

# Inspection of a good school: Garstang St Thomas Church of England Primary School

Kepple Lane, Garstang, Preston, Lancashire PR3 1PB

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Inspection dates:

17 and 18 October 2023

## Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this ungraded (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might be outstanding if a graded (section 5) inspection were carried out now. The school's next inspection will be a graded inspection.

## What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are cheerful, smart and full of enthusiasm for their learning at Garstang St Thomas Church of England Primary School. They achieve well and become confident and articulate learners. Pupils leave the school at the end of Year 6 as well rounded and thoughtful individuals, ready for their next stages of education.

The school's values underpin the busyness of each day and the wealth of opportunities on offer for pupils. Pupils are proud of how they help others, both inside school and in the wider community. They carry out their roles and responsibilities with a sense of purpose and compassion. Pupils told the inspector that the staff and pupils are kind and caring. As a result, pupils said that they feel happy and safe in school.

Pupils meet the high expectations the school has for their achievement. These expectations extend beyond pupils' academic achievement. For example, pupils develop strong communication skills. Consequently, pupils are confident to independently lead events for large audiences and present on the school radio show.

Visits and opportunities to learn outside the classroom permeate the curriculum. Pupils build a secure understanding of their local area and beyond. Teachers are skilful in using experiences, books and other resources to bring learning to life. Pupils enjoy their lessons enormously. Almost all pupils attend school regularly.

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

The school has designed a highly ambitious curriculum for all pupils, including for children in the early years. The curriculum has been carefully crafted to ensure that pupils build

their knowledge securely over time. The curriculum enables pupils to make connections between essential concepts and ideas. It prepares children and pupils very well for their next steps of learning. Pupils make effective use of the subject-specific vocabulary that they have learned and they articulate their learning well.

Teachers use their secure subject knowledge to explain concepts clearly. The school's environment for early years, including for two-year-olds, is well resourced and supports children's development across all areas. Staff are skilled in understanding the developmental needs of young children. This ensures that children are very well prepared for Year 1 at the end of the Reception Year. Across all year groups, teachers routinely check what pupils know and remember. Teachers adapt learning and address gaps in pupils' knowledge effectively. As a result, pupils achieve well.

The early years environment is rich in language and communication. Children enjoy learning through a range of stories and rhymes. The school has prioritised reading for pupils throughout the school. Staff are well trained to teach phonics securely. Pupils who find reading more difficult are identified quickly and given the individual help that they need to catch up with their peers. Pupils read with fluency and expression. The love of reading continues for older pupils. Pupils enjoy their class novels and the opportunity to recommend books to others. They appreciate the ambitious reading challenges that are set for them.

The school identifies pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) effectively. This starts in the early years. The school ensures that staff have the information and training that they need to meet the needs of all pupils. As a result, all pupils follow the same curriculum and participate in the same opportunities beyond the academic curriculum. Pupils with SEND enjoy school and achieve well.

Pupils are polite and sensible. They follow routines well. This means they can quickly move between lively conversation and more formal activities without fuss or loss of time. Each classroom has a harmonious and purposeful atmosphere. This begins in the early years, where staff model behaviours effectively and children follow instructions, share resources and are kind.

The school ensures that pupils learn about and respect the differences between people and communities. Pupils also learn about the factors that contribute to positive relationships and how to stay safe, including online. The opportunities beyond the curriculum for pupils are noteworthy. All pupils, including those from disadvantaged backgrounds, take part in additional activities. Pupils were keen to talk about the achievements of their sports teams, the musical instruments that they have learned to play and other activities such as their discussions in the philosophy café.

Leaders communicate well with parents and carers. The vast majority of parents are delighted with the experiences their children have at the school. Staff feel well supported by leaders and are proud to be part of the school. They said that leaders are considerate of their workload when changes are implemented. Staff at all levels value the training and support that they receive to continually develop in their roles.

## Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

## 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 June 2014.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	119528
<b>Local authority</b>	Lancashire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10291423
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	2 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	244
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Emma Bray
<b>Headteacher</b>	Jim Blakely
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.garstangstthomas.com">www.garstangstthomas.com</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	17 July 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school has provision for two-year-olds.
- This is a Church of England primary school in the Diocese of Blackburn. The most recent section 48 inspection took place in July 2019. The school's next section 48 inspection is due to take place before 2026.
- Leaders do not make use of any alternative provision for pupils at the school.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the lead inspector discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers and pupils and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- The inspector observed pupils reading to a trusted adult.
- The inspector spoke to pupils about their experiences of school and their views about behaviour and bullying. They also observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and at breaktimes.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector: 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.
- The inspector spoke with the headteacher, other senior leaders, subject leaders and members of staff.
- The inspector met with members of the local governing body.
- The inspector spoke with a representative of the local authority, a representative of the Diocese of Blackburn and a school improvement partner.
- The inspector considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. The inspector also considered the responses to Ofsted's online surveys for staff and for pupils.

### **Inspection team**

Eleanor Overland, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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