

# Sir Tom Finney Community High School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	135346
<b>Local Authority</b>	Lancashire
<b>Inspection number</b>	341638
<b>Inspection dates</b>	18–19 November 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Alastair Younger

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Community special
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	143
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	39
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Chris Brown
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Shaun Jukes
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Moor Park Blackpool Road Preston PR1 6AA
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 14 lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff and groups of students. They observed the school's work, looked at samples of students' work, school improvement plans, governing body minutes and many other examples of the school's documentation. They analysed 29 questionnaires from parents and carers alongside 75 from students.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- how well assessment is used to improve learning opportunities
- the accuracy of self-evaluation and its use to inform improvement planning
- the effectiveness of the sixth form
- the effectiveness of leadership and management at all levels
- the achievement of different groups of students.

## Information about the school

The school opened in September 2008, following the closure and subsequent amalgamation of the three special schools which were previously sited on the campus. These three schools were all-age schools, had different designations and catered for distinctly different ranges of needs. The new school is designated as a generic learning difficulties school. This means that it admits students with a very wide range of special educational needs and/or disabilities. The main groups are students with moderate, severe or profound and multiple learning difficulties. Many students have physical disabilities and multisensory impairment. There is also a significant group of students with autistic spectrum disorder. All students have a statement of special educational needs. Most students are White British. Those who are not are mainly of Asian heritage. Boys outnumber girls. One third of students are entitled to free school meals.

About one half of Year 7 students transfer from another special school; the other half transfer from primary schools. Many students coming from the special school are performing at a sensory level, where progress is measured more in terms of reaction or response to stimulus than in clearly identifiable learning steps. Those transferring from primary schools are usually more able but have been assessed to be potentially vulnerable in secondary settings because of their special educational needs and/or disabilities.

The local authority envisages that the school will eventually operate as a 90-place establishment. On opening there were 147 students. The accommodation was not originally designed for the current range of students.

**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?**

2

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

2

## Main findings

The school has rapidly established its own identity. Many parents and carers who initially resisted its foundation are now strong supporters. A shrinking core remains of those who still feel their children were better served in their previous schools, but the overwhelming majority reports that their children are happy in school and feel safe. There is strong support from parents and carers for the headteacher and staff and the work they are doing to make sure that students' experience of school is a good one.

There has been rapid improvement since the school was founded. Inspectors found very clear evidence that teaching is rapidly improving and that students' achievement is following suit. Senior leaders and governors are crystal clear in their vision for the future of the school. The headteacher and deputy headteacher share a particularly good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and how to build on the former and get rid of the latter. Governors have played an important part in their contribution to the appointment of some inspirational new teachers. The way in which staff from three different schools have been melded to form a single team with shared ambition and pride in the school is exemplary. All this demonstrates the school's good capacity for sustained improvement.

Students say they enjoy school and feel safe. They achieve well because they are well taught. A growing proportion of teaching is moving from good to outstanding. Very little is mediocre. None is inadequate. Students show a great desire to play their part in making the school better. They behave well and work hard in lessons. The curriculum is good but teachers do not routinely plan for, or use, computers and other technological aids to enhance learning opportunities across all subjects.

Leaders and managers show a good understanding of the community the school serves. In the school there is a strong sense of community cohesion. This dilutes as the definition of community extends because planning for this aspect of the school's work is too informal.

The sixth form is not as effective as the rest of the school, nor is it improving at the same rapid rate. It is satisfactory, but in the eyes of inspectors and the school's leaders and managers this is not good enough for a school with such high aspirations.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Promote more strongly the impact that computers and other technological aids can play in students' enjoyment of learning and the progress they make in lessons.
- Draw up a formal plan to demonstrate how the school intends to make a greater

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impact on community cohesion. Include in this plan the means by which the school intends to contribute to national and international communities.

- Develop the sixth form by improving leadership and management and ensuring that students' achievements are fully recognised through a more imaginative range of courses leading to accreditation.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils****2**

Existing information about students' prior achievement supports inspectors' judgement that students are making good progress and achieving well. More importantly, the rate of progress is speeding up. Three terms ago, the school and local authority felt that teaching and students' achievement were satisfactory - a term ago, they felt that both were good. The evidence of inspection shows that, while progress remains good overall, in a growing number of lessons students are making outstanding progress.

