

# Pontefract Orchard Head Junior and Infant School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique reference number</b>	108173
<b>Local authority</b>	Wakefield
<b>Inspection number</b>	384883
<b>Inspection dates</b>	21-22 March 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	James Kilner 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.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3-11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	313
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The Interim Executive Board
<b>Chair</b>	Pam Reynolds
<b>Headteacher</b>	Penny Dobson
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	10 November 2010
<b>School address</b>	Orchard Head Lane Pontefract West Yorkshire WF8 2NJ
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<b>Age group</b>	3-11
<b>Inspection date(s)</b>	21-22 March 2012
<b>Inspection number</b>	384883



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**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

## Introduction

Inspection team

James Kilner  
Marian Thomas

Her Majesty's Inspector  
Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out at no notice and was the fourth monitoring inspection since the school went into special measures. Inspectors observed 16 lessons and parts of lessons which included short observations of phonics teaching and observed all teachers who were present during the inspection. Meetings were held with staff and the Chair of the Interim Executive Board (IEB). Inspectors conducted a telephone interview with a representative from the local authority and met with groups of pupils and the school council. They observed the school's work, including hearing some pupils read, and looked at a range of documentation including self-evaluation documents, analysis of performance data, action plans, and the Interim Executive Board minutes.

Parent and carer questionnaires are not normally distributed for monitoring inspections conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005, unless inspectors have specific reasons to request that the school does so. However, an inspector spoke informally with parents and carers at the start of the first day of the inspection.

## Information about the school

The school is larger than the average size primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is average. Most pupils are from White British heritage with few from minority ethnic groups and none are at the early stages of learning English. The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is above the national average although the proportion of those with a statement it is well below average. The school was inspected in November 2010 and judged to require special measures. It has been monitored termly since March 2011. During this time the local authority removed the powers of the governing body and replaced it with an Interim Executive Board (IEB) to provide challenge and support for the school. A new governing body has been constituted and will resume full governance of the school, with full delegated powers, from September 2012.

The school has not met government floor standards for attainment and progress.

## Inspection judgements

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Achievement of pupils</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety of pupils</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>2</b>

### 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.

- In the time since the school was placed in special measures it has improved significantly and is now satisfactory. It is not yet good because the quality of teaching is not sufficiently consistent to enable all pupils to make good or better progress. Since the last inspection the Early Years Foundation Stage has built on its previous strengths and is now outstanding because children are given the very best start possible to their life in school.
- Pupils' achievement, including that of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, is satisfactory and rising. An increasing proportion of pupils are making good progress to close the gaps which arose when teaching was inadequate. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make outstanding progress. The more creative curriculum provides good opportunities for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The quality of assessment when marking pupils' work, the organisation of learning to match what pupils need to learn, providing constructive feedback and the level of pace and challenge in lessons are inconsistent.
- Pupils enjoy school and they generally feel safe and mainly behave well in lessons and around the school. However, for some, mainly boys, their skills in taking responsibility for their own learning and behaviour independently are less well-developed, leading to minor interruptions to routines and lessons.
- Leaders and managers now evaluate accurately the school's strengths and areas for development so that it is improving rapidly. Through close monitoring in lessons, tracking pupil progress and management of performance they have eradicated previously-identified inadequate teaching. The IEB holds the school to account well and as such is making a positive contribution to its development. The school demonstrates good capacity to improve further.

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?

- By December 2012 raise levels of attainment, particularly at Key Stage 2, so that all pupils make consistently good progress which better reflects their capabilities.
- By December 2012 increase the proportion of teaching that is good or better by ensuring that:
  - there are routine opportunities for pupils to demonstrate greater independence in their work
  - teachers use assessment information more effectively so that pupils of all abilities are sufficiently and consistently challenged throughout the lesson
  - marking of pupils' work is consistent, in line with the school's policy and provides pupils with clear advice as to how to improve
  - pupils' numeracy and literacy skills are developed and embedded across the curriculum
  - pupils and their parents and carers are more aware of how pupils might improve their work in order to fully achieve their targets.
- By September 2012 improve the proportion of good behaviour by ensuring that pupils take greater responsibility for their own actions both in lessons and around school.

## Main report

### Achievement of pupils

Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with levels of skills which are well below those typical for their age, particularly in communication, language and literacy. Outstanding leadership in the Early Years Foundation Stage, combined with consistently good and frequently outstanding teaching, ensures that, by the time they join Year 1 the vast majority of children has attained the expected learning goals. Children are confident in using letters and the sounds they make (phonics). They are able to use these skills effectively in activities such as when they take part in role-play as 'Sound Detectives' donning 'hearing ears' and firmly grasping their magnifying glasses in their eager search for objects to match to their sounds.

