

St Richard's VC Academy

Marfleet Lane, Hull, East Yorkshire HU9 5TE

Inspection dates

8–9 November 2017

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Standards in reading, writing and mathematics have declined over the last few years. New leaders, in school and in the trust, have identified ways to address this, but these plans have only been delivered in earnest since September 2017. It is too soon to see the impact of this work on pupils' outcomes.
- Leaders have not used assessment systems to check how well all pupils and groups of pupils are performing. As a result, the actions they are taking to improve standards are not as refined or as rapid as they could be.
- In Nursery, there are not enough opportunities for children to develop their early literacy and mathematical skills. Consequently, the progress that children make in their basic skills through the early years is not rapid enough from their low starting points.
- Despite leaders' recent determined actions to improve the quality of teaching, this is still inconsistent across the school. As a result, the progress pupils make is varied and requires improvement.
- A lack of effective tracking of the progress of all disadvantaged pupils has made it difficult for leaders to check the impact that the additional funding has had for these pupils.
- Where there is a lack of challenge in lessons, pupils become disengaged and low-level disruption occurs. Adults do not apply behaviour strategies and policies consistently.
- Pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities do not make good progress overall. The new leader for this area has started work to improve this.

The school has the following strengths

- Since its reorganisation, the trust has taken effective action to improve the leadership and teaching within the school.
- Leaders have ensured that the welfare of pupils is high profile and of high priority. Well-understood, effective systems ensure that pupils are safe.
- New leaders, including the executive headteacher, the head of school, and senior and middle leaders, demonstrate clear ambition for the school. They have implemented a range of strategies that are starting to improve teaching and learning.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve leadership and management by:
 - as a matter of urgency, using the information from the school assessment system to accurately identify the attainment of all pupils and measure the progress they are making
 - refining the new plans and strategies for improvement, for example the checking of teachers' performance and of the quality of teaching and learning, by using information gained from a better understanding of each pupil's progress and attainment
 - putting more thorough plans in place for addressing the needs of disadvantaged pupils and checking the impact of these actions carefully
 - continuing to action recent plans to improve the provision for, and subsequently the progress of, pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities
 - using the strengths that exist in the school and the trust to support improvement.
- Improve the quality of teaching so that all pupils make strong progress from their different starting points by:
 - making sure that all teachers use their assessments of learning each day to identify the next steps that pupils need to take so that appropriate subsequent tasks are set for them
 - ensuring that all teachers can accurately assess pupils' learning in relation to national expectations
 - using the right tools and resources, including teaching assistants, to support pupils effectively in their learning
 - having high expectations in making sure that not a moment is lost in challenging pupils to move on in their learning.
- Improve pupils' behaviour by:
 - carrying out leaders' plans to review the behaviour policy to ensure that there is consistency in how adults support pupils in making good choices
 - encouraging all pupils to take responsibility and pride in their own behaviour and conduct.
- Improve provision in the early years so that all children make rapid progress in developing their early literacy and mathematical skills by making sure that planned activities in all areas of learning encourage plentiful opportunities for children to test out their basic skills, both in the classroom and particularly outdoors.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Since the school became an academy it has faced a number of challenges, resulting in a decline in standards. The trust, aware of pupils' underperformance, commissioned several audits and reviews to support them in accurately identifying strategies for improvement. Recent reorganisation of, and improvement within, the trust has meant that the quality of challenge and support has been focused. Actions taken by school leaders since September 2017 are starting to have a visible impact on improving teaching and learning. However, it is too early to see an impact on pupils' outcomes, and a lack of precision in leaders' use of assessment information makes the progress of all pupils difficult to check.
- Until recently, leadership roles have not been clearly defined. Leadership has not been shared and direction to other staff has been unclear and confusing. However, across the second part of the last academic year, systems and strategies have carefully been put in place and the leadership structure has been reorganised. This has meant that since September 2017, there has been an obvious shift in the direction and urgency of school improvement work. Leaders have been given dedicated time to effectively carry out their work and there is a wide range of opportunities for support and professional development provided by the trust.
- An effective system to track assessment has been put in place, but this has only been used to check the progress and attainment of pupils at the end of their time in each key stage. Pupils' progress is checked in books, but there is not a strong enough understanding and overview of the progress pupils are making within the national expectations for their year group, across the year or from their starting points. Leaders are not clear about the proportions of pupils in every year group or class who are working within standards that are typical for their age. Leaders at all levels fully agree that gathering this fundamental information will instantly refine their focus on many aspects of school improvement.
- Leaders have identified some of the barriers disadvantaged pupils face, and have started to put in place strategies to support better pupils' outcomes. The end of key stage outcomes show that these pupils do not make strong enough progress from their starting points to catch up with other pupils nationally. There is a lack of focus on tracking pupils' progress in other year groups and classes. Therefore, leaders have not checked the impact of strategies in place and it is not clear whether the substantial amount of pupil premium funding is being used effectively or not.
- The new executive headteacher brings a wealth of experience to the school, including a strong understanding of how to support teachers in improving their practice. The positive partnership between the executive headteacher and the head of school, substantive in her role since September 2017, has brought a focused evaluation of the school and given staff confidence and clarity in what needs to be done to improve.
- This term, the lead teacher for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities has effectively used a combination of lesson drop-ins, checks on pupils' work and assessment

