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Mrs C Dellow
Headteacher
Thornton-Cleveleys Red Marsh School
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Dear Mrs Dellow

Short inspection of Thornton-Cleveleys Red Marsh School

Following my visit to the school on 7 February 2019 with Kathleen McArthur, Ofsted Inspector, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. The visit was the first short inspection carried out since the school was judged to be outstanding in January 2015.

This school continues to be outstanding.

The leadership team has maintained the outstanding quality of education in the school since the last inspection. This exceptional school's core values of learn, care, challenge and share are at the heart of everything it does. Parents and carers talk with much enthusiasm of the warm and welcoming atmosphere in which staff take the time to listen. Leaders have instilled a culture of high aspirations where pupils' personal and social development is as important as their academic progress. One parent summarised the views of many others in saying: 'My child is happy and I am delighted with the progress that he is making. The school is of a high standard and their values are true to their word.'

You have successfully addressed the areas for improvement from the last inspection. For example, you make time for teachers and teaching assistants to plan pupils' learning together. Staff have the support of leaders to be creative and innovative in their planning. There is a culture of teamwork and mutual respect which results in pupils being challenged and extremely well supported. For example, in the college, 16- to 19-year-old students of all abilities undertake enterprise activities. They help with site maintenance such as cleaning windows or tidying up the garden. Other students make cakes or candles which they sell to the school community. Money tokens are earned that the students are then able to 'cash in' for social trips. Meticulous planning enables every student to take part. All the staff know exactly what resources and support are needed for each group or student and, as a result, all students are engaged and are able to enjoy their learning experiences.

Leaders now work with similar schools across the North West to check that their assessments of pupils' work are accurate. They have been a driving force behind this group of schools and recognise that their own assessment practice is now more rigorous. Across all year groups and all abilities, staff measure the small steps in progress that pupils make and have an accurate picture of progress for every pupil.

The headteacher is a national leader of education. She has used this expertise to share the school's outstanding practice in teaching and managing pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) with other schools. The staff are also empowered to share their skills and knowledge. The school has opened its doors to other professionals who come in to observe the outstanding practice. Staff have also visited other schools to offer advice and support in managing pupils with SEND. This support is appreciated and one of the school's feedback comments typifies many, saying, '... staff suggested strategies to try with a pupil that other agencies hadn't suggested, I am looking forward to implementing them'. Leaders would like to widen the outreach work with other schools and their community to continue the sharing of good practice.

Safeguarding is effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding in the school. The designated safeguarding lead is quick to respond to any concerns. Referrals to the local authority or other agencies are followed up quickly. Families have the support from early help when needed and leaders are persistent in securing external agency involvement where appropriate.

All safeguarding records are detailed, thorough and compliant, including the required checks on members of staff. Staff training is up to date and robust. Leaders use weekly safeguarding briefings to keep all staff alert to any local or national updates and information.

Leaders have maintained a culture of safety throughout the school. Personal and online safety is an essential part of the curriculum across all ages and abilities. Parents say their children know how to keep themselves safe and that the message is constantly reinforced in language that their children can understand.

Inspection findings

- One of the key lines of enquiry I explored with you was the effectiveness of the school's curriculum. Leaders' rationale for the curriculum is for pupils to develop the necessary skills, knowledge and attitudes to achieve fulfilling lives. Leaders have a clear vision that all pupils should benefit from a full range of national curriculum subjects to broaden their knowledge and experiences. The use of carefully planned topics enables a breadth of subjects to be covered across each year group and allows pupils to make strong progress. Some pupils recently participated in a collaborative project with other local mainstream schools and the Royal Shakespeare Company. They were invited to rehearse and perform

'Julius Caesar' at the Swan Theatre in Stratford-upon-Avon. The project expanded pupils' knowledge and confidence and also supported their use of appropriate social skills in unfamiliar situations. This is just one example of the strong curriculum achieving its aims.

- The curriculum also helps pupils to prepare well for the next stage in their learning. Staff use pupils' education, health and care plans to write personal targets for each pupil. Work in pupils' books and learning records shows that the vast majority make outstanding progress across personal, social, emotional, physical and academic areas. The school's own communication system gives non-verbal pupils a voice and these pupils use their chosen method of communication throughout the school. During lunchtime, pupils use visual symbols, signing and electronic equipment to choose their food. Staff and pupils are all respectful and patient while pupils ask in their chosen way and in their own time. This is one example of how pupils are constantly learning to be independent and gaining the social skills needed to communicate with others to prepare for the next stage in their learning.
- The school's 16 to 19 study programme also prepares students well for the next stage in life. They learn to practise skills out in the community. They learn how to manage money, cook and clean and all students undertake work experience. The number of students gaining qualifications in English, mathematics, personal effectiveness, art and sport has increased year on year. For the past three years, all students have gone on to further education and some students have gained paid employment.
- I also considered how effectively the pupil premium funding is used. Leaders found that communication was a barrier to disadvantaged pupils' learning and progress. The speech-and-language coordinator sets targets and strategies for each pupil which are addressed by school staff and closely monitored by leaders. This personalised approach has a very positive impact and any differences between the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and other pupils have been eradicated. The pupil premium funding is therefore used effectively.
- Another area I looked at concerned the impact of the school's sport premium grant. This funding is utilised well. By working alongside professional coaches, school staff have gained the necessary skills to deliver a range of physical activities. Pupils have undertaken dance, tag rugby, golf, boccia and gymnastics. Inspectors observed pupils enjoying a dance class taught by school staff. Staff were skilled in engaging pupils and reinforcing the necessary movements for pupils to stretch and move their bodies to meet the dance targets.
- Teaching pupils to swim has also been a priority for the school. Leaders have employed a specialist swimming teacher so that younger pupils from Reception to Year 4 learn the necessary skills to stay safe in the water. Small steps in progress are rewarded with certificates which are celebrated in school assemblies. Older pupils attend the local swimming baths to help them gain confidence to use and enjoy the public facilities.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they widen the outreach work within the community to continue the sharing of good practice.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Lancashire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Julie Bather
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection, inspectors met with you and senior leaders. They held a meeting with seven members of the trust, including the chair. Inspectors met with the safeguarding leads and scrutinised paperwork and safeguarding records, including the record of checks completed on staff. Joint learning walks with leaders were completed and pupils' books and learning records were scrutinised. There were 17 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for parents (Parent View) and inspectors met with 13 parents. They took account of the 51 responses to Ofsted's questionnaire for staff, spoke to staff during the day and also met formally with a small group of staff. They spoke with pupils informally during the day and met formally with 10 pupils. They observed behaviour in lessons and around the school. Documents were scrutinised, including: information about pupils' progress; the school's self-evaluation; the school improvement plan; records of pupils' attendance and information relating to the work of the governing body.