

Inspection of Richmond Academy

Unity Street, Sheerness, Kent ME12 2ET

Inspection dates: 8 and 9 November 2022

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are excited and eager to tackle the challenges of the school's ambitious curriculum. They particularly enjoy using a range of technology to support their learning and to communicate their understanding. Pupils acquire a range of knowledge and skills. If they are behind, teachers help them to catch up quickly.

Everyone who works in this school cares deeply about the pupils. Each and every pupil matters. Pupils' mental health is a high priority. Pupils feel listened to. They value the support provided by the trained emotional literacy support assistants (ELSAs) and the time they spend with Dudley, the school dog. As one pupil said, 'The adults here care about our emotional well-being and we feel safe.'

The school's values of compassion, respect, truth and friendship are promoted throughout the school day. Pupils learn to value and celebrate diversity and difference. They respect each other's different beliefs and opinions.

The school has an inclusive ethos. Pupils often use Makaton sign language when greeting visitors. Pupils are kind, polite and friendly to one another, and to school staff. When pupils do fall out with their friends, staff help them to resolve this quickly. This means that friendship issues rarely escalate.

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

Leaders have taken the school on a journey of continual improvement. They are tireless in their efforts to provide the very best education because their pupils deserve nothing less.

School leaders have worked closely with leaders across the trust to develop a high-quality curriculum. This begins with firm foundations in the early years. In most subjects, schemes of work outline in detail the knowledge pupils will learn. Leaders have a little more work to do in a small number of subjects. For example, in history leaders have not identified precisely enough the key knowledge that pupils need to learn.

A broad range of trips, visitors and experiences are planned to broaden pupils' horizons. Leaders have designed the wider curriculum to help pupils develop key characteristics such as resilience and perseverance. Staff make sure that any barriers pupils face do not prevent them from accessing the exciting learning opportunities on offer. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

Staff are determined to make all pupils confident, fluent readers who love reading. Teachers follow a systematic programme for teaching phonics. Mostly, this is taught skilfully. Children get off to a strong start learning to read. They enjoy reading. They get very excited when they read a new word, using their sounds successfully.

However, too many pupils are behind with their phonics in Year 2. Despite leaders' current efforts, more needs to be done to help these pupils catch up.

Most teachers deliver the curriculum well. In the early years, children learn in a stimulating, vibrant environment. They encounter interesting activities that help them to learn important knowledge and skills. As pupils move through the school, most teaching builds on these foundations well. Teachers explain important concepts clearly. They check carefully what pupils have remembered and revisit any concepts that have not been understood. Technology is used well to support pupils' learning in different subjects. This means that pupils remember the important knowledge that they have been taught in most subjects. However, pupils find this trickier in history.

The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) is knowledgeable. She provides effective support and advice for staff. Pupils' particular learning needs are identified early. The SENCo works with staff and parents to make sure the right support is in place for these pupils. Staff make appropriate adaptations to the curriculum to ensure that these pupils achieve well.

On occasion, teachers do not deliver curriculum content as well as they might. This is because the tasks they set do not support pupils to learn well enough. Consequently, despite pupils working hard to stay focused, they do not learn the knowledge they should. Leaders are providing training and support for teachers to build their confidence and to help them improve. Alongside this, leaders consider staff well-being and their workload. Staff feel well-supported by leaders.

All staff promote a culture of high expectations for pupils' behaviour. Pupils who struggle to control their behaviour are given support and strategies to help them be successful. Classrooms offer a range of different seating options. Pupils choose whether to sit at a desk, on low-level seating with a lap table, or on an exercise ball. This flexibility helps pupils to concentrate and manage their behaviour well.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Pupils' welfare and their well-being is at the heart of the school's work. All staff are trained extensively in safeguarding and it remains high on their agenda at all times.

Staff know pupils really well and have worked hard to build strong relationships with their families. The members of the school's safeguarding team are knowledgeable and work relentlessly to make sure that pupils and their families get the help and support they need. Leaders work closely with outside agencies whenever necessary.

Pupils learn about potential risks to their safety, including those online, through the curriculum. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a small number of subjects, leaders have not identified explicitly enough the key knowledge that pupils need to learn. Furthermore, the tasks some teachers set do not help all pupils to learn the crucial curriculum content well enough. This means pupils cannot always confidently recall prior learning or build on what they have already learned. Leaders need to ensure that the key knowledge pupils need to know in all subjects is explicitly clear. They also need to provide training so that teachers set tasks that help pupils to learn the curriculum content well.
- Too many pupils in Year 2 are behind in their learning of phonics. These pupils are not yet confident and fluent readers. Leaders need to strengthen their efforts further to provide these pupils with the high-quality, additional support they need to catch up quickly.

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

Unique reference number	145013
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10241209
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	307
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Fiona Trigwell
Headteacher	Helen Evemy
Website	https://richmond.kent.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	30 and 31 January 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Richmond Academy joined The Stour Academy Trust in January 2017.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.
- The school runs a breakfast club and an after-school club.
- The school admits two-year-old children into the nursery provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded 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 met with the headteacher, senior leaders, staff and pupils. They also met with leaders from the central team of The Stour Academy Trust and the chair of the board of directors.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: computing, early reading, history, mathematics and science. For each deep dive inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors listened to some pupils read. Inspectors also spoke to leaders and pupils about the curriculum in some other subjects.
- To inspect the school's safeguarding arrangements, inspectors met with leaders responsible for safeguarding. Inspectors looked at relevant safeguarding documentation, information about attendance and behaviour, staff recruitment checks and training records. Inspectors also talked to a range of staff and pupils.
- Inspectors met pupils from different year groups to talk about their learning and experiences at school.
- The views of staff, pupils and parents were gathered through discussions and through Ofsted's online surveys.

Inspection team

Leah Morgan, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Rosemary Keen	Ofsted Inspector
Kirstine Boon	Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2022