

Inspection of a good school: Richmond School

Darlington Road, Richmond, North Yorkshire DL10 7BQ

Inspection dates:

18 and 19 January 2022

Outcome

Richmond School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a large and vibrant school that sits at the heart of its local community. Leaders prioritise pupils' academic achievement and pupils achieve well. Leaders show a strong commitment to pupils beyond just academic success. There is a wealth of opportunities in which pupils can take part outside the classroom. One pupil said that school, 'helps us to find our talents and interests'. The range of sports and performing arts clubs is impressive. Extra-curricular activities continue at lunchtimes. The library is a much-valued, central space for pupils where they play chess or read. Leaders are proud of the range of trips and experiences they offered before the COVID-19 pandemic, including trips to France, links with the local Georgian Theatre Royal and a German exchange programme. Plans are already in place to make sure that these opportunities are once again available to pupils.

Pupils are happy, courteous and articulate. They were all willing to speak to inspectors and share their experiences. Year 7 pupils and parents and carers spoke of how the transition from primary school was well managed. One pupil said, 'Even though it's a big school, they helped me fit in quickly.'

Many parents praised the school for its 'fantastic' response to COVID-19 restrictions. Parents appreciated the hard work and dedication of staff to continuing to deliver a high-quality education to their children remotely. Parents were also grateful for the pastoral support that staff provided during this time, reporting frequent contact, especially for more vulnerable pupils.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders have ensured that lessons are challenging and well planned. Leaders from the trust ensure that subject teachers are confident about exactly what they want pupils to know. Leaders have checked that planning is logical and well organised. Teachers focus on making sure that pupils understand and remember important vocabulary through the use of 'knowledge organisers'. Consequently, many pupils were able to confidently explain

to inspectors what they knew. In most lessons, teachers check carefully what pupils know and have remembered. In some lessons, this is not happening routinely. This means that in these lessons, pupils are not able to clearly explain what they have learned. In Years 7 to 9, leaders are reconsidering and developing effective systems to ensure that assessments accurately check what pupils know. This is not yet in place for all subjects.

Leaders support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to achieve their potential. Teaching assistants work closely with pupils with SEND to make sure that they can succeed. Teachers make sure that pupils with physical needs have full access to practical subjects, including dance and physical education (PE).

Behaviour around the school is orderly and respectful. Pupils and adults speak considerately to each other. In classrooms, there is a high level of respect. Pupils know that teachers want them to do well. Most pupils are actively engaged and keen to learn. Pupils trust adults in school to help and support them. If bullying occurs, it is dealt with quickly by staff. Leaders take bullying seriously. Pupils are taught about how to treat each other with respect, which is one of the school's core values.

Pupils receive detailed and thorough information about careers, university and the world of work. The careers provision is a considerable strength of the school. Pupils receive individual support to make sure that they make the choices that are right for them. Teaching staff also make sure that pupils understand how jobs are linked to the subjects they study in lessons. The strength of the careers support is evident in the destinations of pupils when they leave school. Students in the sixth form say that they feel well supported to take their next steps.

This is a school with ambition. Trust and school leaders are clear about continuing to improve the quality of their provision even further. Trust leaders spoke passionately about their vision to continue to broaden the experiences of all pupils, especially the most vulnerable and disadvantaged. Staff explain that they feel supported by leaders. They recognise efforts that leaders have made in considering their workload and well-being. Staff said that they feel their opinions are valued and that leaders will listen to what they have to say.

In discussion with the headteacher, the inspector agreed that assessment may usefully serve as a focus for the next inspection.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have established a vigilant safeguarding culture. Staff are clear about what the key risks are for their pupils. They know how to report concerns, and robust procedures are in place to monitor vulnerable pupils. Leaders make sure that pupils are well informed about how to keep themselves safe, and regularly quiz them to check their understanding. Leaders share key information about local risks with parents. Leaders take timely action when involving outside agencies as necessary. They routinely follow up these referrals to make sure that families get the support they need.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some lessons, teachers are not systematically checking what pupils know and remember. This means that pupils' learning is not as secure as it could be, and pupils sometimes struggle to explain or demonstrate their understanding. Leaders should ensure that teachers are regularly checking in lessons what all pupils have learned in order to help them embed important knowledge.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the section 8 inspection a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the predecessor school, Richmond School, to be good in January 2017.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

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.

School details

Unique reference number	145090
Local authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	10215954
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of students in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,300
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	250
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Catherine Brooker
Headteacher	Jenna Potter
Website	www.richmondschool.net
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Richmond School is larger than the average-sized secondary school.
- Since the previous inspection, Richmond School has joined the Arete Learning Trust in December 2017.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

This was the first routine inspection the school had received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders, and have taken that into account in their evaluation.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: modern foreign languages, geography, science and PE. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders,

looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- Inspectors spoke with a wide range of senior leaders, including the chair of the local governing body and the chair of the trust. Inspectors met with the chief executive officer of the trust. Inspectors spoke to leaders responsible for careers provision and personal development.
- Inspectors met with the special educational needs coordinator. They met with a group of pupils with SEND and reviewed individual provision maps for these pupils. They visited a range of pupils with SEND in lessons and looked at how they were supported. They also reviewed samples of their work.
- An inspector met with the leaders in charge of safeguarding arrangements. They checked logs and records of actions the school has taken to keep pupils safe and ensure that they receive the support they need. They reviewed documentation and case studies of how the school deals with bullying and serious incidents. They met with a wide range of staff to check the effectiveness of safeguarding procedures.
- Inspectors spoke to a range of staff.
- Inspectors considered the 206 responses to Parent View, the 81 responses to the staff survey and the 249 responses to the pupil survey. They also considered additional communications from parents.

Inspection team

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