

# Richard Rose Morton Academy

Wigton Road, Carlisle, Cumbria, CA2 6LB

**Inspection dates** 26–27 November 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	<b>Inadequate</b>	<b>4</b>
Achievement of pupils		Inadequate	4
Quality of teaching		Inadequate	4
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Inadequate	4
Leadership and management		Inadequate	4

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires special measures.

- Achievement is inadequate. For the past three years the proportion of students who have left Year 11 with five high grade GCSEs, including English and mathematics, has been well below average and has shown few signs of improvement.
- Gaps in students' knowledge, as a result of inadequate teaching over time, are not being filled. Consequently, this provides a weak foundation for further learning and slows students' progress.
- Teachers do not use the assessment information they have on students' current performance well enough to match learning activities to meet their needs. As a result, teachers' expectations are too low; few students make the progress of which they are capable with many disengaging and being disruptive.
- There are too few opportunities for students to find out things for themselves. As a result, students are too reliant on their teachers and opportunities for students to deepen their understanding, or for teachers to check it, are missed.
- Students' attendance is below average, and the number of students who are persistently absent is well above average.
- Leaders have not been effective in addressing underachievement. The monitoring and evaluation of teaching lacks rigour and performance management has had no impact on driving up standards.
- The academy's policy of entering students early for GCSE mathematics has had a negative impact on achievement in this subject.
- Application of the academy's marking policy is inconsistent. As a result, opportunities for students to learn from their mistakes are missed.

### The school has the following strengths

- The quality of teaching in art, physical education, modern languages and geography is stronger than other subjects.
- The newly appointed executive and associate principals have a clear vision for developing the academy.
- The School Improvement Board has an accurate understanding of how well the academy is doing, including the quality of teaching and the standards achieved by the students. They are providing robust challenge to the new senior leaders to accelerate the pace of change.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 34 part lessons taught by 33 different teachers. Two of these lessons were jointly observed with members of the leadership team. Inspectors also made visits to form tutor time.
- Separate meetings were held with the associate principal and members of the senior leadership team, the Chair of the School Improvement Board, the executive principal and a representative of the academy's designated sponsor United Learning. Inspectors also met with groups of teachers and groups of students representing the various age groups in the academy. The lead inspector also held a telephone conversation with a local authority representative.
- Students' work was scrutinised, as were the academy's policies, minutes of the School Improvement Board's meetings, the academy's evaluation of how well it is doing and the development plan. Inspectors also analysed senior leaders' records of the monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning and data showing students' current attainment and progress in a range of subjects.
- Inspectors were able to canvass the opinions of a small number of parents by telephone and they also took into account the 27 responses to the on-line questionnaire, Parent View.
- During this inspection, inspectors asked additional questions designed to ascertain the academy's view of the impact and effectiveness of local authority services to support improvement. This information will contribute to work being carried out by Ofsted to assess the use, quality and impact of those services.

## Inspection team

Charles Lowry, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Anne Smedley

Additional Inspector

John Ashley

Additional Inspector

Peter Harrison

Additional Inspector

## Full report

In accordance with section 44 of the Education Act 2005 (as amended), Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

