

Sir Thomas Rich's School

Address: Oakleaze, GL2 0LF

Unique reference number (URN): 136306

Inspection report: 9 December 2025

Exceptional	
Strong standard	
Expected standard	
Needs attention	
Urgent improvement	

Safeguarding standards met

The safeguarding standards are met. This means that leaders and/or those responsible for governance and oversight fulfil their specific responsibilities and have established an open culture in which safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and concerns are actively identified, acted upon and managed. As a result, pupils are made safer and feel safe.

How we evaluate safeguarding

When we inspect schools for safeguarding, they can have the following outcomes:

- **Met:** The school has an open and positive culture of safeguarding. All legal requirements are met.
- **Not met:** The school has not created an open and positive culture of safeguarding. Not all legal requirements are met.

Strong standard ●

Achievement

Strong standard ●

Pupils progress significantly well through the curriculum. This is evident in the school's published outcomes and in the quality of pupils' work in different subjects. Planned points for checking how securely pupils understand their learning are used effectively to help pupils deepen their knowledge. This enables pupils to continue to advance successfully. Pupils achieve the qualifications to progress to the sixth form or further education, training or employment.

Over time, pupils and students attain very highly across all subjects in nationally published examinations. Pupils arrive with high academic starting points and typically make progress well above the national averages. Although small in number, disadvantaged pupils achieve as well as their peers. Students are highly prepared and very successful in progressing to higher education or high-quality apprenticeships of their choice.

Attendance and behaviour

Strong standard ●

Leaders' approaches to tracking and managing attendance are systematic. Pupils attend school well, and attendance data is high for all groups of pupils. When pupils struggle to maintain regular attendance, leaders provide sensitive adaptations and specialist support to help pupils improve their attendance. The school respects the individual needs of pupils without compromising the school's high expectations. As a result, pupils enjoy consistently positive experiences in lessons and during social times. They demonstrate high levels of commitment and motivation across school life.

Leaders have instilled a culture of self-regulation, respect and pride that pupils reflect through their behaviours and actions. Staff apply the school's expectations fairly and consistently. Pupils behave courteously and respectfully, whether staff are present or not. Routines happen automatically and calmly. Transitions are punctual, such as moving from the basketball court at lunchtime to lessons. The school environment ensures that pupils spend their social time positively, such as sitting with friends, playing sports, rehearsing shows or playing chess. Students and older pupils act as effective mentors to younger pupils. As a result, pupils demonstrate self-discipline and maturity across the school.

Curriculum and teaching

Strong standard ●

Leaders have designed a well-ordered, highly ambitious curriculum. They check the quality of the curriculum astutely and use this information to design high-quality professional learning for staff. Teachers know their pupils well. They share their subject knowledge with passion and clarity, which encourages pupils to be highly engaged in learning. Teachers deepen pupils' understanding by challenging them to connect ideas. Pupils revisit and review their learning regularly and thoroughly. This means they acquire their knowledge securely and move on quickly and confidently to more complex concepts.

Teachers use highly effective strategies such as modelling to help pupils to develop their work. Pupils know what they need to do next to improve their understanding. Teachers support disadvantaged pupils and those with other barriers to learning through well-judged adaptations to teaching. Leaders and staff check skilfully how well pupils have learned the curriculum and plan supportive interventions matched specifically to pupils' needs. Interventions such as imaginative and creative writing workshops help pupils to develop different writing styles. As a result, pupils are very well equipped to progress successfully.

Inclusion

Strong standard ●

Leaders have robust systems and processes to check how successfully pupils learn, attend and engage in school life. As a result, pupils prosper across all aspects of school life. Leaders ensure that pupils experience smooth, personalised transitions into Year 7 and Year 12. This means staff understand and cater for pupils' individual needs. Staff provide well-considered support and bespoke pastoral care for pupils to address any barriers to learning. This is evident in how the school applies the pupil premium funding. Staff deliberately plan wider, accessible opportunities, such as appropriately adapted sporting events, to ensure that pupils thrive academically, socially and developmentally.

