

Inspection of Richard Rose Central Academy

Victoria Place, Carlisle, Cumbria CA1 1LY

Inspection dates: 8 and 9 June 2022

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Sixth-form provision

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils, and students in the sixth form, told inspectors that the school had changed for the better in recent years. Pupils said that in the past bullying was common. This is no longer the case. Leaders now have higher expectations of pupils' behaviour and their achievement. Most pupils and students in the sixth form said that they feel safe and well cared for.

Pupils and students said that behaviour is continually improving. Increasingly, pupils can learn without being disrupted by others. However, pupils and students told inspectors that some pupils still do not behave as well as they should in lessons.

Pupils and students are beginning to benefit from wider leadership opportunities to develop their character and confidence. For example, they can become a prefect or an anti-bullying ambassador. Pupils said that they value assemblies on the topics of equality and respect. They explained that the school is now a place where most pupils can be themselves, for example as part of the LGBTQ+ group.

Leaders are in the process of transforming the curriculum to improve the quality of education for pupils. However, too many pupils and students, particularly those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), do not attend school regularly enough. This prevents some pupils and students from experiencing all that the curriculum has to offer.

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

Leaders are navigating this school through a period of considerable change. Those staff, and pupils and students in the sixth form, who spoke to an inspector said that the quality of education is getting better. Many parents and carers also agree that the school is improving.

The curriculum that pupils and students previously experienced did not allow them to achieve as well as they should have. Leaders are now fully focused on ensuring that the curriculum is ambitious and that it meets pupils' and students' learning needs. These ongoing improvements mean that pupils and students are starting to gain the breadth and depth of knowledge that they need across a wider range of subjects.

In many subjects, leaders are clear about what they want pupils and students to know. In these subjects, leaders have thought carefully about the order that teachers deliver new subject content. This ensures that more pupils, and students in the sixth form, successfully build on their previous learning. Added to this, leaders have successfully prioritised the development of subject-specific vocabulary in these subjects. This helps pupils and students to build a deeper and richer body of subject knowledge.

Although the curriculum is improving in many subjects, in a small number of subjects, leaders are still being supported to refine the subject curriculum content that pupils and students must learn. Senior leaders are focused on ensuring the consistent delivery of the new curriculum across all subjects. Some subjects are further on in their journey of change than others. There is still some way to go to achieve uniformity in the quality of the curriculum delivery. As a result of the inconsistencies in the curriculum, pupils' and students' achievement across year groups and subjects is uneven.

A whole-school approach to assessment has been introduced across subjects in all key stages. In some subjects teachers use these systems well to identify the gaps in pupils' knowledge and to help them to improve. Where there is less clarity in what subject content teachers are delivering, and where teachers have not had enough training, assessment systems are less effective. As a result, some pupils' misconceptions go unaddressed. In the sixth form, assessment strategies are more consistently embedded. Students benefit from teachers' expert subject knowledge and industry-specific experience.

Leaders have introduced a whole-school approach to reading so that pupils experience a wide range of culturally diverse texts and develop fluency in their reading. However, leaders' systems to identify and support pupils who are at the early stages of learning to read are not developed well enough for them to catch up in a timely manner. This negatively affects how well these pupils are able to access the curriculum and, sometimes impacts negatively on how well they learn. That said, leaders have appropriate plans in place to address this issue.

Leaders have implemented a new behaviour policy. They provide ongoing training for staff to develop their expertise in managing pupils' behaviour. As a result, pupils' behaviour has improved in the recent past. The school is now calm and orderly during many lessons and social times. However, the new behaviour system is not used consistently well by all staff. This means that in a small minority of lessons, some pupils do not behave well. This causes disruption to the learning of others.

Leaders have effective systems in place to identify pupils with SEND. Leaders provide useful information that teachers use to support these pupils in their learning.

