

Sir Tom Finney Community High School

Ribbleton Hall Drive, Preston, Lancashire PR2 6EE

Inspection dates

8–9 November 2017

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Good
16 to 19 study programmes	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Outstanding

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Leaders prioritise pupils' personal development and welfare at the heart of all their work. This is an outstanding aspect of the school.
- Relationships between pupils and staff are excellent. Staff are compassionate and kind and understand pupils as individuals. This contributes to pupils' progress and attainment.
- Students in the sixth form benefit from dynamic and inspirational teaching. This results in excellent outcomes for students.
- Highly effective work experience for pupils in 16 to 19 provision is integrated into students' individualised study programmes.
- Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. This is because of the excellent role models that staff provide.
- Effective careers guidance enables pupils to achieve a range of externally accredited qualifications that reflect their interests and aspirations.
- Some of the most able pupils are not challenged enough in their work. Pupils agree that they would like more challenging targets.
- The quality of teaching and learning in key stage 3 does not match the high standards evident in other areas of the school. Although pupils make good progress, the recently introduced 'semi-standard curriculum' is still at an early stage of development.
- Leaders ensure that the curriculum offers a broad range of options to cater for pupils' individual needs. Pupils make good progress in subjects beyond English and mathematics.
- Pupils grow in confidence during their time at the school. They make excellent progress with their verbal communication skills.
- Pupils make good progress in their reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is supported effectively through the school's contemplation room. This is where pupils have chance to reflect on the 'big questions' about life.
- Governors have ensured a smooth transition to the school's new premises without losing sight of pupils' achievement and the caring ethos of the school.
- The strategic role of department and curriculum leaders is underdeveloped. Their ability to monitor and evaluate teaching and learning is limited.
- Leaders' improvement plans do not provide clear outcomes. They do not evaluate their actions to improve the school effectively.
- Governors cannot explain how actions to improve the school have made a difference to pupils' progress and attainment.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning further by ensuring that teachers provide greater challenge for some of the most able pupils in their work.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - senior leaders evaluate the school’s performance more precisely so that plans to improve the school have well-defined, measurable outcomes
 - department and curriculum leaders gain the skills and knowledge necessary to have a better overview of the areas for which they have responsibility.
- Improve the effectiveness of governance by ensuring that governors question in greater detail the progress made by different groups of pupils in the school.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- This is a school that focuses upon celebrating pupils' unique qualities. Leaders set high expectations of staff and pupils. This is evident in pupils' outstanding behaviour and conduct. Leaders and governors have created a culture of respect and understanding that all staff are committed to. Pupils' personal development is exceptional and underpins all aspects of their education. Pupils appreciate the high levels of support and care that they receive for their special educational needs.
- Leaders and governors value the staff at the school and invest heavily in their development. All staff receive appropriate training so that pupils' special educational and medical needs are met effectively. Staff expertly support each pupil to overcome any barriers to learning.
- Parents responding to Ofsted's online survey recognise the positive, kind and compassionate leadership of the headteacher. They greatly value the personal attention he pays to their children's needs.
- The school's values ensure that pupils are prepared well for life in modern Britain. Pupils are taught independent living skills throughout the school. Their awareness of equalities is excellent. As one pupil stated, 'We accept everyone for who they are.'
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is supported by the school's contemplation room, where pupils are supported 'to think about things bigger than themselves'. The room facilitates pupils' reflections on a wide range of spiritual and moral issues. This has been vital in supporting pupils to understand events and feel safe and secure in light of current affairs, such as the recent Manchester bombing.
- Leaders have introduced a three-tiered curriculum to match the ability of pupils in the school. The curriculum is broad and balanced and highly adaptable to the needs of the pupils. Although the quality of teaching and learning in key stage 3 is good, it is not as effective as that in key stage 4. This is because leaders have introduced their semi-standard curriculum and these changes are at an early stage of development.
- Leaders' plans to develop the school lack measurable outcomes. The headteacher has already identified that improvements to the evaluation cycle are necessary. Governors do not have enough detailed information to assess the effectiveness of actions taken to improve the school. For example, the additional funding for disadvantaged pupils is allocated meticulously and is used to address pupils' needs. However, leaders do not evaluate the difference that this funding makes in enough detail.
- The additional funding for pupils with special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities and the Year 7 literacy and numeracy catch-up funding are allocated to address pupils' next steps in learning. However, leaders do not evaluate the effectiveness of their actions to improve outcomes for pupils.
- Heads of department and core subject curriculum coordinators have not been provided with the time or the professional development to strategically lead improvements in their areas of responsibility. There is a lack of monitoring, evaluation and improvement planning from middle leaders. Leaders at all levels can describe provision but cannot evidence the impact of their actions beyond anecdotal evidence.

