

Pontefract Halfpenny Lane Junior Infant and Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	108204
Local authority	Wakefield
Inspection number	377714
Inspection dates	25–26 April 2012
Lead inspector	Glynis Bradley-Peat

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	422
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Watson
Headteacher	Geraldine Lindley
Date of previous school inspection	10 December 2007
School address	Halfpenny Lane Pontefract WF8 4BW
Telephone number	01977 722820
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Introduction

Inspection team

Glynis Bradley-Peat

Steve Rigby

Jennifer Firth

Additional inspector

Additional inspector

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspectors observed 24 lessons taught by 16 teachers. The work of teaching assistants was also observed. Meetings were held with staff, members of the governing body and pupils. The inspectors heard a small number of pupils read. The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at school evaluation documents, safeguarding documentation, data on pupils' progress and development planning. Responses from questionnaires completed by 141 parents and carers were analysed, as well as those from pupils and staff.

Information about the school

This is a larger than average-sized primary school. Its pupils are mostly from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is average. The proportion of pupils who are supported at School Action Plus or with a statement of special educational needs is broadly average. Most of these pupils have speech and language needs or behavioural and emotional difficulties. The school meets the government's current floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for attainment and progress. The school is part of the 'Pontefract Education Trust'. The school runs a breakfast club. The headteacher took up post in September 2011.

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

- This is a satisfactory school. It is not yet good because progress is inconsistent between year groups and as a result leads to satisfactory rather than good achievement overall. In addition, the impact of the curriculum on pupils' learning is inconsistent. The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively. Schools whose effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.
- Achievement is satisfactory. Attainment has recently been below average but is improving significantly across a number of year groups and is currently broadly average in English and mathematics. Pupils make satisfactory progress overall although the rate of progress varies between year groups. It is good in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Years 1, 5 and 6 but satisfactory in other year groups.
- Teaching is satisfactory overall but is rapidly improving with much that is good and some that is outstanding. This is because there has been a relentless focus on improving teaching. Leaders have eradicated weaknesses and are quickly moving satisfactory practice to good. The leadership of teaching is good. However, teachers' marking does not always ensure that pupils clearly know how to improve their work.
- Behaviour, safety and pupils' well-being are good and it is clear that pupils enjoy school. They show good attitudes to learning and are able to concentrate on their learning without interruption. Attendance has improved markedly and is now broadly average.
- Both senior and subject leaders provide effective management of the school's performance and teaching. Leaders and managers are highly motivated and determined to improve the achievement of all pupils. Staff morale is high and all share the vision for school improvement. As yet, the curriculum does not always have a consistently good enough impact on pupils' learning. This is because time is not used to best effect to develop pupils' basic skills, including in information and communication technology (ICT).

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Build upon current work to raise attainment and accelerate progress across the school by:
 - ensuring that the quality of teaching and learning is consistently at least good in all lessons
 - ensuring that teachers' expectations of what pupils should achieve are consistently high
 - sharing best practice across the school
 - ensuring that marking makes pupils more aware of what they need to do to improve their work and reach the next level of attainment.

- Maximise the impact of the curriculum on pupils' learning by ensuring that:
 - there are more opportunities to develop and apply basic skills across a variety of subjects
 - ICT is taught through a range of subjects
 - time is used more effectively to maximise learning.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

Pupils are eager to contribute ideas in lessons and they are able to articulate these. Year 6 pupils were able to explain why it was important to buy 'fair-trade' goods and were particularly pleased that a large multi-national company had responded to their letters about paying a reasonable price for cocoa. In Year 1, pupils developed independence in their writing skills. They were able to identify their own 'wow words' and were able to use their knowledge of the links between letters and sounds to attempt new spellings. As a result they made good progress in improving their sentences about the Big Bad Wolf. A good emphasis on speaking and listening enabled those pupils in class with speech and language needs to develop their communication skills. The expectations of teachers are varied and in a few classes pupils do not always have sufficient opportunity to reflect well enough on their learning. The vast majority of parents and carers think their children make good progress. Inspectors found that pupils make satisfactory progress overall because of inconsistencies in the quality of teaching.

Historically, attainment has been below average but the picture is much improved now. The gap between the school's performance and the national picture is closing rapidly. However, some groups of pupils have gaps in their knowledge and understanding which the school is actively seeking to reduce. This is more evident in some classes than others. Where progress is stronger, this is directly linked to better quality teaching. There has been an increase in the proportion of pupils reaching the higher level 5 in English and mathematics in Year 6. This is because teaching ensures that the most-able are stretched and provided with work which challenges and motivates them. Collaborative working ensures that pupils have opportunities to talk through solutions to problems, such as in mathematics when working out test questions about perimeters. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage achieve well from starting points that are generally below those expected for their age because teaching is consistently good in both Nursery and Reception. Progress is satisfactory in Key Stage 1 and attainment remains a little below average by the end of Year

2. In Key Stage 2, while still satisfactory overall, progress accelerates. Attainment in the current Year 6 is broadly average. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs achieve as well as their peers because support is effective and progress is carefully monitored.

Pupils have a love of reading and enjoyed reading to inspectors and talking about the books they had read. There is timely support for pupils who are in danger of falling behind in their reading. Attainment in reading is generally a little below average by the end of Key Stage 1 but by the time pupils leave the school they have reached average levels.

