

# Sir Tom Finney Community High School

Moor Park, Blackpool Road, Preston, PR1 6AA

**Inspection dates** 23–24 October 2012

|                                |                      |                    |          |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|--------------------|----------|
| <b>Overall effectiveness</b>   | Previous inspection: | Good               | 2        |
|                                | This inspection:     | <b>Outstanding</b> | <b>1</b> |
| Achievement of pupils          |                      | Outstanding        | 1        |
| Quality of teaching            |                      | Outstanding        | 1        |
| Behaviour and safety of pupils |                      | Outstanding        | 1        |
| Leadership and management      |                      | Outstanding        | 1        |

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is an outstanding school.

- Students arrive with levels of attainment well below national averages. Nevertheless, the great majority make excellent progress in all areas. Older students gain useful accreditations. Some are successful in GCSE and other national qualifications such as Entry Level Certificates, which recognise the ability of students to apply basic skills, knowledge and understanding in everyday situations.
- The great majority overcome their learning difficulties and disabilities. They make friends and build strong relationships.
- Their attendance is high. Students enjoy school. They contribute superbly in lessons, to the life of the school and to the wider community.
- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural developments are outstanding, as is their behaviour. They report that they feel very safe in school and this is confirmed by parents.
- Students' progress and personal development are helped by the high standards of teaching. In most lessons teachers prepare interesting and exciting activities.
- Students are busy and active in their learning during lessons and little time is wasted. Excellent use of technology enables students with extreme difficulties to join in more easily.
- The sixth form is good and improving rapidly. Here, the rate of progress is rising sharply.
- Where lessons are not outstanding it is because teachers do not plan for students to learn in very small stages.
- Through outstanding leadership and management improvements have continued in teaching and achievement since the previous inspection. Students' attendance has increased, relationships with families are highly effective and much has been done to raise the quality of teaching.
- The opportunities provided for all students are excellent with individualised courses that meet the wide range of needs and abilities.
- The governing body is outstanding and has undertaken sterling work with the local authority in planning the forthcoming changes.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 12 lessons and an off-site activity at another school. They undertook short visits to classrooms, watched lunchtime activities, breaktimes and movements to and from transport.
- Students' work and their records were examined. Inspectors listened to students reading during lessons.
- The inspectors spoke with the students in classes and informally at other times throughout the school day to gain their views and opinions.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, members of the senior team, curriculum and other coordinators, a representative of the local authority, the school nurse and the Chair of the Governing Body.
- The views of the staff were taken into account through their questionnaires and in discussions with them.
- The inspection took account of the views of parents through scrutinising the school's own surveys and by viewing the five responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire (Parent View).
- The work of the school was observed and documents concerning planning, self-evaluation, safeguarding, attendance, behaviour and students' progress were scrutinised.

## Inspection team

|                                |                      |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|
| Terry McKenzie, Lead inspector | Additional Inspector |
| Nell Banfield                  | Additional Inspector |

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school admits students with a wide range of special educational needs, including moderate learning difficulties, severe learning difficulties and autistic spectrum conditions. Many experience complex and multiple barriers to learning and all have a statement of special educational needs. Some have social, emotional and behavioural difficulties.
- Students are admitted at any age from 11 to 19 but the majority enrol in the early stages of secondary education and continue to beyond the statutory school leaving age. Around one third are known to be eligible for the pupil premium and this is high compared to most other schools nationally.
- Most come from a White British background and there is a slightly higher percentage of boys than girls.
- Many travel a considerable distance to attend and, for some, their journeys can take around an hour.
- The school has an arrangement with the nearby Ashton Community Science College, Renaissance Centre through which some Key Stage 4 students attend for one morning each week to study hair and beauty. Key Stage 4 and Sixth Form students also use the PE and media facilities as part of their options.
- After school clubs are operated on certain days of the week and holiday clubs are run by the school several times each year. These are under the control of the school and the governing body.
- Since the last inspection the Bronze level Investors in People Award has been renewed and the school has gained a distinction in the Pearson Teaching Award.
- The school is due to move to new premises and share a site with a local high school in 2014.

