

Richmond Park Academy

Park Avenue, London SW14 8RG

Inspection dates

7–8 December 2017

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
16 to 19 study programmes	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The new principal has galvanised the school community with his high aspirations to improve outcomes for pupils. He is tenacious and inspires staff.
- Governance is strong and ambitious for the school community. Members of the school's management board provide effective challenge to leaders to set aspirational targets and secure further improvements in teaching and learning.
- Staff feel valued and proud to be associated with the school. Leaders link professional development opportunities to individual teachers' needs and the school's priorities.
- Senior leaders are astutely aware of the school's strengths and work hard to ensure that rigorous systems are in place to monitor teaching and learning. However, there are some inconsistencies in teachers' expectations of what pupils are capable of achieving in lessons.
- Teachers do not always use assessment information to plan lessons that challenge pupils. In particular, the most able and disadvantaged pupils do not make consistently strong progress.
- Leaders' evaluation of key actions to improve pupils' progress has not been sharp and lacks detailed assessment of impact.
- The 16 to 19 programmes of study are good. The quality of teaching and learning is strong in the sixth form.
- The school actively promotes students' well-being and safeguarding is effective.
- Pupils enjoy school. The new behaviour system which rewards good behaviour has improved pupils' engagement in lessons. Attendance has improved. Leaders' actions to reduce persistent absence have been successful.
- Teachers use their secure subject knowledge to plan learning activities that interest pupils. However, in some lessons, teaching assistants are not used effectively. As a result, pupils who need additional support are not challenged to extend their learning.
- The school's curriculum is broad and provides a range of academic and vocational subjects. It supports pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.
- Pupils' behaviour is good and exemplifies the school's values. Pupils are confident and articulate.
- Across a range of subjects, pupils make good progress and where differences in achievement exist, leaders are taking effective action to secure good progress.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that:
 - teachers have consistently high expectations of all pupils' learning
 - teachers use assessment information to plan learning that challenges pupils appropriately, particularly the disadvantaged and most able pupils.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management at all levels by:
 - evaluating the impact of strategies so that clear impact of specific steps undertaken is established to secure further improvements across the school
 - ensuring that teaching assistants are deployed effectively to support pupils' learning

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The principal, who has been in post since September 2016, has brought strong leadership to the school. He is motivated to improve standards and the quality of teaching across the school. The principal has introduced strategies which have had a strong impact on the school ethos and improvements in pupils' outcomes. He leads by example and is highly respected by staff, parents, pupils and governors.
- The principal is respected across the school and has communicated a clear vision for the school to all members of the school community. He has empowered the leadership team to raise standards and hold staff to account for pupils' outcomes through a relentless focus on improving teaching and learning. Staff feel well supported and happy to be part of the drive for improvement.
- Leaders, including management board members, are reflective and accurate in their self-evaluation of the school. They have identified clear priorities for school improvement and put strategies in place to deliver school improvement priorities.
- The changes introduced by leaders include opportunities for staff professional development which focus on improving teaching and learning. Newly qualified teachers receive appropriate support within their subject specialisms.
- The principal holds staff to account through clear performance management targets which focus on pupils' outcomes.
- Leaders receive support from the trust to develop leadership and build capacity for further improvement. They are regularly reviewing pupils' progress information and scrutinising pupils' books to identify ways to improve progress.
- The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum. Pupils study a range of academic and vocational subjects. They have other opportunities through the extra-curricular programme to enrich their learning. For example, pupils publish a book of poems and participate in debate competitions, sporting events and other school clubs.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is embedded in the curriculum across the school. Through the tutor programme and religious education lessons, pupils learn about other faiths and cultures. The school promotes tolerance and respect effectively. Inspectors noted that the school is a harmonious community where differences are celebrated.
- The school's tutor programme and personal, social, health education allows pupils to develop their understanding of British values and prepare them for life in modern Britain.
- Leaders use the pupil premium funding effectively to ensure that disadvantaged pupils make good progress. Some of the funding is used to provide additional adults to help pupils across the school. Additional lessons are organised for pupils to receive tuition in any subjects in which they have fallen behind. Assessment information shows that any differences between the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and that of others are diminishing. However, leaders' evaluation of some intervention strategies are not fully effective because they do not identify the impact of specific actions taken to raise

achievement.

