

Inspection of The Richmond Hill Academy

Clark Lane, Leeds, West Yorkshire LS9 8PN

Inspection dates: 9 and 10 March 2022

Overall effectiveness

Good

The quality of education

Good

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Early years provision

Good

Previous inspection grade

Not previously inspected under section 5
of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

Exceptional leadership at all levels has brought about considerable improvement for the opportunities and experiences of pupils in the school. Leaders in school, supported by trust leaders, have the highest expectations of pupils. For example, pupils start learning Mandarin from Year 1 and then supplement this with French from Year 3. Pupils speak and write in these languages to a high standard.

Pupils' behaviour is excellent. Staff teach children coming into Nursery how to be kind and how to move from one activity to another. This sets the tone and only improves as pupils move through the school. Staff pick up on small details such as sitting correctly so that everyone knows how to 'show excellence', one of the school's values. Pupils say that if they are concerned about bullying staff will sort it out within 24 hours, and they do.

Leaders bring in professional music teachers who have a deep passion and knowledge about music teaching. All pupils learn a musical instrument to a high standard after gaining the technical knowledge they need in key stage 1.

Leaders have established a highly successful curriculum for personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education. The way that pupils discuss their respect for their peers and others in the community is breathtaking. Pupils talk with a deep understanding and maturity about themes such as misogyny and the suffragettes when discussing what has happened in the past to bring about a more equal society. Leaders' work to match the curriculum to rich and meaningful experiences for pupils like voting for an 'MPP' (member of pupil parliament) is exemplary.

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

The caring and inspirational leadership from the principal, supported by senior and trust leaders, has improved every aspect of the school at a rate of knots. Parents and carers overwhelmingly appreciate all that staff do for their children. Staff are happy and feel listened to and well trained. As one teacher said, 'I walk out of school happy every day.'

Leaders have designed a curriculum that is highly ambitious for pupils. Each subject is led by a knowledgeable leader who has planned out what the important concepts that pupils should be taught are. The curriculum is planned out in an iterative way so that pupils practise what they have been taught in the past. Pupils gain more knowledge and skills in each subject over time.

Teachers use the 'Hi 5' method to check what pupils have remembered and to practise what they have done in the past. Teachers understand the subjects that they teach and have the subject knowledge they need to then make changes based on what they see. This helps pupils get better at what they are doing. Very occasionally where this assessment is not as precise as it needs to be, pupils receive

work that is not as meaningful as it could be. Through the well-planned training they provide, leaders are improving teachers' ability to address this.

Staff have received suitable training for teaching phonics. They teach children in the early years the sounds that they need to read, with expertise and enthusiasm. Children learn and use these sounds with helpful actions to aid remembering them. Alongside this, teachers read books to pupils that help with both pupils' vocabulary and their understanding of important themes such as gender equality, or what it might be like to be a refugee. Teachers make use of these books to improve pupils' use of words in a range of subjects.

The rainbow base is a highly effective and impressive resource that supports the development of pupils with complex communication needs, including autism spectrum disorder. Leaders are highly ambitious for pupils to make the progress that they need. This is done through personalised curriculums. Staff understand how to teach each pupil, based on their unique needs. Teachers assess what pupils can do and make changes to their plans based on this, all the time focused on what the pupils should be able to achieve at the end of each sequence of learning.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are supported well throughout the school. Plans for these pupils are created with parents and the pupils themselves. Teachers use this information well to provide help that means pupils are successful in each subject across the curriculum.

Leaders prioritise the development of children's spoken and written language in the early years. Teachers focus on improving children's attitudes to learning and how they speak to each other. Large-group sessions led by the teacher are well planned. Children gain knowledge and words which they use when talking to each other. However, the curriculum for some of the areas of learning is not as clear or precise as it is for literacy and numeracy. When children are selecting learning activities staff sometimes miss opportunities to embed children's learning and enrich their vocabulary. Children do not gain the knowledge and vocabulary in their independent learning as well as they could.

Leaders' work to involve the local community is exemplary. There are multiple examples of where staff go above and beyond to help both pupils and families. For example, governors and staff have been supporting parents to find employment, resulting in some already successfully doing so. The positive relationships that staff have with parents has supported pupils who did not come to school enough in the past. The attendance of many of these pupils has improved immensely.

Trustees, trust leaders and local governors all work together well. Trust leaders provide insight and expertise to school leaders at all levels. School and trust leaders pass information to trustees who then ask local governors to check out what is happening in the school. All of this contributes to a highly effective system where what leaders are doing is supported and challenged to help further improve the school for the pupils.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders give the safety of pupils the highest priority in the school. There is a real urgency in everyone's work to keep children safe. If staff have a concern about a child then they report it to the designated safeguarding lead who investigates if anything more needs to be done immediately. Leaders work well with other agencies and will push for more support if they feel a family needs it. Leaders make sure all staff and volunteers are suitable to work or be in the school.

Leaders use the curriculum to educate pupils about how to keep themselves safe. Pupils have a particularly good understanding of how to resist toxic relationships, and what is and is not safe to eat or drink.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some areas of learning in the early years curriculum are not planned precisely. The environment and how some staff support children when they are learning independently is not as exact or purposeful as it needs to be. Staff miss some opportunities to capitalise on the language children are taught in the adult-led teaching sessions. Leaders should plan the early years curriculum with precision for all areas of learning. They should ensure that the learning environment and the interactions between staff and children match this revised curriculum planning.

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	145178
Local authority	Leeds
Inspection number	10212323
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	614
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Anne McAvan
Principal	Anna Mackenzie
Website	www.richmondhill.leeds.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The Richmond Hill Academy converted to become an academy school in November 2017. When its predecessor school, Richmond Hill Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be inadequate overall. The school is now part of The Gorse Academies Trust.
- The principal started at the school in January 2018.
- The school makes use of one alternative provider, The Stephen Longfellow Academy. This is an alternative provider that is also part of The Gorse Academies Trust and is judged as good overall by Ofsted.
- The school has a nursery for three- and four-year-olds.
- The school has specialist provision on site for 35 pupils with education, health and care plans for complex communication needs, including autism spectrum disorder. This provision is called the rainbow base.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school 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 of the school.
- Inspectors spoke with the principal, partnership director for teaching across the trust, vice principal and two assistant principals about actions taken since the last inspection. The lead inspector spoke to trustees and members of the local governing body about their work with the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, science, languages and music. 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. Four of these deep dives included a visit to the early years.
- Inspectors visited the rainbow base and spoke to staff who teach there and looked at pupils' work. Inspectors visited other pupils with SEND in their lessons. They considered how these pupils were being supported.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read books that had been allocated to them.
- Inspectors looked at records that leaders keep on safeguarding pupils and spoke to leaders about their work to engage parents.
- Inspectors looked at the curriculum for PSHE education and spoke to pupils about their learning in these lessons. Inspectors spoke to pupils about behaviour in the school and watched break and lunchtimes to see how pupils play together.
- Inspectors scrutinised the plans and agreements for pupils attending alternative provision.
- Inspectors used the 67 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View, and responses from staff and pupils through surveys to evaluate how leaders engage with the wider community.

Inspection team

Matthew Knox, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Dom Brown	Ofsted Inspector
Chris Pearce	Her Majesty's Inspector
Jenny Thomas	Her Majesty's Inspector

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