

Inspection of Garstang St Thomas' Church of England Primary School

Kepple Lane, Garstang, Preston, Lancashire PR3 1PB

Inspection dates:	26 and 27 November 2024
The quality of education	Outstanding
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Outstanding
Early years provision	Outstanding
Previous inspection grade	Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils and staff say rightly that everyone in this school loves learning. Pupils promote and demonstrate the school's values of respect, love and courage through their exemplary behaviour and positive attitudes. They feel safe and are confident that they know who to turn to with any worries.

The school has exceptionally high expectations for pupils' learning. Pupils meet these expectations from the moment that they enter the provision for two-year-olds. Children in the early years benefit from a high-quality curriculum which underpins their later learning. This is highly successful. Pupils' achievement is exceptionally high.

Behaviour is impeccable around school and in lessons. Adults have established calm and predictable routines. As a result, pupils become self-organised and independent from a very young age. This continues as pupils move into key stage 1 and 2. They express their emotions, empathise with others and focus well on their learning.

The school's value of 'service' is a high priority and pupils make a real difference to the community around them. For example, they think of 'mission impossible' challenges to help others. Pupils say, 'Serving is fun here.' They recount proudly their service to others, such as donating books, litter picking or raising funds for a homeless charity.

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

The school has designed a curriculum which is highly ambitious. Each new lesson fits seamlessly with prior knowledge from the Nursery Year to Year 6. Inspirational staff ensure a constant drive to improve an already excellent curriculum. The school prioritises a highly inclusive oracy programme alongside reading, which enhances pupils' ability to speak clearly.

Children from the early years, get an excellent start. Parents and carers appreciate the clear communication that they receive. Staff ensure that pupils' learning needs are identified and met swiftly. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) make excellent progress through the curriculum and achieve highly. Pupils with emotional needs learn how to manage their feelings highly positively. The school provides exceptional support for pupils' speech and language development. As a result, children as young as three years old ask precise questions and older pupils develop mature debating and public speaking skills.

Staff use many exciting strategies to enhance learning. They ensure that learning experiences are memorable for pupils and that key knowledge is understood. Staff check and make sure that pupils talk articulately about what they know before they move pupils' learning on. The primary focus on language development ensures that vocabulary is enriched and reinforced so that pupils use sophisticated words. For example, children in nursery describe how to be careful with a "teacup" or a "medical box". Older pupils reason with precision in mathematics.

Highly skilled staff ensure that this translates into written work which is of a high standard in all subjects.

The school teaches early reading very effectively. Any pupil who falls behind is provided with precise support and catches up quickly. Pupils leave key stage 1 as confident readers. Older pupils are enraptured by their daily story time. They talk knowledgeably about their preferences of author, biographies and mystery books.

The school has high expectations of behaviour. The standards are notably high for very young children, who demonstrate remarkable kindness to one another and a readiness to learn. The school makes sure that parents and pupils know that regular attendance is non-negotiable. It has robust systems to ensure that pupils attend on time and regularly.

The school has a deliberate focus on 'joyful serving'. This focus on other people benefits pupils. Relationships between pupils are empathetic and considerate. They aspire, when they grow up, to make a tangible difference to issues such as the environment.

The school offers an extensive range of trips and clubs. Pupils take advantage of these opportunities to develop their sporting, creative or oracy talents. They value the sense of belonging that their school gives them and contribute to assemblies. Pupils welcome those new to school. They hold many leadership roles which enrich and support younger pupils. For example, pupils run a radio broadcast at lunchtimes.

Governors are well-informed and proficient in their roles. Leaders at all levels are highly effective in driving forward further developments in school. Staff are overwhelmingly positive about the encouragement that they receive from caring, empathetic leaders. They appreciate the time to read and reflect on the impact of their training together.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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 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	119528
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10337667
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	255
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Emma Bray
Headteacher	Jim Blakely
Website	www.garstangstthomas.com
Dates of previous inspection	17 and 18 October 2023, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not make use of alternative provision.
- The school has provision for two-year-old children.
- 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 July 2019. The next inspection is due in 2017.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation of the school's educational provision.

- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors spoke to the headteacher, senior leaders, members of the governing body, the local authority adviser and a school improvement partner.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, science and geography. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors heard some pupils read to a familiar adult and spoke to older pupils about their reading.
- Inspectors also held discussions about the curriculum in some other subjects and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors viewed pupils' behaviour during playtimes, during transition times and while in lessons.
- Inspectors considered responses from staff and parents, both in person and from Ofsted Parent View, including free-text responses, and Ofsted's online survey for staff. There were no responses to Ofsted's online survey for pupils.
- Inspectors viewed a range of documents, including safeguarding, attendance and behaviour records.
- 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.

Inspection team

Trish Merritt, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Joe Dryland	Ofsted Inspector
Cath Cooke	Ofsted Inspector

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