

Richmond Methodist Primary School

Darlington Road, Richmond, North Yorkshire DL10 7BH

Inspection dates

28 February – 1 March 2017

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher and deputy headteacher provide effective leadership. Since their appointments in January 2016, they have raised expectations and held teachers more tightly to account for pupils' progress.
- Most pupils make good progress across key stage 1 and key stage 2 and develop a secure understanding of skills in reading, writing and mathematics. However, children make inconsistent progress in the Reception classes.
- Disadvantaged pupils increasingly get the additional support they need to address gaps in their knowledge.
- The quality of teaching is good and improving. Leaders provide clear guidance and good training which has improved the teaching of writing and mathematics in particular.
- Pupils grow in confidence as they move through the school. A particular feature is the mutual support that pupils are happy to provide for one another. They cooperate well in lessons to support each other's learning. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- Levels of attendance are improving because pupils enjoy coming to school. The attendance of disadvantaged pupils has been weaker over time, but has now begun to improve. The vast majority of parents and pupils would recommend the school.
- The good core curriculum is enriched through an extensive range of additional opportunities. Music and the visual arts are strongly promoted and the school excels in a wide range of sports.
- Leaders have an accurate evaluation of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They have improved systems to assess pupils' progress and ensure that good-quality additional support is provided for pupils that need it.
- Leadership and oversight of the early years is weaker, however. More needs to be done to ensure that children in the Reception classes get off to a good start.
- Pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development sits at the heart of the school's Christian ethos. Positive relationships help shape pupils' polite and respectful attitudes. Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Governors are ambitious and determined to improve the school. They know the school well and provide strong support and challenge to the headteacher.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the leadership of the early years, so that:
 - children settle quickly and make better progress from their different starting points
 - good routines and safe practices are quickly established
 - better use is made of all available assessment information to provide well-designed activities that fully meet children’s needs
 - the learning environment is developed further to stimulate curiosity and engage children in purposeful learning.
- Ensure that the impact of the pupil premium funding is checked carefully and that all disadvantaged pupils receive the additional support they require to make good progress.
- Sustain improvements in attendance, particularly in the attendance of disadvantaged pupils.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Since taking up post in January 2016, the headteacher and deputy headteacher have challenged the staff and pupils to raise their expectations. They have addressed some aspects of leadership and management that lacked rigour and have begun to improve the quality of teaching and learning. Their leadership has ensured that the school is moving forwards and is securing good outcomes for pupils currently in the school.
- Leaders and governors articulate a clear vision based on strong academic progress within a context of distinctive Methodist Christian values. Leaders place significant emphasis on the development of pupils' spiritual and moral growth and their preparation for life as responsible young citizens. This is exemplified by the house system, which promotes a sense of belonging, healthy competition and responsibility.
- The performance of teaching is being managed more robustly than in the past. Teachers are required to gather evidence for the impact of their teaching and need to demonstrate a positive impact on their pupils' progress in order to secure pay progression. Leaders use assessment information effectively across the year to track pupils' progress and challenge teachers where progress is less evident. A relatively high level of staff absence has, however, been a barrier to improvement that leaders and governors are working to address.
- Good advice and guidance is provided to teachers and teaching assistants. A careful analysis of last year's end of key stage 2 test results identified where the teaching of writing needed strengthening. Teachers have implemented revised approaches that are having a positive impact on pupils' progress. A similar level of analysis of mathematics outcomes has led to change in teaching methodology. Good support from middle leaders has quickly helped teachers to consistently embrace new methods and approaches.
- The leadership of early years is less secure, however, and there is a lack of expertise for this age group across the leadership team. This is reflected in an overgenerous evaluation of the quality of early years provision. Senior leaders have arranged support from an external consultant who is advising on possible improvements.
- The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum with some excellent extra-curricular opportunities. Pupils enjoy English and mathematics and receive good additional support if they fall behind. The wider curriculum helps pupils to gain a good understanding of their local area and heritage. For example, last year, all pupils visited historic abbeys across North Yorkshire to learn about their history. Leaders are exploring opportunities to foster links with an inner-city school in order to broaden pupils' understanding of multicultural Britain. This would complement established links with schools in Kenya that support pupils' international understanding. Good musical and artistic opportunities also contribute effectively to pupils' strong social, moral, spiritual and cultural development.
- Primary school physical education and sports funding is used well to provide a wide range of activities. The school excels in competitive sports and achieves highly in a

broad range of events. Sport for all pupils is promoted strongly and there are good arrangements in place to foster good physical and mental health.

