

# Inspection of a good school: Richmond Academy

Winterbottom Street, Oldham, Greater Manchester OL9 6HY

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Inspection dates: 11 and 12 January 2023

## Outcome

Richmond Academy continues to be a good school.

## What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy and enjoy attending Richmond Academy. They quickly become part of the school community in this welcoming school. Pupils described the school as a friendly place where they feel cared for.

Leaders have high expectations of pupils' learning and behaviour. Pupils enjoy positive relationships with their teachers and contribute to lessons with enthusiasm. Classrooms are calm places to learn. This helps pupils to achieve well. Pupils are respectful and kind towards others and do not disrupt their learning.

There are very few incidents of bullying or poor behaviour. Leaders are swift to act and deal with bullying and name-calling effectively. This helps pupils to feel safe.

Pupils can take part in many creative and sporting activities. They enjoy a wide range of clubs, such as bakery, art and dance. Leaders plan opportunities for pupils to be active citizens in their local community, for example the community clean-up project.

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

School leaders have taken care to design a curriculum which incorporates the knowledge, skills and experiences that the pupils at the school need. There is an emphasis on creating a language-rich environment from the early years. Mostly, leaders have identified high-quality vocabulary that they want pupils to use to describe their learning. Careful thought has been given to what pupils are taught and the order in which pupils should build their knowledge.

Leaders have supported teachers well so that they gain an expert knowledge of their subjects. This enables teachers to design and order learning well. Teachers plan opportunities for pupils to strengthen their knowledge. In mathematics, for example, teachers begin lessons with a revisit of earlier learning. This helps pupils to recall what they have learned previously, and quickly addresses any forgotten learning.

In English and mathematics, leaders have clearly defined the ambitious endpoints that they want all pupils, including those with special educational and/or disabilities (SEND), to reach. In these subjects, teachers use assessment effectively to understand how well pupils have learned the curriculum and rapidly address any gaps in learning. However, in some other subjects, teachers do not use assessment strategies effectively to check what pupils know and remember. This means that teachers are less certain about what learning pupils should revisit in these subjects. As a result, some pupils miss learning something important without teachers knowing.

Leaders have prioritised reading. They have created a culture where reading is at the heart of every classroom. The reading motto, 'read, achieve, succeed', is reflected in the reading community created by staff and pupils. Teachers are passionate about the books that they share with their classes. Pupils value being read to by their teachers.

Staff are dedicated to getting pupils to read. All staff are well trained to deliver the trust's phonics programme. From the start of pre-school and Nursery, staff introduce children to a wide range of books, stories and rhymes. Early years staff use every opportunity to immerse children in a language-rich environment. They model spoken language well. Staff teach children to listen carefully and to recognise sounds. Reception children are taught phonics from the start. This continues through key stage 1 with daily phonics lessons. Staff model sounds accurately and identify pupils' misconceptions quickly. Pupils, including those with SEND, are given reading books that match the sounds that they have learned. This helps pupils to practise their phonics. Pupils who need extra help with phonics are identified quickly and get the support that they need.

Leaders quickly and accurately identify the needs of those pupils with SEND. This group of pupils receive support that is matched precisely to their individual needs. Leaders ensure that teachers understand precisely how to adapt the delivery of the ambitious curriculum for these pupils. Pupils with SEND, and those pupils who are disadvantaged, take part in all the school has to offer.

From starting school, children learn routines. This helps them settle into school quickly. Pupils behave with maturity; they are well mannered and courteous. Pupils socialise well at lunchtimes. They enjoy playing together and do not leave others out.

A small number of pupils do not attend school as often as they should. Leaders work with the trust and the local authority to support parents and carers and improve this situation.

Leaders have designed activities and experiences that promote pupils' personal development. Pupils learn about fundamental British values and understand how these are reflected in the school's values. Pupils are taught about discrimination and tolerance. They celebrate the faiths and beliefs of others. Leaders provide opportunities for pupils to take on leadership roles, for example on the children's leadership team or as mental health ambassadors. In the early years, children enjoy a wide range of activities that help to foster their curiosity about the wider world.

Trustees have robust mechanisms to hold leaders to account. Trustees support leaders well and work with them closely to ensure that decisions are made in the best interests of pupils. Staff said that they enjoy working at the school. They appreciate leaders' actions to help manage staff workload and look after their well-being.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding because staff are vigilant to the risks that pupils may face. All staff have up-to-date training in safeguarding issues. They are adept in identifying the pupils who need support.

Leaders are skilled at working with a wide range of external agencies. They are persistent in ensuring that the right support is in place for vulnerable pupils and their families.

Pupils learn about safety in the curriculum. They learn about how to keep themselves safe, including when online. Pupils know who they can speak to if they are feeling worried.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- In the foundation subjects, teachers' checks on how well pupils are learning are not fully matched to the intended curriculum. As a result, pupils can miss learning something important without teachers knowing. Subject leaders should assure themselves that pupils are learning all the essential knowledge set out in the curriculum.
- A small number of pupils miss too much school. They miss valuable learning time, which negatively impacts on their achievement. Leaders should ensure that the attendance of these pupils improves so that they do not miss important learning.

## **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 an ungraded inspection and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in September 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.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	139651
<b>Local authority</b>	Oldham
<b>Inspection number</b>	10241885
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy sponsor-led
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	2 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	418
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Anne Weinstock
<b>Chief executive officer</b>	Antony Hughes
<b>Principal</b>	Claire Rahman
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.richmond.theharmonytrust.org">www.richmond.theharmonytrust.org</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	13 and 14 September 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- Richmond Academy is part of The Harmony Trust.
- Leaders do not use any alternative provision for pupils at the school.
- The school has provision for two-year-olds.

## Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in her evaluation of the school.
- The inspector spoke with the chief executive officer of the trust, principal, other senior leaders, subject leaders and other members of staff. The inspector also spoke with members of the board of trustees and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector spoke to pupils about their experience of school and their views on behaviour and bullying. The inspector also observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and at breaktimes.

- The inspector reviewed a wide range of evidence, including leaders' self-evaluation documents, improvement plans, minutes of trust meetings and records of pupils' behaviour and attendance.
- The inspector checked the school's safeguarding policies and procedures and the single central record. The inspector met with leaders, staff and pupils to evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics and geography. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers and some pupils about their learning, and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspector spoke with leaders about the curriculum in some other subjects.
- The inspector considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View and the responses to Ofsted's surveys for pupils and staff.

### **Inspection team**

Kate Bowker, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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