- Leaders monitor and review the impact of the Year 7 catch-up funding well through a range of intervention activities which are effective and responsive to the needs of pupils.
- The school has an autism resource base and pupils in the base are integrated into mainstream lessons. Leaders use the funding for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities effectively. They ensure that these pupils are making good progress through targeted support across the curriculum. However, teaching assistants are not always deployed as well as they could be. Consequently, pupils are not always challenged to extend their learning.

Governance of the school

- The governing body has been replaced with a new management board of eight members appointed by the trust.
- The management board members are acutely aware of the priorities of the school and provide appropriate support and challenge to the school leaders to secure improvement in outcomes. The board has a range of skills and experience which helps them to identify accurately strengths and weaknesses.
- The board has a clear strategic vision to secure improvement in the quality of education for pupils. Board members visit the school regularly and review evidence with the senior leadership team. They have an effective performance management system in place to hold the principal to account for outcomes and development of staff linked to clear targets.
- Board members are determined to raise standards across the school using a range of strategies. They recognise the need for sharper and smarter evaluation of the impact of key actions to secure further improvements.
- Members of the management board undertake relevant training to meet their statutory duties, including training related to safeguarding and the curriculum.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Board members and leaders have a clear understanding of their safeguarding responsibilities. They ensure that statutory requirements are met.
- Leaders ensure that procedures to keep pupils safe are rigorous. Systems are in place to ensure that staff can report any concerns they may have about pupils' welfare and seek advice. Staff have received up-to-date training and have developed an attentive safeguarding culture. Staff training covers safeguarding issues such as radicalisation, child sexual exploitation and female genital mutilation.
- Leaders ensure that pupils feel safe in and out of school. They work with the police to deliver training on road safety and safe use of the internet.
- The designated safeguarding lead works closely with external agencies to provide timely support to pupils and their families. They follow up referrals to ensure that the

right support is provided to keep pupils safe. Leaders make appropriate checks when appointing staff and governors.

- Pupils told inspectors that they feel safe and happy in school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teaching is good across all year groups and subjects. The constructive relationship between teachers and pupils contributes positively to a learning environment where pupils are confident in asking questions to deepen their understanding.
- Pupils' behaviour in lessons is good and they demonstrate positive attitudes to learning. Generally, lessons are calm and no time is wasted because pupils are engaged in their learning.
- Inspectors observed pupils using established routines where they review their learning using a fact-usefulness-skills-evaluation (FUSE) system. This system contributes to pupils' good progress. They enjoy regular opportunities in lessons to improve their learning using the teachers' feedback, in line with the school's policy.
- Teachers set homework in accordance with the school's policy to extend pupils' learning and foster engagement with the curriculum provision.
- Pupils told inspectors that they are well supported in school. The range of after-school clubs linked to subjects, Saturday intervention classes and a residential programme allow pupils to catch up in their learning and contribute well to pupils' good progress. Teachers have unwavering commitment to secure the outcomes for students.
- Teachers plan well-structured lessons which mostly respond to the needs of pupils. They use their good subject knowledge to secure pupils' enthusiasm for learning, which supports the very effective dialogue between teachers and pupils.
- Teachers use assessments to inform their teaching in line with the school's assessment and feedback policies. However, teachers do not always use pupil performance information actively to support disadvantaged and most-able pupils in lesson. This means that these pupils sometimes fall behind.
- Teachers' expectations of what pupils are capable of achieving are not consistently high. As a result, pupils are not always moved on quickly in their learning.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The tutor and assembly programmes are well organised. Pupils have regular opportunities to learn about British values and participate in extra-curricular activities.
- Pupils feel safe in school. They have positive relationships with staff, which has an impact on their personal development. As a result, pupils are confident and play an active part in the life of the school. Pupils are encouraged to participate in community charity events such as a sponsored walk around Richmond Park.