- Governors make regular checks on the use of the pupil premium. However, they know that more needs to be done to ensure that disadvantaged pupils make consistently good progress as a result of the additional funding. For example, the impact of this funding is not routinely evaluated in the early years. Governors commissioned an external review of the use of the pupil premium last year and have implemented the recommendations. In response, leaders have developed more sophisticated tracking systems which are helping to ensure that the progress made by different groups of pupils is more carefully monitored. Funding for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is used well. The special educational needs coordinator has a detailed knowledge of individual pupils' needs and reviews their progress regularly.

Governance of the school

- The governors are ambitious, challenging and determined to improve the school.
- Governors used the opportunity to appoint a new leadership team to tighten aspects of leadership and management. Their accurate evaluation of what was needed established an agenda for change.
- The governors hold leaders to account for delivering this agenda. They provide good support and backing for leaders, but are clear in their expectations and challenge robustly when impact is not evident. They use the school's improvement plan effectively to check that leaders are making the improvements that they have identified.
- Governors make regular visits to the school to see for themselves the quality of provision. They are therefore well informed and know in detail what needs to be done to secure the school's improvement.
- Effective support is brokered from the local authority and from within the local teaching school alliance. Governors ensure that the school is open to external scrutiny and consider carefully the findings of the local authority education development partner's reports.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders ensure that all necessary checks are made on adults that work in or visit the school. Safeguarding policies are reviewed regularly and appropriate training, including training on radicalisation and extremism, has been provided for all members of staff. A culture of vigilance pervades the school. There are good arrangements in place to act in partnership with families and external agencies when children are in need of support or protection.
- A potentially serious safeguarding incident occurred the day before this inspection took place. Inspectors converted the inspection in order to evaluate the response of leaders and managers, including members of the governing body. The headteacher and governors made a transparent and proportionate response to review the failures that led to children being at risk. The local authority provided excellent and prompt support. The headteacher ensured that all members of staff were appropriately briefed and that

risk assessments were reviewed. By the end of the inspection, a full investigation was underway, with appropriate actions taken quickly to remedy identified weaknesses.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Most teachers have good subject knowledge, plan effectively and track the progress of each pupil carefully. Their improving use of assessment and better planning is helping to overcome some inconsistencies in pupils' progress. However, the use of assessment to support planning is less secure with the early years provision.
- Teachers draw upon a variety of approaches to help pupils acquire a sound grasp of phonics which underpins the rapid development of their reading skills. Pupils read frequently and show interest and enthusiasm in a range of different texts. There are well-planned opportunities for pupils to read mature texts across different subjects and good activities that promote the analysis of language. The challenging approaches to reading ensure that pupils make significantly stronger progress than seen nationally.
- Teaching promotes the careful analysis and checking of written work. Pupils learn to review and edit their work in response to helpful feedback. The consistent application of the school's marking and feedback policy ensures that pupils address incorrect spellings and improve their grammar and punctuation. As pupils move through the school they become increasingly confident to discuss and help refine each other's written work using correct subject-specific terminology.
- Mathematics lessons have become more challenging. Teachers now focus on getting pupils to explain their thinking and to demonstrate to one another how they solve mathematical problems. Pupils enjoy the challenge and display confidence when given new and unfamiliar questions to tackle. Most teachers are adept at asking probing questions to check pupils' level of confidence and quickly spotting any misconceptions. Because of this they are able to adapt lessons as they proceed.
- Pupils develop effective learning skills, which are increasingly evident in key stage 2. They collaborate well with one another and confidently support one another in group work. Most classrooms have a 'can do' approach which develops pupils' resilience to keep trying when the work is challenging.
- Partnerships between teachers and teaching assistants are well developed. Teaching assistants complement the teacher's input well through their strong support for particular pupils. They ask effective questions and know when to withdraw and allow pupils to work things out for themselves.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Pupils acquire positive attitudes and good learning behaviours as they move through the school. They are willing to participate fully in lessons, enjoy discussion and debate and show determination when the work is difficult.

