

Richard Rose Central Academy

Inspection report

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| Unique Reference Number | 135621 |
| Local Authority | Cumbria |
| Inspection number | 360969 |
| Inspection dates | 10–11 November 2010 |
| Reporting inspector | Jane Austin HMI |

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills (HMCI) the authority to cause any school to be inspected. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

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| Type of school | Academy |
| School category | Non-maintained |
| 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 | 1341 |
| Of which, number on roll in the sixth form | 320 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Mr Brian Scowcroft |
| Principal | Mr Russ Wallace |
| Date of previous school inspection | 10 December 2008 |
| School address | Edgehill Road Carlisle Cumbria CA1 3SL |
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Introduction

When Richard Rose Central Academy was inspected in December 2008 it was judged to require special measures. Subsequently, the academy was inspected on four occasions. This inspection was carried out by three of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors. They observed the school's work, including 45 lessons taught by 45 teachers. Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior staff, the Chief Executive of the Federation, representatives of the 'parent voice' group, and students, and a telephone conversation was held with the chair of the governing body. Documentation including the academy's self-evaluation, monitoring records, data regarding students' progress, safeguarding policies and procedures, and governance reports were considered.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the academy's work. Inspectors looked in detail at the following.

- The quality of teaching and students' learning, their attainment and achievement.
- Students' behaviour, their rates of attendance and levels of punctuality.
- The effectiveness of the academy's policies and procedures for safeguarding students.
- The quality of leadership and management at all levels and the academy's capacity to improve.

Information about the school

Richard Rose Central Academy opened in September 2008. It is part of the Richard Rose Federation which also includes the Richard Rose Morton Academy. The sixth form serves the federation and is situated on a separate site. The academy is much larger than the average secondary school and the sixth form has more students on roll than is generally found in school sixth forms. Almost all students are White British: only a very small number speak English as an additional language. The proportion of students who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average, although the percentage with a statement of special educational needs is average. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is broadly average. The academy's specialisms are in sport and science.

Since the academy opened there has been a significant turnover of staff at all levels. About 30% of teaching staff have joined the academy since it was placed in special measures. The academy is due to move to its new building in January 2011, where all students will learn on the same site.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the academy no longer requires special measures. The academy provides a satisfactory education for its students.

The vigorous and forthright leadership of the headteacher has been pivotal in bringing about significant improvements to the outcomes for students and to the quality of the academy's provision. He resolutely and consistently articulates the vision for the academy and its high expectations for students. The academy sets challenging targets aimed at realising these expectations and examination results in 2010 demonstrate that the academy is beginning to have some success in reaching them.

Students' attainment has risen over the last two years so that the academy's GCSE results in 2010 were broadly in line with those of similar schools. Nonetheless, standards remain low compared with national averages. Students' learning and progress, including for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, is now satisfactory as a consequence of satisfactory teaching. However, more rapid progress is hampered by the limited use teachers make of assessment information to plan learning which closely matches the needs of all students. It is also hindered by low attendance. Rates of attendance have increased considerably as a consequence of rigorous, multi-faceted strategies put in place by the academy, but further improvement is required. Behaviour is generally satisfactory and no longer presents a barrier to learning. Restorative practices are becoming established as a means of helping students to take more responsibility for their own conduct.

The satisfactory curriculum has been broadened by the introduction of a number of vocational courses. These have raised the achievement of a significant proportion of students who are motivated effectively by the methods of learning and assessment involved. Students' learning and personal development are enhanced by the wide range of extra-curricular activities offered, many linked to performing arts and sports. The academy's specialism in sport makes an important contribution in this area, helping the substantial proportion of students who participate in these activities to lead healthy lifestyles as well as develop their leadership skills.

The care, guidance and support provided for students are good. The positive impact of this is seen in improving attendance, punctuality and engagement in lessons. The academy is striving for an inclusive ethos and working hard to ensure that there is suitable provision for those who find it hard to learn or whose behaviour can be challenging. There is an increasingly unified approach to academic and pastoral support.

