

Richmond Academy

Winterbottom Street, Oldham, Greater Manchester OL9 6HY

Inspection dates

13–14 September 2017

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Standards of reading, writing and mathematics have improved over time. Most pupils make better progress than other pupils across the country as they move through the school. Parents, staff, trustees and pupils comment on how improvements are evident in the school and are proud to belong to the 'Richmond family'.
- Support provided for the most vulnerable pupils is exemplary. Leaders understand the needs of pupils and their families well and provide effective support. They have astutely identified barriers to learning that pupils face and have ensured that the most appropriate support is in place for them.
- Senior leaders have a clear and accurate picture of the standards across the school and use this information well to drive forward improvements. Staff are clear about how and why these improvements need to happen and are well supported in their work.
- Pupils are well behaved, friendly and courteous in the classroom and as they move around the school. They interact well with each other and adults, demonstrating confidence, tolerance and respect. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a notable strength.
- There are effective systems in place to ensure that pupils are safe and well cared for.
- Children get off to a flying start as they settle quickly in the pre-school and nursery provision. From the very early days, children are well supported in developing their language skills.
- Leaders and trustees have high expectations for staff and pupils. There is a clear vision articulated by all for the school to improve further.
- Trustees check the work of the school carefully, but their levels of challenge about pupils' achievement in different subjects is not as strong as it is for English and mathematics.
- Leaders have a positive effect on standards because they use personnel and expertise very well.
- The quality of teaching in all curriculum areas is having a positive impact on standards in most year groups. However, Year 6 pupils have less opportunity to develop their skills and knowledge in subjects other than English and mathematics.
- Leaders are aware that the curriculum needs further development to enable key stage 2 pupils to meet the expectations for their age in some subjects, such as humanities, art and technology.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve leadership by ensuring that there is greater challenge from trustees, about different curriculum subjects, using the detailed, high-quality information presented to them by senior leaders.
- Improve teaching and learning further and raise pupils' achievement by ensuring that:
 - the Year 6 curriculum provides adequate time to develop all aspects of pupils' primary education, including the humanities, technical and artistic areas of learning
 - key stage 2 pupils achieve the skills expected for their age in the humanities, technical and artistic areas of the curriculum.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Leaders have a clear and accurate picture of the current school priorities of raising standards due to careful analysis of data and other information. They have made effective use of available funds, research and people's expertise, both from within the school and from other schools, to bring about improvements. They have devised well-thought-out plans to bring about these improvements. Plans are evaluated honestly and candidly to refine them further.
- Leaders have high expectations of all staff and articulate these well. They set good examples and have developed a strong culture of honesty, openness and hard work. Staff understand their role in improving standards and they value the support and feedback given by senior leaders in the regular and rigorous checks made on their work. A robust cycle of performance management is used effectively to bring about both whole-school improvements and the development of individuals as teachers and leaders.
- Teachers, including newly qualified teachers, value the wide range of professional development opportunities available. Staff report that they attend good-quality training. They appreciate the opportunities to network with other teachers within the school, within the Harmony Trust or other trusts and in the local authority. The impact of these development opportunities can be seen in the improving teaching practice in the classroom.
- Leaders' evaluations of teaching and learning are accurate. Their views on strengths and weaknesses in teaching are used well to develop all areas of the curriculum. Leaders of each curriculum area are clear about the standards in their area of responsibility. They also understand their role in developing basic skills within different curriculum subjects. For example, a focus on pupils' writing skills across different subjects underpins the high standards of writing achieved by pupils in key stage 2. High-quality English work is evident in pupils' books and through the work on display across the school.
- The curriculum has been designed with careful thought. Leaders have ensured that most pupils receive a broad and balanced curriculum and that they have access to a wide range of enrichment activities. These activities help to broaden pupils' experiences of the world around them.
- Senior leaders accept that the curriculum is still an area for improvement for Year 6 pupils. For a significant part of the year, in preparation for their tests, Year 6 pupils focus on reading, writing and mathematics and do not have the same opportunity to develop their skills in the humanities, technical and artistic learning that other year groups do.
- Leaders are also clear that some pupils currently in key stage 2 were not well taught when they were in key stage 1 and therefore have gaps in their learning. In some areas of the curriculum, notably in the humanities, work is purposely set below the level expected for pupils' ages as this is the level the pupils are currently working at. Sensibly, leaders have taken the decision to provide good-quality teaching at the

appropriate levels before attempting work set at the expected level. They are aware that, as pupils progress towards age-related expectations, the curriculum will need to be adapted again to ensure that pupils continue to be challenged. The high standard of work seen across the school by inspectors demonstrates the good progress that is already underway towards addressing any shortfalls in pupils' previous achievement.

