

Inspection of Richard Barnes Academy

Williamson Avenue, Peterborough, Cambridgeshire PE3 6BA

Inspection dates:	1 and 2 October 2024
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

The headteacher of this school is Claire Everton. This school is part of the Thomas Deacon Education Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Scott Hudson, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Mark Potter.

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders and staff help pupils to 'be the best version of themselves' by creating a nurturing, purposeful and friendly environment. For example, they show patience when pupils struggle to focus or make good choices.

Staff understand that pupils at Richard Barnes Academy need considerable support to build relationships, learn to trust adults and re-engage in education. Pupils have many opportunities to develop conversational skills, including during lunchtimes when staff eat and chat with them. Pupils learn that adults will not give up on them, which quickly helps them feel settled. Pupils feel safe and are safe here.

All pupils get opportunities to catch up on missed learning. In lessons, teachers revisit material to help pupils retain information. Teachers tailor lessons to meet pupils' varied needs. Pupils' educational experiences help them earn important qualifications. They succeed when they return to mainstream schools.

The school offers a variety of opportunities to broaden pupils' horizons, such as organising charity events and visits to religious sites and cultural landmarks. Older pupils appreciate their lessons about relationships and health. These lessons boost their confidence in staying safe and prepare them well for adult life.

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

Since the school joined the trust, leaders have significantly improved the quality of education. All pupils engage in education, and much higher proportions of pupils successfully take examinations. They now achieve important qualifications. The school's academic and vocational curriculum is well designed. Each pupil experiences a personalised learning journey. This includes help in catching up on key skills, such as reading. The school encourages pupils to aim high, for example, by enabling them to learn as much mathematical knowledge as they can so that they can gain a GCSE in the subject.

The school has set out its principles for effective teaching. These principles are grounded in high-quality evidence. In lessons, staff encourage pupils to revisit prior learning and to focus on key vocabulary. Teachers regularly check pupils' understanding of the material being taught. This means pupils are more likely to remember and understand new concepts. Some staff are still getting used to the school's new teaching techniques. At times, they do not maximise pupils' opportunities to learn. The school regularly evaluates how well the curriculum is being implemented and plans to provide staff with further training and support.

As soon as pupils join the school, staff assess how much they know and can do. These checks also include pupils' social and emotional development. Staff collaborate closely to identify any pupils who need additional support. By working with external professionals, the school provides training so that staff can support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities effectively.

The school actively promotes and values reading. Pupils understand the importance of reading. Staff expertly guide pupils in learning how to read and appreciate literature. In reading lessons, pupils explore a wide range of books. As a result, they gain knowledge about different cultures, landscapes and historical periods.

The school carefully reviews behaviour records to identify moments and places where routines help pupils to remain calm. This work has had a positive impact on the school and pupils' behaviour. For example, it is helping older pupils proceed undistracted to their early morning tutor groups. Staff aim to instil positive habits in pupils, including the habit of arriving at school on time. The school encourages high levels of attendance through rewards and effective regular communication with parents.

There is a well-structured curriculum for personal, social, health and economic education. Staff reflect on and adjust this curriculum based on pupils' questions, needs and experiences. The school provides opportunities for pupils to engage with the world of work, such as through hosting charity events. This helps pupils to learn about and gradually take on responsibilities. However, these opportunities are not yet fully organised and promoted coherently.

The school's vision has distinctive, purposeful clarity. Leaders base their work on the school's three pillars of 'ambition,' 'safe' and 'character.' Their conversations and decisions prioritise pupils' education and well-being. Staff feel supported and are supported. Parents are rightly confident that the school makes decisions in the best interests of their children.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some staff are still getting to grips with the school's new approaches to teaching. As a result, not all lessons maximise pupils' opportunities to learn. The school should continue to train and support staff to implement the school's teaching approaches in a more consistent way.
- Opportunities for pupils to learn about and take on responsibilities are not fully organised and promoted. As a result, pupils do not consistently build their understanding of responsibility. The school should continue its work to clarify and promote opportunities for pupils to learn about responsibility, as part of the school's approach to character education.

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' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	147892
Local authority	Peterborough
Inspection number	10345525
Type of school	Alternative provision
School category	Academy alternative provision sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	5 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	124
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Mark Potter
CEO of the trust	Scott Hudson
Headteacher	Claire Everton
Website	www.rjba.education
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Richard Barnes Academy provides primary and secondary education for pupils who have been permanently excluded from school, or who are at risk of permanent exclusion. Some pupils have an education, health and care plan.
- The provision operates from two sites: the Fitzwilliam campus, located at Williamson Avenue, Peterborough PE3 6BA, and the Trinity campus, located at Honeyhill, Paston, Peterborough PE4 7DR. Primary pupils are taught at the Fitzwilliam campus. Pupils in key stages 3 and 4 are taught at both campuses.
- The school makes use of seven unregistered alternative provisions and four registered alternative provisions.
- The school joined Thomas Deacon Education Trust in May 2020. When its predecessor school, The Pupil Referral Service (Peterborough), was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be inadequate for overall effectiveness.
- The headteacher was appointed in December 2021 to oversee provision at the Fitzwilliam campus. In January 2023, she became headteacher of both campuses.

- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English and early reading, mathematics and vocational education. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with staff, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors spent time with pupils at breaktimes to observe behaviour and gather their views about school life.
- The lead inspector held a meeting with the chair of trustees, the chair of the local academy committee and the CEO of the trust. The lead inspector also met with a representative of the local authority.
- An inspector spoke with the headteacher of one of the virtual schools that the school works with.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors spoke to a range of staff over both days on inspection. The lead inspector considered three responses made by parents to Ofsted Parent View, including free-text responses. The lead inspector also spoke with some parents by telephone.

Inspection team

Hannah Stoten, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Sally Garrett

Ofsted Inspector

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