

Thornton-Cleveleys Red Marsh School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119897
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	379903
Inspection dates	15–16 November 2011
Reporting inspector	Eric Craven

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	2–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	77
Of which number on roll in the sixth form	19
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Pat Naylor
Headteacher	Catherine Dellow
Date of previous school inspection	05 February 2009
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. Thirteen lessons, seven teachers and one teaching assistant were observed along with a visiting music specialist. Meetings were held with staff, school council representatives, five members of the governing body and an adviser from the local authority. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at data about the progress pupils make as well as their attendance. They looked at the school's monitoring and evaluation records, minutes of meetings of the governing body, documents about the school's safeguarding procedures and teachers' planning. The 53 questionnaires returned by parents were scrutinised along with the 34 from pupils and 31 from staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- How well the pupils make an enthusiastic contribution to the work of the school and life of the local community.
- The effectiveness of the school in raising the quality of teaching.
- The impact of the school's partnership with parents and carers on the achievements of the pupils.

Information about the school

Thornton-Cleveleys Red Marsh School provides for pupils with severe and profound learning difficulties. Around a quarter also has autistic spectrum disorders. The pupils come from the Wyre and Over-Wyre districts of Lancashire and all but a handful are transported to and from school by the local authority. All of the pupils have a statement of special educational needs and four are looked after by the local authority. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage. Nearly 60% are known to be eligible for free school meals, which is above the national average. The boys outnumber the girls three to one. Red Marsh School is an Investor in People and has a number of other national awards including Leading Parent Partnership, ECO-School Silver and National Healthy School status.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory and 4 is inadequate
Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

Red Marsh School is relentlessly and successfully driving forward with school improvement and as a consequence it has moved from being a good school at its last inspection to now being outstanding. Overall effectiveness is equally outstanding in both the Early Years Foundation Stage and the post-16 department.

Pupils' personal, social, moral, spiritual and cultural understanding is impressive. At their own level they give careful thought to their own and others' experiences. They know they are part of a highly cohesive community and have a great appreciation of the differences between people. Overall their behaviour is splendid. Outstanding care, guidance and support helps pupils learn to control their own behaviour. The school's first-class partnerships with other services aid the deeply embedded thoughtfulness given to pupils' well-being. The school's engagement with parents and carers is of high quality. This is endorsed well by a typical view from a parent who wrote about communication, 'The school has an excellent communication system with parents via e-mail, text and daily diaries. Phone calls are always answered and returned promptly'. Staff know the pupils very well and are vigilant to ensure that their needs are being met and that they have every opportunity to get the most from their time in school; equality of opportunity is tangible.

Well-targeted professional development has brought about significant improvements to the quality of teaching and learning and virtually all of the teaching is of good quality. A small proportion is outstanding. Pupils make good progress overall in their learning and some even better than this. More-able pupils are able to work independently and articulate well what they have learned because of an increasing emphasis on self-assessment and a good understanding of their own targets. Occasionally, however, opportunities are missed to provide additional challenge for more-able pupils and sometimes pupils sit and listen for too long. Senior staff rightly recognise that teachers need more opportunities to learn from the best quality practice to ensure as many pupils as possible make outstanding progress. The school's first-class curriculum provides an array of memorable and rich opportunities for learning and wider personal development, which are matched very well to the needs of different groups of pupils and kept under regular review.

Pupils enjoy their education, are proud of their school and feel valued; they want to play their part. The youngest pupils undertake jobs in class and older ones have earned external awards for their voluntary work in the school and community. Within

their capabilities pupils have an impressive understanding of what it means to be safe. They try their utmost to apply what they learn about healthy living; they are very active and regular periods of exercise, including Tai Chi and Yoga-cise, are on the timetable.

Senior staff and subject leaders monitor and evaluate the work of the school extremely well and accurately, and plans are well-informed by all those associated with it. Members of the governing body play a full and active part in school life and fulfil their roles outstandingly well. The school meticulously applies its first-class safeguarding practices so that pupils are safe, a fact endorsed by all parents who returned the questionnaire.

Owing to its proven successes, the rigour of its evaluation and planning systems and because everyone is pulling in the same direction the school has an outstanding capacity to improve further. It is a school providing excellent value for money.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of teaching that is outstanding by:
 - sharing the high-quality practice that exists in the school
 - including more practical activity in the few lessons where pupils sit and listen for too long
 - providing work that further challenges the thinking of some of the more-able pupils.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

Owing to their learning difficulties and/or disabilities pupils' attainment when they join the school is low in comparison to those of a similar age nationally. However, they make good progress in their academic learning and, where the teaching is of the highest quality, some make excellent progress. The school's analyses of data show that different groups of pupils such as those looked after and those with the most profound learning difficulties make progress on a par with that of their peers.