- As a result of a more rigorous and wider curriculum, pupils talk with enthusiasm about the different opportunities they have during lesson times, at breaktimes and in out-of-school activities. This wider range and quality of opportunities offered to pupils has been an important area of improvement for the school. This is valued and appreciated by pupils and their parents. Pupils feel that these experiences prepare them well for their next stage of their education. Leaders have made effective use of expertise within the school, the wider trust and outside providers to offer high-quality extra-curricular activities.
- Pupils are given a wide range of opportunities to explore, develop and understand British values. Topics addressed in personal, social, health and economic education and in assemblies challenge pupils to reflect and develop their own understanding of what it means to be an active member of modern Britain. Developing British values has a high priority in the school. Pupils explore what this means to them as a school and a local community, celebrating their learning in work displayed around the school. They are given the opportunity to develop their understanding of democracy through opportunities such as pupil leadership and voting for head boy and girl.
- Pupils have many opportunities to enhance their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This is a strength of the school. Leaders describe these aspects as the 'golden thread' woven into all aspects of school life. A wide range of evidence collected throughout the inspection supports this view. Examples of this are class prayer books where pupils write their own prayers to use in class; cultural celebrations such as Eid and Chinese New Year; the effective use of rewards and celebration assemblies to reinforce positive attitudes; and the use of adults to model positive social interaction in the dining room at lunchtime.
- Leaders and teachers also make good use of opportunities in lessons and trips to enrich the curriculum. Many examples were evident during the inspection, including the varied and high-quality work on display around the school. For example, on a trip to the countryside, younger pupils were amazed to see the variety of animals. Teachers used the trip well to improve pupils' understanding about nature.

Governance of the school

- The school is governed by the Harmony Trust board of trustees. Trustees have a good understanding of the school's current strengths and weakness, especially of the standards of reading, writing and mathematics, informed by detailed reports from the chief executive officer (CEO). They use this information to monitor the work of the school and to draw up action plans to bring about further improvements.
- Trustees state that a broad and balanced curriculum is fundamental to the principles of the trust and, through visits to the school, feel that this is being delivered. However, they confirm that reports of subjects other than English or mathematics are not

considered by the board of trustees. This limits the trustees' abilities to fully evaluate the work of leaders in providing a broad and balanced curriculum for all their pupils.

- Trustees monitor the work of the school closely and hold leaders to account. They are able to talk with confidence about the impact that leaders have from a first-hand perspective.
- Trustees have worked with the CEO and executive principal to facilitate a high level of support to the newly appointed head of academy.
- The CEO carries out the rigorous performance management of the executive principal that feeds into the performance targets for other leaders and members of staff. Similarly, the board of trustees effectively manages the CEO's performance, ensuring that all targets are clearly linked to improving standards across the school.
- Effective use is made of personnel across the trust to provide expertise or support. Through the trust, expertise is also utilised from other multi-academy trusts.
- The trustees monitor the use of additional funds for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities to ensure that they are generally well supported throughout the school and make good progress. The school's provision for pupils who have complex needs makes good use of the classrooms available and provides a safe place for these pupils to flourish. Enticing resources, attractive displays and well-trained staff support pupils well in their learning.
- Trustees ensure that sport premium funding is spent on appropriate activities. Through this funding, pupils are able to attend a range of after-school clubs run by specialist staff and qualified coaches, such as football, netball, multi-skills and dance. Pupils are also enabled to take part in local competitive sport through these funds. Although no physical education lessons were observed during the inspection, pupils spoke with enthusiasm about their work in physical education. Leaders also reported that the quality of teaching across the school has improved in this area, ensuring the sustainability of the funding.
- Trustees have ensured that funding for disadvantaged pupils is used effectively and is closely monitored. They speak confidently about how the attainment and progress made by these pupils match those of other pupils across the country who are not disadvantaged.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are very effective. Safeguarding is a high priority of the school. Staff know their families very well and work tirelessly to support and to protect the large number of vulnerable pupils and their families.
- Staff and trustees are well trained and are clear about what to do to support vulnerable pupils. There are positive relationships between staff and parents who need support. Several effective initiatives have been implemented to develop this relationship. The positive impact of support for parents can also be seen in the positive responses to parental surveys.
- Policies and procedures are up to date and meet statutory requirements. Staff are clear about how to implement these when needed. Leaders ensure that new staff are engaged following safe recruitment procedures.

