in the primary schools. Pupils’ English work from Years 7 and 8 showed that in a few cases not enough gains in learning and skills had been made.
- Better teaching is evident in mathematics. Patient attention to detail and checks on understanding lead to improved progress right from Year 7 onwards.
- Excellent teaching in dance ensures its popularity as an option choice. Pupils learn extremely well because expectations of what they can achieve are high and they receive focused ‘on the spot’ feedback to help them to improve.
- The school has a well-established marking and feedback policy. Pupils report that in addition to appreciating written feedback and opportunities to improve their work, they also receive useful verbal feedback and support in small groups to guide them through tasks they find difficult. Inspectors agreed that where this is most effective, pupils’ progress leaps forward. However, where the school’s policy works less effectively is when teachers are working harder than the pupils and writing long comments, but not pushing pupils to put the advice into practice in the next similar piece of work.
- In the most successful teaching, teachers challenge pupils with deeper questioning. Relationships are strong and pupils of all abilities very much enjoy participating and putting forward their ideas and responses. Teachers have built a secure atmosphere in lessons where pupils’ confidence has grown. Some pupils are still a little shy when talking about their learning and do not have the self-assurance to show their work proudly. Although the most-able pupils contribute extended answers to their teachers’ questions and demonstrate their good understanding, their grammatical errors with spoken English go uncorrected, which leads to inaccuracies in their written work.
- The school has rightly focused on improving pupils’ reading because many join the school with very limited literacy skills. Pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9 are all expected to have a reading book and there is dedicated time for reading on the timetable. All pupils spoken to during the inspection had a reading book, and many work through specially designed programmes to help their knowledge of phonics (letters and the sounds they make) and also their comprehension and inference skills. Less attention has been paid to improving pupils’ writing skills across different subject areas.
- Pupils are set homework and expected to complete it. Catch-up classes support pupils who need extra help to meet their targets and most appreciate the additional support they can access.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The development of pupils as balanced, confident young people is a growing strength of the school. Pupils are sparky and interested in their own futures and life around them. School leaders and staff identified that increasing pupils' self-assurance was a key priority and have focused on widening the range of subjects and extra-curricular opportunities to provide them with new and challenging experiences.
- Pupils have opportunities to be leaders and contribute to decisions about the direction of the school. They take their roles seriously and gain maturity and wisdom through responsibility.
- Pupils are thoughtful and get along with each other well. They feel safe and secure in school and know how to avoid risk, including when out of school and online.
- Bullying rarely occurs and pupils are confident that staff will tackle it effectively. There is very little name-calling or derogatory language. Pupils from different backgrounds and lifestyles feel confident that they will not be singled out as victims of discrimination or intolerance.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- A firm line is taken with serious misbehaviour and as a result, the number of exclusions has reduced.
- Pupils at risk of exclusion are supported extremely well and integrated back into the school or alternative provision with specialised and effective programmes of support. As a result, pupils attending alternative provision behave well and make progress with their learning.
- Low-level disruption is rare, but is more likely when the teaching is not well planned. Pupils enjoy learning and know that teachers are there to help them. Relationships are warm and good-humoured.
- Pupils wear their uniform smartly, look after their books and try hard to present their work neatly. They look after the school site: rooms are kept tidy and corridors and outdoor areas are free from litter.
- Persistent absence is higher than that found nationally. However, there is no doubt that good attendance is the school's top priority along with a long-term strategy to change the mindset of some parents in the community. The school has invested in additional staff and new systems in order to reduce persistent absence and leaders work in close partnership with the primary schools and other agencies in the local authority. The school can rightly be proud of several cases of significantly improved attendance as a result of its tenacious and spirited work with children and families.

