

Pontefract St Giles Church of England Voluntary Aided Junior and Infant School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	108268
Local authority	Wakefield
Inspection number	384875
Inspection dates	1 – 2 February 2012
Lead inspector	Shirley Gornall HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills (HMCI) the authority to cause any school to be inspected. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 – 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	243
Appropriate authority	The Interim Executive Board
Chair	John McLeod
Headteacher	Mary Gibbons
Date of previous school inspection	19 July 2010
School address	Skinner Lane Pontefract West Yorkshire WF8 1HG
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Age group	3 – 11
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Introduction

Inspection team

Shirley Gornall

Her Majesty's Inspector

Doreen Davenport

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out at no notice. Inspectors observed eleven lessons, taught by eight teachers and one teaching assistant, of which three were joint observations with the headteacher. They also observed an 'early birds' reading intervention session taught by one teacher and six teaching assistants. Inspectors talked with pupils attending the breakfast club and observed two assemblies, one of which was attended by parents and carers. They held meetings with six groups of pupils and listened to them read. They also held meetings with the Chair of the Interim Executive Board (IEB), a school improvement officer from the local authority, senior leaders, teachers and the learning mentor manager. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including the school improvement plan, safeguarding policy and single central record, behaviour records and minutes of IEB meetings. They also analysed 31 questionnaires returned by parents and carers and 19 completed by staff. In addition, they considered feedback to school surveys completed by pupils. There were no responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) at the time of the inspection.

Information about the school

This is an average-sized primary school serving the community of north Pontefract. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. Most pupils are White British. The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported at school action is broadly average. The proportion of pupils supported by School Action Plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.

When it was inspected in July 2010, the school was judged to require special measures. Since then, the school has undergone significant change. A new headteacher took up post in April 2011 following a period when the school was led by three consecutive acting headteachers, latterly with the support of a consultant headteacher. The school building was flooded in December 2010, leading to the partial closure of the site; consequently pupils were taught in several locations for a term. The building has been remodelled and improved. The school is an active member of the Pontefract Education Trust. An Interim Executive Board (IEB) has governed the school since November 2010. The school has received three monitoring inspections and was judged to be making good progress at its most recent one. Pupils' achievement in 2011 fell below the government's floor standards.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness	3
Achievement of pupils	3
Quality of teaching	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key findings

- In accordance with section 13(4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.
- The school provides a satisfactory and rapidly-improving quality of education for its pupils.
- Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. The progress of all groups of pupils, including those who are disabled or with special educational needs, is accelerating and attainment is rising quickly. However, pupils' reading comprehension skills require further improvement.
- Teaching is satisfactory overall with an increasing amount that is good or better. Lessons are generally lively and interesting, underpinned by excellent relationships between staff and pupils. There are relatively few opportunities for pupils to assess their own work and that of their peers.
- Highly-skilled and dedicated support staff make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning and behaviour, both in lessons and through the intervention work they lead.
- Pupils' behaviour is good and their positive attitudes are reflected in their improved learning. Attendance levels are above the national average.
- A vibrant curriculum has been developed that engages pupils' interest. Trips to places of interest and extra-curricular clubs enrich their learning.
- Leadership is good. The headteacher has brought vision and energy to the school and gained the confidence of staff, pupils, parents and carers within a short time. She has fostered a sense of self-esteem throughout the school

community. The IEB supports the management of the school by providing effective advice and challenge.

- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural aspects of learning are apparent in many aspects of the school's life. Opportunities for reflection are valued by pupils and diversity is celebrated.
- Parents and carers are increasingly involved in the life of the school; they are supportive of its values and keen partners in their children's learning.
- The school demonstrates good capacity to make further improvements. Its new motif of 'growing together' epitomises its strong ethos as a learning community.
- Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise achievement across the curriculum by improving pupils' reading comprehension skills and extending their vocabulary.
- Increase the proportion of teaching that is good or outstanding by:
 - ensuring that tasks are appropriately tailored to meet the needs of all pupils so that they make consistently good progress
 - developing pupils' ability to assess their own work and that of their peers so as to deepen their understanding of success criteria and next steps for improving their work.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills that are, on average, well below those that are expected of their age, particularly in communication and language, and in personal, social and emotional development. They make at least good progress as a result of focused teaching and sensitive intervention, so that most enter Key Stage 1 with achievement that is closer to that which is found nationally. On leaving reception, their communication and language skills are not as well-developed as their other skills.