- Pupils said that they are well cared for and supported by staff. According to pupils interviewed by inspectors, bullying is rare in the school. They said that if bullying occurs, teachers are able to resolve the issues.
- The elected school council members are actively involved in developing policies to enhance pupils' experience of school. The recent focus in Year 10 has placed an emphasis on developing pupils' leadership and entrepreneurial skills. Examples of such initiatives have developed pupils' confidence and interest in education.
- Pupils have developed their sense of belonging and responsibility to the school community. Pupils are proud of their school and want to look after it. They know, for example, not to throw litter anywhere.
- School leaders encourage healthy eating and pupils understand the benefits of eating healthily as well as keeping physically and mentally fit. The school provides a wide range of extra-curricular activities, such as boxing, gardening, choir, algebra, art and debating clubs, to develop pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Pupils know how to be safe when using the internet, including social media websites. Through the workshops run by the school with external agencies, pupils have a good understanding of road safety, radicalisation and extremism.
- Pupils learn about religion, diversity and different cultures. Teachers plan trips and other activities to enhance pupils' learning. For example, pupils in Year 7 visit France and Spain to learn about cultures and other faiths.
- Pupils benefit from effective careers and guidance provision across all key stages. They are well prepared for their future education, training and employment.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are respectful, courteous and work well together. They respond well to the teachers and adults working with them. Pupils wear their school uniform with pride.
- Pupils' attitudes to work and learning are positive and contribute well to their progress. The learning environment is very tidy, calm and purposeful. In most lessons pupils are enthusiastic and demonstrate high levels of engagement.
- The school's behaviour system is robust and clearly understood by pupils. They speak highly of the reward systems. Staff and parent responses to the questionnaires support the view that behaviour is well managed by school leaders.
- Conduct of pupils at break, lunchtimes and on corridors is good and contributes to the calm atmosphere in the school.
- Attendance has improved due to leaders' relentless focus on monitoring pupils' attendance closely. Leaders have used initiatives and strategies to improve attendance. For example, 'Just 25' is a challenge for pupils to achieve 100% attendance for the first 25 days of the half term. Pupils respond positively to the competition and overall school attendance is currently above the national average. Persistent absence has also improved.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils make good progress across a range of subjects, including English and mathematics. The current assessment information shows that pupils are making good progress from different starting points. From the last academic year, the improvement in pupils' outcomes is reflected across all year groups. Where there are gaps in attainment and progress, there is an improving trend. Work in pupils' books confirms that pupils are making good progress.
- Attainment of pupils at the end of Year 11 in 2017 in mathematics and English is above the national average. The current school's assessment information confirms an improving picture.
- Pupils' work in books and teacher assessments show that progress is good. However, there are some areas where progress is weaker, such as in science. Leaders are rightly focusing on these areas to diminish the differences.
- GCSE results in 2016 were significantly below the national average for progress and attainment. However, leaders have taken effective action, resulting in a strong trend of improvement for pupils.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities when compared with other pupils with similar starting points make good progress across the curriculum.
- The assessment system in the school has been refined to ensure reliability of teacher assessment. The school uses 'stop the clock' assessments in the core subjects designed by the trust to improve the accuracy of assessments and reported outcomes across the school.
- Disadvantaged pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, are now making progress similar to other pupils. This is due to improvements in teaching and learning as well as tailored support given to pupils who need to catch up.
- Pupils with low prior attainment at the start of Year 7 make strong progress. Middle-attaining pupils made the least progress in 2017 but the current assessment information shows that progress in a range of subjects is improving.