### Information about this school

- Richard Rose Morton Academy is a smaller than average, mixed comprehensive school. It is located in the Morton area of Carlisle, Cumbria, about three miles to the south-west of Carlisle town centre.
- The proportion of pupils who are eligible to receive support from the pupil premium is above average. The pupil premium is extra funding the academy receives to help support those students who are known to be eligible for free school meals, students who are in the care of the local authority, or students who are members of service families.
- The number of Year 7 students who are entitled to the catch-up premium is just below average. The catch-up premium is added finance the academy is given to help improve the reading or mathematical skills of those students who did not attain Level 4, in either subject, at the end of Year 6.
- Almost all pupils are of White British heritage and, consequently, few are at the early stages of learning English.
- The number of pupils with special educational needs and who are supported at school action is below average. The number supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also below average.
- The academy has a policy of entering students early for GCSE mathematics.
- There have been a number of changes at senior leadership level since the previous inspection. The Principal in post at that time has left the academy and a new Principal will join the staff in February 2014. In the interim, the academy is being led by an associate principal working alongside the executive principal, both of whom are relatively new appointments.
- All the academy's students are educated on-site and none attend any other provision.
- Although the academy is designated as an 11-18 school, currently there are no students in the sixth form.
- Arrangements for governance are currently being carried out by the School Improvement Board. This group will oversee the transfer of the sponsorship for the academy from the current sponsors, the Richard Rose Federation to United Learning. This is due to be completed on 1 January 2014.
- The academy does not meet the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Urgently improve the quality of teaching in order to ensure that all students, particularly of middle and higher ability achieve well, especially in English and mathematics, by:
  - making sure that all teachers use the assessment information they have about the students to plan and deliver lessons that meet their needs
  - raising teachers' expectations of students' capabilities, ensuring that the work students are given to do is challenging, makes them think hard and, as a result, deepens their

understanding

- ensuring that students do not rely too heavily on their teachers and giving them more opportunities to find out things for themselves
  - ensuring that teachers regularly check students' understanding in lessons and adjust their teaching if students do not demonstrate a firm grasp of what is being taught
  - taking immediate steps to address gaps in students' knowledge and understanding, particularly in English and mathematics, in order to make up for weaknesses in teaching over time
  - ensuring that teachers consistently follow the academy's marking policy so that students are clear about what they have done well and what they need to do to improve their work and so learn from their mistakes.
- Improve students' behaviour, particularly in lessons, in order to maximise their achievement, by:
- encouraging all students to take a positive approach to their learning and the opportunities provided by their teachers
  - increasing students' attendance and reducing persistent absence, particularly those students supported by the pupil premium or with special educational needs.
- Improve the effectiveness of the leadership team, by:
- strengthening their accountability for securing good or better teaching, particularly the role of middle leaders in carrying out their areas of responsibility
  - ensuring that the procedures they adopt for monitoring, evaluating and reviewing the quality of teaching and learning are rigorous, robust and have positive impact
  - using teachers' performance management effectively, to drive up standards in teaching and raise students' achievement.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### is inadequate

- As a result of weak teaching over time, the number of students leaving Key Stage 4 having attained five high grade passes at GCSE, including English and mathematics, has been below the government's minimum expectation for the past three years with no sign of improvement.
- The gaps in attainment between the boys and girls, students supported by the pupil premium and their peers, and students with special educational needs and their fellow students, are wider than those found nationally and are not closing.
- In 2012, the latest year for which validated data is available, students of higher ability significantly under attained at GCSE in humanities, mathematics and science. Students of middle ability, that is, those students who left primary school having achieved Level 4, also significantly under attained in humanities and mathematics, but also in English.
- Given their starting points, the progress made by all groups of students in English and mathematics has been significantly below expectations for the past two years. In fact, expected progress declined from 2012 to 2013 and was about 27 percentage points below the national figure in both subjects.
- As with attainment, the gaps in progress between the various groups in the academy were also wider in 2012 and 2013 than those found nationally.
- The academy's policy of entering students early for GCSE mathematics has meant that they have been sitting the examination before they are ready to do so. This, coupled with weak teaching at Key Stage 4, has led to students underperforming in this subject.
- Prior to the appointment of the current associate principal, there was no evidence of any accountability for use of the pupil premium or its impact. This is now being addressed and senior leaders are monitoring the effect this additional finance is having on the attainment and progress of those students for whom it is intended. However, in 2013 the achievement gap between these students and their peers in school was wider than the national figure. In 2012, that is the most recent year for which there is valid data, students supported by the pupil premium left the academy about two grades behind their peers, nationwide, in English, and just over two grades behind in mathematics. The results for 2013 strongly indicate that this gap remains. Consequently, this funding had no impact on achievement.
- The academy is using the catch-up funding effectively to improve the reading skills of students in Year 7. The academy's internal data is showing that the reading ages of those students who are benefitting from this funding are accelerating.
- A rigorous system for tracking students' progress was introduced in September. The students are set targets for achievement in each subject and plans are in place to monitor their progress against these targets at five points during the year. The current data indicates that progress is accelerating for a number of groups. However, not all of the assessment information has been checked externally to ensure that it is reliable.
- The majority of parents who responded to Parent View indicated that their child is making good progress. However, just over one third of respondents did not.

