

# Richard Challoner School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	102606
<b>Local Authority</b>	Kingston Upon Thames
<b>Inspection number</b>	286441
<b>Inspection date</b>	14 June 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Anne Feltham HMI

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Boys
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	839
6th form	159
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr M Draper
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr T Cahill
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	4 February 2002
<b>School address</b>	Manor Drive North New Malden KT3 5PE
<b>Telephone number</b>	020 8330 5947
<b>Fax number</b>	020 8330 3842

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<b>Age group</b>	11–18
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors, accompanied by an Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

Richard Challoner School is a comprehensive Catholic voluntary-aided school for boys aged 11-18. The school is oversubscribed and there are currently over 800 boys, 159 of whom are in the sixth form. The school shares sixth-form provision with a nearby girls' school and gained specialist technology college status in 2003. Pupils come from a variety of social and economic backgrounds, and the great majority of their families are of the Catholic faith. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is much lower than average and the proportion of pupils whose first language is not English is lower than average. Slightly above average numbers of pupils come from a minority ethnic background. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is higher than in most schools.

## Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 1

Richard Challoner School provides a highly effective education for its pupils and the learning environment is outstandingly stimulating, caring and supportive. Pupils' attendance and behaviour are exemplary. They enjoy being at school and contribute very well in lessons and to the life of the wider school community. Sports, arts and musical opportunities are excellent, and enable pupils to develop beyond the classroom. Parents and carers are overwhelmingly supportive of the school and pupils talk frankly and openly of the culture of respect and tolerance fostered by the school. Pupils have a clear sense of right and wrong. They are proud of their school, and talk with pride of the lack of bullying - 'it's stamped on straight away' - and the school's 'zero tolerance' of poor behaviour. They support each other in an exceptional environment which eschews machismo.

Academic standards are very high indeed. Pupils enter the school with slightly above average attainment and make exceptional progress through Key Stages 3 and 4, achieving outstanding results in GCSE examinations. As well as statutory subjects, in which they do very well, all continue to GCSE with a humanities subject, a technology and a foreign language, often obtaining a high number of qualifications. This curriculum lays firm foundations for their future economic well-being. School provision for subjects such as food technology and catering has recently expanded and such subjects are very popular. Where pupils are more suited to a less academic curriculum, very good arrangements are made for part-time college courses and in-house alternatives.

The quality of teaching is excellent, engaging and motivating pupils very well. Lessons are generally characterised by lively, interactive teaching, and pupils are encouraged to develop their understanding by working with different groups and partners in the course of lessons. Very high quality resources ensure that pupils are constantly challenged and have access to 'state of the art' technology. New facilities for physical education and art are already having an impact on the quality of the pupils' work and exemplify improvements to the school since the previous inspection.

Senior leaders have a very good understanding of their school's strengths and areas for development. They support and challenge subject leaders and heads of year, and develop opportunities for these colleagues to participate in whole-school decision making. The governing body demonstrates strong commitment to the school and provides a powerful blend of support and challenge in its role of critical friend. Specialist school status has had a very positive impact on work in the focus subject areas and across the wider curriculum. It has also enabled the school to strengthen links with the local community. The continuing improvement of pupils' achievement and standards over recent years, to the current very high levels, reflects the clear vision, commitment and determination of those who lead and manage the school.

## Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

### Grade: 2

This is a well-established, effective and improving sixth form, described accurately by one student as 'really on the up'. Recruitment has increased rapidly in recent years. It offers a varied curriculum, with a wide range of both academic and vocational courses available. Students are given clear advice to ensure that they make appropriate subject choices and the school has recently improved the way in which it supports their progress through the sixth form. These

new systems are already having an impact on the progress of current students. Achievement is good, and standards in 2006 were broadly in line with national averages, with some variation across subjects. Standards are rising year on year. A high percentage of students go on to study in higher education.

Students have very positive attitudes towards the teaching they receive. They play a very active part in the life of the school and also contribute well to the local community, for example providing training in the use of new technologies for elderly people. A sixth-former has led recent charitable work overseas, engaging younger pupils very effectively to donate money and equipment for a school in Ethiopia. Sixth form students provide excellent role models for younger pupils.

The sixth form is well led and managed, ensuring that resources are used effectively to meet learners' needs. Further initiatives are now underway to strengthen support for students and appropriate strategies are in place, with the potential to secure further improvement in standards.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Ensure that students in the sixth form achieve the very high rates of progress demonstrated by pupils between 11 and 16.

