

Inspection of Tonacliffe Primary School

Tonacliffe Road, Whitworth, Lancashire OL12 8SS

Inspection dates: 2 and 3 July 2024

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

This school was last inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 11 years ago and judged 'Outstanding' under a previous inspection framework. This reflected the school's overall effectiveness under the inspection framework in use at the time.

From then until November 2020, the school was exempted by law from routine inspection, so there has been a longer gap than usual between graded inspections under section 5 of the Act. Judgements in this report are based on the current inspection framework and also reflect changes that may have happened at any point since the last graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at this school benefit from the support of caring staff, who know them well. They are happy during lessons and when playing with their friends in the playground. If pupils have worries, they can use the 'ask it basket' to speak to adults in the school.

The school has high expectations of what pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), can achieve. Most pupils respond with positivity to the work that teachers prepare for them. In the main, they achieve well.

Pupils follow the school's motto of 'only our best is enough'. Staff encourage them to earn 'behaviour stars' for their teams. Pupils look forward to finding out who receives the much-coveted 'friendship and kindness' awards each week.

Pupils enjoy exploring the outdoors, tending to the school's allotment, and learning in the school's woodland area. They spoke excitedly about showcasing their musical and acting talents during recent summer performances. Through these activities, pupils build their confidence and independence.

Pupils contribute to school life by taking on leadership responsibilities. For example, older pupils relish becoming 'buddies' for younger children. School councillors and eco-team members pride themselves on helping to improve the school's environment.

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

The school has designed a broad and ambitious curriculum. It has identified the knowledge that pupils should learn from the beginning of the early years to Year 6. The school has carefully considered the order that this knowledge should be taught, to support the learning of pupils in mixed-age classes. Staff quickly identify pupils who may have additional needs. They ensure that these pupils have the support that they need to progress well through the curriculum.

From joining the school in the early years, children are immersed in stories. They enjoy visits to the local library, which help them to develop a love of books and reading. Throughout school, pupils are keen to earn 'millionaires' certificates for reading regularly. They enjoy participating in reading challenges.

In 2023, the proportion of Year 1 pupils who met the expected standard in phonics was lower than the national average. However, the school identified the reasons for this and made changes to the phonics programme. It has trained staff to deliver this new programme consistently well. Staff swiftly identify pupils who struggle to read. They support these pupils to help them to catch up with their peers. The school ensures that the books that pupils read from contain the sounds that they already know. As a result, most pupils learn to read fluently and confidently.

Staff use plentiful resources to support the delivery of the curriculum. Pupils use these resources effectively to support their learning. However, in some subjects, the work that staff give to pupils does not reflect the ambition of the curriculum. This hinders some pupils in developing a deep body of knowledge across the curriculum.

Overall, during lessons, teachers check pupils' understanding well. However, at times, staff do not consistently address pupils' misconceptions or gaps in their knowledge before they move on to new learning. This prevents some pupils from learning as well as they should.

Pupils are polite, welcoming, and considerate of each other and of adults. In the early years, children follow well-established routines. During lessons, pupils engage well in their learning. The school places high priority on supporting pupils' levels of attendance. It provides pupils and their families with the necessary support to reduce pupils' absences.

Pupils benefit from a range of opportunities that extend beyond the academic. They enjoy a variety of clubs, such as in music, art, and sport. Some pupils are proud members of the school's music band. Pupils also enjoy learning more about the curriculum through visits, including to the beach and to the local area. They learn about other faiths and cultures. Pupils understand the importance of treating everyone fairly and with respect.

Governors know the school well and have the information that they need to hold the school to account effectively, with a focus on the quality of education that it provides. Staff appreciate the steps that the school takes to prioritise their workload and well-being. For example, by being provided the time to fulfil their subject lead roles.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, the school has not ensured that the work given to pupils enables them to deepen their knowledge. As a result, some pupils do not achieve as strongly as they should in these subjects. The school should ensure that staff provide pupils with work that strengthens their understanding of these subjects.
- Occasionally, staff do not identify or address gaps or misconceptions in some pupils' knowledge before they move on to new learning. This means that these pupils' learning is not as secure as it should be. The school should support staff in checking that pupils have successfully embedded the prior knowledge that they should before they learn new curriculum content.

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	119271
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10314001
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	325
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Steve Oxford
Headteacher	Joanne Heap
Website	www.tonacliffe.lancs.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	16 and 17 January 2013, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not make use of alternative provision for pupils.
- Since the previous inspection, a new chair of governors has been appointed.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school has received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors conducted deep dives in the following subjects: early reading, mathematics, design and technology, modern foreign languages, and history. For each deep dive, they had 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 spoke with subject leaders and with pupils about their learning in some other subjects.
- The lead inspector observed pupils from key stages 1 and 2 read to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other school leaders.
- The lead inspector met with members of the governing body, including the chair of governors. She also spoke with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors spoke with staff about their workload and well-being.
- Inspectors met with leaders responsible for attendance, behaviour, early years, the provision for pupils with SEND and pupils' personal development.
- 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.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils about their experiences of school. They looked at a range of documents related to pupils' welfare and education. They also observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and around school.
- Inspectors took account of the responses to Ofsted's online surveys for staff and for pupils.
- Inspectors met with parents at the start and end of the school day. They took account of the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. Inspectors also considered some letters sent for their attention.

Inspection team

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