Governance of the school

- Governors have worked tirelessly over the last few years to secure the school's new premises. The facilities are excellent and match governors' vision of providing first-class care, guidance and support for pupils.
- Governors are knowledgeable about the school. There has been a focused effort on recruiting governors with specific skills. Governors' engagement and questioning of senior leaders is improving. They have a very strong grasp of the school finances.
- Governors are not provided with the information that they need to evaluate the progress made by different groups of pupils. There is a lack of evaluation around the effectiveness of actions taken to improve the school. For example, governors know how additional funding for disadvantaged pupils is used but they do not question the difference that this makes to pupils' progress.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Pupils are supported in a highly nurturing environment that places their safety and well-being as the highest priority. Staff receive comprehensive training and regular updates, which ensures that the culture in school is one of constant vigilance.
- Pupils feel supported and safe. This is clearly evident in their behaviour and demeanour towards staff, who treat them with warmth, kindness and dignity.
- Parents are engaged and reassured through effective communication. One response to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, said that their child 'loves school and feels very relaxed'. This is because parents know that pupils are safe in the care of school staff.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Pupils make excellent progress in their communication and language skills because of the effective teaching and personalised support that they receive. Pupils have opportunities to perform in musicals, which boosts their confidence and instils a belief that 'anything is possible'.
- Pupils' preparation for independent living is highly effective. They develop skills through the use of a purpose-built flat and through highly effective lessons that promote their communication and mathematical skills.
- Pupils enjoy their learning and smile throughout the day. The relationships between staff and pupils are outstanding. Lessons are coloured with humour. Staff create a calm atmosphere that allows pupils to focus on their work. As such, pupils make at least good progress in their reading, writing and mathematical development.
- Pupils have a wide range of options for their learning, and these programmes are carefully matched to pupils' interests and aspirations. All staff are aware of the next steps in pupils' learning and personal development. Staff support pupils well to achieve these aims. The support for pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties is targeted effectively through well-thought-out individual plans.

- Pupils have a good grasp of what they are learning in lessons. However, some of the most able pupils say that they feel that they can be challenged further. Pupils' learning sometimes slows because they have to wait for other pupils to complete their work. Some of the most able pupils agree that some activities do not provide them with enough challenge in their work. The inspection evidence also bears this out.
- The school's progress data shows that the quality of teaching and learning is never less than good. However, it varies between key stages. This is largely due to the introduction of the school's new semi-standard curriculum which is still being developed in key stage 3. Leaders are aware that more training needs to take place to ensure that staff are confident to implement aspects of pupils' independent learning activities effectively.
- Pupils read well in class when reading books or reading their own work. The most able pupils are confident and highly articulate. They choose to read sophisticated books for their independent reading and they can reflect well on the text.
- The curriculum is supported by a range of extra-curricular activities. Homework is proportionate and leaders take into account pupils' needs and aptitudes.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding because leaders and governors hold this at the heart of everything the school does.
- Pupils reflect well on the skills that they learn in lessons. They are confident and self-assured because of the time that staff take to understand them as individuals and their needs. Consequently, they are proud of their achievements and proud to be part of the school. This was summed up by one pupil who said, 'I think the school is perfect.'
- Pupils value the opportunities that they have in their personal and social education to debate issues, one such example being their discussion of what a fair trial is.
- High-quality careers advice allows pupils to choose from a range of study options. Pupils are well prepared in their social and personal skills through work experience and the excellent opportunities available to them to develop their independent living skills. Leaders have ensured that the new building has incorporated a self-contained flat for pupils to master the domestic tasks that they will need in order to lead independent lives.
- Leaders are proactive in seeking out new ways to support pupils. The school has been part of a pilot project to support pupils' social and emotional mental health and ensures that pupils develop their self-esteem and that their anxiety is reduced. Pupils are welcoming, pleasant and polite, and speak to visitors with confidence and curiosity.
- Pupils care for each other because of the examples set for them by staff. From the moment pupils enter the school they are met with warmth and compassion. Pupils respond accordingly, for example they respond to pupils with hearing impairments in sign language.
- All of the staff and parents who responded to Ofsted's surveys agree that there is no

bullying in the school. This also reflects pupils' views. The environment is well ordered and pupils display clear respect for one another.