All pupils and students receive appropriate information about how to keep themselves healthy and safe, as well as effective careers information, advice and guidance. Pupils and students also benefit from age-appropriate information about sex and relationships. In Years 10 and 12, pupils and students enjoy well-planned opportunities for work experience. Leaders are well on the way to reviewing the personal, social, health and economic education curriculum to ensure that it provides further depth and coverage to meet pupils' learning needs, particularly at key stage 4.

In the sixth form, enrichment activities for students include charity work and volunteering opportunities. However, a number of students do not engage with

these opportunities. As a result, they do not benefit from these broad, rich experiences to develop their character and wider employability skills.

Governors and trustees are supporting and challenging leaders well towards their journey of improvements. Staff are appreciative of leaders' actions to support their workload and well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have increased the capacity of the school's safeguarding team. They ensured that there is a strong culture of safeguarding. Leaders make sure that they and their staff apply safeguarding policies and practices robustly. All staff receive appropriate, regular training. They are clear about the procedures for reporting concerns.

The leaders with responsibility for safeguarding know pupils' individual circumstances well. They work effectively with families to ensure that they receive the extra support that they need. This includes working with external agencies, when appropriate.

More recently, leaders have deliberately and effectively increased their engagement and communication with parents, carers and the local community. This is to highlight and raise awareness of local and national safeguarding issues.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The curriculum content that teachers must deliver has not been finalised in a small number of subjects. This negatively affects how well some pupils and students learn the essential knowledge in these subjects. Leaders should finalise their curriculum thinking across all subjects and key stages.
- Not all teachers use leaders' assessment systems as effectively as they should to check how well pupils are learning the content of the curriculum. As a result, there are times when pupils have misconceptions in their learning which go unaddressed. Leaders should finalise their curriculum thinking and ensure that teachers receive the training that they need to assess pupils' learning effectively.
- There is variability in how well teachers implement the new behaviour policy. As a result, a small number of pupils disrupt lessons for other pupils. Leaders should ensure that the behaviour policy is consistently applied by all teachers so that pupils' learning is not disrupted.
- The attendance of pupils with SEND is lower than should be expected. This prevents these pupils from benefiting from all that the curriculum has to offer. Leaders should ensure that their newly designed strategies to address persistent

absence are implemented and embedded so that the attendance rates of pupils with SEND improves.

- Some pupils in the sixth form do not attend or engage in the enrichment activities and wider personal development experiences that the school provides as part of their programmes of study. This means they do not benefit from the broad and rich experiences on offer. Leaders should ensure that students' attendance and engagement is monitored closely so that students experience their full programmes of study.

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	135621
Local authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	10226339
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	934
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	87
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Nigel Robson
Headteacher	Dan Markham
Website	www.rrca.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	26 and 27 April 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of United Learning multi-academy trust.
- The school makes use of three registered alternative providers and one unregistered provider.
- Since the previous inspection, the school has appointed a new chair of the local governing body.
- Since the previous inspection, there have been considerable changes to the leadership of the school, including the appointment of a new headteacher, a new senior leadership team and several new subject leaders.
- The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

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

- This was the first routine inspection that 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 met with the headteacher, other senior leaders, subject leaders and a range of staff. The lead inspector spoke with representatives of the local governing body and the regional director of the United Learning multi-academy trust.
- The lead inspector spoke on the telephone with a representative from the local authority.
- As part of this inspection, inspectors carried out deep dives in English, science, geography, modern foreign languages and music. Inspectors met with subject leaders, visited some lessons, looked at pupils' and students' work and spoke with pupils, students and teachers.
- Inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders and reviewed a range of documentation, including that relating to safeguarding, self-evaluation, external quality assurance and pupils' and students' attendance and behaviour.
- Inspectors checked on the school's safeguarding arrangements, including the recruitment checks made on staff. Inspectors met with leaders, staff, pupils, students and governors to evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding in school. An inspector checked the arrangements for those pupils who attend alternative provision.

Inspection team

Amanda Downing, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Philip Wood	Ofsted Inspector
Annabel Bolt	Ofsted Inspector
Katy Robinson	Ofsted Inspector

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