

Pontefract Orchard Head Junior, Infant and Nursery School

Orchard Head Lane, Pontefract, West Yorkshire, WF8 2NJ

Inspection dates 3–4 March 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected as an academy	
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management	Good		2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Good		2
Quality of teaching	Good		2
Achievement of pupils	Good		2
Early years provision	Outstanding		1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Incisive and determined leadership has brought rapid improvement in key areas of the school's work.
- Highly effective management of teaching and learning has resulted in consistently good and, at times, outstanding teaching which has secured pupils' rapid progress and raised standards. Achievement is, therefore, good.
- Outstanding leadership and provision in the early years over time continue to give children an excellent start to their learning.
- Governors challenge the school well and fully share leaders' determination to improve the school further.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. Their positive attitudes contribute well to their good learning. Pupils feel safe in school and describe their teachers as, in their words, 'the best.'
- Teaching is consistently good and sometimes better. Pupils find lessons lively and enjoyable. Pupils' different abilities are well catered for and teaching assistants provide very good support.
- The school engages well with parents. They are very supportive of the school.
- As part of the Pontefract Academies Trust, the school works productively with its partner schools.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The standards and quality of pupils' writing are not as good as they could be because pupils' correct use of spelling, punctuation and grammar is inconsistent.
- Pupils' speaking and listening skills are not developed sufficiently.
- The presentation of some writing and mathematics work is not as good as it should be.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in a range of lessons, two of which were observed jointly with senior leaders.
- Meetings were held with members of staff, pupils, members of the governing body and representatives from the local authority and Pontefract Academies Trust.
- Inspectors also took account of the views of the 28 parents who responded to Ofsted’s online survey Parent View as well as questionnaires completed by staff members.
- Inspectors observed the school’s work and examined a range of documentation including: national assessment data and the school’s own assessments; external reports and the school’s own view of its work; minutes of governors’ meetings; curriculum information; safeguarding documents and samples of pupils work.

Inspection team

Kevin Johnson, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Susan Davis	Additional Inspector
Kathleen Wood	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a larger than average-sized primary school in which most pupils are White British.
- Pontefract Orchard Head Junior, Infant and Nursery school converted to become an academy on 1 April 2013. When its predecessor school, Pontefract Orchard Head Junior and Infant and Nursery school was last inspected by Ofsted it was judged to require improvement overall.
- The academy is now part of the Pontefract Academies Trust.
- The proportion of pupils who are supported by the pupil premium is broadly average. The pupil premium is additional funding to support pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- A breakfast club is provided by the school during term-time.
- The headteacher joined the school as interim headteacher in January 2013 and took up his permanent position in September 2013.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the standards and quality of pupils' writing by
 - improving pupils' correct use of spelling, punctuation and grammar
 - giving pupils the responsibility as well as the opportunity to develop their speaking and listening skills.