Attainment on entry is always low. The progress of those students with the most profound and multiple learning difficulties is measured against personal, challenging targets that fall outside the bounds of formal assessment procedures or levels of attainment. These targets are usually met. This confirms the view of inspectors, formed from observation of lessons, that students are making good progress. More-able students make equally good progress as other groups. They often enter the school at a level below that expected by the National Curriculum, but leave Year 11 with qualifications that reflect attainment at Level 1 or 2 in English, mathematics, and information and communication technology (ICT). There is no evidence to suggest that any group of students is underachieving, nor that there is any difference in achievement in the main subjects of the curriculum.

Students enjoy the wide range of physical activities provided by the school. Those pupils with physical movement regimes receive skilled additional support to help them improve their mobility. Students cooperate well with the school's drive to encourage them to eat healthily. Equal attention is paid to helping students to thrive emotionally and mentally as well as physically. Great pride is taken in being a member of the school council. In discussion, students say they feel safe and can recount in detail what they learned in a recent anti-bullying week. Students played an important part in the foundation of the school and the drafting of school rules. They have helped out at the summer fair and older ones have been involved in cleaning up the school grounds as part of an environmental project. Through the progress students make in class and in their personal development, students are being well prepared for the future. Nearly all attend whenever they can but illness and medical conditions, often involving long absences, reduce overall attendance.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<sup>1</sup> The 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.

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

**How effective is the provision?**

Since the school opened there has been a concerted drive to improve teaching. This has been supported by an extensive range of good training. This has been of the utmost importance because while all teachers had worked in special schools before, not all had experience of working with the full range of abilities and difficulties of the students represented in the new school. Leaders and managers paid particular attention to improving teachers' awareness of the importance of carefully assessing students' progress throughout the course of lessons. This assessment of learning is now good, with the result that teachers now have a much better awareness of the tiny steps by which less-able students make progress and also when more-able students should be given a greater degree of challenge. Teachers take great care to match activities to the needs and interests of individuals. Staff have excellent relationships with students and this contributes to the sense of enjoyment and adventure in many lessons. Large classroom teams are usually well managed by teachers but, occasionally, skilled classroom assistants are not used to maximum effect throughout the whole lesson. The curriculum meets all requirements. Great care is taken to ensure that students are given ample opportunities to learn about the importance of living healthily and staying safe. The promotion of personal, social and health education infuses all lessons and many opportunities are taken to promote literacy and numeracy in lessons other than English and mathematics. The use of computers and other technological aids is less well planned for. While interactive whiteboards were frequently used effectively during the inspection, the use of other computers in lessons other than ICT lessons was notably absent. Over a short period of time, many good links have been forged with other

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schools and colleges and with providers of work experience. These are of particular benefit to older students who are preparing to leave school. They contribute significantly to easing transition to other educational or training settings and to preparing students for adult life. There are many outstanding features in the way the school cares, guides and supports students. Huge attention is paid to keeping students safe, healthy and protected from risk. Precise plans are in place to show how individual needs can best be provided for. These include individual education plans and management plans for aspects such as behaviour, feeding or mobility. The school acknowledges that while it has gone a long way to confirm to parents and carers that their children's needs are being fully met, there is still more that it can do to reassure those who remain unconvinced that they are involved enough in their children's education.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

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

**How effective are leadership and management?**

Under the inspired leadership of the headteacher, managers and governors have rapidly established this new and effective school. They have successfully and sensitively managed the formation of a single staff team from what were three very diverse teams just over a year ago. A strong sense of pride and a common sense of purpose are clearly evident around the school. Some excellent new appointments have been made to add youth and energy to the experience and enthusiasm of longer-established staff. The result is that provision is rapidly improving and standards are rising. There are no significant gaps in the progress of different groups of students and where minor differences occur, they are quickly remedied. Governors have been hugely supportive in helping to develop the school. They are fastidious in ensuring that they fulfil their statutory responsibilities, including those that relate to safeguarding. Governors are about to implement their well-developed plans to build further upon their current good work in monitoring and evaluating the work of the school.