information to evaluate the outcomes for these pupils. She has carefully checked the progress that each child is making and knows that this is too slow. She has accurately identified that this is because the provision in classrooms often does not address pupils' needs and the next steps they need to take. Although it is too soon to see the impact of leaders' work, the plans for improvement identify the right priorities. Dedicated time has been allocated, and has started, to ensure that these actions can be carried out. Pupils who have an education, health and care plan or statement of special educational needs make stronger progress in their emotional and social development owing to the high-quality one-to-one care, guidance and support they receive.

- The new lead teachers for English and mathematics demonstrate good subject knowledge. They are being well supported by senior school and trust leaders, to quickly develop their own leadership skills. Improvements in mathematics have been a high priority over the last year. The impact of leaders' work to improve pupils' skills and application can be seen, although there is some variation in this across year groups. A careful analysis of which skills most need to improve in reading has led to a change in how reading is taught from this September. There is a clear understanding that families need help to develop this area and a learning links worker is supporting this.
- The impact of leaders' work to promote a broad and balanced curriculum can be seen through the consistent approach to encouraging pupils to enquire and find out more about subjects. Many examples of pupils' work show evidence of engaging activities where pupils are challenged to explain their ideas and thinking. Leaders rightly have plans to develop this further, making sure that there is more consistency across subjects and classes.
- Frequent opportunities to work with other leaders and teachers in the trust are highly valued by school leaders and staff. These conversations and focused activities contribute well to school improvement.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well. Through assemblies and teaching, the school successfully promotes values such as responsibility, mutual respect and tolerance. Leaders ensure that any form of discrimination is not tolerated. This prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain.

Governance of the school

- St Cuthbert's Roman Catholic Academy Trust has recently taken the full responsibility for the governance of the school, on an interim basis. Having recently been through a period of considerable change itself, the trust has taken decisive actions to improve the challenge and support it gives to the school. This includes an ambition to strengthen governance.
- Recent restructuring has meant that many of the directors of the board are new to the school. They understand well the challenges the school has faced, but do not know specific details of the school's work to address these. They are in agreement that they need further refined plans and details from school leaders to help them more accurately support and challenge further improvement. For example, they need more precise information about the achievement of all pupils in the school, and how effectively additional funding is helping pupils to improve.

- Directors have prioritised ensuring that strong, collaborative leadership is in place. They know that there is much to be done to improve standards, but they are passionate in their intent to direct improvement. Their overview of all the schools in the trust gives them the advantage of being able to utilise proven expertise and experience in school improvement to support St Richard's.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders have developed a strong culture of safeguarding among the school community.
- The safeguarding lead has efficient and effective systems in place. She knows pupils and their families well and how to access and put in place the support they need. Effective links are made with other agencies.
- Leaders have ensured that staff receive regular training and updates about safeguarding. They have improved the way that staff report and record concerns so that leaders can more effectively check issues. Resulting actions are taken swiftly and records are detailed and of high quality.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Although some recent improvements can be seen, the quality of teaching is not consistently good enough across school to enable pupils to make good gains in their learning.
- Leaders' lack of understanding of the achievement and progress of all year groups and classes has, in turn, led to teachers' lack of understanding of, and aspiration for, what pupils should and could achieve. Teachers have relied on delivering the national framework, without closely marrying this to each child's current skills and what they need to learn next. More recently, teachers have begun to make better daily checks on pupils' work and use this information to plan the next tasks they set. However, this is varied. Overall there is not enough precision and urgency in matching work to pupils' needs, particularly in lower key stage 2.
- In mathematics, work to encourage pupils to apply their skills and give reasons for their choices is starting to be evidenced in pupils' books and in some learning taking place, for example in upper key stage 2. However, pupils are not consistently given access to materials and resources to help them carry out tasks and develop their understanding. As a result, pupils, particularly those of lower ability, are not successful in improving their skills or understanding of how these skills might be applied to solve everyday problems.
- Teachers have changed their approach to how they teach reading since September. Whole-class, shared book sessions are focused on teaching pupils how to retrieve information from the texts they read and access challenges at different levels to deepen their skills. Pupils are responding positively to this teaching and enjoy reading. An earlier introduction of phonics teaching is supporting pupils' reading and writing skills. As with many areas of teaching, there are some inconsistencies in how well this is modelled and delivered by adults, and in the urgency with which learning is moved

forward.