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

- Leaders and managers should continue to improve teaching and further increase the rate of learning by encouraging all teachers to plan lessons that enable students to make progress in the smallest possible steps.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is outstanding

- From very low starting points most students make much more progress than would be expected. This is confirmed by the school's own information and records, and by lesson observations.
- The rate of progress in literacy and numeracy has increased recently, particularly for those known to be entitled to the pupil premium. A clear focus by staff on helping students to recognise letters and the sounds they make (phonics) supports their good progress in learning to read and most enjoy reading activities.
- New reading schemes and additional staff have aided progress. Furthermore, since the last inspection better use has been made of technology such as mobility and communication aids and information and communication technology. Those with particular learning difficulties now have much better opportunities to take part.
- Students who attend the hairdressing course do well and most gain a useful accreditation for their work.
- The school is skilled at identifying students who are flagging in their studies. Staff quickly intervene so that students do not fall behind.
- The progress of students in the sixth form has improved since the last inspection through greater emphasis on academic work. Also, teaching in the sixth form has improved and is now consistently good or better.
- The curriculum in Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form helps students to move on to the next stages of their lives by gaining experiences in the work place, finding out about what is available when they leave school and obtaining qualifications that help them to find appropriate future placements.
- Students of all ages are keen to take part in school. Their generally excellent progress in lessons is aided by high levels of concentration and exemplary behaviour.
- Relationships between staff and students are excellent. When questioned about the best aspects of school students consistently stated that it is the adults who care for them.
- These strong relationships with staff extend to students' families so that parents become closely involved in knowing how well their children are doing. This helps to maintain very high levels of motivation in school.
- Some of the best achievements are outside of classrooms when students take part in community activities such as playing in a band, competing in sports, undertaking live dramatic performances and taking part in Scouts.

### The quality of teaching is outstanding

- Teaching has improved since the last inspection. It is now mainly outstanding and never less than good. This is due to school managers providing training, development opportunities and resources, such as those provided to improve the teaching of phonics.
- Good use of performance management has led to the provision of training that meets the needs of teachers and other adults who work with students well. This has resulted in better teaching and more effective use of assessment and information of students' progress. Teachers have increased their skills in using information about students' progress to set challenging targets for students. They also match tasks very closely to students' levels of ability and plan extremely well for the students' different learning difficulties.
- Staff are positive about the school and its management. They share the vision that encourages all to strive for the best for students. Morale is high.
- Many lessons are exciting in nature and provide students with experiences they will never forget. In an outstanding performing arts lesson students rehearsed the story of Odysseus. The group contained students with every style of learning difficulty and disability but all enthusiastically

joined in as far as they could with the acting, singing and speaking. Activities of this nature provide chances for students to undertake the same kind of additional activities as their peers in mainstream school and to fulfil ambitions.

- Other quieter learning situations observed included an outstanding art lesson where a small group were provided with every opportunity to develop their ideas. When questioned why she was challenging herself with GCSE art one student replied, 'This is what I've always wanted to do.'
- In a very few lessons where teaching is not outstanding students make less progress because the targets are too broad and the planned stages of learning are not small enough to meet the needs of all students.
- The adults know the students and their needs very well. The outstanding care that they provide is interwoven with school work as far as possible so that very little time is wasted in class

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils** are outstanding

- Throughout the inspection students' behaviour was exemplary and they were a pleasure to meet. No cross words were heard and when any student became restless or distracted the adults quickly and skilfully intervened.
- Students are keen to come to school. They take a lot of responsibility for looking after themselves, for example they were observed moving efficiently between lessons with the minimum of supervision.
- They develop high moral standards. Where they can, they look after each other, such as when they help other students with severe disabilities who cannot move about easily. Students learn about right and wrong and this is reflected in the very low number of incidents and the absence of exclusion.
- They have high self-regard because of the great successes that they enjoy here. Their cultural experiences are profound because even those with severe disabilities and complex learning difficulties undertake music, drama, art, sport and off-site learning in hairdressing. Many go on residential holidays that enable them to experience new localities and people from different backgrounds. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural developments are outstanding.
- When questioned, all replied that the school is a safe and secure place. One said, 'It is the safest place in the world!' These views are in accordance with those of parents, staff and the inspection team. When asked about bullying and harassment some stated they had experienced it in other places but never in this school. Students at the off-site hairdressing course agreed that they feel safe and well cared-for at this location.
- Students learn about keeping themselves safe in lessons, by being able to talk things through with other professionals such as the school nurse and by experiencing practical activities such as science, food technology, horticulture and hairdressing.

