

Pennine Way Junior Academy

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	137543
Local Authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	386191
Inspection dates	2–3 November 2011
Reporting inspector	Krishan Sharma

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Academy
School category	Non-maintained
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	291
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Derek Roe
Headteacher	Richard Mansfield
Date of previous school inspection	N/A
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors, who visited 21 lessons or parts of lessons and observed 14 teachers. Meetings were held with the Chair of the Governing Body, senior and middle leaders and a group of pupils. The lead inspector also spoke to a small number of parents and carers. Inspectors looked at some of the school's policies and procedures, pupils' written work, a sample of self-evaluation documents, development plans and records containing details of pupils' attainment and progress. Questionnaires returned by 126 parents and carers were analysed, as were those completed by pupils and staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- How effective is the school's tracking of pupils' progress as they move through the school?
- How well does the school's curriculum cater for pupils of different abilities?
- How robust are the school's monitoring and evaluation, particularly of teaching and learning and the implementation of its various development plans?

Information about the school

This is a larger-than-average sized primary school. Almost all pupils come from White British backgrounds. A small number come from other White, mixed White and Black Caribbean, Indian and Chinese backgrounds; very few of these pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs at school action level is about the national average, but the proportion of those at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above. The school holds the Active Sports Award, the ICT Mark, the Gold Arts mark, the Silver 'Sing UP' and the Silver International School Award. There is a breakfast club which is managed by the governing body.

Just over a month before the inspection the school converted to academy status.

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: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Pennine Way Junior Academy provides a good quality of education. The school gives its pupils a good grounding in basic skills and develops their personal qualities well. Relationships with parents are positive and they are very satisfied with what the school does for their children. One parent summed up for many by saying that 'I find the staff approachable and willing to help' and that 'This school keeps getting better and better.' Pupils are also pleased with the wide range of opportunities they are able to enjoy.

Most pupils make at least good progress from their starting points on entry to Year 3. This progress varies somewhat as pupils move through the school, but accelerates in Years 5 and 6. As a result, attainment is often above average by the end of Year 6, sometimes significantly so. Standards in writing and mathematics are now much stronger due to the priority given to their development.

Teaching is predominantly good, but leaders' monitoring is not always focused on its impact on the progress pupils make in lessons. Consequently, some inconsistencies remain, particularly in the marking of pupils' written work and the level of challenge provided for pupils of all abilities. There are many good examples where this is not the case. The senior leaders recognise more could be done to tackle these inconsistencies by spreading the good practice that already exists.

The school's effective self-evaluation has enabled it to draw up a range of relevant priorities for its development. Middle leaders have also used the action plan to work out and implement the school's priorities. Benchmarks for evaluating the impact of their plans are not always sufficiently precise and measurable to ensure the highest rigour in monitoring and evaluation. Current strengths in monitoring and evaluation skills are fit for purpose overall, but leaders at all levels have not consistently reviewed them, particularly those skills needed for observing lessons and scrutinising pupils' written work. Even so, the school's continuing success with maintaining the many strengths of the predecessor school, demonstrate good capacity for improvement.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching in the minority of lessons where it is only satisfactory by:
 - using examples of effective teaching that are already present in the school as models of good classroom practice
 - sharpening teachers' marking of pupils' written work with more precise comments and by clearly indicating what they need to do next to improve
 - providing appropriate challenge for all groups of pupils in lessons to ensure that they make the best progress they are capable of.

- Strengthen monitoring and evaluation in the school by:
 - involving middle leaders more effectively in making classroom visits and scrutinising pupils' written work, and in assessing the impact of their plans on outcomes for pupils
 - regularly updating the monitoring and evaluation skills of all leaders, including members of the governing body
 - engaging systematically the governing body in evaluating the work of the school.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

On entry to Year 3, pupils' attainment in their basic skills is broadly average. In lessons and in the most recent work, attainment of Year 6 pupils is on target to be above average, reflecting good progress from their starting points. In general, pupils perform better in writing and mathematics than in reading. Pupils of all groups, including those with lower attainment and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress. More-able pupils work at levels fitting their abilities in most lessons and achieve above-average standards as a result. Those few pupils who speak English as an additional language make good progress because the support they receive is specifically targeted towards building their competence in spoken and written English.

