

Inspection of a good school: Tadcaster Grammar School

Toulston, Tadcaster, North Yorkshire LS24 9NB

Inspection dates:

4 and 5 October 2022

Outcome

Tadcaster Grammar School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy learning at this school. Their attitudes to learning are positive. Leaders have made sure that the curriculum matches, and goes beyond, the scope of the national curriculum. Teachers plan lessons which make good sense to pupils. Pupils can talk about their learning. Some pupils are developing the confidence to do this better. Pupils feel safe and well looked after in the school.

Staff have high expectations of pupils. Most pupils meet these expectations. Pupils behave well around the school. Pupils are respectful towards each other, adults and visitors. On the rare occasions when this is not the case, pupils say that school leaders quickly deal with this.

The school provides a range of opportunities for pupils to learn beyond lessons. These include house activities, the 'five ways to well-being' approach, residential visits, community fundraising and charity events. Leaders ensured that these opportunities were quickly restarted following the disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, make full use of these opportunities. Leaders make sure that additional support is made available to pupils where needed, for example mental health and well-being support. Leaders are working hard to encourage even more pupils to take part.

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

Leaders have planned an ambitious curriculum for all pupils. This includes disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Lessons are sequenced so that pupils can build their knowledge and skills and remember important concepts. Pupils revisit prior learning regularly. This helps them remember the important things they have learned. Pupils respond to feedback by reflecting on what they need to improve. For example, in English, pupils use green pen to improve their work. Teachers provide feedback in purple pen to guide them. Pupils told inspectors that they find this very useful and easy to understand. Teachers check pupils' understanding throughout

each lesson in every subject. They use a variety of methods. Pupils get any extra help they need. As a result, most pupils keep up with their learning.

Pupils and students in the sixth form enjoy their learning. They can see how teachers help them to understand and remember subject content. The work in pupils' books is generally well presented. Pupils are proud of their work.

The curriculum in modern foreign languages is well sequenced. Teachers plan the way pupils learn carefully. They use sentence builders to help pupils gain confidence in their use of the language. Because of this, pupils' knowledge of the language structure is strong. Equally, pupils' knowledge of the language vocabulary is also a strong feature. Leaders are keen to encourage more pupils to study at least one language at key stage 4.

Leaders have made sure that there is a wide range of support available for pupils with SEND. Teachers use assessment information well to remove barriers to learning. However, this support is inconsistent. As a result, in some subjects, some pupils with SEND do not fully meet the intended learning goals.

Leaders are determined to help those pupils who arrive at the school with low reading skills to improve their reading. They have put into place a range of strategies to help them. For example, pupils 'drop everything and read' in their tutor periods. Leaders know that some strategies are working better than others and need further development.

Most pupils attend school regularly because they enjoy the learning opportunities provided. Pupils who are disadvantaged have strong and improving attendance. However, they still attend less well than other pupils. Leaders are aware of this and continue to work hard to make further improvements.

The majority of pupils behave well at this school. Leaders encourage pupils to report any inappropriate behaviour or comments from others. This includes any which make them feel uncomfortable. Leaders take swift and effective action if such incidents occur. Pupils say that bullying is rare. When it does occur, leaders deal with it swiftly.

Leaders have put in place a strong programme of careers advice and guidance for pupils. This meets the requirements of the Baker clause, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships. Pupils say that they are happy with the advice and support they receive. Inspectors agree that the support is of high quality.

Leaders have made improvements since the last inspection. They have taken into consideration the well-being and workload of staff. Staff report that they are proud of and are very happy to work in the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and governors ensure that the procedures for checking, recruiting and training staff are robust. All staff have regular safeguarding training. Staff take swift action to ensure that pupils receive the help they need. All staff and pupils know who to talk to when they have a concern.

Leaders have worked hard to make sure that pupils are supported if they have concerns or worries. Leaders have invested in pastoral support for all pupils, including those who are the most vulnerable. For example, leaders have introduced programmes for emotional health and well-being.

Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe, including when online. Pupils know the names of the designated safeguarding leaders in the school. They understand what leaders can do to help them.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Teachers do not consistently provide effective support for all pupils with SEND to reduce barriers to learning. Consequently, some pupils with SEND do not fully meet their intended learning goals. Leaders should ensure that classroom support for pupils with SEND is consistently effective in helping them reach their intended learning goals.
- The attendance of disadvantaged pupils is not as high as other pupils in the school. As a result, those disadvantaged pupils who are absent too often miss important learning opportunities. Leaders should ensure that procedures for addressing poor attendance continue to target the most vulnerable pupils.

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 predecessor school, Tadcaster Grammar School, to be good in May 2012.

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](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	145777
Local authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	10241374
Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1520
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	223
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Clare Thornton-Eckford
Headteacher	Mr Andrew Parkinson
Website	https://tgs.starmat.uk
Date of previous inspection	14 March 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Tadcaster Grammar School converted to become an academy school and joined the STAR Multi Academy Trust in May 2018. When its predecessor school, Tadcaster Grammar School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good overall.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is below average.
- A very small number of pupils attend registered off-site alternative provision at NUDGE, Bilbrough Country Classrooms, The Ark, MAP Charity, North Leeds GB Gymnastics, GB Trampolining, Medical Education Service (NYCC).

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors met with the headteacher, senior leaders, curriculum leaders and other members of staff. The lead inspector met with representatives of the local governing body, including the chair of governors, the chief executive officer of the trust and the chair of the trust board.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school, including at breaktime and lunchtimes. They gathered pupils' views about the school through formal and informal discussion.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans, minutes of governing body meetings and safeguarding documents. Inspectors evaluated information relating to pupils' behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents and carers who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, along with responses submitted as free text. Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted's staff and pupil questionnaires.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, history, modern foreign languages and art. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also visited other subjects across the school.

Inspection team

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His Majesty's Inspector

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