

Pontefract Larks Hill Junior and Infant School

Larks Hill, Pontefract, West Yorkshire, WF8 4RJ

Inspection dates 7–8 July 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	Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Larks Hill Junior and Infant school is a happy and inclusive school.
- Standards in reading, writing and in mathematics are above average. The progress of all pupils and groups of pupils is now good.
- Pupils behave well and feel safe. There is a strong culture of mutual respect between pupils and their teachers.
- Pupils learn a broad range of subjects and there are many sporting, creative and musical opportunities all of which contribute well to their enjoyment of school.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make the same good progress as their classmates.
- Senior leaders are highly effective and provide clear direction for improvement in the quality of teaching and drive for excellence. Teaching is effective and promotes good learning.
- The governing body plays an effective role in supporting and challenging school leaders. Governors are enthusiastic and knowledgeable about the school and bring a wide range of skills to their role.
- The 6R's represent the key values of the school and are widely promoted and understood. Relationships in the school are strong.
- Additional adults working in the school are highly effective in their role and provide excellent support for individuals and groups of pupils.
- The quality of early years education is effective. Children embrace the learning opportunities provided for them and make good progress.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The curriculum presents too few opportunities, in a wide range of contexts, for pupils to investigate, apply their skills and follow their learning interests.
- The impact of teaching over time does not enable pupils, particularly boys, to make consistently outstanding progress and demonstrate a love of learning.
- Subject leaders are not sufficiently involved in the checks completed on the quality of teaching and achievement to fully drive through improvements in their subjects.
- Teachers do not always insist that pupils produce work that is consistently their very best in all subjects all of the time.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed pupils' learning in 15 lessons and part lessons; several of these were joint observations with the headteacher and the deputy headteacher.
- In addition, the inspection team looked at examples of pupils' work in folders and books and listened to pupils read.
- There were meetings with groups of pupils, the headteacher, senior leaders, members of the governing body and representatives of the Academies Trust.
- The inspection team took account of 47 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) and considered recent questionnaires undertaken by the school. They also considered 13 responses to staff questionnaires.
- The inspection team examined the school's own information about pupils' current progress, the school's evaluation of how well it is doing and its records of monitoring the quality of teaching, records relating to behaviour and attendance and documents relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Diane Buckle, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Mary Lanovy Taylor

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Larks Hill Junior and Infant School is an average-sized primary school. and the number on roll has remained steady since the previous inspection. It forms part of the Pontefract Academies Trust, which comprises two secondary schools and six primary schools. When the academy's predecessor school was last inspected in May of 2012, it was judged as good.
- The very large majority of pupils are White British.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils who are supported through pupil premium is below the national average. The pupil premium provides additional funding for disadvantaged pupils and pupils looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of disabled pupils or those with special educational needs has increased over the last three years and is above the national average.
- Extended school provision operates from the school offering before-school care.
- There has been considerable staffing turbulence within the academic year. This includes the long-term absence of the headteacher and the promotion of the deputy headteacher. The appointments of a substantive deputy headteacher and an early years leader have been made within the year.
- The school website is lively and engaging and provides visitors to the site with all of the required information.
- The school meets the current floor standards, which sets the minimum standards expected by the government for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics, at the end of Year 6.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching further so that more pupils, especially boys, make outstanding progress and achieve even higher standards by:
 - insisting that all pupils produce work that is of their very best in all subjects
 - setting expectations for the quality of presentation in all subjects
 - providing increasing opportunities for pupils to investigate, apply their skills and follow their learning interests in a range of contexts and subjects.
- Strengthen leadership across the school by:
 - ensuring that checks made on teaching and achievement fully involve subject leaders, so that they can further support senior leaders in their drive for excellence
 - ensuring that curriculum provision enthuses and excites all pupils and develops outstanding attitudes to learning.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher has recently returned from long-term absence to provide stability to the school after a period of staffing turbulence.
- The recently appointed deputy headteacher and early years leader have had a significant impact upon pupil achievement in a very short space of time and have brought energy and dynamism to the senior leadership of the school.
- Leaders share a vision for excellence and a determination to create an exciting place in which all pupils can reach their full potential.
- The Academy Trust has introduced systems to check the work of the school that are highly effective and have led to greater accountability among all staff. Outcomes from these checks inform the school's priorities for improvement and have contributed to the rapid improvements seen in both teaching and achievement which are now good. Greater involvement by recently appointed subject leaders, to better check the quality of teaching and learning, will strengthen further the leadership of the school. Leadership of teaching is good.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced and enjoyed by most pupils. However, it offers too few opportunities for pupils to investigate, apply their skills and follow their learning interests in a range of different contexts. This is particularly so for boys who do not always demonstrate the same level of resilience to their learning as girls.
- Assessment is detailed, accurate and regularly checked and evaluated by leaders. There is now a consistent approach to assessment which extends across all schools within the Academies Trust, thus allowing for consistency of judgements and increased opportunities for moderating standards.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is effective. For example, the school hosted a multicultural week, where the pupils experienced different cultures and traditions from around the world.
- Although pupil premium funding is limited, a review of spending and its impact was undertaken. Each term a detailed progress report is analysed and support adjusted on an individual basis. This has resulted in significantly improved outcomes, with disadvantaged pupils making the same good progress as others in the school.
- Additional funding for physical education and sport has been used effectively to extend the range of after-school activities on offer to pupils. Sports coaches are employed to strengthen the teaching of physical education, particularly in Key Stage 2.
- Strategies to support pupils' special educational needs are well organised and effective. Detailed records of the progress made by pupils in their learning are monitored and evaluated effectively. As a result, disabled pupils and pupils who have special educational needs make good progress from their starting points.
- The good progress now made by all pupils shows that there are equal opportunities for all pupils. Discrimination is not tolerated and the school successfully fosters good relations.
- The vast majority of parents are happy with the school and feel that their children are well looked after and are kept safe. They are extremely supportive of the school, as evidenced by the huge turnout of parents who attended 'Inspire Day' marking the 40th anniversary of the school's existence.
- A minority of parents feel that the information provided by the school to inform them of the progress of their children could be better. Leaders acknowledge this and have plans to develop the content of existing termly reports.
- The school has a programme to make pupils aware of core British values, which suitably prepares them for life in modern Britain. They recognise that increased emphasis on beliefs, traditions and difference will support pupils' understanding further and prepare them better for the next stage of their education.
- Attendance is high and punctuality excellent. This is because procedures to support individuals and families are highly effective and well established.
- The school is part of the Pontefract Academies Trust and wider Pontefract Education Trust, which offers extended partnerships to share good practice and support school improvement. The school has benefited greatly from these partnerships.
- The Academies Trust has provided highly effective support to the school during the period of staffing turbulence. They appointed an interim headteacher to drive through improvements and offer support to the newly appointed deputy headteacher. They continue to offer excellent support to the school to secure its financial position and further support the drive for excellence.
- **The governance of the school:**