### The quality of teaching

### is inadequate

- Inadequate teaching over time has led to students making poor progress.
- In the large majority of lessons, teachers do not have high enough expectations of what students can achieve. They fail to take adequate account of the students' current rate of progress or level of capability. Consequently, the activities the students are given to do often do not meet their needs. Many activities lack appropriate challenge. As a result, students' engagement with the learning is superficial; it does not make enough demands on their thinking and, as a consequence, their progress is slow. In these circumstances, students often become disengaged and disruptive.

- In a number of lessons, students are expected to listen to the teacher for long periods. This limits opportunities for them to work in small groups or on their own, to solve problems and find things out for themselves. Consequently, students are too reliant on their teachers and give up easily when they perceive the work as being difficult.
- On many occasions, teachers slavishly follow their detailed lesson plan and will not deviate from it even when the students are not engaged. In addition, they fail to build in sufficient opportunities to check students' understanding. As a consequence, students' learning, in these lessons, is weak.
- Subject leaders, particularly in English and mathematics, have not paid enough attention to dealing with the legacy of weaker teaching in their respective curriculum areas. They have not made sure that their staff devote some teaching time to filling the gaps in students' knowledge. This has resulted in many students' grasp of these subjects becoming more tenuous as they move through the academy and has led to low outcomes in both subjects at GCSE.
- The academy's marking policy is not followed consistently by all teachers. Where marking is most effective students are given clear information about what they have done well and advice about what they need to do to improve. This advice is then followed up by the students and their work becomes even better, as is the case in art. However, in some books, comments relate to peripheral aspects such as the quality of presentation and in others the marking is unhelpful. When this happens, opportunities are missed for students to learn from their mistakes.
- There are pockets of good and even better teaching in the academy. In these lessons, students work hard and strive to do their best. For example, in one excellent Year 9 geography lesson, students worked effectively in groups and engaged passionately in a debate about Fairtrade, and this contributed well to their moral and cultural development. In a very strong Year 10 art lesson, the teacher introduced the students to the key ideas of cubism and the work of Picasso. She then went onto expertly model drawing in this style for the students who then worked independently on their own compositions, demonstrating rapid progress.
- Of the parents who expressed an opinion, the majority felt that their child was well taught. However, a small minority expressed reservations about the quality of teaching in the academy.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils are inadequate**

- As a result of too much teaching that fails to inspire and ignite their enthusiasm, students' behaviour is poor. Too many lessons are disrupted by a minority of students whose needs are not being met and, as a consequence, their progress and that of others is weak. Yet there are examples of these same students behaving well and enjoying their learning when the teaching is at least good.
- In a number of lessons, students showed a lack of resilience, giving up and disengaging when the teacher attempted to increase the degree of challenge. As a result, students were not encouraged to seize the opportunities presented by their teachers to deepen their understanding and develop their skills in solving problems.
- Although attendance at the academy has shown an improvement over the last three years, it is still just over two percentage points below the national figure. Although persistent absence has fallen over the same period the proportion of students whose attendance is 85% or lower is more than twice the national average. Absenteeism of students supported by the pupil premium and those students with special educational needs is a major concern. Attendance at Key Stage 4 is lower than it is at Key Stage 3 with the consequent negative impact on students learning and GCSE results.
- When asked, students say that, since the appointment of the associate principal, behaviour has improved; expectations of students' conduct are higher and, outside of lessons, they have risen to them. Students move around the academy in an orderly fashion. Between lessons, and at breaks and lunchtimes, relationships appear warm and friendly. Students are well presented and classrooms and the academy grounds are tidy and free of litter.
- Students say that they feel safe in the academy and most of their parents who were surveyed

agree. The design of the building is such that all areas are readily accessible and easily monitored by the teachers who are on duty.