Previous underachievement in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 has been tackled successfully and gaps in pupils' achievement, caused by weak teaching in the past, are closing rapidly. Almost all pupils are now working at age-related expectations, which has not been the case previously. The concerted teaching of phonics ensures that pupils' achievement in reading in Key Stage 1 is now in line with that of their peers nationally. Pupils develop an enjoyment for reading and older pupils whom inspectors heard read were able to talk about their reasons for choosing a particular genre of story. The increased ability in reading is developing pupil's writing skills, leading to the use of more adventurous language when writing stories. For example

when describing a mythical creature a Year 1 pupil wrote, 'My dragon was all blue flames' which was presented in a neat, legible script and mainly spelt correctly. The teaching of handwriting throughout the school ensures that pupils' work is presented neatly, legibly and is now something in which pupils take great pride. Historically, standards have been low at the end of Key Stage 2 and very few pupils achieved the higher levels in their English and mathematics over the past five years. This has been halted and indications are that in the current Year 6 over a third of pupils are firmly on target to reach the higher level 5 and that the government's floor standards will be met. Pupils' reading abilities are much improved by the end of Year 6 with the majority now reading at the level expected for their age. Their love for books was demonstrated in a hugely popular event to celebrate 'World Book Day' recently where Year 6 pupils took an active role in promoting reading and celebrating the works of popular authors. A whole-school focus on raising attainment in mathematics has paid dividends with pupils now more confident when using and applying their mathematical skills. For example, in a mathematics lesson pupils confidently worked out perimeters and the areas of complex shapes, relating their learning in the classroom to their practical work earlier in the day on the playground. Pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are particularly well supported in their learning and frequently make better progress than that of their peers, particularly in reading and mathematics. While there is little difference in the overall achievement between boys and girls, the attitude and preparedness for learning for some boys in Key Stage 2 means that they do not always make the same rates of progress as their peers. The school is aware of this and has appropriate plans to ensure that these gaps do not widen. Parents and carers spoken to during the inspection indicate that they feel their children are now making better progress and that the school has improved since the last inspection. Inspection evidence confirms their views.

### **Quality of teaching**

The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. Some good and occasionally outstanding examples were seen during the inspection. Parents and carers spoken to during the inspection feel that teaching has improved over the past year, although there was some concern about staff absence which senior leaders have now resolved. Previous weaknesses have gone and there are more consistent practices evident in all lessons such as teachers' good subject knowledge and the effective use of modern classroom technology. For example, in an effective phonics lesson, very young children in the Nursery class confidently traced the shape of the phoneme 's' on the interactive whiteboard. The consistent application of the school's behaviour policy ensures that the majority of lessons proceed in a generally harmonious working atmosphere with little interruption. However, not all pupils have the level of personal skills to manage their learning and behaviour independently. Consequently, there is an over-reliance on learning in lessons being led too much by the teacher, with few opportunities for independent learning. Pupils' learning is only satisfactory because teachers do not check frequently enough during lessons to assess pupils' levels of understanding. Also, while teachers consistently use assessment information to plan lessons which generally meet pupils' needs, too frequently the activities do not provide sufficient challenge to extend the learning of pupils of all abilities.

A concerted effort by senior leaders ensures that the majority of pupils know their

targets. However, because of inconsistencies in marking of their work, pupils are not always sure how to reach them. In other cases the marking is over-long and too complex for some of the younger pupils to understand fully. Equally, while parents and carers are given information about their children's achievements, more could be done to exemplify these levels and give them tips and guidance as to how to assist their children in reaching their next levels. The creative curriculum provides meaningful opportunities for pupils to explore the wider world and empathise with the feelings of others. This was demonstrated well during a lesson based on the television programme 'I'm a celebrity, get me out of here', where the pupils were able to put themselves in the place of others who were without a homeland and related this to their prior knowledge of the plight of refugees. Also, in a successful follow-up lesson after a visit to Hardwick Hall, well-organised and exciting activities led to pupils exploring the living conditions of the past using their art work, design and technology and mathematical skills as well as producing high-quality creative writing.

### **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

Pupils' behaviour is satisfactory overall and scrutiny of school incident records, discussions with parents and carers and pupils indicate that this is typical. Pupils are courteous to adults, develop positive relationships and are in the main, kind and supportive of one another. For example, in an exciting preparation for a writing lesson where pupils were creating a tableau of 'The Forest' they spontaneously applauded the efforts of their peers. Activities in the curriculum help to teach pupils how to keep safe, with events such as anti-bullying week raising their awareness of different forms of bullying. They say they feel safe and that bullying and racism, if it should occur, will be dealt with successfully by adults in school. The school's records of incidents confirm that pupils' views are accurate. Pupils' attitudes to learning are generally positive and the majority responds well in lessons. The work of the school's learning mentor and his team has done much to improve pupils' behaviour so that exclusions are drastically reduced and the revised behaviour policy is consistently applied by all staff in school. The few exceptions tend to be in the older classes where pupils, mainly boys, need reminding of the school's behaviour code and teachers have to resort to sanctions. In these instances pupils' lack of independent skills to manage their own behaviour can slow their own progress. It is to their credit that the majority of other pupils ignore their peers who choose to misbehave during lessons.

