

# Tatham Fells Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Lowgill, Lancaster, Lancashire LA2 8RA

## Inspection dates

21–22 November 2018

|  |                    |
|--|--------------------|
| <b>Overall effectiveness</b>                 | <b>Good</b>        |
| Effectiveness of leadership and management   | <b>Good</b>        |
| Quality of teaching, learning and assessment | <b>Good</b>        |
| Personal development, behaviour and welfare  | <b>Outstanding</b> |
| Outcomes for pupils                          | <b>Good</b>        |
| Early years provision                        | <b>Good</b>        |
| Overall effectiveness at previous inspection | Outstanding        |

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- The headteacher, governors and staff have ensured that this small school provides pupils with a good standard of education.
- Pupils make good progress in English and mathematics. However, the proportion of pupils leaving key stage 1 who achieve greater depth in reading, writing and mathematics is low.
- Parents and carers are extremely supportive of the school. They say that their children are safe and very well cared for.
- Attendance is good and is consistently above the national average.
- The behaviour of the pupils is outstanding. They are polite, well mannered and discuss their learning confidently.
- The exciting curriculum offers pupils many opportunities to develop a range of subject-specific skills well. Many trips, residential visits and sporting activities enable pupils to meet children from other backgrounds. Pupils are prepared well for life in modern Britain.
- Good teaching, learning and assessment create strong links between a range of subjects across the curriculum. However, pupils are sometimes limited in opportunities to further develop their writing skills in science and geography.
- Mathematical skills are applied well to other subjects. Sometimes, teachers do not sufficiently challenge the most able pupils to reach the very highest standards.
- Teachers make regular checks on the quality of work across the curriculum. Strong links have been formed with other schools to help teachers evaluate pupils' work well.
- Children in the early years settle quickly to life in school. The provision is exciting and provides many learning experiences. However, opportunities to develop writing skills are sometimes not clear. Sometimes, opportunities to extend children's learning are not maximised when the purpose of learning activities is unclear.

## Full report

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

- Strengthen teaching, learning and assessment and thereby outcomes by:
  - providing pupils with more opportunities to reach the very highest standards in mathematics by the end of key stage 2
  - ensuring that pupils have more opportunities to develop their writing in science and geography
  - increasing the proportion of pupils who achieve greater depth in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of key stage 1.
- Strengthen the provision in the early years by:
  - providing children with more opportunities to engage in writing activities
  - providing clear direction to children, to enable them to engage better with the wide range of learning challenges on offer.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- The headteacher, staff and governors have ensured that Tatham Fells provides a good level of education to the small rural community that it serves. Relationships between adults and pupils are very strong, and everyone knows each other well. The headteacher and teachers monitor the progress of each pupil.
- The school has gone through a significant period of change since the previous inspection, which took place in 2008. The headteacher and teachers are newly appointed since then. The headteacher shares her time between Tatham Fells School and another local primary school. Academic standards in the school have remained stable for several years.
- Leaders' self-evaluation of the school is accurate. Leaders are honest and recognise the position that the school is currently in and how it has changed over the years. The local authority agrees with the school's evaluation of its own performance. It has worked in partnership with the school for several years and provides the school with advice and support, most recently in the further development of reading. The school development plan sets out clearly a range of relevant priorities to improve the school further. Teachers work closely with the headteacher to formulate action plans for all subjects.
- Leaders ensure that the standard of teaching, learning and assessment is good, and that the behaviour of the pupils continues to be a strength of the school. Leaders have strong links with the other schools in the Lune Valley Cluster. They make frequent checks on the quality of pupils' work and compare this work to the work of pupils in other schools. This assures teachers that their assessments are accurate. As a result, pupils continue to make strong progress in a wide range of subjects.
- As a small team of staff, the headteacher and the teachers share the roles of subject leaders between them. As a team they monitor the standards in English and mathematics and agree on aspects needing attention. For example, they noticed that standards in mathematics were falling. They introduced a new scheme of work to help teachers plan better for the wide age ranges across the two classes. As a result, standards in mathematics are improving. This improvement continued, and pupils' attainment rose in key stage 1 and key stage 2 in 2018.
- Leadership in English has been effective in improving reading outcomes across the school. Leaders have focused on developing the pupils' ability to read with greater levels of understanding. Working alongside an adviser from the local authority, leaders have now streamlined systems in school to ensure that texts are carefully matched to the reading ability of the pupils. Pupils read well and enjoy reading.
- Additional funding through the pupil premium and the physical education (PE) sports funding is used effectively. The school has recently invested in a purpose-built running track to further develop pupils' fitness. Each school day starts at 8.30am and many pupils arrive early and attempt to run a mile before school. Leaders provide after-school clubs every day for the pupils. These include football, netball and multi-sports.
- Leaders plan the curriculum carefully to ensure that skills and knowledge are

developed well over time. They manage this well through a rolling programme of coverage. Each sequence of lessons or planned learning experiences considers the different ages of the pupils. For example, a recent trip to Lancaster cathedral included a focus on a range of geography skills as well as being part of pupils' religious education work.

- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is developed effectively through the curriculum. Leaders ensure that pupils have many opportunities to visit places of worship, engage in sporting activities with other schools and attend events away from school. Pupils take part in several residential activities during their time at school; the older pupils enthusiastically told me about a previous trip to the Isle of Man and how they were looking forward to visiting Edinburgh later in the year. Pupils value opportunities to attend large-scale events, such as participating in a mass choral event in Manchester. These activities enrich pupils' learning experiences, enabling them to meet pupils from other parts of the country and prepare them well for life in modern Britain.
- Leadership of education for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is good. Pupils who have individual support plans make good progress and receive timely and proportionate interventions.

### **Governance of the school**

- Governors are very active in the life of the school and supportive of the work of the staff. They are regular visitors and know the school well. For example, several governors come into school to hear pupils read each week and they run a gardening club weekly for pupils.
- Governors work diligently to engage parents and develop positive relationships with families. They have set up a monthly stay-and-play session for pre-school children to encourage new families to attend the school.
- Governors are kept up to date through regular reports from the headteacher in relation to standards in the school. Governors have a deep understanding of the school's needs. For example, governors were pragmatic and ensured that the needs of this small school were met appropriately when appointing the current headteacher.
- Governors have ensured that they meet their statutory responsibilities.

### **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders have created a strong and vigilant culture. All members of staff receive up-to-date training in how to safeguard pupils and spot signs of potential radicalisation through 'Prevent' duty training. Checks on the suitability of adults to work in the school are undertaken with care.
- Members of staff are clear in their safeguarding responsibilities. Safeguarding concerns are recorded centrally. When the headteacher is not on the school premises, the senior teacher fulfils the role of designated safeguarding lead.
- School leaders work with a range of partner agencies, including children's social care

and several national charities. They ensure that pupils receive the correct support where needed.

- The parents who responded to Parent View and all parents who spoke to the inspector agreed that their children are safe in school and are well cared for by staff.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

**Good**

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment secures good progress for pupils across the curriculum. Teachers plan lessons well to meet the needs of the mixed age ranges of the classes and of pupils with SEND. They plan exciting activities to spark pupils' curiosity.
- Teachers have high expectations of the pupils. Relationships between the teachers and pupils are strong; the teachers know the pupils well. As a result, pupils respond promptly to instructions and are keen and enthusiastic to learn.
- The support staff have a large teaching commitment. Governors value their work highly and describe them as the 'backbone of the school'. Teaching assistants support teachers well and regularly lead groups in the teaching of English, mathematics and phonics.
- Teachers' subject knowledge is good. Teachers question pupils well in mathematics and encourage them to think deeply. For example, while learning about ratio, pupils are challenged to think how they could find out the required information. Pupils respond well to this type of challenge.
- Questioning is also employed successfully in the teaching of reading. Teachers ask probing questions to draw out pupils' understanding of a text in more detail. As a result, pupils' skills of inference are developing well.
- The teaching of phonics is effective. Teachers and teaching assistants challenge pupils according to their ability. For example, in one class the oldest pupils wrote sentences using superlatives while the very youngest practise sounding out the initial letter sounds. Games and well-established routines ensure that little learning time is lost. Teaching assistants benefit from regular training in the teaching of phonics so that their support is effective.
- The teaching of mathematics is good across the school. Teachers have implemented a new scheme of work successfully. Teachers and teaching assistants have all received thorough training in teaching mathematics to mixed age-group classes. Work seen in pupils' mathematics records and books shows that they work hard and make strong progress. Sometimes, the most able pupils are not challenged enough to move on their learning to the next step.
- Writing is taught effectively across the school. In English lessons, pupils write widely and often across a range of interesting genres. Teachers ensure that pupils apply a wide range of punctuation, grammatical features and accurate spellings in their writing. For example, in English older pupils have written poetry about their favourite chocolate cake, and younger pupils have written instructions for catching a wild bird. This standard of writing continues in history where pupils write with care about Henry VIII. Pupils enjoyed designing posters advertising the position of the king's next wife.

