

Richmond School

Darlington Road, Richmond, North Yorkshire, DL10 7BQ

Inspection dates 5–6 February 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Strong leadership, including the work of the governing body, is driving secure, swift and sustained improvements in students' progress.
- Teachers consistently plan interesting lessons. They frequently give up their own time to offer students extra help.
- The school's checks on the quality of teaching and students' work are accurate, regular and helping teachers to improve their work rapidly.
- Students are routinely polite and thoughtful. They feel very safe in school. They have positive attitudes to their learning. This is contributing strongly to improvements in their progress.
- The sixth form is good and improving quickly. Students in the sixth form are excellent role models for younger students because they are articulate, confident and self-assured.
- Students make good progress overall and it is outstanding in some important areas such as mathematics.
- Students are confident learners and readily answer questions thoughtfully and fluently.
- Students' reading is good and extra help for students whose reading is not as strong is helping them to improve their skills.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There are a few occasions when students who have extra help in class and those who are known to be eligible for free school meals do not make as much progress as other groups of students.
- There are a few subjects, including a small number in the sixth form, in which students do not make consistently good progress.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 47 parts of lessons. Ten were observed jointly with members of the senior leadership team.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, staff, members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspectors spoke to students in lessons, at break and during lunchtimes. They also spoke formally to four groups of students, including some sixth form students, on the first day of the inspection.
- One inspector heard a small group of students read.
- The inspection team observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation, including the school's plans for the future and on-going reviews of those plans, and the school's records of their observations of teaching. They also looked at behaviour logs, racist incidents and the school's safeguarding arrangements.
- Two inspectors toured the school with students.
- The inspectors took account of 123 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and 44 responses to the staff inspection survey.

Inspection team

Joan Hewitt, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Peter William Harrison

Additional Inspector

Graeme Clarke

Additional Inspector

Catherine Laing

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Barbara Waugh

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Full report

Information about this school

- The school is much larger than the average secondary school.
- It has a large sixth form.
- The proportions of students from minority ethnic backgrounds and those who speak English as an additional language are well below the national figures. There are very few students who are at the early stages of learning to speak English.
- The percentage of students who are eligible for pupil premium (which provides additional funding for students in local authority care, those known to be eligible for free school meals and those whose parents or carers are in the Armed Services) is below the national average.
- A few students are of Nepalese heritage with parents or carers in the Armed Services.
- The proportion of students registered as disabled or with a statement of special educational needs is below the national average, as is the number of students supported at 'school action plus'. The proportion of students supported at 'school action' is in line with the national average.
- The school has an enhanced resource base which provides support within the school and to local primary schools for students and pupils with specific learning difficulties.
- The school meets the government's current floor standard, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- The school occasionally makes arrangements for individual students to be educated off-site at Richmond and Hambleton Pupil Referral Unit.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Iron out the inconsistencies in the progress made by different groups of students so that they all make outstanding progress by making sure teachers plan carefully to meet their needs in all lessons.
- Improve teaching so it is consistently outstanding in all subjects by:
 - building on the existing good and outstanding practice to ensure students have consistent high quality opportunities to solve problems on their own and in small groups
 - improving the pace and challenge in lessons so that students tackle their work with a greater sense of urgency
 - ensuring that teaching in the sixth form consistently provides students with opportunities for creative and independent enquiry.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Students enter the school with above average starting points. By the end of Year 11 the large majority of students gain five or more good GCSE passes including English and mathematics. This has increased sharply in recent years and the current Year 11 is on track to do even better. This is excellent progress for many students. Progress is good in most subjects and it is often excellent in mathematics and English.
- The school has an effective approach in entering some students early for GCSE in mathematics. For example, it has helped to motivate a small number of students who were at risk of becoming disaffected with school.
- Students who have extra help in class and those known to be eligible for free school meals do not do as well as other groups of students. There is a gap between the average point score of these students and other groups. The differences in the rates of progress are improving because the needs of these students are being met with increasing success. This can be seen most clearly in Key Stage 3. The few students of Nepalese heritage make good progress because the school makes sure their individual needs are met. On the few occasions when students attend courses away from school, they generally make good progress and good gains in improving their social, emotional and behavioural difficulties.
- Students who are disabled or have a statement for their special educational needs make sound progress. They are supported very well in small groups and overcome significant difficulties in improving their basic reading and writing skills. These students also make a great deal of progress in learning good strategies to deal with social and emotional difficulties.
- Students are competent and enthusiastic readers. The school promotes a love of reading by creating frequent opportunities for students to read and discuss the books they have enjoyed. Leaders monitor how well students' reading is improving. If students are struggling with their reading they have highly effective extra help. Teachers and support staff ensure the weakest readers in the school have good strategies to help them tackle unfamiliar words with confidence.
- Writing in the school is generally of a high quality. Students can write engagingly across a range of subjects. Students' confidence is clearly seen in the quality of their speaking and listening skills. They frequently contribute well-structured answers in lessons and have enthusiastic discussions with each other about their work.
- Achievement in the sixth form is good and improving swiftly and securely. Most students go on to secure places at their first choice of university. High attaining students do particularly well. There is some variation in the progress students make in different subjects. In high performing subjects, such as English, students have excellent opportunities to decide which skills they will need to tackle a problem but this approach is not fully consistent in all classes and subjects.