Pupils who can communicate freely are polite and respectful and almost all show respect and concern for others. They have splendid relationships with staff and their peers. They greatly enjoy being at this school, endorsed by the fact that all but one pupil said this in their questionnaire returns. Many have learned to concentrate well. They share and take turns and in the best lessons some collaborate on work with their classmates. There are excellent examples of pupils improving their healthy living, for example, by overcoming their intolerance to certain foods and improving their diet. Unanimously, questionnaire returns from parents and carers, pupils and staff say pupils feel safe at this school. They make an outstanding contribution to the school and the local community. The recently-reconstituted school council is taken seriously and is able to exert influence as staff are keen to hear of and act on its views. Some pupils gain external accreditations in developing their skills for the workplace and are all well-prepared for life after school. Pupils develop a keen

interest in aspects of other cultures. Moral and social development is very much a part of the school’s curriculum emphasis and pupils develop these attributes extremely well. They are able to resolve conflicts with guidance and show acceptance of others’ behaviour, concerns and needs.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	*
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

Lessons are consistently well-planned and invariably include precise learning objectives for individuals and small groups of pupils, supplemented by clear displays of pupils’ targets in classrooms. As a consequence all adults are consistently working toward the same goals with pupils. A recent investment in information and communication technology (ICT) resources and associated training of staff are reaping rewards as technology is used well to engage and interest pupils in their learning. In the best lessons a powerful use of praise helps pupils recognise what they have achieved and cements their learning. In these lessons there is a relentless focus on learning and every single opportunity is taken to help pupils build on their skills, knowledge and understanding.

There have been improvements to teachers’ on-going assessment. This has been aided by regular and reliable analyses of data and ongoing record keeping, increasingly well informed by feedback from teaching assistants. A thrust to develop the skills of teaching assistants so they play a substantial role in pupils’ learning is proving to be successful.

The curriculum is broad and balanced and relevant to the needs of the pupils. Pupils greatly enjoy their experiences and the activities they are given to do. Curriculum development is innovative and very appropriate for the school. For example, subjects

¹The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

*In some special schools inspectors do not make a judgement about attainment in relation to expectations of the pupils’ age.

are linked well through a themed approach to learning which interests the pupils greatly.

'The staff at Red Marsh go the extra mile to help our children learn and develop, they all do an excellent job' is typical of the many supportive comments from parents. As a consequence of this tangibly caring and supportive ethos the pupils trust the staff implicitly. Staff model social skills and class rules for pupils splendidly. Partnerships have a strong impact on pupils' achievements because, for example, parents and carers are extremely well-informed about the school's approaches to supporting their children and can thus reinforce these at home. Although it is still broadly average, staff have been successful in increasing the rate of attendance year on year since the last inspection and internal data suggest this will continue this year. Attendance is adversely affected by the rates of absence of a few pupils with significant medical difficulties.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account:	
The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

Senior staff and the governing body have an accurate view of the school's strengths and priorities, afforded by rigorous and systematic self-evaluation. Staff are on board with the changes being made and everyone is playing a full part. All those who returned the Ofsted questionnaire said they are proud to be a member of staff, know what the school is striving to achieve and they are involved in this work. Leaders and managers have married their determined drive for improvement with a close eye on the welfare of staff. The school has successfully tackled the areas for improvement from its last inspection, a good example being the effectiveness of subject leaders who now play a full role in monitoring their subjects and influencing the work of their colleagues. Governors get to know the school intimately; not least through the probing they do to get parents' and carers' views but also through the questions they pose when presented with information. They operate exceptionally well as critical friends of the school. The school improvement plan is not too onerous and has well-selected, achievable targets. It is regularly monitored to ensure it makes a positive difference. Nevertheless, the opportunity is missed to include more measureable targets around improved rates of progress and increasing the proportion of teaching that is outstanding.

An overwhelming sense of fairness and equality of opportunity for all pervades the school. As one parent wrote, 'No matter how profoundly disabled a pupil is they are always included - the staff have very creative ideas to enable all pupils to fulfil to the best of their ability'. The school capitalises extremely well on its partnerships with other agencies, schools and services to the great benefit of the pupils. The association with health care professionals based at the school is a very good

example. There is good communication and a seamless approach to health care as a consequence.