- Governance is effective. All governors share a determination to move the school to outstanding. They recognise the role they play and have determined their own development by instigating a review of governance in February 2014. This was repeated in May 2015 to measure the impact of their work.
- Governors know their strengths and carefully appoint new governors with appropriate skills to address their specific needs.
- The committee structure effectively addresses the work of the school. Minutes of meetings held reflect the increasing challenge offered to leaders.
- Governors are aware of school performance data and the quality of teaching. They have ensured that performance management procedures are in place and that teachers' pay is linked to the performance and achievement of pupils.
- Governors have ensured that the school's statutory responsibilities towards safeguarding arrangements have been met.
- Governors know how additional funds have been spent and the impact this has had on pupils' achievement, health and well-being.
- Governors know the school well and have high aspirations for the future of the school, but recognise that such ambition could be shared better with parents.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They play happily together and relationships between pupils are strong.
- Pupils commented that they are happy and this underpins the positive ethos that exists in school.
- Pupils demonstrated a good awareness of bullying and the different forms it can take; school records would confirm this to be the case.
- Conduct around the school is good. Pupils are welcoming and courteous. They demonstrate good manners to all adults and are respectful of each other.
- Generally pupils are keen to do well and demonstrate positive attitudes to learning. However, some pupils, particularly boys, can be reluctant to complete tasks. This is because they receive too few opportunities to develop their resilience towards learning and engage in activities that follow their interests and allow them to think for themselves and apply their skills.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils overwhelmingly say that they feel safe and happy in school.
- The school could better explore the wider implications of pupils keeping themselves safe in different situations. For example, pupils were less secure about keeping themselves safe when accessing the internet at home.
- The school site is secure and pupils are well supervised at break times. There is no bullying or racism evident within the school and records and discussions with pupils confirmed this.
- Pupils are free from harassment and all pupils are treated equally.
- Friendships are appropriately supported through a buddy system and personal, social and emotional curriculum.
- Attendance is high, punctuality excellent and persistent absenteeism low, which illustrates the confidence pupils have in school.

The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching is good and is improving rapidly. Relationships in all classes are strong with pupils working happily together and sharing resources.
- Effective questioning makes pupils think carefully about their answers and it enables them to make links to learning in other lessons.
- Work seen in books builds effectively upon previous learning and demonstrates good progress. The new marking policy is established across all classes and pupils respond well to teacher prompts.
- Teachers are not consistent in their expectation that pupils produce work of their very best in all subjects. As a result, the presentation of work in some books and across a minority of subjects is variable. An

inconsistent handwriting style within school contributes to this.