Outcomes for pupils

require improvement

- Examination results from 2014 show that pupils' progress from their starting points in English and mathematics was lower than that found nationally. While overall attainment improved in 2014 and demonstrated a rising trend, not enough pupils with low starting points made good progress in English. Disadvantaged pupils made less progress overall in both English and mathematics than other pupils nationally.
- Unvalidated results from 2015 show a further decline in progress and attainment, particularly in science and English. Some weak aspects of the school's performance that had been exposed in the 2014 results did not improve in 2015, including overall attainment in art and pupils' progress from lower starting points in English. Changes to staff, unexpected modifications to examination requirements, the challenge of recruiting the best-quality teachers and inexperience of new staff have all contributed to the disappointing outcomes.
- The progress of pupils currently in the school is not consistently good. Analysis of Year 7 and 8 pupils' progress in English shows that not enough are making the expected progress. This was confirmed in pupils' books and assignments. There is a more encouraging picture in mathematics and for disadvantaged pupils overall, where there is clear evidence that better teaching and use of extra help to ensure that pupils catch up, are having a positive impact. Overall, the school's predictions for the 2016 examinations are more promising: Year 11 pupils' assessments and work in their books and folders show that more are on track to make the expected progress.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make better progress currently than previously

shown in the 2014 and 2015 examination results. Better planning for pupils' needs in day-to-day lessons, combined with tackling shortfalls in numeracy and literacy, are beginning to lead to improved progress, although this is not consistent across all subjects and year groups. In a few lessons, expectations of lower ability pupils and those with special educational needs are not high enough.

- The most-able pupils usually make more progress in English and mathematics than others in the school and their progress is closer to reaching national figures for pupils with similar starting points. However, school leaders have correctly identified that expectations of the most-able pupils are not consistently high across the school and have established a new assessment and target-setting system that is intended to increase aspirations. Pupils told the inspectors that they felt that their targets were very high and that they had to work hard to climb up through the 'steps' to their expected grade.
- Pupils know how well they are doing. They are given a helpful 'monthly statement' which includes their attendance rates and how close they are to their ultimate goals. They said that they 'constantly know where we are and what we can improve on.'
- Pupils achieve excellent results in dance and history because expectations are high and planning is effective. Pupils work hard and receive incisive guidance at the point when they need it most.
- The school's work to improve reading has made a dramatic difference to pupils' reading scores and confidence. Many pupils who were unable to read independently when they joined the school make rapid gains and reach a suitable standard to manage homework and individual tasks without needing support.
- Pupils who are in alternative provision, whether at the Harbour School, or on bespoke packages of support led within the school, are quickly put back on track to prepare for and take examinations, often achieving better than expected results.
- Pupils are prepared well for their next steps. An increasing number of pupils are in the position of being able to gain scholarships to prestigious independent schools in the city to continue their studies post-16. Very nearly all pupils go on to further education, employment, apprenticeships or training. Pupils are very well supported with impartial guidance that helps them make the right choices and increasingly promotes greater ambition and aspirations.

School details

Unique reference number	116462
Local authority	Portsmouth
Inspection number	10001414

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	655
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Russell
Headteacher	Gareth Hughes
Telephone number	023 92 370321
Website	http://kingrichardschool.net
Email address	head@kingrichardschool.net
Date of previous inspection	9–10 October 2012

Information about this school

- King Richard School is a smaller than average secondary school, catering for boys and girls aged 11 to 16.
- The headteacher was appointed in September 2013.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils who are supported with additional funding because they are eligible for free school meals is higher than the national average.
- Nearly all pupils are White British.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is slightly higher than the national average.
- The majority of pupils join the school with prior attainment that is significantly lower than average.
- The school uses the Harbour School as alternative provision for the very few pupils who may be at risk of exclusion or whose attendance is causing concern.
- King Richard School is in a partnership cluster with its feeder primary schools and the local teaching school, the Mary Rose Academy.
- The school meets the current government floor standards from 2014 which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Year 11.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors made 30 visits to lessons, most of which were accompanied by senior leaders.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders, faculty leaders, a group of teachers, a group of governors and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils informally in lessons and around the school site. An inspector also held a formal meeting with a group of pupils.
- Documentation related to attendance, behaviour, safeguarding, students' attainment and current progress and governors' minutes was reviewed. Inspectors scrutinised the school's self-evaluation and improvement plan.
- Inspectors examined a sample of pupils' work across all subjects and year groups.
- The inspection team visited tutor time, observed pupils at break and lunchtime and attended an assembly.
- The 10 responses to the online survey Parent View were taken into account, in addition to the school's own survey of parents carried out in 2014.

Inspection team

Janet Pearce, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Seamus Murphy	Her Majesty's Inspector
Julie Miriam	Ofsted Inspector
Sue Child	Ofsted Inspector
Richard Blackmore	Ofsted Inspector

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