- Pupils readily accept responsibilities. House captains play an important role in fostering a positive ethos and culture within their houses. Other pupils run a healthy tuck shop at playtime or represent their classes on the school council. Pupils are mutually supportive of one another's efforts in lessons.
- The school promotes good physical and mental health effectively. Sport and physical exercise has a high priority in the school and many pupils are members of sports teams. Displays around the school celebrate the school's success in local competitive sports competitions.
- Leaders are also aware of the needs of some more vulnerable pupils. Good arrangements are in place to support such pupils at the start of the day and there are skilled learning mentors available for pupils to confide in. Leaders plan to strengthen further arrangements to support pupils who feel more anxious through the provision of yoga sessions and workshops focused on good mental health.
- All pupils receive a weekly lesson focused on personal, social, health and economic education. These lessons help pupils to understand and manage risks to their safety, including risks posed by digital media and through bullying. Pupils told inspectors that they feel safe and secure at school and that bullying is rare. A small number of pupils described to inspectors how members of staff had quickly addressed bullying when it had occurred.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Almost all lessons flow smoothly because pupils are interested and engaged by the activities provided for them. They show good levels of self-discipline because they know what is expected of them. No pupils have been excluded from the school for poor behaviour in recent years.
- Pupils are polite and friendly and warmly welcome visitors to the school. They follow well-established routines during meal times and help to tidy away happily. They show respect for one another and readily follow instruction from their teachers.
- More formal arrangements for the start of the day have recently been put in place. This is helping to establish a sharper start to the day. Pupils now line up outside and quickly move to their classrooms, where learning begins promptly.
- Overall levels of attendance are in line with the national average for primary schools. A smaller proportion of pupils than nationally are regularly absent. The attendance of disadvantaged pupils has been lower than other pupils nationally, however. Some focused efforts this year have seen improvements in attendance for this group. This improvement now needs to be sustained to ensure that the progress and learning of disadvantaged pupils is not adversely affected.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils make good progress, grow in confidence and develop positive attitudes to learning as they progress through the school. By the end of Year 6, most pupils attain standards in reading, writing and mathematics that are close to or above those seen nationally.