Quality of teaching

The vast majority of parents and carers who responded to questionnaires said they thought the teaching was good. Inspectors found some strengths in teaching in different parts of the school but inconsistency across year groups. Where teaching is at least good, the pace of learning is rapid and the teaching of everyday skills becomes exciting. For example, in a lesson in Year 5 the stimulating activities and fast pace chosen by the teacher ensured that times tables were learnt with gusto! The lesson contributed very well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development because it encouraged pupils to 'have a go' through building their self-esteem. The quality of marking varies from class to class. There are some good examples of comments that show pupils what they have to do next to improve their work, but at other times marking shows that teachers are too generous with praise, and targets for improvement are insufficiently clear.

Focused sessions in the Early Years Foundation Stage are effective because practical resources are used well to support learning. For example in a mathematics session in Reception, children sliced a real chocolate cake into pieces and made good progress in understanding the concept of halves. Prompting and probing questions were used well to move the session on at a good pace. The teaching of the sounds that letters make is also a particular strength in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Key Stage 1.

The planned curriculum is having a mainly positive impact on learning, as planning is consistent across the school and detailed in setting objectives and measureable success criteria. Teachers plan well for those pupils with disabilities or special educational needs. Work is well matched to individuals, teaching assistants are generally well directed and support is effective. In some lessons, however, there is not enough focus on teaching the basic, key skills in a creative way across different subjects. For example, pupils were observed writing newspaper articles in Year 6 but did not have access to programs on computers to make their learning more realistic.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Almost all pupils behave well and show consideration for one another. Behaviour is typically good. However, behaviour in lessons sometimes varies according to the quality of teaching. When teaching captures pupils' interests, they learn well and pay good attention. Occasionally, if the pace of the lesson is slow, a few pupils quietly daydream. Questionnaire returns from parents and carers, pupils and staff reflect a high level of confidence in the way the school deals with behaviour and any incidents of bullying. Pupils are polite and courteous on a daily basis. Pupils say that bullying is not a problem, including cyber-bullying and prejudice-based bullying related to special educational needs, gender, race, religion or belief. The records the school keeps support this view. Pupils are confident that staff will

deal effectively with any concerns they may raise. All parents and carers think that their children are safe at school. Pupils are knowledgeable about how to stay safe, for example when using the Internet. Attendance has been low in the past, but is now being sustained at average levels.

Leadership and management

The senior and middle leadership teams are highly ambitious for the school and have successfully overseen good improvements in teaching and learning and in the progress pupils make. The quality of teaching is checked regularly. Teachers receive clear feedback about how to improve their practice. This is linked purposefully to training for teachers but the school does not always use opportunities to share its good practice across year groups. Senior leaders use data, observations and scrutiny of pupils' work to ensure that the picture they formulate about the quality of teaching is accurate, although occasionally judgements are a little over-generous. Regular pupil progress meetings ensure that teachers are held to account robustly for the progress their pupils make. The significant improvements in teaching and its impact on English and mathematics attainment and progress, in particular, show that the school has good capacity for further improvement.

Self-evaluation correctly identifies the areas the school needs to improve. Initiatives introduced to improve the quality of writing in particular have had a good impact on raising standards. The curriculum is broad and balanced but it is satisfactory because it does not always include sufficient opportunities for pupils to apply their basic skills across different subjects. The school has correctly identified the teaching of ICT as requiring improvement. The suite is not used well enough to promote the development of basic skills and ICT tends to be taught in isolation. The curriculum has a good impact upon pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through excellent enrichment opportunities and partnership working with the Pontefract Trust. A wide range of trips and visits to places of interest contributes well to pupils' achievement and personal development. Sometimes curriculum time is not always maximised to ensure that learning moves along at a swift pace throughout the day. 'Bolt-on' activities to teach reading and handwriting do not always ensure that basic skills are developed as well as they could be. Time is sometimes wasted moving younger learners into different rooms for different sessions.

The governing body is supportive of the work of the school and effectively challenges leaders and managers. It ensures that safeguarding requirements are fully met and that pupils are kept safe. The school promotes equality and tackles discrimination well. Pupils are valued as individuals and the school has been particularly successful in supporting the achievement of those pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable. As a result they have been able to overcome barriers to learning. Careful analysis of data enables leaders and managers to keep track of pupils' performance and to intervene effectively to prevent any underachievement. The well-run breakfast club provides pupils with a good start to the day.

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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	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 to 31 December 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.
Floor standards	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures
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.



27 April 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Pontefract Halfpenny Lane Junior Infant and Nursery School, Pontefract, WF8 4BW

Thank you for making the inspectors welcome when we visited your school and for sharing your views with us. Halfpenny Lane provides you with a satisfactory and improving education. You told us you enjoy school and usually find lessons interesting. The youngest children make good progress because the teaching is mainly good or better in the Nursery, Reception and Year 1. Those of you in Year 6 also make good progress and your attainment is getting higher. Well done! We found you all to be well behaved, polite and courteous both in and out of lessons. Teaching is improving quickly but at the moment it is satisfactory. Your new headteacher and her team lead the school well and have improved it considerably. However, there are some things that still require improvement.

For the school to improve further we have asked leaders and staff to:

- make sure you reach even higher standards and that you make quicker progress
- ensure you learn equally well in all classes and year groups
- use marking to show you how to improve your work
- share the best teaching approaches in all classes
- make sure you use ICT in your classroom more regularly
- make sure you have lots of chance to practise English, mathematics and ICT in different subjects
- make sure no learning time is wasted.

You all can help by taking on board the advice teachers give you when they mark your work and always working hard. Thank you once again for your help. This letter comes with our best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely,

Glynis Bradley-Peat
Lead Inspector

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