### **The leadership and management** are outstanding

- School managers have responded well to the requirements identified in the last inspection. The use of technology to support learning is excellent, the way the school now interacts with the local community has changed profoundly for the better and the sixth form has improved.
- The headteacher has encouraged staff to make greater use of information about students' progress. Consequently, leaders and managers demonstrate great skill in quickly and efficiently finding out what is happening with the different groups of students within the school. For example, a recent study indicated that a group of students working at a particular standard appeared to be underachieving compared to others in the school. Measures were quickly put into place to remedy this and those students are now closing the gap with their peers.
- Through helping teachers to understand and use assessments better the rates of progress of all

student groups in the school has greatly increased and now exceeds that of most other similar schools. Observations of lessons by the senior team have confirmed that teaching and learning have improved and this is in line with the findings of the inspection.

- The rate of attendance has continued to rise since the last inspection and is now above the national average for special schools. This is related to the excellent work that the school has undertaken with families. The result of this is that many parents attend school functions and specific activities such as coffee mornings, curriculum briefings and talks given by local authority officers.
- Improved attendance is also related to the wide range of opportunities devised for students such as the informal breakfast, after school clubs, and meeting with friends from the school during the holiday clubs. Furthermore, the work of medical practitioners operating from the school reduces the need for students to leave the site to attend clinics.
- Self-analyses undertaken by the headteacher and senior team are accurate and extensive. Analysis leads to appropriate action planning and school development. Outstanding ability to improve further is demonstrated at all levels of management. Thus, where a very few aspects of management are not yet completely outstanding it is because plans have not yet been fully implemented or embedded and the school is fully aware of this.
- The pupil premium has been used wisely for those who are known to be entitled to the funding. Consequently, this group of students has made above the expected rate of progress in English and mathematics.
- The local authority has worked closely with the school in helping it to admit students with a wider range of special educational needs. It has helped the school to identify a new and better site for the school to move to in the near future.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governance is outstanding because governors demonstrate excellent understanding of the work of the school. Governors actively support and challenge; for example, each member of the body is linked with a curriculum area and champions its interests. Governors have helped with changes in staffing and resources. They have checked that the pupil premium funding is being used correctly. The governing body has established meaningful performance-management targets for the headteacher. It has ensured that all requirements for safeguarding are met including where students are educated under partnership arrangements. Governors have worked productively with the local authority in planning the move to future new premises.

## What inspection judgements mean

| School  |                      |  |
|---------|----------------------|--|
| Grade   | Judgement            | Description  |
| Grade 1 | Outstanding          | An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.   |
| Grade 2 | Good                 | A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.   |
| Grade 3 | Requires improvement | A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.   |
| Grade 4 | Inadequate           | <p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> |

## School details

|                                |            |
|--------------------------------|------------|
| <b>Unique reference number</b> | 135346     |
| <b>Local authority</b>         | Lancashire |
| <b>Inspection number</b>       | 402691     |

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

|   |                         |
|---|-------------------------|
| <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                   |
| <b>Gender of pupils in the sixth form</b>     | Mixed                   |
| <b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>    | 134                     |
| <b>Of which, number on roll in sixth form</b> | 35                      |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>                  | The governing body      |
| <b>Chair</b>                                  | Chris Brown             |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                            | Shaun Jukes             |
| <b>Date of previous school inspection</b>     | 18 November 2009        |
| <b>Telephone number</b>                       | 01772 795749            |
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