Procedures and initiatives for promoting community cohesion are less well developed than many other aspects of the school's work. In its first year, the school has concentrated more strongly on its own community. In this it has been extremely successful and can be summed up in its vision and mission statement 'Achieving together'. The time is ripe now to extend rapidly its contribution to the broader community. A start has been made through the development of good partnerships with other education and training providers, but there is still plenty of scope for improving its

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contribution to national and international communities.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

## Sixth form

Most students with moderate learning difficulties leave school at the end of Year 11 to be educated or trained in other settings. Only those students who are assessed as being unlikely to thrive in other settings transfer to the sixth form. In recognition of this, the sixth form curriculum tends to focus much more strongly on promoting independence and skills for life, than on academic achievement. During the inspection, students were seen to be making the progress expected of them. They behaved well and demonstrated their growing maturity, for instance, by helping sensibly with routine daily tasks which contribute to the sixth form environment. Many have participated in wheelchair support training so that they can help those who use manual wheelchairs to get around the school. Further information about progress suggests that students' achievement is satisfactory, but the information is less well organised, analysed and presented than in the rest of the school. This is symptomatic of several aspects of leadership and management. There are no major deficiencies in either, but the rigour seen in the rest of the school is less evident here. Some of the teaching is good, clearly building on what students have previously learned and challenging them to achieve more. Where teaching is less effective it amounts more to supervision than teaching. There is a limited range of courses leading to formal recognition of students' achievement but the range is growing and many more students are due to gain external accreditation this year than did so last year. The care offered to students is of the same high quality as that in the rest of the school.



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*These are the grades for the sixth form*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the sixth form</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	3
The quality of provision in the sixth form	3
Leadership and management of the sixth form	3

## Views of parents and carers

Many parents and carers were highly resistant to the reorganisation that led to the formation of the school. Several have retained their suspicion that their children were better served in their previous schools. Inspection evidence suggests that their children are being well served in this school, but inspectors cannot comment on how this compares with previous experiences. A few parents and carers of students with moderate learning difficulties feel that the school devotes more attention to those who have more severe, profound or complex difficulties, but inspectors did not find any evidence to support this view. Similarly, a few parents and carers of students with the most severe and profound difficulties worry about the over-exuberance of other groups of students, even though all respondents to the questionnaire expressed total confidence in the school to keep their children safe. This trust is not misplaced. A greater than usual proportion of parents and carers feel that their children are not making enough progress but inspectors judge that students' progress is good. This suggests that parents and carers share the school's high aspirations for it to be even better.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Sir Tom Finney Community High 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 29 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 143 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	13	45	15	52	1	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	12	41	17	59	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	9	31	14	48	5	17	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	10	34	10	34	6	21	2	7
The teaching is good at this school	13	45	14	48	1	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	11	38	14	48	3	10	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	13	45	14	48	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)	11	38	12	41	3	10	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	12	41	12	41	5	17	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	13	45	11	38	2	7	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	12	41	12	41	3	10	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	13	45	11	38	2	7	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	13	45	14	48	2	7	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 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 inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

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 were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

## 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"> <li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li> <li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li> <li>■ The quality of teaching.</li> <li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li> <li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li> </ul>
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.**



20 November 2009

Dear Students

Inspection of Sir Tom Finney Community High School, Preston, PR1 6AA

I would like to start this letter with a big thank you to all of you who made my visit so enjoyable. You were great and you did your school proud. My colleague thoroughly enjoyed speaking to members of the school council and was just as impressed as I was by how well the school is developing.

Your school is good. With your help and support and that of your parents and carers, it can get even better. You make good progress in lessons because you are well taught. In an increasing number of lessons you make outstanding progress. This is a very encouraging trend. It explains why I feel so confident that your school is going to keep on improving. Another reason is that I have great confidence in the leaders and managers of the school. They don't pretend that everything is perfect, but they do have good ideas to move towards achieving their vision for the school.

In response to the student who asked what we inspectors actually do, I would like to explain that an important part of our job is to help schools improve. This is how I feel yours could.

- Teachers could make better use of computers to help you to learn.
- You could be more involved in making the community outside the school a better place for everyone.
- The sixth form should match the rest of the school in its ambition to improve.

Good result, well deserved. You did the school proud.

Yours sincerely

Mr Alastair Younger

Lead Inspector

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