- Staff keep records and implement systems meticulously. Leaders liaise closely with each other and follow up any issues raised with diligence. They continue to refer and re-refer pupils to the appropriate agencies where needed. Current safeguarding cases are discussed weekly between senior leaders to ensure that they are monitored effectively.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Pupils' work books are of a high standard. They explain the positive picture in the test results at the end of key stage 2. Teachers have high expectations for the standard of work pupils produce, the quality of presentation and pupils' behaviour in classes and around school.
- Pupils' books from the current and the previous academic year show that pupils across the school make good progress within a school year in a wide range of subjects. The high standard of writing evident in English books is reflected in pupils' books for other subjects across the curriculum. This is because teachers make effective use of the links between different areas of the curriculum to support pupils' learning. Opportunities to practise writing in other subjects are used well to enhance pupils' progress.
- At Richmond Academy, pupils and teachers get on well. Consequently, pupils concentrate on their work and do not talk when teachers speak. Staff know pupils well and spot problems in learning at an early stage. Pupils' learning is effective because they are challenged with activities that match their ability. Teachers' good use of effective questioning and the opportunities they provide for pupils to complete practical activities allow pupils to take risks, test out their ideas and learn from their own evaluations.
- The most able pupils typically receive challenging work from their teachers. However, this work is sometimes too difficult, which results in these pupils becoming disengaged.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are well supported throughout the school. For pupils who have complex needs, very effective use is made of 'Jaspar' and 'Jade', which are classrooms within the school adapted to cater for their needs. These pupils can also access a sensory room to help them to feel calm or access an appropriate curriculum.
- Teachers across the school provide focused support to help pupils acquire the language skills they need. Pupils make rapid progress as they move through the early years foundation stage and key stage 1 due to the support they receive.
- The teaching of phonics is effective. It has ensured that standards in reading have risen over time. Pupils in key stages 1 and 2 talk about their love of reading and are keen to practise at home. Pupils also talk with enthusiasm about the books used in class by their teachers to help improve their reading skills and how they connect with the work they do in other subjects.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils say that staff look after them very well and make learning fun. The positive relationships between staff and pupils are evident in a relaxed atmosphere where pupils feel comfortable talking informally, but respectfully, to staff both inside and outside lessons. Leaders have helped to develop this relationship by encouraging staff to eat and socialise with pupils in the dining room. Many members of staff have responded to this, providing good examples of positive social behaviour as well as effective opportunities to develop language skills.
- Care for children from the very early stages of school is very strong. Staff identify quickly particular needs that children have and put suitable and effective support in place.
- The most vulnerable pupils are very well supported. Pupils who have recently moved to Britain are supported particularly well and make very good progress with their language skills. Leaders know the families of vulnerable pupils very well and provide sensitively delivered support with understanding of each family's circumstances. This support has a very positive impact on these pupils' academic and emotional development.
- Pupils say that everyone is treated equally at school and that 'everyone is welcome in the Richmond family'. Diversity is celebrated through planned school events and displays around the school. Leaders make good use of opportunities to develop understanding and tolerance of different ethnic groups in their school community. There are a range of successful initiatives to encourage parents from different groups to celebrate cultural diversity in the same way. One example of this is the parents' coffee morning group.
- Pupils are confident and self-assured and enjoy carrying out responsibilities around the school. Parents and pupils value the systems used to encourage and reward positive attitudes and responsible behaviour. Older pupils say that they feel confident that they will be well prepared for their tests in Year 6 and for moving on to high school.
- Pupils speak knowledgeably about the ways that they are kept safe at school and their own role in keeping themselves safe, including e-safety.
- Staff, pupils and parents feel that incidents of bullying are very rare and that any incidents reported are dealt with swiftly and appropriately by members of staff. School records support this view. Although very rare, staff have taken appropriate action where extremist language has been used. Pupils spoken to during the inspection talked about different types of bullying, including cyber bullying, and were confident about what to do if anything happened to them or others. They also said that other pupils would speak up in school and tell a member of staff if they saw someone else being bullied.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. This view is shared by staff, pupils and parents.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school and attendance for most pupils is similar to that of other pupils across the country, despite the fact that some pupils miss school for extended periods of time, visiting family overseas. Leaders have taken appropriate steps to improve attendance and punctuality and evaluate the effectiveness of their actions.
- There is a calm, orderly atmosphere throughout the school, including in the dining