- Children start school in the Reception class with skills and abilities that are broadly typical for their age, although some children enter the school with social and emotional skills below those that are typical. Disruption to staffing and a lack of sharpness in the use of assessment information means that some children do not spend enough time on activities that develop their reading, writing and number skills. Although outcomes at the end of the Reception Year have improved over the last three years, more needs to be done to ensure that a good start is made by all children.
- Pupils' progress quickens in key stage 1. Teachers are skilled in developing pupils' reading skills. The proportion of pupils who attain the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics check has risen steadily over recent years to be above the national average. By the end of Year 2, the proportions of pupils attaining the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics has been consistently above the national average. The school's assessment information and the work in books shows pupils currently in the key stage are also making strong progress, particularly in developing reading skills, which is a strength of the school.
- In 2016, outcomes at the end of key stage 2 dipped slightly from the strong picture seen in previous years. Although pupils continued to make significantly stronger progress in reading than seen nationally, progress rates in writing and mathematics were no better than average. Leaders have looked closely at why this was the case and have implemented new approaches to teaching that have quickly had a positive impact. Assessment information and the quality of pupils' work shows that current pupils are making better progress than seen last year.
- Last year, the progress of disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities matched that of other pupils nationally in reading and mathematics, but was weaker in writing. Leaders have recognised this and now make regular checks on the progress of both groups of pupils to identify any underperformance. Additional support is increasingly being provided by skilled teaching assistants to address identified gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding. As a result, both groups of pupils currently in the school are making more consistent progress this year.
- The most-able pupils make strong progress because lessons are suitably challenging. Again, their progress in reading is a strength, with progress rates being significantly better than seen nationally. The most-able pupils show increasing confidence and independence as they mature and regularly take on roles in lessons supporting other pupils or explaining their thinking to the class.
- Pupils take pride in their handwriting and presentation. They persevere well and show a willingness to edit and improve their work in response to the teacher's feedback.
- The quality of pupils' work across the wider curriculum is equally good. In science, pupils demonstrate a good understanding of how to conduct investigations and analyse data to draw conclusions. Pupils' progress in art and music are both strong. The school excels in sport and celebrates sporting achievement in a range of events, including cross-country running, gymnastics and cricket.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- A lack of sharp leadership and disruption to staffing over the last year has led to some children making a slow start in the Reception classes. Some children are still to establish good routines and safe practices and some are yet to feel socially and emotionally confident.
- The learning environment is not sufficiently varied or exciting to stimulate children's curiosity. Both indoor and outdoor areas lack sufficient resources to fully support children's development. For example, the outdoor space has limited resources to develop children's understanding of number or to encourage them to read or write.
- Adults who work in early years make regular assessments of children's abilities but do not always use this information to design suitable learning activities. Consequently, children's progress in some areas of learning has been slow. More needs to be done to ensure that there are more frequent and suitably engaging activities that support children's development in reading, writing and their understanding of technology.
- Assessment information is not analysed in sufficient detail. For example, leaders do not routinely look at the progress of different groups of children. Consequently, leaders are not clear on the progress being made by disadvantaged children in comparison with their peers. It is not clear, therefore, whether additional funding for disadvantaged children is having a positive impact.
- Some adults are skilled in challenging children's thinking through skilful questioning. However, the quality of teaching is variable across the two Reception classes.
- In 2016, the proportion of children that reached the expected standard by the end of the Reception Year was in line with that seen nationally. Most children developed a secure range of skills so that they were ready to begin Year 1. However, the inconsistencies in the quality of provision currently indicate that fewer children will secure a good level of development this year.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher have recognised that the quality of provision in the early years needs developing. They have arranged support from within a local teaching school alliance, which has begun to have a positive impact. However, leaders have less experience in this phase of education and plans for its development are less well developed. For example, more effective use needs to be made of information from local pre-school providers and parents, so that learning activities are tailored to meet children's needs from the start of the Reception Year.
- Leaders have a good understanding of safeguarding requirements and ensure that the early years welfare requirements are fully met.

School details

Unique reference number	121544
Local authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	10000929

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	316
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jan Linsley
Headteacher	Helen Ring
Telephone number	01748 822794
Website	www.richmondmethodist.n-yorks.sch.uk
Email address	admin@richmondmethodist.n-yorks.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	23–24 April 2012

Information about this school

- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information about safeguarding and child protection, as the policy on the website is out of date.
- Richmond Methodist Primary School is larger than the average-sized primary school. The school is a member of the Swaledale Alliance and provides the lead role on initial teacher training.
- Most pupils are White British. Few pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds and few speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium is less than half that seen nationally.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average. Currently there are no pupils who have an education, health and care plan or a statement of special educational need.

- The school meets the government's current floor targets, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress at the end of key stage 2.
- The school provides a breakfast club and after-school care.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher were both appointed in January 2016 following the retirement of the previous headteacher.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited lessons across all year groups, including the Reception classes. A number of observations were undertaken jointly with the headteacher and deputy headteacher. During observations, inspectors sampled pupils' books and talked to pupils in order to evaluate the quality of their current work. In addition, inspectors scrutinised in detail a sample of books containing work from a broad range of subjects and listened to some pupils read.
- Inspectors also observed an assembly and the general climate around the school at social times.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, other senior leaders, middle leaders, a group of teachers, the early years leader, the special educational needs coordinator and a group of pupils. Further meetings were held with a group of governors, including the chair of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documents including the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans, policies, assessment information and records of checks on the quality of teaching. Inspectors looked at records of attendance, behaviour, minutes of governing body meetings and safeguarding information, including a number of risk assessments.
- Inspectors took account of the 86 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, the 15 responses to Ofsted's staff survey and the 56 responses to Ofsted's pupil survey.

Inspection team

Chris Smith, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Dawn Foster	Ofsted Inspector
Ann Muxworthy	Ofsted Inspector
Cathy Lee	Ofsted Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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