The school promotes community cohesion splendidly. Pupils quickly become part of a tangible school community and many appreciate the part they have to play. They have enjoyed and benefitted from the regular experiences they are given to increase their awareness of cultural diversity in Britain and abroad. Safeguarding arrangements are exceptional. There is a comprehensive awareness of procedures and a keen vigilance employed by staff and governors.

These are the grades for the leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	1
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children new to the school make at least good progress in all areas of their learning particularly in their personal and social development. The quality of teaching is at least good and sometimes better than this. Extremely good partnerships with parents and carers, other professionals and a local nursery help staff get to know the children very well from the outset. Precise targets are formed and continual record-keeping keeps staff well-informed about how children are doing and the experiences they need. The recently developed outdoor environment is proving to be exciting and stimulating for the children. They enjoy continual use of facilities inside and outside of the classroom. Children are kept extremely safe because of the staff's application of the excellent safeguarding arrangements. Their progress and the effectiveness of the provision is rigorously monitored and evaluated. There are high aspirations from staff and a commitment toward the best possible achievement for every child. Leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are excellent.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation stage	1
Taking into account: Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

Sixth form

The school’s post-16 area has recently been rebuilt and the resources available have improved significantly. The quality of teaching is consistently good and the curriculum outstanding. Staff suitably ensure that there is an increasing focus toward life after school in all that the students do. The curriculum has been reviewed and ‘pathways for learning’ make it relevant and bespoke for individuals. It meets the differing ability levels of students extremely effectively. Students are increasingly able to gain external accreditation for their achievements. They receive excellent support in preparing them for transition to college or social care provision and those from other schools who join the school at age 16 are very skilfully inducted. All students enjoy well-tailored work experience opportunities and college taster courses, which they enjoy greatly. These, alongside excellent support from staff and other professionals, help students and their parents and carers make informed choices about the future. Testimony to the effectiveness of this work is that over the past few years all school leavers have moved directly into either further education or social care provision. Senior staff have been very successful in embedding changes and the leadership and management of post-16 are excellent.

These are the grades for the sixth form

Overall effectiveness of the sixth Form	1
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	1
The quality of provision in the sixth form	1
Leadership and management of the sixth form	1

Views of parents and carers

Around 69% of parents and carers returned the Ofsted questionnaire. Eighteen included supplementary comments with the vast majority of these being very complimentary about the school. Overall a very positive view of the school was expressed, reflecting the inspection findings. All those who responded feel their children enjoy school and are kept safe and healthy. They unanimously feel that teaching is good, the school is led and managed well and that they are kept informed about their children’s progress. There was little consensus from the few parents and carers who disagreed with some of the statements. A couple mentioned dissatisfaction with the amount of speech and language therapy in school. Inspectors found staff have good relationships and communication with the therapists and diligently deliver the therapy programmes devised by the therapists.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Thornton-Cleveleys Red Marsh School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received **53** completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 77 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	42	79	11	21	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	44	83	9	17	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	38	72	14	26	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	35	66	14	26	2	4	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	43	81	9	17	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	37	70	13	25	2	4	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	40	75	13	25	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well-prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	34	64	15	28	1	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	41	77	10	19	2	4	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	40	75	11	21	1	2	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	37	70	14	26	1	2	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	45	85	7	13	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	45	85	6	11	1	2	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above is for the period 1 September 2010 to 08 April 2011 and is consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add up exactly to 100. Sixth-form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



17 November 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Thornton-Cleveleys Red Marsh School, Thornton-Cleveleys, FY5 4HH

Thank you for your warm welcome when we inspected your school recently. It was a pleasure to meet you and to watch you at work in your lessons. A special 'thank you' also to those of you on the school council who met with the other inspector.

I am delighted to tell you we think your school is excellent. The headteacher and deputy headteacher are doing an extremely good job in managing the school. Staff care for you a great deal and keep you very safe. The way you behave and get on together is splendid. It is great that you know about how to keep healthy. We were very impressed with the way you do jobs in the school and raise money for people in Britain and other countries. This also helps you learn about people from different places. The help you get to make choices about where you go when you leave school is really good.

We think the things you learn about are very interesting and useful to you. I particularly enjoyed watching those of you in 'Senior Red' using the dictionaries on your own and finding definitions for words. I was also pleased to be in a 'Primary Red' lesson when you were learning about loud and quiet sounds. I thought you did brilliantly. Most of your lessons are good and some of them are especially exciting. We think even more of them could be as exciting as the best ones. We have asked the staff to try and make all the lessons like this. You can play your part by listening carefully to what teachers tell you and trying your hardest.

You have my best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Eric Craven
Lead inspector

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