

Inspection of Richard Rose Central Academy

Victoria Place, Carlisle, Cumbria CA1 1LY

Inspection dates:	11 and 12 March 2025
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Sixth-form provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

The principal of this school is Dan Markham. This school is part of United Learning Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Sir Jon Coles, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Christian Brodie.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy to attend this school. They wear the uniform with pride. Pupils behave extremely well. They are respectful of the rules that are put in place to help them to learn well. For instance, pupils listen attentively in lessons. They follow teachers' instructions quickly. There is rarely any disruption to learning.

The school has cultivated a sense of fun and belonging alongside raising standards. For example, there was much healthy competition between the three house teams in the pancake flipping competition. Pupils publicly claim their 'golden ticket' as a reward for house points. This helps to motivate others to want to do their best too.

The school's expectations of what pupils can achieve are exceptionally high. Pupils are beginning to rise to these high expectations and believe that they can achieve. They learn well across the curriculum and build a secure foundation of knowledge.

Students in the sixth form act as excellent role models. Well-trained reading buddies support younger pupils with reading. Pupils enjoy taking part in an array of clubs such as art, football and 'STEM'. They benefit from trips to enhance their cultural awareness, for instance to the theatre.

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

The quality of education that pupils receive has vastly improved. However, published outcomes at the end of key stage 4 do not reflect this. These reflect historic weaknesses in the design and delivery of the curriculum which were compounded by pupils not having the same sense of belonging to the school that they have now. Pupils now benefit from an extremely well-thought-out curriculum that is carefully designed to give pupils the knowledge and skills that they need to succeed. Furthermore, pupils now engage positively in their learning. Staff apply the behaviour policy consistently and fairly.

Teachers have strong subject knowledge and communicate new information clearly. The school's agreed strategies for delivering the curriculum are firmly embedded, including in the sixth form. Teachers regularly check for understanding. They identify pupils' misconceptions and address them swiftly. This means that any gaps in pupils' knowledge are filled quickly.

Pupils are given plenty of opportunity to recall previous learning. This helps them to successfully build on prior knowledge and connect it to new ideas and concepts. Pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, build knowledge successfully over time and achieve well. Nevertheless, in a small number of subjects, activities are sometimes not designed well enough to allow pupils to apply their learning independently. This hampers some pupils from achieving as highly as they could.

At times, pupils, including students in the sixth form, lack the confidence to articulate their understanding. This hinders them from being able to deepen their knowledge

through talk. Moreover, some pupils struggle to express themselves fluently, engage in debate or discuss their own opinions. The school has recognised this but work on this is in the early stages.

The school provides staff with helpful information around pupils' additional needs. Teachers use this information to help shape learning to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). These pupils learn well. The school has identified reading as a barrier to learning for some pupils. It puts effective support in place to help these pupils to read more confidently and fluently. The school's reading programme, delivered in form time, exposes pupils to a range of texts and authors. This motivates some pupils to go on to read other texts by these authors in their own time. The school's strategies for improving attendance have borne some fruit. The attendance of disadvantaged pupils, including those with SEND, has risen. Typically, pupils attend regularly. This allows them to take advantage of all the school has to offer.

The school's offer to promote pupils' wider development includes opportunities such as visits to universities. These activities inspire pupils and prepare them for their next steps in education. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe in water, online and in the local community. They enjoy donating to charitable causes or helping less fortunate people in the community. Pupils learn about different cultures and appreciate how everyone is different. In the sixth form, students learn to take responsibility such as leading the anti-bullying and well-being committee.

With determination, the school, supported by the trust, has driven forward improvement. The school rigorously evaluates what is working well and less well. It is unafraid to make changes, when needed, to make things better. Governors are well chosen for the expertise that they bring to the role. They carefully hold the school to account. Staff wholeheartedly support and share the school's ambitious vision. They appreciate the flexibility around planning and preparation time.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a few subjects, teaching approaches, including activity choices, do not help pupils to deepen their learning or build their independence. This affects how well some pupils achieve. The school should ensure that teaching approaches, including learning activities, enable pupils to engage in deep learning and achieve highly.
- There are inconsistencies in how well the school promotes opportunities for pupils to express themselves orally. This means that, sometimes, pupils lack confidence to

express themselves verbally and take part in activities such as discussions and debates. This sometimes hinders pupils from deepening their understanding. The school should finalise its plans to ensure that pupils are equipped with the oracy skills that they need to be able to express themselves confidently so that they can explore different ideas and deepen their learning.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	135621
Local authority	Cumberland
Inspection number	10348257
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1045
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	155
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Christian Brodie
CEO of the trust	Sir Jon Coles
Principal	Dan Markham
Website	www.rrca.org.uk
Dates of previous inspection	8 and 9 June 2022 under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of United Learning Trust.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.
- The school uses one registered and one unregistered alternative provision for a small number of pupils.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024, will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors spoke to the principal, senior leaders and other members of staff.
- Inspectors spoke to two trust regional directors.
- An inspector held a telephone conversation with a representative of the board of trustees.
- An inspector met with representatives of the local governing body, including the chair.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, science, art and design, history and modern foreign languages. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors visited lessons in other subjects. They also looked at a sample of work across a range of subjects.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils about their experiences of school. Inspectors also observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and social times. An inspector observed pupils' arrival at the start of the day.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation including behaviour and attendance data, the school's self-evaluation and quality assurance records.
- Inspectors considered the responses shared through Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. They also considered the responses to Ofsted's surveys for pupils and staff.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.

Inspection team

Jenny Jones, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Jackie Cahalin

Ofsted Inspector

Phill Walmsley

Ofsted Inspector

Paul Edmondson

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
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