Pupils are keen to learn and enjoy their lessons. They work well on their own and with others. They rise to the challenge in open-ended activities which allow them to take the initiative for their own learning. In one such lesson in Year 6, pupils were introduced to journalistic writing. The teacher's skilful explanations and questioning increased pupils' motivation and understanding of features that make good reporting. As a result, they demonstrated discernible readiness and confidence in writing a brief report of their own.

Pupils and parents and carers expressed some concerns in their responses to the questionnaires about the occasional unacceptable behaviour in the school. During discussions, pupils assured inspectors that staff sort occasional incidents of unacceptable behaviour well. One of them summarised clearly the school's typical response as 'The teachers soon stop it if it happens'. Inspectors found behaviour in

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and around the school to be good and it contributed positively to pupils’ learning. Pupils report that they feel safe and well cared for. Most of them have a good understanding of how to stay healthy. They understand the importance of eating healthily and take advantage of the numerous opportunities for exercise, which are offered by the school’s wide range of extra-curricular activities. They willingly take on a range of responsibilities in the smooth running of the school. The prefects and mini-leaders take pride in helping other pupils at the beginning of the school day and during lunchtime. Pupils are always keen to help others in the immediate and wider community. They participate in local events and raise funds for good causes within their community and beyond. The average rate of attendance, taken together with good achievement in the basic skills and well-developed personal skills, prepare pupils well for the next phase of their education. Pupils have a clear understanding of right and wrong and they relate well to each other. They demonstrate good skills in reflecting on their own and others’ life experiences and in drawing lessons from them. Their knowledge and understanding of cultural diversity are satisfactory but growing steadily.

These are the grades for pupils’ outcomes

Pupils’ achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils’ learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils’ behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is good; teachers make their intentions clear at the start of lessons and plan activities carefully matched to pupils’ interests and abilities. Teachers have good subject knowledge and provide clear explanations. They assess pupils’ developing understanding through thorough questioning and promptly adjust tasks to ensure

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

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that all pupils make the best possible gains at a rapid rate. These features are less well represented in the few satisfactory lessons. The use of interactive white boards is widespread for teaching purpose. Invariably, teachers use them successfully to explain ideas clearly and keep pupils interested and attentive. Teaching assistants contribute well to pupils’ learning in most lessons. Teachers’ marking of written work is often complimentary and does not always convey precisely what pupils have done well and what they could do next to improve their work.

The school’s curriculum provides well for the development of pupils’ basic skills of reading, writing and mathematics and their personal and social skills. It underpins good academic achievement in the school. In a minority of lessons, teachers’ planned opportunities provide insufficient challenge for the more-able pupils. The cross-curricular provision is stronger for literacy than for numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT). Although the school has gained the ICT Mark, there was insufficient use of computers in lessons and little evidence of ICT work on display during the inspection. The school has a strong tradition of promoting arts, such as, design and art, music and dance. This commitment has resulted in the achievement of Gold Artsmark and Silver ‘Sing UP’ awards. Historically, the school has demonstrated high standards in sports. This is deservedly recognised in the achievement of Active Sports Award and numerous successes in competitive events. The extensive range of enrichment activities add to pupils’ learning and enjoyment. As an academy the school intends to build on its curricular strengths and diversify its provision further.

Pastoral arrangements are good. The school contributes well to all pupils’ well-being and provides timely support for pupils whose circumstances make them potentially vulnerable. Additional resources are provided from within the school and, when needed they are augmented by support from external agencies. Pupils feel confident that if they have a problem, adults will listen to them and provide the support that they need. The school continues to work hard to raise its attendance to above average, but a small number of families who take holidays during term time remain a barrier to improvement. Arrangements for transition are well established and are working well. The breakfast club provides good care and interesting learning activities for a large group of pupils.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils’ needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

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How effective are leadership and management?