Following a period of decline that led to progress and attainment being well below average in reading, writing and mathematics, standards of attainment in Key Stage 1 are now rising. Pupils are benefiting from focused, enthusiastic teaching and timely intervention that is resulting in most of them making at least satisfactory progress. Standards of attainment in Key Stage 2 are rising more rapidly. Less than half of the pupils who left the school in 2011 attained Level 4 in English and mathematics.

However, evidence from lesson observations, scrutiny of pupils' books and teacher assessments indicate that previous underachievement has now been addressed. Current standards are much closer to national expectations for the significant majority of pupils. Achievement is rising sharply for all groups of pupils. There has been an intensive focus on improving writing and this has had a positive impact on achievement throughout school. The youngest children enjoy mark-making in stimulating role-play settings and older pupils produce sustained and interesting writing for a variety of audiences and purposes. Vibrant displays of pupils' work celebrate achievement and indicate the high expectations that now prevail.

Standards of attainment in mathematics are rising and pupils are increasingly able to apply mathematical concepts in different situations. The fast-paced recall of tables by Year 5 pupils indicates a high level of enthusiasm. Some pupils' mathematical work is hindered by weaknesses in their reading. Most pupils develop good knowledge of the linkage between sounds and letters, apparent in both their reading and spelling. However, their reading comprehension skills are not as strong. Many find it difficult to work out the possible meaning of a word from its context or to 'read between the lines' of a story. Some pupils have a limited vocabulary to draw upon and this hinders their reading.

The school has developed a range of interventions that are accelerating progress for pupils requiring additional support, including those who are disabled and those with special educational needs. The 'early birds' reading programme is particularly successful and has been shared as good practice across the local authority. The vast majority of parents and carers believes that their children are now making good progress. The expansion and enrichment of the school's curriculum means that pupils now develop a broader range of skills than was previously the case. Their achievement in music is particularly impressive. The school has recently gained the 'Sing Up' bronze award and is working hard to achieve silver.

Quality of teaching

Teaching is satisfactory overall, with an increasing amount that is good or better. The school suffered from a period of fluctuation in staffing, which has now stabilised. Considerable work has been undertaken, with the effective support of the local authority, to improve the quality of teaching and ensure that there is consistency of approach throughout the school. Excellent relationships between teachers and pupils are apparent in all classes. Lessons are generally well-paced and engaging, with an effective balance of whole-class, paired, group and individual activities. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, teachers actively encourage children's curiosity and foster independence well through a stimulating range of activities, some of which children direct themselves. Children develop social skills quickly and co-operate with their peers in situations which encourage their imagination and develop early reading skills. In a very effective lesson, children in the Reception class showed high levels of concentration and enjoyment as they put toys in place to set up an Arctic village and matched flash cards correctly to the igloo, Inuit and husky. Others used their phonic skills to build words with their teacher and showed an increasing ability to match sounds and letters.

Teamwork is promoted strongly throughout the school and pupils enjoy sharing their ideas and solving problems together. This was evident in a good numeracy lesson in which Year 2 pupils showed perseverance in positioning numbers and developing their understanding of place value. In English lessons, teachers make work interesting by encouraging pupils to rehearse their ideas through talk before they start to write. Role-play and hot-seating are used to good effect to help pupils to deepen their understanding, as was shown in a vibrant lesson where Year 5 pupils developed open questions that a journalist might use in planning a newspaper report with an Olympic theme. Teaching assistants work effectively to support pupils' learning, both in lessons and through a range of interventions that have a marked effect on achievement and behaviour. Teachers have a good understanding of individual pupils' skills and needs, but do not always ensure that tasks are precisely matched and adapted to challenge different groups of pupils appropriately, and this slows progress in some lessons.

Marking is consistently thoughtful and effective throughout school. Comments praising achievement and giving the next steps for improvement are colour-coded so that the pupils can easily recognise and act upon their teachers' advice. Staff monitor pupils' progress regularly during lessons, but there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to assess their own work and that of their peers in order to deepen their understanding. Pupils say that they receive adequate and appropriate homework, although some think they finish it too quickly. Parents and carers regard the quality of teaching as good and that the school is a very supportive, friendly place. As one commented, 'my child feels loved and cared for.'