## **Achievement and standards**

**Grade: 1**

**Grade for sixth form: 2**

Achievement is very good and standards are well above average. Pupils' attainment on entry is just above average. They make exceptional progress through Years 7 to 9 so that the standards they reach at age 14 are consistently above the national average, and have been improving year on year. They reach particularly high levels in mathematics and science. Standards at the end of Year 11 are well above average and, again, on an upward trend. Pupils also achieve well in English and mathematics. Very good support ensures that all pupils, including those from minority ethnic groups, make equally good progress. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities also do very well. This is a highly inclusive school.

## **Personal development and well-being**

**Grade: 1**

**Grade for sixth form: 1**

Pupils thoroughly enjoy school and grow in confidence, becoming increasingly reflective about their own learning. They are very well prepared for life beyond school and, by the time they leave, they have extremely strong academic and personal skills. They build very positive relationships with each other, and support new, or more vulnerable, peers exceptionally well. These young men are not afraid to express their feelings, and the school encourages them to develop their emotional awareness very well. Behaviour is excellent, both in class and around the school. Pupils are keen to learn, and the atmosphere in classrooms is charged with a sense of classes wanting to find out more; pupils ask their teachers questions and seek further knowledge with confidence. They also take their responsibilities very seriously, for example their charity work. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent, and opportunities to develop these aspects of their education have expanded in recent years. Pupils

respond very well to the school's values, engaging in very open and productive dialogue with teachers as they grow through the school.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

**Grade: 1**

**Grade for sixth form: 2**

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding overall. Classroom work, planned and led to a consistently high standard, is supported by pupils' excellent attitudes to work and high levels of motivation. This is a powerful combination and results in pupils' excellent progress in their studies. A strength of teachers' work is that they have high expectations of all their pupils, and plan accordingly: pupils in lower-attaining groups - including those with special educational needs - are challenged and supported very effectively; those in higher-attaining groups achieve exceptional outcomes.

Relationships between teachers and pupils are excellent. Pupils show high levels of enjoyment and interest in their lessons. Teachers' questioning is particularly good and pupils delight in challenging - always in a polite and skilful way - and taking their own learning further. Teachers give pupils very good feedback, in writing and orally in class, and pupils find this very motivating.

Pupils enjoy the interactive style of teaching and learning which characterises classrooms. Teachers are adept at organising seating to ensure that pupils maintain concentration and learn to the full. They expect pupils to work productively in pairs and groups; they provide lively, highly structured activities which require pupils to work with each other, developing their own thinking through listening and speaking. New technologies are used very well to engage their interest and ensure the involvement of all pupils. They are stimulated and excited by the high quality and 'state of the art' accommodation and equipment.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

**Grade: 1**

**Grade for sixth form: 2**

The school offers a broad curriculum that is very well matched to pupils' needs. They also benefit from an extensive range of enrichment opportunities, through clubs and visits. The school's new sports facilities offer exceptional opportunities, and pupils also take part in a wide range of musical and performing arts. Industrial level design and technology equipment, together with information and communications technology facilities provided across all departments, means that pupils benefit from exceptionally good access to experiences which equip them for their future life.

The curriculum is planned and monitored very carefully to meet pupils' needs. Choice is built in from the outset, for example the great majority of pupils can choose which language they wish to specialise in from Year 8; this increases their motivation in future years. The curriculum in Years 10 and 11 is challenging, offering access to a wide range of subjects, with a good balance between choice and compulsory subjects, such as technology, languages and humanities. The recent introduction of an 'alternative curriculum' has enabled a minority of lower-attaining pupils to achieve in a parallel, but equally demanding, context. Similarly, the introduction of extremely popular food technology and catering courses has broadened the offer. Whilst the

sixth form offers a wide range of more traditional advanced courses, it also has broadened its offer to include appropriate vocational courses.

Specialist school status has brought many benefits to the school, including greatly improved facilities for the target subjects and updated equipment across the curriculum. For example, the languages department has benefited from interactive whiteboard facilities in classrooms, which increase pupils' motivation: one pupil, describing grammatical work, said 'you get to come to the front and move words around on the board and it really makes it fun'. The school has also exploited these resources very well to offer additional technological experiences to the local community, for example primary schools, parents and residential homes for the elderly.