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher has been resolute in his successful drive to build a strong senior leadership team. Leadership of the sixth form is

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authoritative and proving very effective in developing broad-based provision for a fast-growing student body. Suitable middle leadership structures and systems are in place but more consistency and rigour are required in their implementation before they can have a uniformly positive impact on improving teaching and students' progress. The governing body provides strong strategic direction for the academy. Procedures for safeguarding students are good and kept under regular review by governors.

The academy has addressed the issues raised by the previous inspection and, in doing so, demonstrated a good capacity to improve.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve students' achievement by raising attainment particularly in English, mathematics and science.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning, including that in the sixth form, to at least good by:
 - ensuring that assessment information is used effectively to match work to students' abilities and learning needs
 - raising teachers' expectations of students so that lessons have high levels of challenge and move at a brisk pace
 - increasing the rigour and consistency with which zone leaders drive improvement in their subjects.
- Raise levels of attendance in Years 7 to 11 to at least in line with the national average.
- Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Students' attainment when they join the academy is well below average. They make satisfactory progress in lessons. When they are engaged by the topic and task, students concentrate well and work without support from adults, asking pertinent questions and making unprompted, relevant contributions. However, many have a passive approach to learning and some find it hard to remain attentive. Most students have not developed fully the confidence to work independently for sustained periods. Nonetheless, they are satisfactorily developing important skills needed for the next stage of their life. Vocational programmes and strong links with local employers contribute well to this. Progression routes through to post-16 courses and apprenticeships are carefully constructed and well signposted. As a consequence, a much lower than usual proportion of students who completed Year 11 in 2010 are currently not in education, training or employment. Across the academy, students' use of information and communication technology is well developed. They collaborate effectively, notably on sports and performing arts activities. A significant number develop leadership skills and experience through gaining qualifications linked to sports coaching. Through such opportunities students are able to make a satisfactory contribution to the community.

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Students say they feel safe and are confident that their views are listened to. They are aware of the academy's rules and routines that are designed to protect them, for example when they are out on visits. Through various areas of the curriculum, students learn how to make safe and healthy choices. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory overall. Students' cultural development is weaker than other aspects: they have limited experience and understanding of the diversity of modern society within the United Kingdom.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

| | |
|---|----------|
| Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning | 3 |
| Taking into account: | |
| Pupils' attainment ¹ | 4 |
| The quality of pupils' learning and their progress | 3 |
| The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress | 3 |
| The extent to which pupils feel safe | 3 |
| Pupils' behaviour | 3 |
| The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles | 3 |
| The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community | 2 |
| The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being | 3 |
| Taking into account: | |
| Pupils' attendance ¹ | 4 |
| The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | 3 |

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is satisfactory but not good enough overall to eradicate students' legacy of underachievement. The better lessons seen during the inspection were planned thoroughly so that tasks matched the students' abilities and prior learning. Teachers had high expectations, both of students' work and their behaviour. Students were clear about what they were learning and how to tackle the tasks set. They knew what they were aiming for in order to be successful, sometimes as a result of good demonstrations by the teacher. Lessons moved at a brisk pace, with varied activities and groupings helping to sustain students' engagement. Teachers used perceptive questions to check students' understanding as lessons progressed. Teaching assistants were well directed and so able to make a good contribution to students' learning.

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Where lessons were less successful, teachers' expectations of students were too low leading to a lack of appropriate challenge in the tasks set. Assessment information was not used effectively to plan work matched to the learning needs of all students. Opportunities for students to think for themselves were limited. Their understanding was not checked frequently or well enough to evaluate their learning and unearth misconceptions.

The academy has worked quickly to broaden the range of vocational courses and qualifications offered: partnerships with local organisations support the delivery of some of these effectively. The timing of examination entries is increasingly well-matched to students' individual needs and promotes their improved achievement. Sharper analysis of students' abilities is leading to targeted support for those with weak literacy and numeracy skills.