- Improve the presentation of some pupils' handwriting and mathematics work.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher's single-minded determination to improve learning and standards in the school has brought a cultural change that embraces the whole school community.
- In the two years since the school converted to become an academy, he has successfully brought about rapid improvement in leadership. The subsequent impact on teaching, progress and pupils' attitudes and behaviour has been immense.
- Effective management of teaching and learning has played a crucial part in the school's improvement. The quality of teaching is checked rigorously by senior staff and this is measured against improvement in pupils' work. Non-negotiable expectations, underpinned by the Teachers' Standards are firmly set across the whole school.
- The determination to continue improving is felt strongly among staff and pupils. Expectations have been raised significantly and pupils talk about their aspirations for the future. The ethos of good relationship in the school means that equality of opportunity is promoted well and all forms of discrimination are strongly challenged.
- Responsibility for improvement in the key areas is effectively distributed among the senior leadership team. This has created a sustainable management system which increases accountability and motivates leaders. They provide strong role models for colleagues with regard to best practice and professional relationships. Senior leaders check the school's work, especially teaching quality, robustly and have a very accurate view of how well the school performs.
- Middle leaders show a strong commitment to their subject development. They know their subjects well and ensure that they continue to develop their knowledge and skills at a whole-school as well as at an individual level. The new primary curriculum is adapted well to pupils' needs though the school acknowledges that more emphasis could be placed on developing pupil's speaking and listening skills and on the consistency of good spelling, punctuation and grammar in order to improve pupils' writing. Teachers work positively with other schools within the Pontefract Academies Trust to share ideas and keep up the pace of developments.
- The curriculum promotes pupils' spiritual, moral social and cultural development well. This has a positive influence on their attitudes and behaviour. Pupils gain a good understanding of the festivals and faiths within other cultures. They take part in exchange visits with a Bradford school where the pupils are largely Asian. They learn about democracy and have worked with a magistrate to find out the importance of the rule of law and what is right or wrong. Pupils reflect on the importance of individual rights and liberties and overall are well prepared to contribute to community life in modern Britain.
- The primary sports funding is used effectively to raise teachers' skills and their quality of teaching in physical education. Specialist coaches work with teachers and lead lessons. Pupils have noticed the increased opportunities for sports and there is a good take-up of sports activity after school, which increases pupils' fitness and well-being.
- Leaders check the impact of pupil premium spending and respond swiftly where they see underlying inequalities emerging. Governors were quickly aware of the picture, shown in published data, relating to disadvantaged pupils in 2014. The school's immediate and robust response has made a significant difference to the achievement of these pupils.
- Attendance is checked closely. The work of the learning mentor responsible for attendance has raised it to securely average and it continues to rise. The school's safeguarding arrangements are reviewed regularly and fully meet requirements.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Since the school converted to academy status governors have worked effectively to bring about good improvement. They have secured strong leadership in the school and continue to challenge and support school leaders so there is no slackening of pace to improve.
 - The good range of governors' expertise equips them well to check the school's performance against that of schools nationally and challenge the school on any emerging issues. They know the school well and recognise, for example, that improvement in writing has not matched that in reading and mathematics.
 - Governors have a clear overview of teaching quality in the school. They understand the principles of teachers' performance management and how it is the basis of review regarding teachers' salaries whereby success is rewarded and ineffective teaching challenged. Finances are managed efficiently, including the management of pupil premium and sports funding.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Staff, parents, and pupils comment on the way that new systems for promoting good behaviour, introduced by the headteacher, have a more positive effect on pupils' attitudes.
- Pupils are enthusiastic about school. They enjoy the whole range of lessons because, they say, 'Teachers make them interesting.'
- Their good attitudes mean that pupils are attentive in lessons and work hard. However, sometimes the way that they present their work could be better.
- Pupils behave well around the school. They play amicably and safely in the playground and behave respectfully in assemblies and when in the dining room. They are respectful towards adults in school and mindful of one another. They claim that 99% of their behaviour is good!
- Pupils respond well to the school's house systems and compete well for house points. They understand the school rules and do their best to stick to them.
- Attendance is average and improving and punctuality is good overall.
- Pupils dress smartly in their uniform and are invariably polite and friendly towards visitors. They are proud of their school and keep the playground and classrooms tidy.
- By taking responsibility as school council members, reading partners or playground buddies, for example, pupils contribute well to the daily life of the school.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good
- Pupils say that they feel safe in school and that there is always a grown-up to talk to when needed.
- Parents endorse their children's view that they are cared for well. The school supports those pupils whose specific needs make them potentially the most vulnerable particularly well.
- Pupils know that bullying can occur in different ways, and have good understanding of how to deal with it, including cyber-bullying. They firmly state that there is no bullying in school and that name-calling in the playground is rare.
- School council members accompany governors on their risk assessment walks around the school.
- Parents appreciate the additional care and safety provided through the well-attended breakfast club.
- The school's safeguarding arrangements are well established and pupils understand that they too have some responsibility for the safety of others.

The quality of teaching is good

- Opportunities for teachers to develop their skills and improve their practice under the school's new leadership have opened up significantly. Their work with partner schools in the Academies Trust has a positive impact. Non-negotiable expectations are consistent throughout the school and staff respond positively to feedback from senior leaders about their work. As a result, teaching is consistently good or better and pupils enjoy their learning and make good progress.
- The work of teaching assistants contributes well to the quality of pupils' learning. They know the pupils well and provide good support for teachers in checking pupils' work during lessons and helping pupils to improve. They are quick to support individual pupils who have particular difficulties with their learning.
- Pupils' workbooks show good evidence of new learning taking place at a rapid pace. They gain good understanding of number systems, shape and measure, and apply their knowledge well to problem solving. Assessment is used effectively during lessons to identify where more help is needed so errors are quickly corrected and learning continues. However, sometimes, the presentation of pupils' mathematics work is untidy.
- English is taught well. There is a good range to pupils' writing and expectations are high. There has been a good whole-school response to pupils' below-average attainment in spelling, punctuation and grammar. Although there is noticeably good improvement in pupils' work over the year, there is still work to be done to improve the general quality of writing. Pupils' have some opportunities to talk to partners in lessons to help clarify thinking. However, pupils' speaking and listening skills are not exploited sufficiently to give them responsibility to share views or explore ideas fully. Teachers' questioning skills and their subject knowledge are good and there is well-focused challenge in lessons to ensure good improvement, though this challenge is not always evident with regard to some pupils' handwriting.
- There is good learning across the range of subjects. Physical education is taught well, teachers' skills

having benefitted from the effective use of the primary schools sports funding. A history lesson about the Ancient Egyptian art of mummification enthralled Year 4 pupils. Pupils in Year 6 enjoyed the musical and spiritual experience of learning about music in different contexts and how it brings back memories and feelings. They also demonstrated their ability to sing well.