Sometimes, teachers do not give the pupils the same opportunities to apply their writing skills fully in science and geography.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

## Outstanding

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils are confident and self-reliant. They positively discuss what they would like to do as a career when they are older. Pupils are knowledgeable about some of the qualifications that they might need in the future. They know that if they are to become better at something, or develop their skills further, they need to work hard and practise.
- Pupils are happy at school, and they know each other well. The older pupils play with the younger pupils at break and lunchtimes. Pupils across the school take full advantage of the many opportunities on offer. For example, many pupils are members of the school council, the eco-council or the gardening club.
- Pupils appreciate that teachers recognise their good work in the weekly special mentions assemblies, as well as the 'once-in-a-lifetime opportunity' to be awarded a VIP badge for excellent work. They are proud of their house teams, which are named after the three local mountains of Whernside, Pen-y-ghent and Ingleborough. Pupils were proud of the fact that, as an optional weekend activity, they have climbed a different mountain each year.
- The school curriculum enables the pupils to learn about their place in modern Britain. They enjoy the many trips and residential experiences that enrich the curriculum further, including looking forward to a planned trip to Edinburgh in the summer term.
- Pupils have a good understanding of the effects of bullying and how to deal with negative behaviours. A large part of their personal, social, health and economic education explores how to stay mentally and physically resilient. This is reflected well in the early years, where the youngest children learn how to sort happy and positive thoughts into one bucket and place negative thoughts and actions into other buckets. Older pupils explore bullying and negative behaviours through role-play. Pupils say that this helps them as part of their transition to high school.
- Pupils know how to stay safe while online and while away from school. They have a good awareness of internet safety. Part of their recent trip to Lancaster focused on teaching the youngest children about the dangers of traffic in large cities.

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Behaviour around the school is exemplary. Pupils are polite and kind to adults and each other. Pupils say that bullying and name-calling does not happen. Incidents of poor behaviour are extremely rare. Pupils are aware of the school behaviour policy and say that it is applied fairly by the staff.
- Pupils' behaviour during social times is impeccable. At lunchtimes, pupils sit together in

mixed age-group tables. Pupils conduct themselves well and behave in a calm and purposeful manner. The mood in the hall at lunchtimes is one where the pupils come together to share a meal rather than merely go to the hall to have their lunch. Pupils tidy away their cutlery, older pupils stack the plates from the table and they go out to play together with no fuss.

- Pupils work very hard in their lessons. They are used to working in groups, pairs or on their own. Despite the wide age ranges in the classes, the pupils support and encourage each other well. Pupils enjoy their lessons, particularly PE, art and mathematics.
- Attendance remains a strength of the school. There are no pupils who are regularly absent from school. Good attendance is celebrated during the 'special mention' assemblies.
- As a result of pupils' outstanding behaviour, they take full advantage of what the school has to offer. Pupils enjoy the full range of after-school clubs and lunchtime clubs that are provided by the school.

### Outcomes for pupils

**Good**

- There are a very small number of pupils in each year group, therefore data needs to be treated with caution. However, over the past two years, no pupil leaving key stage 1 has achieved the very highest standards in reading, writing or mathematics.
- Pupils make typically good progress at this school. Attainment at the end of key stages 1 and 2 is close to national averages.
- Information provided by the school for pupils currently on roll shows that pupils make strong progress in reading, writing and mathematics across each year group. Progress information indicates that as pupils move through school, progress remains strong.
- The care and attention from teachers and staff ensure that pupils with SEND receive effective support to make good progress from their different starting points across the curriculum.
- Pupils enjoy reading. They say that they like the new way reading is taught across the school. Pupils engage in a wide range of reading activities, including individual, whole-class and group reading. In all situations, the pupils benefit from effective teacher questioning. In their individual reading, they enjoy taking a computer-based quiz at the end of each book. Not only do these quizzes challenge the pupils to prove that they have understood the text, they also keep a count of the number of words in each book. Each pupil in key stage 2 is working hard to read one million words and join the 'millionaire club'. Pupils read well and are knowledgeable about a range of contemporary authors.
- Improvements in mathematics are evident in pupils' growing confidence in calculations. Attainment for pupils leaving key stages 1 and 2 rose in 2018.
- Pupils enjoy their writing and have developed good skills over time. Outcomes for pupils leaving key stage 2 rose in 2018. Pupils write with increasing accuracy and the application of well-embedded skills enables them to edit and reflect on their writing.

Opportunities to develop these skills are limited in geography and science.

- Pupils' outcomes in other subjects are strong. In history, pupils regularly apply their research skills to find out about the past. Skills in geography are built up consistently over time. For example, pupils read maps of increasing complexity as they move through the school. Older pupils can find geographical features and compare the use of rural and urban land. In science, pupils have many opportunities to develop their investigative skills and apply their mathematics well to create tables, graphs and charts.
- Art skills are developed well from an early age. As pupils move through the school, they experiment with a wide range of materials and media. They use paint, pencils and chalks effectively. The work in pupils' sketch books over time demonstrates strong progress in this area. Staff celebrate pupils' artwork well in the many colourful displays around the school.