## **Care, guidance and support**

**Grade: 1**

**Grade for sixth form: 2**

The care provided for pupils is outstanding and staff work tirelessly to ensure that pupils are happy and achieve. Pupils and parents value this highly and praise the ethos of the school. The school offers a very supportive environment where students flourish as individuals. Personal, social and health education lessons give pupils the opportunity to discuss topics which enable them to think for themselves and challenge prejudice and stereotypes. This results in pupils' mature and thoughtful approach to relationships: one younger pupil said 'it's all about respect really'. Bullying and racism are challenged very effectively and pupils understand clearly the school's values and endorse them in their daily lives. The school manages the balance between strict discipline and a real commitment to care extraordinarily well.

The school's emphasis on a safe, healthy environment encourages pupils to develop appropriate lifestyles: several pupils interviewed talked with enthusiasm of their use of the school's new gym and sporting equipment. Safeguarding procedures are in place and the school has strong links with external agencies. Pastoral care is enhanced by the work of the school chaplain. There is very effective careers advice, which enables pupils to make appropriate decisions as they progress through the school. Academic progress is monitored consistently and effectively from Years 7 to 11, and pupils have a very good understanding of how well they are doing, and what they need to do to improve. New systems in the sixth form ensure that older students now have their progress monitored through similarly rigorous procedures.

Good links with the partner school in the joint sixth form ensures that older students are well supported. Further new initiatives are currently being introduced for next year's cohorts designed to provide even tighter support, for example means of helping students to achieve even better attendance and punctuality.

## **Leadership and management**

**Grade: 1**

**Grade for sixth form: 2**

The excellent leadership and management of the school has resulted in very high levels of pupil achievement. The Headteacher and extended leadership team combines experience with enthusiasm and a strong commitment to innovation. Parents' and pupils' views are sought and taken into account, with the result that the whole school community demonstrates a high degree of consistent commitment to the school's vision and values.

The school has an established, committed staff, working together to provide a stable and yet continuously improving learning environment. Robust systems are in place to ensure that staff are both held to account, but are also supported in their own continuing development. This results in exceptionally lively and engaging classroom work, which motivates pupils to succeed. There is a high level of consistency across subjects of the curriculum, and this reflects the effectiveness of management within the school.

The school's commitment to working in partnership - for example, with its partner in the sixth form, with primary schools, local colleges, and various local, national and international charitable organisations - ensures that pupils benefit from a very wide range of opportunities. All this is managed very efficiently by staff at all levels.

The school's physical environment has changed significantly in recent years, and the very effective management of change has resulted in pupils' and teachers' immense pride in their new accommodation and resources.

The senior leadership team and governors know their school well, providing very accurate self-evaluation. They have identified that further efforts need to be focused on the development of the sixth form, and very good plans are in place to secure further improvement to what is already good provision. There is clear capacity to improve, bringing sixth form provision up to the excellent quality of education offered in the main school. The school offers outstanding value for money.

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## Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	<b>School Overall</b>	<b>16-19</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	1	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	1	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	1	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1	

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	1	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	
The behaviour of learners	1	
The attendance of learners	1	
How well learners enjoy their education	1	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1	

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	1	2
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	1	2
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	1	2

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	1	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	1	
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1	
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No	
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No	

## Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

25 June 2007

Dear Students

Inspection of Richard Challoner School, New Malden, KT3 5PE

During our recent visit to your school, my colleague and I enjoyed meeting many of you, seeing you at work and listening to your views. Many of your parents and carers completed a questionnaire to let us know how they felt about the school. I hope you will talk to them about the inspection report because it explains what your school does particularly well and how it can become even better.

Richard Challoner School is an outstanding school. There is a very strong focus on learning and achieving and this combines well with the calm and caring atmosphere created by the staff. You play an important part in this too, and we were most impressed by your maturity, sensitivity and readiness to talk openly about your experiences. Your sense of right and wrong is keen and your behaviour in class and around the school is excellent. Respect for each other, including those from different backgrounds, is clearly a key value for you and this shone through in all you did and said. Your work with charities and the local community is also very impressive.

Your teachers provide excellent learning conditions, and you told us how much you appreciate their lively approach, the way they combine good classroom discipline with fun and challenge. They get you to work with different partners and groups and this helps you learn more about your subject and about each other. The school's equipment and resources are excellent, and you take pride in these.

You make excellent progress in Years 7 to 11, achieving very high results at GCSE. We agree with your school that the sixth form, whilst good, should share more of the elements which make your learning in the earlier years in school so successful.

Thank you for the warm welcome to your school, and for being such tremendous ambassadors! We wish you all the very best in your future lives.

Yours sincerely,

Anne Feltham Her Majesty's Inspector.