



# Richmond School

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 121680  
**Local Authority** North Yorkshire  
**Inspection number** 292200  
**Inspection date** 9 January 2007  
**Reporting inspector** Cathryn Kirby HMI

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary	<b>School address</b>	Darlington Road
<b>School category</b>	Community		Richmond
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–18		North Yorkshire DL10 7BQ
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01748 850111
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	1258	<b>Fax number</b>	01748 828106
<b>Number on roll (6th form)</b>	428	<b>Chair</b>	Mrs A Clark
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr P Beever
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	10 February 2003		

<b>Age group</b>	<b>Inspection date</b>	<b>Inspection number</b>
11–18	9 January 2007	292200

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

Richmond School is a larger than average comprehensive school with 1,686 pupils on roll including 428 in the sixth form. The school is located on two sites, with the smaller building providing accommodation for Year 7 pupils. The town of Richmond, North Yorkshire, has lower than average levels of social deprivation. Richmond is surrounded by a predominantly rural area and many pupils are bussed to the school from surrounding villages. Pupil mobility is lower than average other than for those children whose families are based at the Catterick garrison. Proportionately more of these children join or leave the school at points other than Years 7 and 12. The proportions of pupils with a statement of special educational need or with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are lower than average. The numbers of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds or who speak English as an additional language are very low.

The school has recently acquired specialist status in the Performing Arts. In December 2005 the school secured Building Schools for the Future (BSF) pathfinder funding to develop the main site.

## Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Richmond School is a good school where key indicators of success are on an upward trend. The school is pervaded by a strong sense of community, underpinned by a climate of mutual respect. The school is inclusive of all its pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Pupils achieve well. They enjoy school and attendance across all year groups is above average. Pupils value the support they receive from teachers and other adults in school and appreciate the positive relationships fostered in lessons. The vast majority of parents are satisfied with the standards of education their children receive. Although pupils enter the school with skills and abilities above those expected for their age, most make further gains and progress well. No group of pupils makes less than satisfactory progress, the result of effective support and the strong focus the school places on the individual pupil. Standards are above average in all core subjects and showed good improvement in 2006. The school's performance in English and mathematics at Key Stages 3 and 4 was particularly strong, with well above average results at GCSE. The good and improving outcomes for pupils show the school provides good value for money.

Specialist status contributes to the school's success by providing many opportunities for pupils to develop their confidence, communication skills and understanding of the culturally diverse country in which they live. The school has established productive partnerships with other local providers to extend the choices for 14 to 19 year olds. Developments in this area continue to flourish.

The school knows itself well. All senior and middle managers are involved in self-assessment and in taking forward the actions arising from the whole-school development plan. The energetic leadership of the headteacher gives a clear direction to the school's work. His firm commitment to high quality teaching, high standards of behaviour and the importance of good relationships in classrooms has been articulated to staff. Teachers have effectively translated these aspirations into practice. His strategic vision for the school's future has been made possible through a successful bid for BSF funding. Plans for the new building are at an advanced stage and afford exciting new opportunities for specialist teaching and learning. The new building will provide the school with much needed additional, state-of-the-art accommodation.

The senior leadership team has done well to maintain the drive to further improve national test and examination results in the face of the considerable work involved in managing the BSF project. This demonstrates the good capacity within the school to secure further improvement. Middle managers have responded well to the challenge of increased responsibility and accountability for their subject areas. The school recognises the importance of continuing professional development in building capacity, for example, through providing management training for subject leaders and by developing the information and communication technology (ICT) skills of all staff. They regularly monitor the quality of provision and with their staff teams identify actions necessary to improve outcomes for pupils. However, the approach to checking that these, often well-considered, actions are having the intended impact varies in frequency and rigour between subject areas.

Provision for the pupils' personal development is good and enrichment opportunities are provided through a range of lunchtime and after-school activities. The impact of this provision results in good outcomes for pupils and students. They develop into articulate, well-rounded young people with many and varied interests and a sound understanding of the world beyond their school gates. Linked very strongly to this is the care and support they receive. The pupils' well-being and care is a priority of all those who contribute to their experiences, including teachers, classroom assistants, school support staff and governors.

Teaching and learning are good. Where teaching is outstanding, planning meets the needs of all the pupils very well. However, this effective use of assessment information is not consistent; in some lessons, the more able pupils are not challenged as well as they could be, for example, in some sixth form lessons, where the ability range is very broad. Teachers' high expectations of behaviour and work-rate are strengths of classroom practice. Pupils' behaviour in lessons is very good and the vast majority have positive attitudes to learning. Typically, the atmosphere in classrooms is harmonious and purposeful.

The school has progressed well since the last inspection and areas for improvement identified in 2003 have been fully addressed. The curriculum has been broadened considerably. Pupils can choose from a wide range of academic and work-related courses: there is something to suit the interests and abilities of all pupils. One pupil echoed the sentiments of many peers by commenting 'There are so many things I want to do, they won't all fit into the day!' The headteacher's commitment to expanding ICT provision both as a discrete subject and a resource for learning across the curriculum has remedied weaknesses identified in this core subject.

