

Inspection of a good school: Taxal and Fernilee CofE Primary School

Reddish Road, Whaley Bridge, High Peak, Derbyshire SK23 7DL

Inspection dates:

24 and 25 May 2023

Outcome

Taxal and Fernilee CofE Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy coming to school. The staff care for all pupils. Pupils learn how to keep safe. They know that they can talk to a trusted adult if they need to. Pupils like being with their friends in school. They are kind to each other, and they respect all staff.

Pupils are enthusiastic about visits that they have experienced. They visit local caverns and take part in adventurous activities. Pupils enjoy it when visitors bring animals into school from local farms. Pupils enjoy taking part in a wide range of after-school activities, including the sports club.

Pupils behave well. They follow their 'script' approach; strength, compassion, respect, integrity, peace and tenacity. In lessons, pupils work hard, and they are proud of their work. Pupils talked about being tenacious, helping them to persist when their work is challenging. Teachers have high expectations of all pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Bullying is rare in school, and leaders resolve any incidents well if it happens.

The majority of parents are supportive of the school. One parent, typical on many, said, 'My child loves this school, he feels valued as part of the Taxal family.'

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

Leaders have designed the curriculum for mathematics and English. They have identified key knowledge that they want pupils to learn. This helps the pupils to recall their prior learning. In other subjects such as history and music, the curriculum is less well developed. In these subjects, leaders have not planned the key components of knowledge that they want pupils to learn.

Curriculum planning for mathematics has been carefully thought out. The building of knowledge and skills happens in small parts and helps pupils to remember their learning. For example, in Year 5, pupils learn to measure angles. They use protractors that have

degree marks in intervals of 30. As pupils became more confident, they reduce the intervals to 10. This helps pupils to become secure in their understanding.

Reading is a priority for leaders. They have identified, and put in place, a new phonics scheme. All staff in school have had the training to deliver the scheme. Those pupils that may fall behind in their reading are well supported. Pupils choose books that they love to read and share them with their friends.

In art, pupils are enthusiastic about their work. Leaders have thought about what skills and knowledge that they want pupils to learn. In the early years, for example, children use smaller paint brushes. This equipment helps them develop control. Older pupils develop the skills needed to sketch portraits. They learn to draw eyes, nose and lips. Once they have the knowledge and skills to do this, they then draw the full face.

Leaders are ambitious for pupils with SEND. If pupils need help, they get it. An adapted curriculum is in place, when needed. Pupils with SEND achieve well and they are accessing the same curriculum as their peers.

Leaders have provided a broad personal development curriculum. Pupils learn about a range of faiths and cultures. They know the fundamental British values, and they learn about this across the curriculum. There are many opportunities to help pupils develop their skills beyond the classroom. Pupils raise money for charity. They visit residents in the local care home.

Teachers expect pupils to behave well at all times in school. Pupils enjoy the reward system, and they work hard to try to earn points. Pupils' work is celebrated and pupils are proud of what they have achieved. Pupils are polite and courteous to both their friends and the staff. Help is provided for those pupils that need further support.

Staff feel well supported by leaders in school. They are proud of their school, and they say that they are a 'team'. Governors have a broad skill set that benefits the school. They hold leaders to account, providing both support and challenge where appropriate.

The interim leadership team has worked with staff to develop stronger links with the community. Parents recognise this, and they have praised leaders about their communication.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There are robust procedures for safeguarding pupils at this school. Staff quickly identify pupils that may be at risk of harm, and they take appropriate action. Leaders carry out employment checks when they recruit staff. Leaders are relentless in pursuing support for families when they need it. Regular safeguarding training takes place for all staff. Governors have a clear oversight of the safeguarding of children in this school.

There are weekly lessons for pupils that help them to keep themselves safe.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The important knowledge that pupils need to learn in some subjects is not as well sequenced compared to other areas of the curriculum. In these subjects, it is not yet fully clear what pupils should learn, and by when, to build their knowledge over time. Leaders should ensure that the curriculum thinking for all subjects sets out precisely the knowledge that all pupils should know and when.

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 second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in April 2012.

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	112872
Local authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	10211538
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	217
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Graham Atkinson
Headteacher	Stephanie Kavanagh (Acting Headteacher)
Website	http://www.taxalprimary.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	20 September 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school had an acting headteacher and acting deputy headteacher at the time of inspection.
- The school makes use of one unregistered alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken that into account in his evaluation of the school.
- During the inspection, the inspector met with the acting headteacher, acting deputy headteacher, and a range of staff.
- The inspector met with members of the governing body. He spoke with representatives of the local authority and diocese.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics and art. For each deep dive, the inspector met with subject leaders to discuss the curriculum,

spoke with teachers, and spoke with pupils about their learning. He visited lessons and looked at samples of pupils' work. The inspector observed some pupils reading to a familiar adult.

- The inspector examined the single central record, spoke with leaders about safeguarding and examined a range of documentation.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around school.
- The inspector considered responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including free-text comments. The inspector met with staff and considered responses to the Ofsted survey for school staff.

Inspection team

George Huthart, lead inspector

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