Pastoral support teams liaise closely with the teaching staff and other agencies to provide good academic and emotional support for students. Arrangements for identifying students who are vulnerable or in need of support are increasingly robust, as is the tracking of their progress and the use of this information to plan for individual needs. The academy places great emphasis on working with families to promote students' well-being, recognising the importance of this in enabling them to achieve better academically. It is building its internal capacity to do this, for instance through the appointment of a family liaison officer and an in-house team so that there is ready access to specialist support and advice. There are good opportunities for students to find out about the options available to them post-16. Through taster days and college placements students in Years 10 and 11 are helped to make informed choices about their future. As a result of very effective liaison with primary schools, Year 7 students settle quickly into academy life.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

| | |
|--|----------|
| The quality of teaching | 3 |
| Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning | 3 |
| The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships | 3 |
| The effectiveness of care, guidance and support | 2 |

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher leads a highly committed senior team that is very ambitious for the academy. The academy knows itself well because it has developed effective procedures for gathering management information. Rigorous quality assurance of provision by the senior team, combined with increasingly sophisticated use of the system for tracking students' attainment and progress, highlight strengths and areas for development and enable underachievement to be identified. On this sound foundation, senior leaders have set demanding but realistic priorities.

The impact of the leadership of teaching and learning is satisfactory. There is a thorough, sharply-focused, systematic approach to identifying strengths and weaknesses and

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supporting staff through carefully targeted methods such as individual coaching and learning communities. Well-considered systems are in place to hold staff to account so all are clear about their part in raising students' attainment and achievement. The middle 'zone' leaders play a key role in systems of accountability but some unevenness in the quality and rigour of implementation restricts the impact on improving teaching and learning. The academy's specialism in sport has made a significant contribution to the development of middle leadership in science.

The governing body has an imaginative and far-sighted vision for the federation and this academy. Governors bring a wealth of expertise to their roles, enabling them to support the academy highly effectively and also to present a demanding level of challenge to senior leaders. They ensure that rigorous arrangements are in place to check that all adults are suitable to work with young people.

The academy has a secure understanding of its context and has rightly made creating a cohesive community its priority. Staff have worked hard to good effect to bring the two predecessor schools together. Good liaison with the 'parent voice' group adds depth to this. Communication with parents and carers has improved significantly, including through regular high-quality and accessible reports on students' progress. Links with the local community are developing well, particularly through the sixth-form's engagement with employers. The academy has sound plans to broaden its work with regard to the wider society within the United Kingdom and the world beyond. The academy's inclusive ethos contributes effectively to tackling discrimination: the promotion of equal opportunities is increasingly refined.

These are the grades for leadership and management

| | |
|--|----------|
| The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement | 2 |
| Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning | 3 |
| The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met | 2 |
| The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers | 2 |
| The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being | 3 |
| The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination | 3 |
| The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures | 2 |
| The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion | 3 |
| The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money | 3 |

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Sixth form

Leaders of the sixth form are ambitious and relentless in their drive for improvement. They have identified the right priorities to bring about improvement and their actions are beginning to bear fruit. From a very low base, standards of attainment at A level have risen rapidly to just below the national average. Nonetheless, data indicate that too many students do not make the progress expected of them. Pass rates for a significant number of students on vocational courses at intermediate levels are high. Attendance is low and staff are working hard to improve this through rigorous monitoring and close working with parents and carers.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Many teachers use their subject expertise well to maintain students' interest and enthusiasm. Teachers know their students well, but the information they hold on students' levels of attainment is not always used effectively to plan and deliver lessons that meet the students' differing abilities. Consequently students, especially the most able, are not always sufficiently challenged. The use of data to set targets and monitor progress is beginning to be embedded.

