

Inspection of an outstanding school: Thornton-Cleveleys Red Marsh School

Holly Road, Red Marsh School, Blackpool, Lancashire FY5 4HH

Inspection dates:

26 and 27 March 2024

Outcome

Thornton-Cleveleys Red Marsh School continues to be an outstanding school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Red Marsh School is a joyful and inspiring place to learn. Pupils thrive in this school where staff are passionate and encourage pupils to achieve their very best.

The school has created a culture of aspiration. Pupils, who all have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), rise to meet the school's high expectations. Pupils get the very best start to their education and achieve very well. They study an ambitious curriculum, which begins in the early years and continues to the sixth form.

The school has implemented highly successful routines that help pupils to behave well and settle happily into school. For example, the day begins with appropriate sensory or physical activities which prepare pupils successfully for their learning. Pupils are welcoming and polite when talking to visitors.

A variety of extra-curricular opportunities enable pupils to develop different interests and talents. For instance, pupils enjoy singing in the choir and they have recently performed to a large audience. Pupils are also proud to have performed a piece from a Shakespeare play to other schools. Managing the popular tuck shop helps older students to enhance their entrepreneurial skills. Older students also support younger pupils by helping to run the school's popular book club.

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

At the heart of this school is a carefully constructed, ambitious curriculum that has been meticulously designed to ensure that it is highly personalised for each pupil. The school has carefully identified and organised the important knowledge that pupils should learn from the early years to sixth form.

Communication and reading skills permeate the curriculum. Through the highly specialised focus on speech and language, pupils learn to recognise sounds, symbols, pictures and words. They learn to communicate their needs and choices effectively. Staff

are highly trained to expertly teach the phonics programme. As a result, many pupils become fluent and confident readers.

Staff have strong subject knowledge and they deliver curriculums exceptionally well. The school is adept at using assessment strategies to make sure that pupils are successfully learning curriculum content. Staff skilfully break down learning into detailed, achievable goals for each pupil. The school has thought thoroughly about how learning will build over time for each pupil. Staff rigorously ensure that pupils' prior knowledge is fully embedded and can be applied in different contexts before they introduce new learning.

The school promotes a passion for reading through engaging storytelling and using props and objects of reference to bring books to life for pupils. Across the school, pupils enjoy reading regularly, for instance, in the calm, welcoming and well-resourced library. Pupils spoke enthusiastically about the weekly book club, where they discuss books and use the shadow puppet theatre to act out scenes from the books that they have read.

The school is mindful of identifying any additional needs of pupils beyond those linked to their primary SEND. Staff ensure that the inspirational curriculum meets pupils' education, health and care (EHC) plan outcomes very well. Throughout the school, teachers seize opportunities to enhance pupils' learning opportunities. For example, pupils successfully develop their social skills in the dining room.

There is a focused and purposeful atmosphere in classrooms and around school. Pupils engage in their learning and feel highly motivated. Staff are extremely well trained to adapt learning to meet pupils' emotional, physical, and sensory needs. Pupils learn to manage their feelings and behaviours positively. As a result, pupils' conduct, confidence and communication skills develop considerably over time. They are supported to be ready for the next stages in their education, employment or training.

Pupils flourish in ways that extend beyond the academic curriculum. Pupils have an age-appropriate understanding of what makes a good friend and what makes a healthy relationship. They develop personally through a rich range of experiences. For example, pupils relish taking part in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award and they appreciate the wealth of opportunities on offer to promote their independence.

The school encourages pupils to become active citizens. For example, the school council regularly raises money for charities. Pupils enjoy volunteering at a local church and students benefit from work experience in various settings including recycling centres and catteries. Sixth-form students described their regular trips as being a highlight of their week. For example, they appreciate visits to the supermarket where they buy ingredients to cook healthy meals.

Governors are highly ambitious. They meticulously monitor the impact of the school's work. Staff morale is high. They are highly motivated and said that the school is considerate of their workload and well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Background

When we have judged a school to be outstanding, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains outstanding. 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 second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be outstanding in January 2015.

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](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	119897
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10321383
Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	2 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	119
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	23
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Joanne Flackett
Headteacher	Jenny Slater
Website	www.redmarsh.lancs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	7 February 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Information about this school

- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.
- The school provides for pupils with a broad range of SEND, including complex needs. This includes specific learning difficulties, moderate learning difficulties, autism and social and speech, language and communication needs. Some pupils have severe learning difficulties, hearing and visual impairments or physical disabilities. All pupils have an EHC plan.
- At the time of the inspection there were no nursery-aged children attending the school. Inspectors considered the curriculum and welfare requirements for these children as part of the inspection.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's educational provision.
- Inspectors discussed the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, other senior leaders, staff, pupils and members of the governing body. An inspector held a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in communication and early reading, mathematics and music. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning, and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also considered the curriculum in other subjects. An inspector observed pupils reading to a familiar adult.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors spoke to staff about pupils' behaviour and their workload in school.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's online staff survey. They took account of the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments.
- Inspectors considered the views of pupils through discussions held with pupils during the inspection.

Inspection team

Rebecca Sharples, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Claire Hollister

Ofsted Inspector

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