Leaders ensure that staff are well trained to identify pupils' needs swiftly, including when needs may not be obvious. This has led to an increase in the number of pupils identified for support. Teachers act effectively to remove barriers in the classroom, such as providing pupils with additional time to process their thinking. Staff training ensures that inclusive practice is at the heart of their work and that actions to support pupils are highly effective and appropriate. This skilful support enables pupils to achieve highly.

Leadership and governance

Strong standard ●

Leaders have designed and embedded improved systems and processes that enable them to have greater precision in their oversight of the school. This has led to increased rigour across aspects of the school leaders have identified. For example, precise monitoring and quality assurance of teaching has further enhanced the school's support for pupils with barriers to learning.

Trustees ensure that governance works effectively with school leadership to provide appropriate support and challenge. Trustees work closely with school leaders to gain an accurate understanding of the school's priorities, actions and impact. Leaders are focused on continual improvement. They seek external guidance and scrutiny to validate how well the school is performing and to check the impact of the school's work.

Leaders have developed an ambitious plan for continued improvement that builds on the previous successes of the school. Staff are fully engaged in this work and have clarity about the priorities of the school. Staff are especially positive about how leaders consider workload and prioritise their wellbeing. Leaders have embedded a high culture of professional learning for all staff. Support and training for staff to reflect on and deepen their teaching and leadership expertise is thorough.

The leadership of inclusion is diligent. Leaders are proud of the work that has taken place to understand what might hinder learning and a full experience of school. The needs of disadvantaged pupils, or pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, are at the forefront of their work.

Personal development and wellbeing

Strong standard ●

The school community benefits from an impressive personal development programme. It supports pupils to become confident and resilient. Participation in enrichment activities is high, with pupils pursuing their interests through an array of clubs. Pupils benefit from and lead a variety of clubs such as the female lead society, philosophy, politics, debate and The Duke of Edinburgh's Award.

Pupils are very well prepared for life outside of school. They have a deep understanding of fundamental British Values and the protected characteristics. Pupils are mature in how they relate these values to their own experiences. The 'Tommy's award' celebrates pupils' work to extol the school's values. The school celebrates diversity. For example, on culture days, pupils share their beliefs and culture with others when they come to school in traditional dress and bring food to enjoy together. Pupils are respectful and tolerant in their day-to-day actions around school. Leaders encourage individuality, and pupils feel they can be themselves. The layers of pastoral support including tutors, heads of year, and pastoral support assistants look after the wellbeing of pupils. This provides highly effective support.

The school plans a well-considered careers programme from Year 7 through to Year 13. Pupils and students in the sixth form learn about future choices and careers. Speakers are carefully selected to provide a breadth of information about potential destinations. Pupils know what they need to do to work towards their ambitions. Leaders ensure that disadvantaged pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, receive additional guidance to help them understand and achieve their goals.

The personal, social and health education curriculum is well designed. Leaders ensure pupils deepen their understanding about contextual and relevant issues, such as relationships, safety or behaviours such as misogyny. Specialist staff receive specific training to deliver the learning. Leaders make sure it is meaningful and comprehensive for all pupils.

Post 16 provision

Strong standard ●

The 16-19 study programme is well designed for the high aspirations of students. Leaders implement the curriculum effectively. It is appropriately adapted so that students who face barriers to learning achieve highly. A large number of external students, boys and girls, join the school in Year 12. Leaders are diligent to ensure the sixth form offers a wide and rich offer for all students, which reflects their interests. Students achieve consistently well, developing detailed knowledge and skills over time. They apply their knowledge well, and they produce work to a high standard. Students' attainment and progress in examinations are consistently above national outcomes.