room. This is enhanced by well-kept classrooms and corridors and beautifully presented pupils' work on display.

- Almost all pupils display excellent conduct. Pupils move around the school in an orderly manner, even when no adults are present. During the inspection, pupils in key stage 1 were also observed at breaktime lining up well, which was managed very effectively by staff. During the inspection, pupils were also observed being able to settle quickly and independently during 'wet' play time.
- Effective whole-school behaviour strategies have had a positive impact on reducing the number of serious incidents. Pupils can describe the school's behaviour systems and understand that there are high expectations of them. They feel that the school's 'six golden rules' are helpful in making sure that everyone remembers to 'do the right thing'.
- School records of behaviour are thorough and well kept. Although serious recorded incidents are few, appropriate action is recorded by senior leaders.
- During the inspection, most pupils showed an interest in learning. Occasionally, some pupils lost focus or did not answer teachers' questions. A small number of pupils were slow to settle to their work. Despite good conduct being maintained, in these instances, pupils' learning slowed.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Test results for pupils at the end of key stage 2 show that all groups of pupils, including those from different minority ethnic groups and those who speak English as an additional language, achieve better than other pupils across the country in writing and mathematics and about as well as other pupils in reading. These test results also show that the progress pupils made from the end of Year 2 was well above the progress made by other pupils nationally. This is also true for disadvantaged pupils.
- Leaders are clear that the standards achieved by pupils in reading, although broadly in line with other pupils across the country by the end of key stage 2, are not as high as those achieved in writing or mathematics. A very high proportion of pupils start school speaking little or no English and a significant number are 'new arrivals' to Britain. This hinders some from understanding the meaning of more complex words and sentences. Improving standards in reading is a high priority for the school. Leaders have already implemented several initiatives which are based on a careful consideration of the barriers that pupils face at the school. Consequently, a focus on vocabulary and suitable reading materials is supporting pupils' reading skills and beginning to improve their achievement in this subject.
- During the inspection, inspectors saw clear evidence of progress in pupils' books across the school in a range of subjects. Similarly, analysis of the school's own data and data from national tests demonstrates a marked improvement over time. Parents, staff, trustees and pupils agree that outcomes for pupils have improved over time due to improved standards of teaching.
- Outcomes in reading, writing and mathematics for most pupils at the end of key stage 1 are currently at least as good as for other pupils across the country. This includes disadvantaged pupils. However, the most able pupils do not do as well as other pupils

nationally. This has been identified by leaders as an area of focus for the school.

- For pupils in Year 1, the proportion achieving the level expected in the Year 1 phonics screening check is about the same as for other pupils across the country. For disadvantaged pupils, this is slightly better than other pupils. This demonstrates very good progress, as many pupils do not speak English when they first arrive at the school.
- There are a wide range of pupils in the school who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, some of which have very complex needs. These pupils are very well supported. They make good progress because of good teaching and the appropriate support they receive.
- Pupils' work in subjects other than English and mathematics also demonstrates good progress being made in most classes. However, in key stage 2, some pupils are not achieving the expected standard in all areas of the curriculum. This is because teachers are ensuring that they first 'plug the gaps' in the learning pupils have missed in the past.
- The current timetable for Year 6 does not enable these pupils to enjoy the same broad and balanced curriculum on offer elsewhere in the school. This is due to an over-emphasis on reading, writing and mathematics, which restricts pupils from studying other subjects, such as religious education, history, geography, art and technology in greater depth.

