

Inspection of Richard Rose Morton Academy

Wigton Road, Carlisle, Cumbria CA2 6LB

Inspection dates:	1 and 2 July 2025
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

The principal of this school is Richard McGuire. This school is part of The United Learning 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), Sir Jon Coles, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Dame Reena Keeble.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at the school feel happy and safe. The school expects pupils to behave and achieve well. Pupils work hard to meet these goals. They have benefited from the positive changes that the school has made to the curriculum. As a result, pupils are making progress that they should through the curriculum in many subjects.

Pupils behave calmly and focus well on their learning. They learn the importance of making positive choices, which shows in their conduct. Staff care deeply for pupils' well-being and safety. Pupils know who to speak to if they feel worried or upset. They have confidence that staff will act on their concerns.

The school's routines are well established. They help create a culture where pupils are ready to learn and eager to succeed. Most pupils enjoy participating in clubs, including rounders, cooking, choir and debating. Many pupils work towards the Duke of Edinburgh's Award. These activities help build pupils' resilience and independence.

Pupils receive high-quality pastoral care. Pupils who need extra support to overcome their barriers to learning benefit from the carefully designed areas in the school. Here, pupils receive the help and care that they require to attend school regularly and learn the curriculum.

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

Pupils benefit from an ambitious curriculum. It is carefully designed and sets out what they need to learn and when this will happen. This helps pupils build on their prior knowledge. However, this is not fully reflected in the 2024 examination data. While the overall progress that pupils made was in line with the national average, their attainment was significantly below the national average in a range of subjects. This was due to gaps in pupils learning linked to previous weaknesses in the curriculum. This has been remedied. As a result, current pupils are progressing well through the curriculum.

The school accurately identifies the additional needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Staff make effective use of the helpful information that they are given about these pupils. Staff expertly use a range of strategies to adapt the learning for pupils with SEND when this is needed. Pupils with SEND learn successfully across the curriculum.

The school supports disadvantaged pupils, particularly pupils with SEND, to enjoy school and succeed. Every pupil can select from many subjects in key stage 4. This choice helps them expand their options for future study. Most pupils move on to meaningful destinations that include further education, apprenticeships or employment with training.

Most teachers have strong subject knowledge. This ensures that pupils learn the curriculum effectively. The school and the trust have invested significantly in staff training. This has strengthened their knowledge and skills to deliver the intended curriculum. Consistent routines and teaching methods help pupils learn and remember more.

Teachers encourage pupils to ask questions and solve problems. However, at times, pupils do not have the opportunity to revisit and practise what they have been taught before moving on to new learning. When this happens, misconceptions occur and pupils' learning is hindered.

The school has prioritised reading. The school's strategies to address the deficits in pupils' reading knowledge have been recently overhauled. The school identifies pupils with gaps in their reading knowledge and it provides effective programmes of reading support. This supports pupils to improve their reading fluency and comprehension. However, opportunities for pupils to read for pleasure are not consistently championed across their curriculum learning. This means that pupils do not read widely. Therefore, they miss the broader academic, emotional, cultural and social benefits that regular reading can provide.

The school has raised its expectations of pupils' behaviour. Staff consistently apply the rewards systems. Most pupils behave according to the school's standards. When they do not, they receive suitable support to reflect and improve their behaviour. The school has worked with families to improve attendance. Now, many pupils attend school more often than they did in the past. This has improved their enjoyment of and success at school.

The school has a well-designed provision to promote pupils' personal development. Over time, pupils learn about key topics such as healthy relationships and mental well-being. Pupils revisit important themes year on year. This prepares pupils well for growing up in modern Britain. Pupils strive to become active local and global citizens through the school's 'Made in Morton' initiative. The school has designed a thorough careers programme. It supports pupils to make informed choices about their future education or training.

Trustees and members of the local governing body offer appropriate support and challenge. This contributes well to the school's continued improvement. Pupils, parents, carers and staff appreciate the clear communication about school decisions. This builds trust within the community. The school identifies the pressures on staff. It makes careful changes to ease staff's workload and improve their well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Pupils are moved on to new learning before they have had enough time to consolidate what has already been taught. As a result, some pupils do not build their knowledge as well as they could. The school should ensure that teachers are suitably equipped to

check that pupils' have secure knowledge and address gaps in understanding before pupils move through the curriculum.

- The school does not encourage pupils to read for pleasure sufficiently well. Consequently, some pupils do not read widely or often. The school should make sure that staff routinely encourage pupils to read a rich variety of texts written by a range of authors in various genres.

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	135620
Local authority	Cumberland
Inspection number	10348256
Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	878
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Dame Reena Keeble
CEO of the trust	Sir Jon Coles
Principal	Richard McGuire
Website	www.rrma.org.uk
Dates of previous inspection	15 and 16 November 2022, under Section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school uses one unregistered provider of alternative provision.
- 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.

- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held meetings with the principal, senior leaders and subject leaders. Inspectors also met with a range of other staff and leaders during the inspection.
- Inspectors met with representatives of the local governing body, including the chair of governors, as well as representatives of the local authority and the trust.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: history, English, mathematics, geography, science and art and design. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors considered the responses shared through Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. They also considered the responses to Ofsted's online surveys for pupils and staff.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils about their experiences of school and their views on behaviour and bullying. They also observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and at breaktimes.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documents, including the minutes of governors' meetings, the school's self-evaluation and development plan, records relating to pupils' behaviour and attendance and samples of documentation relating to pupils with SEND.
- 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.

Inspection team

Kevin Sexton, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Marc Heron	Ofsted Inspector
John Cowper	Ofsted Inspector
Chris Beard	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 2025