An active school council and playground buddies are high profile in the school. Their work ensures that the pupils' voice is genuinely noticed. For example, they have been instrumental in making decisions surrounding the development of the curriculum and about charity fundraising activities. Attendance has improved since the last inspection and is now above average, although the school continues to work with a small number of families who allow their children to be persistently absent.

### **Leadership and management**

With steadfast and resolute determination the headteacher and the senior leadership team, ably supported and challenged by the members of the IEB, have successfully steered the school from failure to success. The Early Years Foundation Stage, already

recognised as a strength in the school at the last inspection, has developed into an outstanding setting where the children thrive and make rapid progress. Effective systems to monitor the progress made by pupils are cross-referenced to classroom observations and discussed with individual teachers at half-termly pupil progress meetings. The ensuing Individual Staff Action Plans (ISAPS) provide every member of staff with clear, measurable targets and guidance on how to improve the quality of their teaching. The increased accountability linked to robust performance-management systems has eradicated all inadequate teaching so that all is at least satisfactory, with a core that is good and outstanding. However, more needs to be done as some weaknesses remain which centre on opportunities for independent learning, use of assessment not only in planning activities, but also checking on pupils' understanding during the lesson.

Following consultation with parents, carers, staff and pupils the new, creative curriculum is now operational throughout the school. The impact on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is tangible in the vibrant and informative displays celebrating world cultures, religions, local history, scientific and space exploration, all of which fire the pupils' imagination. For example, pupils spoke knowledgeably about the beliefs of Islam they had learned when studying the life of Mohamed Ali, the boxer. First-hand experiences from field trips provide rich opportunities to follow up their research. For example, a recent visit to Hardwick Hall provided a wealth of opportunities for pupils to explore socio-economic aspects of their heritage. In this instance follow-up activities used pupils' first-hand knowledge to develop literacy, communication, mathematical, design and drawing skills. However, opportunities for pupils to use their literacy and numeracy skills consistently across the new curriculum are not yet fully embedded in everyday practice.

A new governing body is about to meet for the first time and will benefit from the experience of existing members of the IEB who will be represented in the group. Together with senior leaders the IEB promotes equality successfully. They ensure that all in school are absolutely clear that discrimination of any form will not be tolerated and are committed to the school becoming fully-inclusive. Self-evaluation is honest, accurate and linked to appropriate action-plans, designed to embed good practice and improve outcomes for the pupils. Arrangements for safeguarding are robust and meet statutory requirements. Strong and effective partnerships through the Pontefract Education Trust benefit both pupils and staff in moving the school forward. For example, joint moderation of the quality of teaching and assessments are regularly undertaken with senior leaders and subject leaders from other schools. This has ensured the solid accuracy of the school evaluation of its strengths and weaknesses. All of these combine successfully to provide the school with a good capacity for sustained improvement. Parents and carers spoken to during the inspection are keen to engage in taking the school forward and, when questioned, express confidence that the school 'has done better over the last twelve months'.



## 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](http://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 up 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.**



23 March 2012

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Pontefract Orchard Head Junior and Infant School,  
Pontefract, WF8 2NJ**

As you know I have been visiting your school at regular intervals for the past year and this was my fourth visit with my fellow inspector. Here is some really good news for you all, your school has improved each time I have been and it is now a satisfactory school, which means it no longer requires special measures. This means I will not visit you again.

Here are some of the strong points about your school:

- everyone has worked hard to improve the school and we were pleased to see that you are now making better progress and learning more
- the Early Years Foundation Stage has gone from being good to outstanding
- your headteacher and her team make a good job of ensuring that the school continues to improve.

Here are some things which need to improve:

- you were able to talk to us about your targets and about how teachers help you to learn; we saw how well teachers mark your books but we think you need more guidance on how to improve and that your parents and carers need to know more about what the different levels mean and how to help you at home
- we have asked your teachers to make sure they always challenge you and give you more opportunities to practise your reading, writing and maths skills in other subjects; also, to give you more opportunities to explore your learning yourselves without having to rely so much on them to help you; you were confident that there is little bullying and that everyone gets on well with each other; however, you were less sure that behaviour is good and told us that sometimes lessons are disturbed by some pupils not behaving as well as they should; we think that you ought to be taking more responsibility for managing your own behaviour in lessons and around school without having to be told.

We know you have played your part in helping the school to improve and know that you will all try hard to improve the behaviour of those few who need reminding too frequently.

I wish you all the best in the future.

Yours sincerely,

James Kilner  
Her Majesty's Inspector

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