

Inspection of a good school: Sir Tom Finney Community High School

Ribbleton Hall Drive, Preston, Lancashire PR2 6EE

Inspection dates:

28 and 29 March 2023

Outcome

Sir Tom Finney Community High School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are proud of their school. They feel that all pupils, no matter what their needs, are valued and included in all school activities. Pupils support each other and work well together to enjoy an exciting range of subjects. For example, the drama group is busy preparing for the summer musical production. Other pupils are carefully making products in design technology to sell in the local market.

Pupils are happy and settled. They thrive in school. Leaders have high expectations for pupils. The focus on personal development, communication and independence allows pupils to achieve well. Many pupils exceed their education, health and care (EHC) plan targets.

Pupils get on well with each other. They also have warm and trusting relationships with staff. Sometimes, pupils may fall out and feel bullied. When this happens, staff help pupils to understand the impact of any unkind words and help pupils to resolve any differences. This ensures that pupils learn to understand each other and respect and accept each other's uniqueness. School is a safe place, where pupils know that they have adults they can talk to and share any worries with. Adults deal with any incidents of bullying effectively. Pupils know that staff will keep them safe.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Pupils have a wide range of special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Leaders have designed the curriculum to ensure that all pupils experience a broad and rich range of subjects that meet their needs and interests. Making sure that pupils are well prepared for the next stage of learning, training and/or employment is central to the curriculum.

The structure of learning is well thought through in the majority of subjects. This allows pupils to build their knowledge securely over time. Staff use assessment information to check if pupils have achieved their targets and to decide the next steps in learning.

Teachers choose activities that will engage pupils, fire their imagination and deepen learning. Teachers are creative and innovative in the ways that they bring learning to life.

Leaders are in the process of improving the curriculum in key stage 4 and sixth form. While pupils and students do achieve nationally recognised qualifications, including entry level and functional skills, in a small number of subjects teachers have not refined what they want pupils to know and be able to do. In these subjects, teachers do not select activities that will allow pupils to secure the knowledge that they need. This means that some pupils do not achieve as well as they could.

Leaders in key stage 3 and the semi-formal and experiential department have ensured that reading and communication is a priority. Staff immerse pupils in stories, rhymes and songs. For example, pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties enjoyed a multi-sensory lesson where the story came to life with sounds of rain, songs, moving puppets and mood lighting. Pupils at the early stages of reading have a well-organised reading programme to learn the letters and sounds that they need to read unfamiliar words. Some pupils who start school as non-readers develop the knowledge that they need to become confident, fluent readers. However, in key stage 4 and sixth form, the strategies to support pupils' reading are not as well designed. This means that older pupils cannot easily build on what they have learned in key stage 3.

Staff know the sensory, emotional, physical and behaviour needs of each pupil very well. Staff adapt how they deliver the curriculum to ensure that every pupil has their needs met. Staff also work with pupils to develop their own coping strategies so that they will eventually know how to regulate their own behaviour. This practice is consistent across different classes. As a result, there is very little low-level disruption in school.

The contemplation room provides a calm, quiet space where pupils have time to reflect, be still and think about spiritual questions. The discussions that take place help pupils to understand different cultures, religions and world events in a safe, non-judgemental environment. Pupils know about democracy, rights and fairness.

The sixth form prepares students for independence and their next steps in life or learning. They can access work experience, college and training providers to allow them to find out about different vocational or work options. Some students learn construction skills, others food, art or retail. The careers curriculum starts in Year 7 and helps pupils and students to make informed choices about their future. Staff work with individual pupils to channel their aspirations and interests. Over the years, this has resulted in a number of students gaining employment, training or a college course in their chosen field.

Staff appreciate the continuous professional development that they receive. Leaders support them with training including British Sign Language, visual impairment, mental health and leadership courses. Staff said there is a strong culture of teamwork in school. Staff and leaders all work well together. Leaders are considerate of staff's workload and well-being. Staff said they come to work with a smile and enjoy working at the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff have regular training and have a secure knowledge around safeguarding. They know the signs to look for that may indicate a pupil is at risk of harm. Leaders are persistent in securing the help that they need for pupils and families, including referrals to the local authority.

Parents and carers receive regular updates around e-safety through a school safeguarding newsletter. Staff work with parents to support them with e-safety and technology. They also signpost parents to external agencies for additional support and advice.

Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe, including online. They are quick to report any concerns that they have around social media to staff.

Leaders ensure that all pupils attending alternative provision are safe.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have not identified what they want pupils to know and be able to do in a small number of subjects, including reading, in key stage 4 and in the sixth form. At times, teachers do not design activities that help pupils to build up their knowledge over time. This inhibits pupils from achieving as well as they should. Leaders should finalise their curriculum thinking in these subjects, so that pupils are able to build more easily on the success that they enjoy in key stage 3 and the semi-formal and experiential department.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in November 2017.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

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.

School details

Unique reference number	135346
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10256228
Type of school	Secondary special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	11 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	219
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	79
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Dorothy Jones
Headteacher	Shaun Jukes
Website	www.stfch.lancs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	8 and 9 November 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Leaders use two unregistered alternative providers.
- Pupils at the school have a wide range of SEND. 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 disorders. All pupils have an EHC plan.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, senior leaders, subject leaders and governors including the chair of governors.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in personal, social and health education, communication with English, and physical development. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also spoke to leaders about the curriculum in some other subjects.
- During the inspection, inspectors reviewed a range of documentation, including that relating to safeguarding. They also spoke with leaders and staff about safeguarding.
- Inspectors took account of the views of parents expressed through Ofsted Parent View. They also considered responses to Ofsted's online survey for staff. There were no responses to Ofsted's online survey for pupils.

Inspection team

Julie Bather, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Lindy Griffiths

Ofsted Inspector

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