Senior leaders are ambitious to use the flexibility afforded by the recent academy status not only to sustain the strengths of the predecessor school, but also to enhance its provision. Areas that are already receiving close attention include introducing specialism in the teaching of modern foreign languages, building further capacity to support vulnerable pupils and increasing partnerships with other schools. The school has set itself challenging targets which have contributed to the good progress that most pupils continue to make. The detailed use of data enables the school to track pupils’ progress as they move through the school. Teachers use this information to group pupils so that they work at levels that are most suited to their abilities and to plan intervention strategies to help those pupils with barriers to learning. The leadership and management of teaching and learning have been particularly strong and staff expertise in the teaching of writing and mathematics has advanced well. The monitoring of teaching and learning has been insufficient, however. The governing body is supportive and, in general, knows the school’s strengths and weakness. However, its engagement in evaluating the work of the school is insufficiently systematic. The Chair of the Governing Body recognises the need to strengthen members’ skills for this purpose.

Safeguarding arrangements meet requirements and the monitoring and evaluation of their effectiveness is sound. The school’s communication with parents and carers is frequent and of good quality. The newsletters are informative and give substantial details about its work. The school has successfully revived a parents’ association, a platform which it regularly uses to seek parents’ and carers’ views. The effective use of external partnerships enhances the school’s provision in some specialist areas, such as sport and for pupils with additional needs. All groups of pupils are treated well and discrimination of any kind is not tolerated. The tracking of pupils’ progress enables the school to ensure that no group is left behind. The school is a cohesive place, where pupils get on well with each other. The school works constructively with its local community. It has made a promising start with broadening pupils’ awareness of the world and its efforts have been recognised with the Silver International School Award. Even so, the senior leaders recognise that work still needs to be done to develop pupils’ awareness of the richness and diversity of cultures in the United Kingdom and globally.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school’s engagement with parents and carers	2

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The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Views of parents and carers

The response to the questionnaire for parents and carers was above the average rate for primary schools. A very large majority of parents and carers are very satisfied with all aspects of the school’s work. They believe their children enjoy being at school and that they are kept safe. A few feel that the school does not take their suggestions and concerns sufficiently into account. The school was able to show the inspectors that it has acted upon some of the suggestions made by parents and carers. Parents and carers consider the quality of teaching and leadership and management of the school to be good. The inspection evidence found many strengths in both of these areas, but also some weaknesses, which are reflected in the recommendations made earlier in this report.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Pennine Way Junior School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 126 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 291 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	78	62	45	36	3	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	80	63	44	35	2	2	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	51	40	67	53	6	5	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	60	48	55	44	4	3	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	71	56	49	39	2	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	61	48	58	46	3	2	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	50	40	65	52	8	6	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	63	50	53	42	4	3	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	61	48	55	44	5	4	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	60	48	50	40	13	10	2	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	44	35	61	48	10	8	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	75	60	43	34	2	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	72	57	47	37	4	3	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 08 April 2011 and 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.

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

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on 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 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:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.

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.



4 November 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Pennine Way Junior Academy, Swadlincote, DE11 9EY

Thank you for welcoming the inspection team to your school. We enjoyed listening to what you had to say about your school and looking at your work in lessons. At the end of the two days, the team has judged it to be a good school.

These are some of the things we liked most.

- You make good progress and reach above average standards when you leave at the end of Year 6.
- You say that you feel safe at school and your parents and carers agree with you.
- Your behaviour is good in lessons and around the school.
- You are keen to help others in your school and in the community.
- You have a good understanding of how to stay healthy and you keenly participate in many of the physical activities your school offers you, in and out of school hours.
- Adults in school take good care of you.

To improve your school further, those in charge should do the following.

- Make sure that all your lessons match the best in school and those of you who can do harder work are challenged to do so.
- Make sure that teachers mark your work more carefully and tell you how you could improve it.
- Make sure leaders check more thoroughly your progress in lessons and in your written work, and that they and the governors regularly check whether the school's plans are helping it to improve.
- Make sure that all leaders and governors keep on improving their monitoring skills.

You also have a role to play by working your hardest in all lessons so that you make the best possible progress.

Yours sincerely

Krishan Sharma
Lead inspector

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