The curriculum is good. Close partnerships with employers have enabled the sixth form to strengthen its curriculum so that it is more relevant to students who wish to move on to employment. A wide range of vocational programmes, offered at both intermediate and advanced levels, now complement the traditional choice of academic A-level courses. As a consequence, growing numbers of students are progressing into the sixth form and the vast majority of them stay on their courses. Provision for the development of students' basic skills, including literacy and numeracy, is satisfactory.

Students receive effective guidance to help them in their future career choices. They feel safe and speak highly of the support they receive from their teachers and personal tutors.

These are the grades for the sixth form

| | |
|--|----------|
| Overall effectiveness of the sixth form | 3 |
| Taking into account: | |
| Outcomes for students in the sixth form | 3 |
| The quality of provision in the sixth form | 3 |
| Leadership and management of the sixth form | 2 |

Views of parents and carers

Parental questionnaires are not normally distributed for monitoring inspections carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005, unless inspectors have specific reasons to request that the academy does so. Inspectors spoke to representatives of the 'parent voice' group who were positive about the way in which the academy keeps students safe, responds promptly to requests from parents and carers, and listens to their views.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Parental questionnaires are not normally distributed for inspections conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005, unless inspectors have specific reasons to request that the school does so.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

| Grade | Judgement | Description |
|---------|--------------|--|
| Grade 1 | Outstanding | These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. |
| Grade 2 | Good | These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well. |
| Grade 3 | Satisfactory | These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils. |
| Grade 4 | Inadequate | These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves. |

Overall effectiveness of schools

| Type of school | Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools) | | | |
|----------------------|---|------|--------------|------------|
| | Outstanding | Good | Satisfactory | Inadequate |
| Nursery schools | 58 | 36 | 4 | 2 |
| Primary schools | 8 | 43 | 40 | 9 |
| Secondary schools | 10 | 35 | 42 | 13 |
| Sixth forms | 13 | 39 | 45 | 3 |
| Special schools | 33 | 42 | 20 | 4 |
| Pupil referral units | 18 | 40 | 29 | 12 |
| All schools | 11 | 42 | 38 | 9 |

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Achievement: | the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training. |
| Attainment: | the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons. |
| Capacity to improve: | the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement. |
| Leadership and management: | the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school. |
| Learning: | how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners. |
| Overall effectiveness: | <p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support. |
| Progress: | the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started. |

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



12 November 2010

Dear Students

Inspection of Richard Rose Central Academy, Carlisle, CA1 3SL

You will be very pleased to hear that when we inspected the academy recently we judged that it now provides you with a satisfactory education and no longer needs special measures. The progress you are making in lessons has improved because teaching is now satisfactory. As a consequence, examination results went up in 2010 and attainment is rising. However, there is still room for improvement because your attainment remains low compared with the national average. You can make a big difference to this by working as hard as you can in every lesson and increasing your attendance. Too many of you miss days when you could be learning and this is hindering your progress.

The academy has good procedures to keep you safe. In discussions and in questionnaires a large majority of you said that you feel safe. Your behaviour is satisfactory overall, although there are moments when it gets rather boisterous. A significant number of you participate regularly in sports and performing arts events and this helps you keep healthy. Lots of you develop leadership skills through such activities; these will be useful when you move on to the next stage of your education.

The sixth form is growing fast because leaders have worked successfully to provide a broad range of courses that meets your needs and aspirations. Examination results went up considerably this year although, in the main, students did not make the progress of which they were capable.

The drive and ambition of the headteacher and senior leaders, including those working relentlessly in the sixth form, have resulted in the improvements to the academy. They have big plans for the future and we have asked them to focus on the following areas so that the quality of education you receive keeps improving.

- Raise achievement and attainment, particularly in English, mathematics and science.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning, including in the sixth form.
- Raise levels of attendance, including those in the sixth form.

I wish you every success in the future and hope you enjoy learning in your new building.

Yours sincerely

Jane Austin

Her Majesty's Inspector

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