High-quality pastoral guidance supports students with their post-18 choices. They undertake meaningful work experience, such as with an MP, in hospital, or with town planning. Students go on to a wide range of destinations, including highly competitive universities. A well-designed programme of non-qualification activities prepares students more broadly. Students learn about healthy relationships, religion, online safety, financial management and travelling. They embrace leadership roles, such as School Captains or Prefects. Students also run societies and clubs, such as debating, maths or law. Through these opportunities, students demonstrate a sense of civic duty and responsibility that prepares them very well for their futures.

What it's like to be a pupil at this school

There is a well-established tradition of being a 'Richian' that permeates the school. Pupils wear their uniform with pride. The culture of the school is caring and ambitious. In Year 12, many external students choose to join the large sixth form. Leaders take care to welcome new pupils and students fully into the school community.

The culture here is one of belonging and community. As a result, pupils flourish. The personal development of pupils threads alongside the academic learning. Pupils thrive through a wide range of established opportunities designed for their personal growth. Students provide excellent role modelling to younger pupils. They embody and share the values and ethos of the school. For example, older students script and produce the house pantomime in which younger pupils eagerly perform. High-quality performance and participation through sports, such as rugby or playing in the jazz ensemble, develops pupils' and students' talents and interests across a broad spectrum.

At key stage 4 and key stage 5, pupils are academically ambitious. They benefit from high-quality experiences in the arts as well as core subjects. Students develop curiosity and maturity. They progress towards their chosen pathways of study in readiness for their future ambitions. They progress significantly well in their chosen subjects. They are thoroughly prepared, both academically and more widely, for their next steps.

Pupils value and enjoy their experience of school. Attendance is high. During social times, pupils interact well. They feel safe. Incidents of bullying or derogatory behaviours are unusual and rare. They behave kindly and calmly. Pupils enact the values and high expectations of the school, such as kindness and respect for each other and the community in which they belong.

Next steps

- Leaders and those responsible for governance should sustain the effectiveness of their work in all areas. They should seek continued improvement, overcoming barriers and challenges, in order to drive a transformational impact for all pupils. This includes disadvantaged pupils, those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, those who are known (or previously known) to children's social care, and those who may face other barriers to their learning and/or wellbeing.

About this inspection

This school is a single academy trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, who is also the headteacher, Matthew Lynch, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Tom Grogan.

Inspectors carried out this full inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Following our renewed inspection framework, all inspections are now led by His Majesty's Inspectors (HMIs) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMIs.

During the inspection, inspectors spoke with the headteacher and senior leaders, the special educational needs coordinator and staff. They also met with representatives from the board of trustees, including the chair of governors.

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 makes use of one registered alternative provision.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The headteacher commenced their post in September 2024. Two deputy heads were appointed to post at the same time.

Headteacher: Mr Matthew Lynch

Lead inspector:

Rachel Hesketh, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Lydia Pride, His Majesty's Inspector

Kelly Olive, His Majesty's Inspector

James Oldham, His Majesty's Inspector

Victoria Griffin, His Majesty's Inspector

Andrew Lovett, Ofsted Inspector

Facts and figures used on inspection

The data was used by the inspector(s) during the inspection. More recent data may have been published since the inspection took place.

 This data is from 9 December 2025

School and pupil context**Total pupils**

1,249

Close to average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils currently at this school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 1,067

School capacity

1,150

Close to average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils who can attend the school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 1,152

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

5.22%

Well below average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years.

National average: 28.9%

Pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan

0.88%

Well below average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan. This covers pupils with more support than is available through special educational needs support.

National average: 3.09%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

3.84%

Well below average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with reported special educational support needs at the school.

National average: 13.4%

Location deprivation

Below average

What does this mean?

Based on the English Indices of Deprivation (2019) and the school's location, we have calculated whether the school is located in a more or less deprived area.

Resourced Provision or SEND Unit (if applicable)

No resourced provision

What does this mean?

Whether school has Resourced Provision or SEND unit (if applicable).