### Early years provision

**Good**

- The headteacher has overall responsibility for the progress of children in the early years. Baseline assessments are carefully completed for each child on entry to school. Effective leadership has built up an accurate assessment system to enable the school to have a thorough understanding of the ability of each child.
- Attainment on entry fluctuates because of small numbers and different pre-school experiences. Leaders focus on individual needs. Assessment records and children's work show that progress is good.
- Parents are kept well informed about the progress of their children through the use of electronic learning journals. Work in these journals and children's other work shows that they make strong progress. Leaders have ensured that the policies in place reflect the needs of individual children. Leaders have ensured that all welfare requirements in the early years have been met; they have created a strong safeguarding culture.
- Children in the early years are taught in the class alongside pupils in Years 1 and 2. Transition of children into Year 1 is seamless and children are ready to start Year 1. Throughout the year, children benefit from engaging in learning with the older pupils across a wide range of subjects.
- Children typically take up a part-time place in the Nursery year. Many children's first experience of full-time school is when they join the Reception class. Leaders have recently introduced a 'stay and play' session to encourage a greater uptake of places in Nursery.
- Leaders carefully consider the curriculum for the youngest children, with a focus on increasing life experiences through a range of visits, such as a trip to the local fire station.
- As in the rest of the school, children benefit from good teaching. The early years has a dedicated outdoor learning space that develops learning beyond the classroom. Children engage in a range of activities that develop their creative, mathematical and motor skills. For example, during the inspection children used marshmallows and



straws to create caves as part of their work about a bear hunt.

- Adults use effective questioning to challenge children to think about their responses. For example, during the inspection children drew maps and plans. They were challenged to talk about the key features and explain the different parts.
- Children in the early years benefit from effective teaching of phonics. They apply their knowledge well and enjoy reading. There are well developed routines in place to teach reading.
- Sometimes, because of the layout of the classroom, it is not always clear what children are expected to achieve from the wide range of activities provided. Occasionally, children need to be gently guided by adults to learning activities. Once engaged in an activity, children work hard and cooperate well together. For example, children were asked to sort a range of objects into similar colours. The children worked well together and communicated effectively with each other throughout the activity.
- Performance information from previous years has indicated that children's writing progress could be even stronger. As a result of this careful evaluation, staff are starting to offer more opportunities for children to write across the wider curriculum. It is too early to judge the impact of these actions.
- The behaviour of children in the early years is outstanding. This small group of children works hard together. They listen to one another and engage in learning activities together. Children enjoy the sessions when they talk about items they have brought to school. This develops their speaking, listening and attention skills. Relationships between adults and children are strong.

## School details

|                         |            |
|-------------------------|------------|
| Unique reference number | 119379     |
| Local authority         | Lancashire |
| Inspection number       | 10046504   |

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

|                                     |  |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| 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 | 47   |
| Appropriate authority               | The governing body   |
| Chair                               | Mrs Helen Wilkinson  |
| Headteacher                         | Mrs Fiona Ip   |
| Telephone number                    | 01524 261441   |
| Website                             | <a href="http://www.tathamfells.lancs.sch.uk/">www.tathamfells.lancs.sch.uk/</a> |
| Email address                       | <a href="mailto:head@tathamfells.lancs.sch.uk">head@tathamfells.lancs.sch.uk</a> |
| Date of previous inspection         | 1 July 2009  |

## Information about this school

- The school is a voluntary-aided Church of England primary school. The most recent section 48 inspection took place in May 2018.
- The headteacher supports the school for two and a half days each week.
- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The school has two classes. The first class teaches children in Nursery and Reception as well as pupils in Year 1 and Year 2. The second class teaches pupils from Years 3, 4, 5 and 6.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is well below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is below the national average.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching, learning and assessment in both classes. The inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons, around the school, during break and lunchtimes and while playing outside.
- The inspector viewed samples of pupils' work from a wide range of curriculum areas. The inspector heard a number of pupils read. He held a formal meeting with pupils and spoke to them at various times, both in their classrooms and around the school.
- The inspector spoke to parents and examined the 22 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire.
- The inspector scrutinised a wide range of school documentation, including the single central record, the school's self-evaluation and school development plan. Records of the minutes of governors' meetings, along with information about SEN, the early years and attendance, were viewed. The inspector examined behaviour records and reports from the local authority about the effectiveness of the school.
- The inspector held a telephone conversation with a representative from the local authority.
- The inspector met with eight members of the governing body including the chair of governors.

## Inspection team

John Donald, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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