

Inspection of Richard Rose Morton Academy

Wigton Road, Carlisle, Cumbria CA2 6LB

Inspection dates: 15 and 16 November 2022

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils have a positive attitude to school, and they mainly enjoy their learning at Richard Rose Morton Academy. They have strong relationships with their teachers, and they are willing to seek help when it is needed. Pupils actively take part in house point challenges with enthusiasm.

Pupils are keen to live up to leaders' high expectations for their behaviour. They get on well with each other and they trust the adults who care for them. Bullying is dealt with very effectively by leaders. This helps them to feel safe.

Pupils with special education needs and/or disabilities (SEND) feel involved in the school community. Diversity is valued and celebrated. Pupils are respectful and tolerant of differences between themselves and others. Pupils are provided with ample opportunities to learn about life in modern Britain. For example, they take part in the annual 'Morton milestone' events which raise money for the community and help pupils develop personally.

Leaders want pupils to achieve well. However, this ambition is not fully realised. Pupils do not know and remember all that they should. This is because the curriculum is not delivered well in some subjects.

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

Leaders have increased the range of subjects that pupils can study. This means that more pupils across key stage 3 and key stage 4 are studying the subjects that make up the English Baccalaureate suite of subjects. For example, languages and art and design are becoming increasingly popular choices. Subject curriculums are well designed. Leaders have thought clearly about the order in which topics will be taught and when they will be delivered.

In contrast, the delivery of these curriculums is variable across year groups and subjects. In some subjects, teachers ensure that pupils gain the knowledge that they need to develop their understanding of the subject. Elsewhere, teachers are not equipped to effectively check if pupils understand new topics and concepts. This means that some teachers do not address errors and misconceptions effectively. As a result, pupils' achievement is variable. Overall, pupils do not gain a deep and secure body of knowledge to support the next steps in their learning.

Leaders identify the needs of pupils with SEND quickly. They ensure that staff receive the information that they need to help them to meet the needs of pupils with SEND. However, staff do not use this information equally well. This means that the delivery of the curriculum is not adapted effectively in some subjects. Pupils with SEND do not achieve as well as they should in some subjects.

Leaders are keen for pupils to read widely and often. They have introduced some strategies, such as one-to-one support, that are proving to be successful. However,

some of this work is not making enough difference. This is because staff have not been trained sufficiently well to identify the gaps in pupils' reading knowledge or to provide suitable support to overcome these barriers.

Leaders' systems for managing behaviour are applied consistently well by all staff. This means that learning is rarely disrupted by poor behaviour. Pupils are polite and respectful to staff and their peers. They strive to be 'model Mortoners' who display positive behaviour. Even so, some pupils do not attend school regularly enough. Leaders have invested considerable time and resources to tackle this situation. This is making a difference as more pupils are coming to school more frequently than they did in the past.

There is a well-designed personal development curriculum for all pupils. Pupils explore a wide range of topics including LGBT+, British values, relationships and mental health. Leaders provide a range of impartial careers guidance and opportunities for work experience. This helps pupils prepare for the world of work as well as make informed choices for their next steps in education, employment and training. A wide range of clubs and activities are offered by leaders, for example sports and drama.

School leaders, alongside trust leaders and members of the governing body, have created a positive and cohesive community. They engage well with parents, carers and stakeholders. Staff are proud to work at the school and they appreciate leaders' consideration of their well-being and workload.

Leaders understand what is working well at the school and what needs to improve. They seek out support from the trust, as well as identifying suitable external advice and guidance to help them bring about improvement. Trustees and members of the governing body fulfil their statutory duties.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders of the trust make sure that school leaders meet their statutory responsibilities in regard to keeping pupils safe. Staff are well trained and have a clear understanding of how to identify pupils at risk. Leaders work effectively with external agencies to ensure support is swift and appropriate for vulnerable pupils.

Pupils have awareness about identifying risks such as abuse, bullying and when online. Pupils receive regular reminders on how to access support through different school reporting systems. They know how to identify and report concerns. As such, pupils feel safe at school.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The delivery of the curriculums is variable across subjects. This means that pupils' learning over time is uneven and they do not achieve as well as they should. Leaders should ensure that staff have the subject knowledge to make suitable choices for delivering curriculum content.
- Some teachers do not use assessment strategies well enough to check on pupils' learning. This means that pupils are not supported to overcome misconceptions or gaps in their learning. Leaders should ensure that all staff are well equipped to assess how well pupils are learning the intended curriculum and then to take suitable steps to help pupils know and remember more.
- Leaders have not made sure that staff have sufficient expertise to identify and then rectify the gaps in pupils' reading knowledge. This means that pupils who struggle to read do not catch up quickly enough to access the curriculum confidently. Leaders should ensure that those staff who support reading have the appropriate skills and knowledge to make a difference to pupils' reading fluency.

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

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| Unique reference number | 135620 |
| Local authority | Cumbria |
| Inspection number | 10242239 |
| Type of school | Secondary comprehensive |
| School category | Academy special sponsor-led |
| Age range of pupils | 11 to 16 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 876 |
| Appropriate authority | Board of trustees |
| Chair of trust | Reena Keeble |
| Principal | Richard McGuire (Executive Principal) |
| Website | www.rrma.org.uk/ |
| Date of previous inspection | 3 and 4 October 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 |

Information about this school

- Leaders do not use alternative provision for any pupils.
- The number of pupils on the school roll has increased considerably since the previous inspection.
- The school is part of the United Learning Trust, a multi-academy trust.
- The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information 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.

- 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 held meetings with the headteacher, senior leaders and subject leaders. Inspectors also met with a range of other staff and leaders during the inspection. Inspectors also met with representatives of the board of governors, including the chair, as well as representatives of the local authority and trust.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: mathematics, English, science, geography, art and design and Spanish. These deep dives involved discussions with curriculum leaders and teachers, visits to lessons, scrutiny of pupils' work and discussions with pupils.
- The inspection team analysed safeguarding documentation, including the single central record. Inspectors spoke with a range of pupils, staff and leaders to evaluate the culture of safeguarding in the school.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documents, including leaders' self-evaluation and attendance and behaviour records.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View and the responses of pupils and staff to Ofsted's surveys.

Inspection team

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|-----------------------------|-------------------------|
| Amina Modan, lead inspector | His Majesty's Inspector |
| Paul Edmondson | Ofsted Inspector |
| Charlotte Oles | His Majesty's Inspector |
| Sarah Mitchell | Ofsted Inspector |
| Michael Pennington | His Majesty's Inspector |

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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

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