- Pupils confidently explain how to keep themselves safe online because of the effective teaching that they receive. Parents agree that their children are safe at the school.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils' conduct in lessons is impeccable. Pupils display an eagerness to learn because of the way in which they are engaged in their learning by staff. They are ready to learn and there are no disruptions to lessons. For those pupils who have difficulty regulating their own behaviour, there is comprehensive support from staff, who expertly handle any situation so that it does not impact on pupils' learning.
- The school promotes pupils' attendance very effectively. However, there can be no meaningful comparison to national averages because the complex medical needs of some pupils affect the school attendance figures due to prolonged treatment in hospital.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, make good and sometimes better progress from their starting points. This includes pupils with complex learning needs. By the end of Year 11, pupils achieve externally accredited qualifications which include a mix of GCSEs in art and mathematics, entry-level and functional skills awards and applied science BTEC qualifications.
- Pupils' verbal communication is exceptionally well developed. In drama lessons, pupils rehearse scripts and are taught vocal control. They receive qualifications in musical theatre, and displays around school celebrate their successful performances in productions such as The Rocky Monster Show and The Amazing Adventures of Super Stan. More importantly, pupils enjoy these opportunities and gain confidence in their own abilities.
- Mathematical skills are promoted well throughout the school. The curriculum focuses on developing functional skills. Pupils are confident at tackling money problems because of the effective teaching that they receive. This ensures that they are prepared for adult life, as they understand money.
- In writing, pupils make good progress from their starting points. Some of the most able pupils' writing displays a clear grasp of punctuation, and pupils write for purpose.
- In their independent living work, pupils have opportunities to practise their language and mathematical skills by solving everyday problems.
- Pupils are prepared well for the next stages of education and all pupils move on to courses in post-16 education.

16 to 19 study programmes

Outstanding

- Teaching and learning in the sixth form are outstanding. Teachers inspire students to make great strides in their learning. Lessons brim with energy and dynamism. This makes learning purposeful and fun. Students make excellent progress to achieve recognised qualifications in a wide range of subjects. This is due to the individually tailored programmes that they study.
- Relationships between adults and students are exceptional and have a profound effect on students' progress. Students trust staff implicitly and they feel safe and secure. Students' behaviour is exemplary because of the highly effective support that they receive for their personal development.
- For students with profound and multiple learning difficulties, adult support is of the highest standard. Students' individual targets precisely match activities so that they can build upon their prior achievements.
- Leaders have revised the study programmes that they offer to provide a sharper focus on students' future employability prospects. Courses are designed effectively with a greater focus on entry-level English and mathematics qualifications to match the entry requirements for apprenticeships.
- Leaders ensure that excellent vocational opportunities capitalise on students' prior learning. The strong focus on students' independent living skills ensures that they confidently approach difficult tasks such as costing ingredients for recipes and participating in mini-enterprise projects. There is a heavy emphasis on developing students' functional communication and mathematical skills.
- The sixth-form leader is passionate about student outcomes. He has put in place a programme of comprehensive careers guidance for students. Parents are integral to this process. The needs and the aspirations of students feature heavily when choosing from programmes as diverse as performing arts, construction and hairdressing.
- Students' experiences are supplemented by meaningful work experience that builds students' confidence in their social and communication skills. Leaders have established links with a wide range of local employers and care providers to offer relevant and supportive placements.
- Retention rates within post-16 education are high and all students move on to other colleges or care settings when they leave the sixth form. Leaders ensure that all destinations are appropriate for the individual needs of students.

School details

Unique reference number	135346
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10012595

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	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	11 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	157
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	54
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Dorothy Jones
Headteacher	Mr Shaun Jukes
Telephone number	01772 795749
Website	www.stfch.lancs.sch.uk
Email address	head@stfch.lancs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	23–24 October 2012

Information about this school

- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information about the pupil premium, a link to the school and college performance tables service or the school's accessibility plan on its website.
- Since the previous inspection, the school has moved to newly refurbished and additional new-build premises at a new location.
- There have been a number of changes in governors since the last inspection, including a new chair of the governing body.
- Pupils at the school have a wide range of SEN and/or disabilities. These include

moderate learning difficulties, severe learning difficulties, profound and multiple learning difficulties, visual and hearing impairment, physical disability and medical conditions, social, emotional and mental health needs and autistic spectrum conditions. All pupils have an education, health and care plan or statement of special educational needs. Some pupils have social, emotional and behavioural difficulties.

- Over half of the pupils at the school are known to be eligible for the pupil premium. This is high compared with the national average.
- There is a rising proportion of pupils from ethnic backgrounds, although this is presently below the national average.
- The school does not use any alternative providers.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in each class, which included joint observations with the headteacher.
- Inspectors examined a range of pupils' work across the curriculum.
- Inspectors heard individual pupils read from key stage 3 and key stage 4, and during activities in lessons.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils formally in groups and informally around the school.
- Inspectors took account of the views of 15 parents who responded to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and 16 responses to the staff questionnaire. There were no responses to the pupil survey.
- Inspectors made observations of pupils' behaviour during lessons, at playtimes and lunchtimes and when pupils were moving around the school.
- Meetings were held with governors, senior leaders, heads of department, core subject coordinators and a representative group of staff about continuous professional development and induction.
- Inspectors considered a range of documentation, including the school's evaluation of its own performance and its areas for development.
- Inspectors looked at attendance and behaviour records.
- Inspectors reviewed safeguarding documentation, considered how this related to daily practice and spoke with staff and pupils.

Inspection team

Steve Bentham, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
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Liz Kelly	Ofsted Inspector
Ann Gill	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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