16 to 19 study programmes

Good

- Leaders have ensured that there is an effective 16 to 19 provision with a range of both academic and vocational courses which meet the needs of students. The flourishing enrichment programme and work experience opportunities prepare students well for higher education and employment.
- Leaders' expectations of students' learning and progress are matched with strong support from teachers to improve outcomes. There is a robust system in place to monitor and track students' progress through a systematic use of assessment information. The weaker performance in 2016 has been addressed and outcomes in 2017 show strong improvement across most subjects.
- Students receive high-quality, impartial careers guidance and advice. This allows students to progress to employment or further education, including universities, because they make informed choices. Although the number of students who stay in the

sixth form is low, leaders have reviewed the curriculum and provide regular intervention opportunities to address the needs of students.

- The quality of teaching in the sixth form is strong. Teachers use their excellent subject knowledge to carefully plan lessons that challenge students to think critically. This contributes to students' good progress.
- Students' attendance in the sixth form is strong and supports the view expressed by students that they enjoy being at school. Sixth-formers play an active role in the school. For example, some are given paid employment to work alongside teachers during lunchtimes by supervising students in the canteen.
- Students' work demonstrates that teachers are driving improvements in their learning through the use of detailed feedback. In a minority of subjects, such as chemistry, psychology and physics, outcomes are low. Leaders are taking action to tackle the problem but the impact of their strategies is yet to be seen.
- The school has a few students who are resitting mathematics because they did not achieve grade 4 at the end of Year 11. The challenge and support provided in the sixth form is reflected in the good progress that these students are making.
- Students know how to keep themselves safe and healthy. They are articulate and confident. Students work well together and demonstrate excellent behaviour which includes adhering to the expectations of dress code and punctuality to lessons. The safeguarding arrangements in the sixth form are effective.

School details

Unique reference number	136208
Local authority	Richmond upon Thames
Inspection number	10036358

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	771
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	67
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John King
Principal	Paul Mundy-Castle
Telephone number	020 8876 8891
Website	www.richmondparkacademy.org
Email address	pmcastle@richmondparkacademy.org
Date of previous inspection	24–25 October 2012

Information about this school

- 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 is part of the Academies Enterprise Trust and has been opened since 2010. The trust has appointed members who form the management board of the school and they work with a local parent and community advisory board.
- The school is a smaller than average-sized secondary school.

- The school has a small number of students in the sixth form, which opened in 2014.
- The principal has been in post since September 2016.
- The school has a high proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals.
- The proportion of pupils of minority ethnic groups is higher than average. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is also high. The largest minority ethnic group is pupils from Black African heritage.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is above average.
- The school has an autism resource base on site and does not use alternative providers.
- The school did not meet the government's floor standards in 2016, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 43 lessons. In five of these lessons inspectors were joined by senior leaders. Inspectors visited lessons in all key stages and across a range of subjects.
- Inspectors held meetings with senior leaders, middle leaders, members of the school management board, including the regional director of the trust, and the special educational needs coordinator. Further meetings were held with pupils in key stages 3, 4 and 5 to find out about their experiences and views on the school. Inspectors also listened to pupils reading.
- Inspectors attended an assembly and tutor time.
- Inspectors gathered and evaluated a range of documentary evidence, including records of the school's monitoring of teaching and learning, assessment information, minutes of governing body meetings and records for behaviour, safeguarding and attendance. Further evidence such as anonymised performance management records, self-evaluation, improvement plans, policies, curriculum information and the school's website were scrutinised.
- The inspection team reviewed work in pupils' books in a wide range of subjects and across all key stages to assess pupils' progress.
- Inspectors considered 146 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. They also considered 54 staff questionnaires and 192 pupil surveys.

Inspection team

Jeffery Quaye, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
James Whiting	Ofsted Inspector
Aruna Sharma	Ofsted Inspector
Ian Morris	Ofsted Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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