- Use of assessment is one of the main factors underpinning effective learning. Pupils work is marked rigorously with clear pointers given for improvement. Pupils have time to correct mistakes before starting their next work. This means that they improve quickly and move on confidently to their next learning.

The achievement of pupils is good

- From below typical starting points pupils achieve well by the end of Year 6. The rate of progress from Year 1 to Year 6 began to increase following the headteacher's appointment. Progress has improved rapidly over the past year as higher expectations and more rigorous assessments which focus on progress take effect.
- The results of the phonics (letters and the sounds they make) screening check for pupils in Year 1 show that in 2014 an average proportion reached the required standard. Currently, that proportion has been raised and the number of pupils on track is already well above the 2014 national average.
- The picture is similar in Year 2. Attainment in reading, writing and mathematics were broadly average in 2014. Rapid progress made over the current year has seen those standards already exceeded with attainment in reading and mathematics on track to be above the previous national average but standards in writing are not improving at quite the same pace.
- Outcomes for 2014 point to broadly average attainment at the end of Year 6, with significant improvement in mathematics. However in reading and spelling, punctuation and grammar attainment was below average. Pupils' work shows good progress year on year and more pupils attaining at least the standards expected of them, with significantly more doing better than expected in reading. However attainment in writing, although improving, has not matched the speed of improvement in reading and mathematics.
- Pupils achieve well in reading. Pupils in Year 2 clearly express their enjoyment of reading and offer a lot of information about the books they know well. They enjoy reading aloud and do so confidently using a range of phonics skills well to tackle tricky words. Year 6 pupils have very positive attitudes to reading and, because of good teaching, make good progress in developing their understanding of the books they read.
- Published national assessment data shows that disadvantaged pupils, supported by pupil premium funding, did not achieve as well from their starting points as non-disadvantaged pupils nationally, or others in the school in reading, writing and mathematics in 2014. Significant gaps between national attainment and that of others in school suggest that disadvantaged pupils were three-to-four terms behind non-disadvantaged pupils nationally in all subjects. In addition the school recognised that progress in reading from Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 2 was significantly low for that Year 6 group.
- The school's response has been swift and successful. Extra reading sessions take place before school. Additional one-to-one reading support has been introduced and reading resources have been improved. As a result of the drive on reading for the disadvantaged group especially, those pupils are rapidly reaching the targets set for them and attainment gaps in all subjects have already narrowed to the equivalent of less than one term. This is indicative of the school's commitment to providing equality of opportunity for all pupils.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are very well supported and they make good progress. They are mostly provided for in classrooms with targeted guidance. That support is checked by the special educational needs leader to ensure that quality of teaching and progress is maintained. The school works effectively with parents and outside agencies to get the specific help that pupils need.
- The challenge for most able pupils brought rewards for the school in 2014 in that several pupils attained the highest possible level 6 in mathematics. The needs of the most able pupils are recognised in teachers' planning so they can be challenged in lessons. Booster classes for pupils with the potential to reach the higher level are also arranged. More pupils than previously are on track to reach the higher level 3 at Key Stage 1 and level 5 at Key Stage 2.

The early years provision is outstanding

- Leadership of the early years has consistently been a strength in the school. Since converting to academy

status, those strengths have been consolidated and improvements in teaching and overall provision have been managed exceptionally well. The quality of provision has been validated by external early years advisers. Inspection evidence supports the school's view. Consequently the effectiveness of early years is judged to be better than the overall effectiveness of the whole school.

- Baseline assessments and the checking of children's progress are accurate and rigorous. Children make excellent progress from below and sometimes well below typical expectations for their age on entry to the provision. Most reach expected levels of development for their age by the end of Nursery. They build exceptionally well on their skills and knowledge in Reception. The proportion reaching a good level of development is above the national average and some children exceed expectations.
- Nursery staff are very sensitive to children's specific social needs. Social and emotional development is encouraged exceptionally well. In Reception, children are confident and eager to learn. They enjoy working with friends especially outdoors where there are many challenging activities for them to share. They show excellent levels of concentration for their age and consistently behave extremely well.
- The quality of teaching in early years is outstanding. Assessments and observations of children drive planning for their next steps so that learning is relevant to children's needs, so that they make rapid progress. Teacher-led activities are highly focused on teaching new skills which children follow-up in activities which are challenging and fun to do.
- Children thrive in an environment in which they feel comfortable and safe. Relationships are excellent. Early years staff work very closely with parents, including through home visits, who contribute information and take an active part in their children's learning. The school has established close links with the adjacent children's centre which also helps to prepare parents as well as children for their first links with the nursery.

What inspection judgements mean

School	Grade	Judgement	Description
	Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
	Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	139503
Local authority	Wakefield
Inspection number	449932

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	341
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Karen Byram
Headteacher	Mr M Letham
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected as an academy
Telephone number	01977 723495
Fax number	01977 723495
Email address	contact@orchardhead.net

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