Early years provision

Good

- Leadership of the early years is good. There is a strong commitment to improvement. The early years leader is effective in supporting teaching and learning, developing positive relationships with parents and ensuring the environment is a safe and happy place for the children who attend.
- The bright and stimulating environment in the pre-school unit and the Nursery class enables children to settle quickly into the school and develop independence and resilience. In these bases, practitioners were observed during the inspection using effective questioning to challenge children to develop curiosity in their learning. Many children enter school speaking English as an additional language. Children are given good models of language by adults to help them develop quickly the English language skills they need.
- Leaders and practitioners across the early years foundation stage staff are trained well and have developed a nurturing and caring environment so children feel at home in all the different areas of learning. Each base is situated alongside the other so children can move easily between them and become familiar with the environments.
- Good use is made of each of the well-planned outdoor environments. In these, children are supported and challenged effectively by adults to engage in problem-solving tasks, developing their focus and cooperative skills as they work.
- During the inspection, there were some examples of lack of challenge or focus observed in some of the areas in the Reception classes, when some adults were less effective in engaging children in focused learning and progress was therefore slow at times. The inspection took place during the second week of the new school year, where many children had just joined the school from settings other than the school's

own nursery class and were still settling in. A range of evidence was considered from the Reception classes, including work from the previous year, which demonstrated children making good progress.

- Children enjoy their time in the early years. They feel safe and behave well. The welfare and safeguarding arrangements in the early years foundation stage mirror the good practice in the rest of the school.
- On entry to Nursery and Reception, many children have skills and knowledge that are below those expected for their age. Many are at the very earliest stage of speaking English as an additional language. All groups of children make good progress, although the proportion gaining a good level of development remains below average. Nonetheless, children are well prepared to start Year 1 because they leave the early years keen to learn and they have the right attitude to succeed.
- The support for disadvantaged children and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is effective. These pupils are tracked closely to ensure that they make progress in line with their peers. Data shows that disadvantaged pupils do achieve as least as well as other children.

School details

Unique reference number	139651
Local authority	Oldham
Inspection number	10036586

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

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	465
Appropriate authority	Academy Trust
Chair	Paul Makin (chair of trustees)
Headteacher/Principal/Teacher in charge	Jessica Hainsworth (executive principal)
Telephone number	0161 260 0610
Website	www.richmond.theharmonytrust.org
Email address	info@richmond.theharmonytrust.org
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school meets the current government floor standards.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.
- The school converted to academy status in February 2014.
- The executive principal is also executive principal of Northmoor Academy in the Harmony Trust.
- The school is part of the Harmony Trust, which is a multi-academy trust of six schools.
- The school recently took over the provision for two-year-olds from the local authority.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors considered 13 responses to Ofsted’s online parent survey (Parent View), with any free-text comments, and the school’s own parent consultation information. Inspectors took into account the 39 responses to the staff questionnaire and the 445 responses to the school’s own pupil questionnaire. The lead inspector held meetings with trustees, which included the chair of the trustees, the chief executive officer and two other trustees.
- The inspection team observed teaching and learning in all classes. The executive principal and head of academy took part in many of these visits. Pupils’ work from a range of areas of learning across the school was examined. The executive principal and head of academy took part in this work with inspectors.
- Inspectors listened to pupils reading and held discussions with groups of pupils. They also talked informally with pupils around the school, in the dining room and in the playground.
- Inspectors met with parents and carers as they left their children at school.
- Inspectors held discussions with members of staff, including: the executive principal and head of academy; the lead for curriculum; the early years foundation stage leader; the leads for behaviour and attendance; the assistant special needs coordinator and inclusion lead; the business manager for the trust; and a member of the school’s administration team.
- Inspectors examined a range of documentation, which included information about pupils’ attainment and progress, leaders’ review of current school performance, records of meetings and reports from the chief executive officer. Inspectors also examined safeguarding documentation and records of pupils’ attendance.

Inspection team

Claire Cropper, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Eithne Proffitt	Ofsted Inspector
Clare McGarey	Ofsted Inspector

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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. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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