- Students are knowledgeable about the different forms that bullying can take including racist, homophobic, cyber and other forms of prejudice based intimidatory behaviour. They say that incidents of bullying are rare now but that when they do occur they are dealt with effectively. However, the term 'gay' is used by some students to describe things that they do not like. Nevertheless, many students realise that the use of this term in a derogatory fashion is unacceptable and is dealt with appropriately by academy staff.

## **The leadership and management are inadequate**

- Over time, the leadership, management and governance of the academy has failed to secure essential improvements in teaching in order to improve the quality of the outcomes for students. In the past, their view of how well the academy was doing was over generous and when targets were not met did not take incisive action to tackle areas of weakness.
- Although there have been recent and significant changes to the senior leadership and governance of the academy, capacity for further improvement remains fragile. This is because middle leaders with subject responsibilities have yet to fulfil all the duties associated with their roles in order to ensure that teaching improves quickly enough to overcome the legacy of under achievement.
- Monitoring of classroom practice by middle leaders lacks rigour. Lesson observations tend to consist of short visits to classrooms to check that teachers are complying with school policy in relation to how lessons should be taught. As a result, they place too much emphasis on what the teacher is doing and not enough on the impact that teaching is having on pupils' learning.
- Until the start of this academic year, arrangements for managing the performance of teachers lacked rigour and staff were not held robustly to account for the standards achieved by students.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced, but ineffective teaching means that it is not meeting the needs of a large number of learners. It does, however, provide opportunities for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. In the stronger lessons, there is effective group work and students learn about other faiths in religious education and other cultures in geography.
- The promotion of equality of opportunity and prevention of discrimination are ineffective because of the variation in performance of the different groups of students at the academy.
- Since the executive and associate principals joined the staff and the new governance arrangements have been put in place, the life and work of the academy has been reinvigorated. The associate principal's evaluation of the academy's performance is accurate and he has galvanised his colleagues into action, putting in place systems to address the most pressing priorities. However, many of these strategies are so new it is too early to assess their impact on students' outcomes.
- The new performance management arrangements, introduced by the associate principal in September, have strengthened accountability. Pay is now clearly linked to teachers' performance and because of students' weak results over time, all pay rises have been frozen until standards improve.
- The impact of the local authority's support and challenge, over time, in helping the academy to improve has been marginal. This is mainly due to the failure, in the past, of the academy's senior leaders to engage with the local authority's school improvement team. The recent changes to senior leadership and governance of the academy have led to a much more productive relationship with the local authority. The local authority has a representative on the School Improvement Board, who is providing an effective link between her employer and the academy sponsors. There are also plans for the local authority's school improvement team to work with the academy on a number of key priorities for improvement.
- The academy should not employ newly qualified teachers.

**■ The governance of the school:**

- Weaknesses in the governance of the academy, identified by the sponsors, have been robustly addressed. In response to students' inadequate outcomes over time, the work of the governing body was reviewed and was replaced by a School Improvement Board under the leadership of a new Chair. Working with the executive principal, they quickly took effective action to secure the senior leadership of the academy by appointing the associate principal. This was in order to accelerate the pace of change. The board has brokered a link with a successful school to help senior leaders make rapid improvements. The School Improvement Board has an intimate knowledge of the work of the academy, the quality of teaching, and the standards achieved by the students. They are investigating the impact of pupil premium funding on students' outcomes. Together with senior leaders, they have injected a sense of urgency into the pace of change and are robustly holding them to account. They have commissioned a full health and safety report on the academy buildings and are acting on the findings. They have made sure that all safeguarding procedures meet statutory requirements.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	135620
<b>Local authority</b>	Cumbria
<b>Inspection number</b>	428870

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Non-maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	720
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The School Improvement Board
<b>Chair</b>	Nigel Robson
<b>Executive Principal</b>	Derek Davies
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	18 September 2012
<b>Telephone number</b>	01228 822644
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