All pupils' performance

English and maths GCSE

Percentage of pupils who achieved grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25	98.7%	45.2%	Above
2023/24	98.7%	45.9%	Above
2022/23	99.4%	45.3%	Above

Attainment 8

A measure of pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25	77.1	45.9	Above
2023/24	76.9	45.9	Above
2022/23	75.3	46.3	Above

Progress 8

How much progress pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24	0.91	-0.03	Above
2022/23	0.84	-0.03	Above

Disadvantaged pupils' performance

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after.

Disadvantaged pupils' English and maths GCSE grade 5 or above

Percentage of disadvantaged pupils achieving grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25	100.0%	25.6%	Above
2023/24	100.0%	25.8%	Above
2022/23	100.0%	25.2%	Above

Disadvantaged pupils' Attainment 8

A measure of disadvantaged pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25	71.9	34.9	Above
2023/24	71.8	34.6	Above
2022/23	67.8	35.0	Above

Disadvantaged pupils' Progress 8

How much progress disadvantaged pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24	0.69	-0.57	Above
2022/23	S	-0.57	S

‘S’ in the table above indicates the data has been suppressed, which is usually due to small cohorts. The suppression rules applied by the DfE when publishing the data have been mirrored and applied in the report card.

Disadvantaged pupils' performance gap

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after. The school disadvantage gap is the difference between the performance of the school's disadvantaged pupils compared to the performance of all non-disadvantaged pupils nationally.

Disadvantaged pupils' English and maths GCSE grade 5 or above

Percentage of disadvantaged pupils who achieved grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2024/25	100.0%	52.8%	47.2 pp
2023/24	100.0%	53.1%	46.9 pp
2022/23	100.0%	52.4%	47.6 pp

Disadvantaged pupils' Attainment 8

A measure of disadvantaged pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2024/25	71.9	50.3	21.6

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2023/24	71.8	50.0	21.8
2022/23	67.8	50.3	17.5

Disadvantaged pupils' Progress 8

How much progress disadvantaged pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2023/24	0.69	0.16	0.52
2022/23	S	0.17	S

‘S’ in the table above indicates the data has been suppressed, which is usually due to small cohorts. The suppression rules applied by the DfE when publishing the data have been mirrored and applied in the report card.

Destinations after 16

Destinations after 16

Percentage of pupils staying in education or employment for at least 2 terms after the end of secondary school (key stage 4).

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023 leavers	99%	91%	Above
2022 leavers	100%	93%	Above
2021 leavers	100%	94%	Above

16 to 18 performance

A-level average point score

The average points that students achieved per A-level entry.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25	R	R	R
2023/24	44.30	34.38	Above
2022/23	44.33	34.16	Above

A-level value added

A score showing students’ progress between the end of key stage 4 and the end of their academic qualification studies.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25	R	R	R
2023/24	0.2	0.0	Above

The Key Stage 5 data we used for this inspection has not yet been published; therefore, we have not provided it alongside this school's report card. ‘R’ in the table indicates that the data is not yet available. We will update the table when the Department for Education publishes the data for the latest academic year.

Absence

Overall absence

The percentage of all possible mornings and afternoons missed due to absence from school (for whatever reason, whether authorised or unauthorised) across all pupils.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (2 terms)	4.1%	8.1%	Below
2023/24	5.0%	8.9%	Below
2022/23	5.5%	9.0%	Below

Persistent absence

The percentage of pupils missing 10% or more of their possible mornings and afternoons.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (2 terms)	7.4%	21.9%	Below
2023/24	9.4%	25.6%	Below
2022/23	12.8%	26.5%	Below

Our grades explained

Exceptional

Practice is exceptional: of the highest standard nationally. Other schools can learn from it.

Strong standard

The school reaches a strong standard. Leaders are working above the standard expected of them.

Expected standard

The school is fulfilling the expected standard of education and/or care. This means they are following the standard set out in statutory and non-statutory legislation and the professional standards expected of them.

Needs attention

The expected standards are not met but leaders are likely able to make the necessary improvements.

Urgent improvement

The school needs to make urgent improvements to provide the expected standard of education and/or care.

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