Behaviour and safety of pupils

The vast majority of pupils behaves sensibly, has good manners and shows respect to each other and to adults. Their happy, positive attitudes have a strong impact on their learning. Those pupils who display behavioural difficulties are effectively supported and generally comply with the school's expectations. The school's 'seal pups' initiative has been effective in enabling these pupils to consider how they apply the school's rules: respect, responsibility, readiness for learning. Disruption to lessons is rare and any incidents of misbehaviour are dealt with consistently and effectively. A positive behaviour management system has fostered healthy competition throughout the school as pupils are eager to earn points for good behaviour, regular attendance and hard work. Comments praising the quality of their behaviour outside school have been received from a variety of individuals and organisations. Most parents and carers confirm that the quality of behaviour is good.

Attendance levels have improved considerably since the previous inspection and are now above average. The school has worked in partnership with parents to make sure that all groups of pupils attend regularly. Breakfast-club provision is greatly appreciated by parents, carers and pupils and has had a positive impact on punctuality.

Pupils take on a range of responsibilities that enable their school community to run smoothly. They were polite hosts to a group of 'over-50s' from the community who enjoyed their regular luncheon club at the school. School councillors take their duties

seriously, including monitoring the safety of the playground. Buddies ensure that all children feel included and have friends to play with. Pupils are adamant that bullying of any form is rare. They state that there are occasional 'fall outs' and pupils appreciate that these are best dealt with through talking together to find a solution. The school teaches pupils about safety, including how to keep themselves safe on the Internet and in the world beyond the school gates. Most pupils show good awareness of personal safety and take responsibility for their own actions.

Leadership and management

In the time that she has led the school, the headteacher, ably supported by her senior leadership team, has brought about a 'new start' underpinned by shared expectations and strong management systems. There are clear lines of accountability and the school's aims are valued, understood and acted upon at all levels. Regular monitoring underpins the school's insightful self-evaluation. Leadership tasks have been embraced by individuals. The learning mentor manager has developed, implemented and evaluated an effective strategy to raise attendance. A teaching assistant has led the 'seal pups' behaviour improvement initiative and evaluated its impact as a case study. Enhanced continuous professional development opportunities have been provided, including accredited leadership courses, to equip some staff to meet more challenging roles. The school is increasingly outward-facing, sharing its good practice and benefiting from partnership working within and beyond the Pontefract Learning Trust.

The curriculum has been broadened and enriched since the previous inspection. Pupils enjoy trips and residential experience that had not previously been available. The teaching of music has made a significant difference to the spiritual and cultural dimensions of pupils' learning. A range of extra-curricular clubs has been introduced, with high levels of participation.

The IEB has provided good support and challenge since its inception in November 2010. A clear transition plan has been developed to enable the smooth transfer of responsibility to the reconstituted governing body. The school's policies are carefully monitored and evaluated. Equality of opportunity is evident in many aspects of the school's life, such as in a high-quality assembly celebrating topic work on Greek gods in which all Year 4 pupils made an active individual contribution. No form of discrimination is tolerated.

Safeguarding is given high priority and meets government requirements. Parents and carers enjoy numerous opportunities to share their children's learning from 'stay and play' in the Early Years Foundation Stage to 'floury fingers' cookery sessions and reading workshops. Through charitable work and international links, pupils are making an increasingly strong contribution to the wider community. The new school motif, designed by a pupil, illustrating the motto, 'growing together' is a symbol of the school's regeneration and good capacity for sustained improvement.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance:	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour:	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Safety:	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



3 February 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Pontefract St Giles Church of England Voluntary Aided Junior and Infant School WF8 1HG

Thank you so much for the help that you gave to Mrs Davenport and me when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed watching your lessons, talking to you about your work, finding out about the school council and hearing you read. We particularly enjoyed your tuneful singing in assembly. We know that you will be pleased to hear that your school is now providing you with a satisfactory education and is no longer a school causing concern.

Your school is improving quickly, due to strong leadership from Mrs Gibbons and great teamwork from staff and pupils. Your teachers make lessons exciting and you have lots of special experiences to enjoy, including visits. Inspectors read some of the positive comments about your good behaviour from people outside the school and agree that nearly all of you behave very well in school. Your attendance has improved impressively and you are making much better progress in your learning.

Inspectors noticed that you take care of each other and help to keep the school safe. Those of you who are school council members and buddies have good ideas that you share with staff to bring about helpful changes. We were very impressed with the design that has been chosen for the new school badge and think that the motto 'growing together' really sums up St Giles'.

We have asked your teachers to raise standards further by helping you to improve your reading comprehension skills, and by giving you more opportunities to assess your own and your friends' work. We know that you will play your part in making your school even better.

I wish you all every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Shirley Gornall
Her Majesty's Inspector

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