- The quality of the support teaching assistants offer pupils is varied. One-to-one support is particularly strong. Pupils who have specific additional needs have their academic and emotional needs well met. In some classes, teaching assistants are well deployed, asking pupils open questions and probing their understanding further. In other classes, teaching assistants' support is not as focused. They do not consistently offer alternative strategies, resources and explanations when pupils do not understand their work. As a result, the pace of pupils' learning stalls.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- School leaders and staff know the pupils and their families well. They know that they have many vulnerable pupils who need extra guidance and support, and they make sure that pupils receive these. Key staff support pupils' welfare needs well and offer emotional support and guidance. Leaders direct specific training for staff to understand and support individual pupils' needs.
- Pupils say that adults listen and support them well. At lunchtime, one child said, 'If I feel sad, they will always ask me why.' At collective times of the school day, such as worship and celebration assemblies, staff create a sense of belonging. For example, in the worship taking place during the inspection, pupils were all joining in, holding hands and showing respect for the nature of the session and each other.
- The breakfast club provides a lively and friendly start to the day. It is well attended. Pupils get the opportunity to improve their physical well-being by taking part in activities in the sports hall with the sports coach. During the inspection, one child said, 'I like coming here because I can see my friends before school.' The free breakfast for pupils who arrive before a certain time gives a strong incentive to many to get to school early.
- Pupils say that they feel safe and that they are taught different ways to keep themselves and others safe. They are aware of risks that may occur in their environment, such as on the school site and how to cross the road safely. They know that the school rules are there to keep them safe and happy.
- The majority of parents and carers who spoke with inspectors were very positive about the school, stating that their children were happy and that the communication between home and school was good.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Attitudes to learning in class are generally positive. However, where teaching is not as strong, pupils drift off task. There are some inconsistencies in how staff address behaviour. When low-level disruption is ignored, this can escalate and distract others

from their learning.

- Pupils generally behave well around school, due to the high level of support and good direction from adults. They find it harder to maintain this independently and are sometimes unsettled in the transition from one activity to another. Some pupils, such as Year 6, rise very well to the responsibilities they are given. Most pupils are polite and speak happily and confidently to visitors.
- Pupils are honest and say that fighting and occasional bullying takes place. A few parents have had some concerns about behaviour and bullying. However, in school, adults' responses are swift. Pupils are confident in the support they receive from adults in solving problems. They explain how specific staff are available to help them at breaktimes and that there are special calming areas pupils can go to.
- The school exclusion rate is high. However, incidents are decreasing. Procedures in place are very clear and well understood. There is a clear rationale for the exclusions made, and incidents and subsequent support given are well documented.
- Most pupils attend school regularly. The overall school attendance has been in line with the national averages for the last two years, because leaders promote good attendance well. Staff follow up absences and lateness stringently. They have effective strategies in place to ensure that pupils get to school. Staff say that opening the school doors early each day has eradicated the problems that occurred before school started, when pupils were lining up. This has also encouraged pupils to be ready to start learning on time. Parents are invited to stay for the first session once a week, to work alongside their children and to speak to staff.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Until very recently, leaders have not ensured that teaching has enabled all pupils to make strong progress. Pupils do not make the progress needed to catch up from their lower starting points. Indeed, for some, the gap between them and other pupils nationally has widened.
- Over time, the standards reached by pupils by the time they leave the school have declined. Provisional national results for 2017 show that the progress pupils made in reading and writing was in the bottom 20% nationally. Where progress is stronger, for example in mathematics, it is not rapid enough to ensure that pupils catch up to the expected standard by the end of Year 6. A very small proportion of pupils reach higher standards.
- The progress made by disadvantaged pupils over their time in school is similarly slow. Because their starting points are generally lower, the standards these pupils achieve are lower than other pupils in the school, and lower than national averages. Only a third of Year 6 pupils reached the expected combined standard in reading, writing and mathematics in the 2017 tests.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities make weak progress across subjects. However, leaders have accurately identified this as a key area for improvement, and work to improve provision and outcomes for these pupils has already begun.
- The standards reached by pupils at the end of key stage 1 show variation. Provisional

results for 2017 show improvement in the achievement and progress of pupils, particularly in reading and mathematics. However, very few pupils reach higher standards.