## **Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form**

### **Grade: 3**

The effectiveness and efficiency of the large sixth form is satisfactory rather than good because, although some students achieve very well and standards are above average, there is some variability in the outcomes for young people between subject areas. Teaching does not always meet the needs of the broad ability range, particularly on academic courses. Overall, students make satisfactory progress relative to their attainment on entry. Nevertheless, there are some good features of sixth form provision. These include the broad curriculum and the care and support students receive, the latter being strongly endorsed by the students themselves. Whilst the open access policy has been successful in widening participation post-16, some young people are enrolled on programmes not best matched to their skills and abilities. The school and governors have recently reviewed entry policies and governors have agreed proposals to increase the allocation of time to the management of this area of the school's work. Leadership and management of the sixth form are satisfactory. The monitoring and evaluation of some aspects of provision could be sharper.

## **What the school should do to improve further**

- Ensure that planning for all lessons, particularly those in the sixth form, uses assessment information effectively to meet fully the range of learning needs.
- Ensure consistency across the school in checking that actions taken to improve provision are having the intended impact.

## **Achievement and standards**

**Grade: 2**

**Grade for sixth form: 3**

Standards at both Key Stages 3 and 4 are above average and improved in 2006 compared to the previous year. At Key Stage 4 the proportion of pupils gaining five A\* to C grades at GCSE increased, substantially so when English and mathematics are included. In 2006, the school achieved its best ever results in English and mathematics. Targets at both key stages were exceeded in 2006 and the school has set suitably challenging targets for 2007.

## **Personal development and well-being**

**Grade: 2**

**Grade for sixth form: 2**

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils enjoy school. They feel safe and say that bullying and racism are not issues at their school. The occasional incident which may arise is dealt with swiftly. Behaviour in lessons and around school is good. Pupils are polite and courteous to teachers, visitors and one another. Attitudes to learning are positive. Rates of exclusion are low. Contributions to school life are encouraged and many pupils feel able to participate in the range of additional activities, including music and sport. The school's own pupil satisfaction survey findings confirms their appreciation of what is on offer.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

**Grade: 2**

**Grade for sixth form: 3**

Teachers have good subject knowledge and a strong commitment to raising standards. High expectations ensure good pace in lessons, and a range of imaginative learning activities enthuse pupils and foster a desire to learn. Discussion is a key feature of the school's teaching and learning style. That pupils respond well to this reflects their confidence and good speaking and listening skills. Mutual respect between teachers and pupils promotes a positive learning culture in this school. As one pupil said, 'It's

cool to do well here'. Inconsistency in the use of assessment information in lesson planning results in a lack of challenge at times for some of the most able pupils.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

**Grade: 2**

**Grade for sixth form: 3**

The curriculum has been developed to provide a broad range of academic and work-related courses. The school is well resourced with specialist performing arts accommodation, good sports facilities and networked computer suites. Development work continues with local partners to extend further the range of specialist work-related opportunities for 14 to 19 year olds.

The extended school initiative has made a valuable contribution to providing rich and varied additional activities of which pupils speak positively.

## **Care, guidance and support**

**Grade: 2**

**Grade for sixth form: 2**

The main strength in this area is the focus on the specific needs of the individual pupil. Pupils across the full age range, 11 to 18, are appreciative of the caring ethos and the learning support they receive. Pupils in Year 7 receive bespoke care in a separate building a mile away from the main school site. The school's concerns are the difficulties this creates with staff movement and in ensuring a prompt start to lessons. However, despite these constraints, the overall quality of provision and outcomes for these pupils are good.

## **Leadership and management**

**Grade: 2**

**Grade for sixth form: 3**

The headteacher's effective leadership has united the staff in the pursuit of excellence. Senior leaders know the school has many strengths but are not complacent. Areas for development are identified through rigorous self-assessment which informs the actions within the school's development plan. These actions are well-considered, but when and how their impact will be evaluated is not always clear. Communication between managers at all levels is effective, giving a strong sense of an extended management team working together to effect change. Governors make a positive contribution to the school and are effective in their role as critical friend.

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## Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	<b>School Overall</b>	<b>16-19</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	2	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	
The behaviour of learners	2	
The attendance of learners	2	
How well learners enjoy their education	2	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	2	3
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	2	3
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	2	2

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

### Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2	
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No	
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No	

## **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Thank you for being so polite and welcoming when my colleagues and I visited your school.

Below is a summary of our inspection findings.

Richmond School is a good school which is getting better. Test and examination results are very good and above the national average. You do well because your school is effectively managed, teachers teach you well and the majority of you work hard. Your teachers have good subject knowledge and work hard to plan interesting activities to help you learn and enjoy your lessons. School provides a broad range of courses and other activities and many of you take full advantages of the opportunities available. Relationships between teachers and students are good in your school. Many of you appreciate the support you receive and understand that the school sees your welfare as a top priority. Your good behaviour and positive attitudes to learning contribute significantly to making Richmond School a school to be proud of.

We were impressed by the confident way in which many of you express yourselves in lessons and when talking to visitors. Many of you older students seem to be thinking carefully about your futures and are interested in what the world has to offer beyond the school gates. We think this is a recipe for your future success!

We have asked Mr Beever and your teachers to make your school even better by:

- ensuring that all lessons fully meet the needs of the whole class, for example, by consistently providing more challenge for the most able students
- checking carefully and regularly that the hard work teachers do to improve your education in all areas really does make a difference.

We wish all of you every success in the future.