

Inspection of a good school: Tatham Fells Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Lowgill, Lancaster, Lancashire LA2 8RA

Inspection date:

27 February 2024

Outcome

Tatham Fells Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Tatham Fells Primary School is a happy place in which to come and learn. Pupils are proud of the way in which everyone is made to feel welcome. They build strong friendships with others across the school.

Pupils' conduct during lessons and at playtimes is first rate. They are polite and thoughtful towards other people. Relationships between staff and pupils are marked by warmth and mutual respect. The school is an oasis of calm, and pupils are able to learn in a purposeful learning environment.

The school has high expectations of pupils' learning, including for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils typically achieve well. They are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Pupils benefit from a wealth of experiences that go beyond the academic curriculum. For example, older pupils spoke excitedly about a forthcoming residential trip, where they will be working alongside pupils from other local schools. Other pupils explained how visiting the Houses of Parliament helped them to learn about democracy.

Pupils relish taking on different roles and responsibilities, such as being sports leaders. Many pupils represent the school during regional sports events and by singing in the choir. They enjoy organising activities to celebrate events such as World Book Day.

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

Reading has a high priority across school. Children in the early years and pupils in key stage 1 get off to a good start. They quickly build a secure knowledge of phonics. Staff ensure that pupils have a range of suitable books to practise reading regularly. Any pupils

who struggle with early reading are given the help that they need to become more confident and fluent. As they move through the school, pupils are encouraged to develop a love of reading. Older pupils become keen and able readers. They talked knowledgeably and enthusiastically about their favourite books.

The school has developed an ambitious and effective curriculum. This is carefully structured to take account of the mixed-age classes. The school has thought carefully about what pupils should learn and the order in which content will be taught. Similarly, the curriculum in the early years equips children with the knowledge that they need and prepares them well for key stage 1. Pupils typically build their knowledge well over time. However, sometimes teachers' expectations of pupils' writing in some subjects are not as high as in others. Where this is the case, pupils do not have enough opportunity to practise and strengthen key writing skills. At times, this means that pupils' written work does not show all they know and can do.

Staff know pupils well. They make regular checks on pupils' learning and are careful to pick up on any misconceptions that may arise. Staff are quick to identify the additional needs of pupils with SEND. The school makes sure that appropriate support is in place to help these pupils to access the full curriculum. Pupils with SEND achieve well.

Pupils behave sensibly during lessons. They listen well to adults and to their classmates. Pupils work well together and have positive attitudes to their learning.

The school focuses strongly on improving pupils' levels of attendance. It checks on the reasons why pupils may be absent from school and works to support pupils and their families where absences are frequent. This is having a positive impact. Many pupils with low prior attendance now attend school regularly.

The school supports pupils' wider development well. Pupils learn about cultures and beliefs that are different to their own. They visit a variety of local places of worship and benefit from hearing school visitors talk about their religious practices.

Pupils enjoy learning how to keep their minds and their bodies healthy. They know how to keep themselves safe during different situations. This includes when using the internet or when they are in or near to water.

Governors know the school well and fulfil their statutory duties effectively. They provide the school with appropriate support and challenge, with a focus on improving the quality of education that pupils receive. Staff are positive about working at the school. They appreciate the way that their workload and well-being is considered, such as when developing a new marking policy. Parents and carers are positive about the school and almost all would recommend it to other parents.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Occasionally, teachers' expectations of pupils' writing in some subjects are not as high as they are in others. At times, pupils do not have enough opportunities to practise the basic writing skills that support their progress through the curriculum. Sometimes this means that pupils' written work does not show all they know and can do. The school should ensure that teachers maintain high expectations for all aspects of pupils' learning and that pupils have the chance to strengthen their key writing skills.

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 first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in November 2018.

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	119379
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10314006
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	36
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Helen Wilkinson
Headteacher	Fiona Ip
Website	www.tathamfells.lancs.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	21 and 22 November 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school operates an after-school club.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision for pupils.
- This Church of England school is part of the Diocese of Blackburn. The last section 48 inspection, for schools of a religious character, took place in May 2018. The next section 48 inspection is due to take place by July 2026.

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 inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, the SEND coordinator and some subject leaders.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics and physical education. For each deep dive, the inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils about their

learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also discussed the curriculum in some other subjects and looked at samples of pupils' work in those subjects.

- An inspector observed some pupils from Years 1 to 3 read to a familiar adult.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors reviewed the single central record and took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils. They considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- The lead inspector held a meeting with a group of governors, including the chair of governors. He also spoke with representatives of the local authority and of the diocese.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. They also took account of the responses from staff and pupils to Ofsted's online surveys.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils about their experiences at school and their views on behaviour and bullying. They observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and at breaktimes and lunchtimes.
- Inspectors spoke with staff about their workload and well-being.

Inspection team

Neil Dixon, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Chris Metcalfe

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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