- The standards achieved by pupils in the Year 1 phonics screening check have consistently sat just below the national average. However, by the time they leave Year 2, almost all pupils have reached the expected standard.
- Although few pupils reach higher standards across school, recently introduced systems and strategies to support the most able pupils are starting to have an impact. For example, the higher-ability pupils in Year 6 are making good gains in their learning in English and mathematics.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- Children enter school with skills across the curriculum that are lower than those typical for their age. Over time, the progress they have made has not been swift enough to successfully prepare them for the challenges of the national curriculum in Year 1.
- When children enter the Nursery, their early literacy and mathematical skills are particularly low. The outdoor and indoor learning spaces do not provide enough direction to encourage children to independently explore and develop their learning in these areas. Literacy and mathematical resources are not high profile or visible enough, particularly in the outdoor environment. As a result, the progress children make in basic skills is not quick enough.
- Work to address basic skills is more developed in the Reception classes. Adults' animated and consistent approach to the teaching of phonics engages pupils and is supporting their development of reading skills well. A considerable number of older pupils' work shows poor letter formation, but since September 2017 early years staff have placed a greater emphasis on pupils forming individual letters correctly.
- The new leadership of the early years has been strengthened with focused support from a second executive headteacher from the trust. In addition, staff have had the opportunity to work with early years staff in other schools within the trust. As a result, the early years leader has confidently introduced improved systems from the start of this term. These include accurate on-entry assessments with a much better understanding of children's starting points and what children need to learn next across each aspect of the curriculum.
- Across Nursery and Reception, adults have created a caring and positive environment. Partnerships with parents are good, with regular opportunities for parents to see and be involved in their child's learning. There is an emphasis on teaching children to keep themselves safe and to be kind to each other.
- Adults work hard to introduce routines and develop clear boundaries. They are raising their expectations of what pupils can do. During the inspection, all of the Reception children took part in a very well-organised physical education lesson, where they practised and developed their ball skills. Adults engaged and motivated pupils effectively. The session was calm and purposeful and children improved their skills, in physical education as well as in listening.

School details

Unique reference number	141649
Local authority	Kingston upon Hull
Inspection number	10036391

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	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	408
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Vanessa Nolan
Head of school	Cate Coldham
Executive headteacher	Karen Seidle
Telephone number	01482 781928
Website	www.st-richards.co.uk
Email address	admin@st-richards.hull.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- St Richard's VC Academy is larger than the average-sized primary school. It became a member of St Cuthbert's Roman Catholic Academy Trust in January 2015. A board of directors governs the trust.
- The executive headteacher and the head of school were appointed to their substantive posts on 1 September 2017. The trust has taken responsibility for governance from 1 October 2017.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium funding is above the national average.

- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is above the national average. The proportion of pupils who have an education, health and care plan or statement of special educational needs is lower than the national average.
- The early years consists of a Nursery and two Reception classes. Children can attend Nursery on a flexible full- or part-time basis.
- The school operates a breakfast club.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.
- The school meets the 2016 government's floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for attainment and progress in English and mathematics.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors gathered a wide range of evidence during the inspection, including observing learning across the school. Inspectors visited all classes. The majority of visits took place with school leaders.
- Inspectors looked at a wide range of pupils' work across the curriculum, much of which was done alongside senior and middle leaders.
- A wide range of documents were scrutinised, including school assessment information, school self-evaluation, school improvement planning, and records of the monitoring of teaching and learning. Documents relating to how leaders check teachers' performance were noted. Leaders' work and documents relating to safeguarding, behaviour and attendance were also checked. Inspectors reviewed meeting minutes for the previous governing body as well as external reviews of the school's performance.
- Regular meetings took place with the head of school and the executive headteacher. Other meetings took place with senior and middle leaders, teachers and teaching assistants, office staff, the safeguarding lead and pupils. Inspectors met with directors and the chief executive officer for the trust, as well as other trust improvement leaders.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read.
- The behaviour of pupils was observed in lessons, at breaktime, at lunchtime and in the breakfast club.
- Inspectors met with parents outside before school and considered the six responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, in addition to the school's own evaluation of responses to their parent questionnaire.
- The views of the 19 staff and the 36 pupils who responded to Ofsted questionnaires were taken into account.

Inspection team

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Rajinder Harrison	Ofsted Inspector
Angela Harper	Ofsted Inspector
Beverley Riddle	Ofsted Inspector

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