The quality of teaching is good

- The rapid gains in students' achievements have been brought about by the clear improvements in teaching. There is a growing core of outstanding teaching, in which teachers plan tasks which precisely meet the needs of each student.
- Where teaching is outstanding learning speeds up dramatically because students find learning irresistible and they tackle challenges with a real sense of urgency. For example, Year 9 students needed minimal input from the teacher as they made outstanding progress in analysing and discussing complex ideas about Christianity and morality. The teacher's careful planning of materials and questions resulted in students of different abilities making rapid progress. This impressive practice is not consistent across all teaching.
- Teachers consistently plan interesting tasks which students tackle willingly and work diligently to complete. Students respond well to opportunities to work together and solve problems. This is becoming more consistent but there are still a few examples where teachers dominate the

lesson and students do not have enough opportunities to work things out for themselves.

- Students' have high quality feedback about their work and how to make it better. This increases their confidence and helps them to make fast progress. Some teachers do this extremely well and make very helpful written comments. In the best examples, teachers make sure students take on board their advice.
- Teaching in the sixth form is also consistently good and often outstanding. There are increasing opportunities for students to tackle problems independently. In the best examples, teachers push students to their limit by creating exciting and demanding challenges. Staff are working hard to make sure this is a regular feature of lessons.
- Teachers have strong subject knowledge and good relationships with students. This makes it easy for students to ask questions and establishes a positive working atmosphere. This is especially strong in small groups where students have specific teaching to help them if they have weak basic skills.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Behaviour around the school at break and lunchtime is exemplary. Even at busy times on crowded staircases, the atmosphere is calm, orderly and students' behaviour is thoughtful. Students who arrive in Year 7 from very small primary schools settle in to the life of the school easily and comfortably. Students say they feel very safe and they are taught how to keep themselves safe in lots of ways, including when they are using social networks and the internet.
- Students behave well in class and lessons go ahead with minimum disruption. Students show high levels of self-discipline when they are asked to work independently but they do not always get the chance to do this. Students understand the 'consequences' system to manage behaviour. They were keen to tell inspectors how this had been changed when they had told teachers it was too complicated. Students say the few incidents of poor behaviour are dealt with firmly.
- There have been no permanent exclusions of students in the past three years. Fixed term exclusions went up as students got used to a changed 'consequences' system. Attendance is broadly average and improving. Staff are acutely aware that students who are eligible for the pupil premium are absent more frequently than other groups. The work of leaders and pastoral staff is reducing this through individual work with students that is detailed and tailored to individual circumstances.
- Students have a good understanding of different types of bullying. They know how it can adversely affect people and what to do if they witness any behaviour they think is intimidating. They understand the importance of avoiding the use of derogatory language. On the rare occasions when bullying occurs, it is dealt with firmly and fairly by staff.
- Students are friendly and polite to each other and to adults. Sixth form students take their responsibilities as role models seriously. A number act as mentors to younger students or play an effective part in supporting learning in Key Stage 3 classes.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher leads the school by example. His unswerving focus on improving teaching has been supported capably by senior leaders resulting in the excellent improvements in students' achievement in English and mathematics. This impressive team is exacting in its pursuit of excellence. Leadership of the sixth form is good and improving strongly.
- Middle leaders have a strong role in checking the quality of teaching and students' work. They produce specific plans to improve students' progress and take action quickly when students are at risk of underachievement by putting in place extra help. The work to improve how teachers meet the needs of students who have extra help in class and those eligible for the pupil premium is beginning to pay dividends and their rates of progress are improving.
- Systems to manage teachers' performance are clear. Leaders, including governors, have made sure there is a clear link between the quality of teaching and the progress students are making

when decisions about teachers' salary progression is determined. Senior leaders take timely and effective action when teaching is less than good. The school can point to some compelling case studies where teachers have been supported through high quality training and coaching to improve their work. Good and outstanding teaching is rewarded not only by financial gain but also through opportunities to share practice and take on extra responsibility to develop the skills of other teachers.

- The school offers a diverse range of subjects in both the main school and the sixth form. This is enhanced by plenty of activities for students to take part in outside of school hours. Students are encouraged to reflect on global issues such as democracy. Lessons frequently deepen students' understanding of moral dilemmas and cultural awareness. For example, Year 7 learned about the history and spiritual significance of gargoyles while they improved their skills in moulding clay models.
- Staff have appreciated support from the local authority. They have especially valued the reviews of teaching which have helped leaders to pinpoint their efforts to have the best effect in improving teachers' practice.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Members of the governing body provide strong challenge in holding the school to account. Governors use the high quality information provided by the school to make sure they know the strengths of the school and the areas which need further development. They have secure systems to ensure appropriate health and safety checks are done regularly and effectively. Governors are exploring ways to support the school in gathering first-hand information about the quality of students' work, especially those who are eligible for the pupil premium and those who have extra help in class. Governors have chosen to spend the pupil premium on staffing to improve the progress of the students eligible for this funding and the care and guidance offered to them. This strategy is having a positive effect. Work to check more carefully that this funding is helping to close gaps in the attendance and behaviour of these students is in the early stages.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	121680
Local authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	413452

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1635
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	361
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Anne Skeoch
Headteacher	Ian Robertson
Date of previous school inspection	30 September 2009
Telephone number	01748 850111
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