- Classrooms are well displayed and provide a resource for learning as well as a celebration of success. The open plan design of the school presents background noise which can be distracting for some pupils. Leaders recognise this and have installed doors to some of the classrooms to create quieter spaces for learning.
- Additional adults play a highly effective role in school. They are well deployed and offer timely support to groups and individuals in lessons. As a result, pupils working with them, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, make good progress.
- The teaching of literacy is effective. All pupils follow a detailed programme for learning the sounds that letters make (phonics) and are encouraged by all adults to apply their skills to both read and spell words. Older pupils are supported through dedicated reading sessions. The most able pupils are challenged by increasingly complicated texts.
- Pupils' achievement in writing has improved and is above average, with all pupils making expected progress and the majority making better than expected progress. Pupils are provided with opportunities to apply their writing skills in a range of genre and relevant contexts. For example, Year 6 pupils were appalled at the poor service their teacher had received at a local restaurant and wrote letters of complaint on his behalf!
- The teaching of mathematics is strengthening, with more pupils reaching higher standards. However, there was limited evidence of opportunities for pupils to apply their skills more widely or work at solving extended problems.
- Homework is well organised and provides daily, weekly and more extended opportunities for pupils to practice their skills at home. Parents are highly supportive and make good contributions to pupils' learning.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Standards overall are above average by the end of Year 6, in reading, writing and mathematics. Results for 2015 in all subjects are a clear improvement on 2014.
- In 2015, all pupils made expected progress with the majority of pupils making better than expected progress in all subjects. This is a marked improvement on previous years' historical data and is supported by the school's tracking data and work seen in books.
- At the end of Key Stage 1 standards have remained consistently good and outcomes at National Curriculum Level 3 have strengthened in reading, writing and mathematics and are above national averages.
- This profile of improving achievement extends across all year groups in the school.
- While achievement of all pupils is good compared with national averages, the profile of girls' achievement is much stronger than that of boys. Leaders are aware of this and track carefully the outcomes of national assessment results to ensure that gaps in attainment and achievement are narrowed. Leaders have invested in 'boy friendly' resources and texts, but recognise the curriculum needs to offer increasing opportunities for pupils to apply their skills in a range of contexts.
- Achievement in reading is good; pupils read extensively and are supported well at school and home. The very youngest pupils are able to express preference and articulate their favourite style of books. A Year 1 pupil stated 'I only like non-fiction books me!' His book choice was about rockets and space from which he was able to read fluently with understanding and interest.
- Developments in the teaching of phonics have improved pupils' ability to read and write independently, particularly in the early years. The results of Year 1 phonics test have improved upon 2014 and are above the national average.
- Work seen in books demonstrates improving standards in writing and confident use of technical vocabulary choices. Variable presentation can detract from well-developed pieces of writing, which are often compounded by an inconsistent handwriting style across the school.
- Achievement in mathematics is above average and has improved in 2015 with most pupils reaching higher National curriculum levels of attainment. Work in books shows that pupils are completing increasingly difficult calculations in all year groups, but opportunities to work on extended problems are limited.
- The very small proportion of disadvantaged pupils in the school means that any comparison between their achievement and other pupils nationally would be statistically unreliable. However, as individuals the school ensures that any additional funding is used well to support their learning and progress. As a result, achievement of disadvantaged pupils is good.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs achieve well and make good progress from

their starting points. They are well supported and receive high-quality intervention programmes.

- Pupils who speak English as an additional language, and those from various ethnic groups, make similarly good progress as their classmates.
- Due to improving teaching and work that is well match to their needs, the achievement of most able pupils has improved considerably in reading, writing and mathematics. There are increasing numbers of pupils reaching higher National Curriculum levels of attainment at both Key Stage 1 and 2.

The early years provision

is good

- The early years leader is only recently appointed, but has made a significant contribution to the provision and achievement of all children in a very short space of time.
- She has an excellent understanding of child development and provides dynamic and enthusiastic leadership to adults working within the unit. As such, there is an excitement within the Reception class that is tangible.
- Learning opportunities are clearly identified and provision is adapted to meet the needs of all pupils. All adults contribute to this. Refined assessment procedures to be implemented in the new academic year will improve this further.
- Children's skills and understanding when they join Reception are typical for their age, but there are already gaps in attainment identified between boys and girls. Careful planning of the environment, particularly outdoors and new resources has begun to address this.
- In 2015, as a result of good teaching, including highly engaging activities and focused adult intervention, all children made at least expected progress, with a significant proportion making rapid progress. By the end of Reception, most have reached a good level of development and are well prepared for Year 1.
- Children behave very well. Relationships across the unit are strong and supportive. Teachers and other members of staff work well to ensure children are safe.
- Children are well motivated to read, write and count because of the interesting contexts and fun activities on offer.
- Learning journals provide an excellent record of the child's experiences and progress and a valuable record of development that parents fully participate in.

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	139499
Local authority	Wakefield
Inspection number	461892

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	212
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jeff Allinson
Headteacher	Alison Smith
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected as an academy
Telephone number	01977 722845
Fax number	01977 722845
Email address	headteacher@larkshill.wakefield.sch.uk

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