

Inspection of a good school: Richard Lander School

Higher Besore Road, Truro, Cornwall TR3 6LT

Inspection dates:

3 and 4 October 2023

Outcome

Richard Lander School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Richard Lander School is a happy and inclusive school. Staff have high expectations of pupils and live out the school's motto of encouraging pupils to 'be the best you can be'. Pupils achieve well. When they leave school, they are well prepared for their next steps in education or employment.

The school is calm and purposeful. Pupils are proud to attend and say that they feel safe. Staff and pupils enjoy warm, respectful relationships. Classrooms are positive learning environments. Some incidents of bullying do take place. However, the school takes swift and effective action to resolve these.

Pupils benefit from an extensive and exciting range of extra-curricular opportunities. As well as creative arts and sports clubs, there are also large numbers of national and international trips every year. For example, pupils talk passionately about a month spent visiting Uganda and working on building projects to support the development of a partner school. Many pupils demonstrate their teamwork and resilience by being part of the Greenpower Education Trust race-car team or participating in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme. Pupils can take on leadership roles, such as being subject leaders, sports leaders or a head student.

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

The school's curriculum is varied and ambitious. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) follow the same curriculum as their peers, with small adaptations as appropriate. The school has increased the number of pupils studying a modern foreign language at key stage 4 for the last two academic years. This means that the school is moving closer to the government ambition for more pupils to study subjects that form part of the English Baccalaureate (EBacc).

The school's area resource base for pupils with SEND is well established. It is a welcoming and nurturing environment. Staff are aspirational for what pupils can achieve, both

academically and socially. Pupils are part of the wider school community, and many attend lessons and tutor groups alongside their peers.

The curriculum is well planned. Subject leaders ensure that the content matches the aims of the national curriculum and is sequenced logically. Therefore, pupils gain important knowledge and build this over time. Teachers have strong subject knowledge, which allows them to deliver the curriculum successfully. Assessment during lessons and as part of end-of-unit tests checks what pupils have remembered. However, this information is not always used judiciously to re-teach pupils or to improve the curriculum.

Pupils enjoy learning, and low-level disruption is rare. If any incidents do occur, staff follow the behaviour policy to ensure that the learning of others is not interrupted. At social times, staff model high expectations around using the dining hall and outside spaces. There are some rare instances of anti-social behaviour. However, staff act quickly and communicate effectively with parents and carers, so sanctions and additional support are put into place as required.

The personal development curriculum develops the self-confidence of pupils and builds the knowledge they need to keep themselves safe in the community. They learn about positive relationships, including consent, and issues related to substance misuse and online safety. Pupils demonstrate an understanding of the protected characteristics and what it means to treat people equally. They learn about beliefs and cultures that are different from their own and engage in moral debates on topical issues.

Pupils receive effective careers guidance throughout their time at school. They participate in work experience, post-16 meetings and visits to colleges to consider the range of options available to them.

Pupils who need additional support with their reading receive the catch-up sessions they require. They are then able to access the wider curriculum successfully. However, there is not an established culture of reading for all pupils. Many pupils do not read widely beyond the curriculum.

Governors understand and meet their statutory responsibilities. They check on the well-being of staff, including the headteacher. Staff say that they enjoy working at the school. They feel listened to by leaders, whom they say are approachable and considerate of their workload. Teachers at the early stages of their career receive appropriate support and guidance.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, assessment is not used well enough to evaluate and improve the impact of the curriculum. As a result, some pupils have gaps in their knowledge that persist, or they do not develop a deep enough understanding of key concepts. The school should ensure that assessment is used effectively in all subjects.
- The school has not fully developed a culture in which pupils read for pleasure. As a result, most pupils do not read widely beyond the academic curriculum. The school should ensure that pupils read a rich and diverse range of texts to improve the culture of reading for pleasure.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in March 2015.

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	112055
Local authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	10297889
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,521
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Yvette Butterfield
Headteacher	Stephen Mulcahy
Website	www.richardlander.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	27 March 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school has an on-site area resource base for pupils with SEND. There are currently 19 pupils from Year 7 to Year 11 on roll there.
- The school uses eight registered and two unregistered alternative providers.
- 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.

Information about this inspection

Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.

This was the first routine inspection the school had received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors held discussions with the headteacher, members of the senior leadership team, the acting special educational needs coordinator, curriculum leaders, members of the local governing body and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, mathematics, history, art and design, and modern foreign languages. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, 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.
- Inspectors considered responses to the online survey for parents and carers, Ofsted Parent View, including free-text comments. Inspectors also considered responses to the staff survey and responses to the survey for pupils.

Inspection team

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