

# Pennine Way Junior Academy

Pennine Way, Swadlincote, Derbyshire DE11 9EY

## Inspection dates

25–26 April 2017

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- The school has successfully tackled some of the weaknesses identified at the previous inspection but the quality of teaching has not improved quickly enough.
- Teaching does not meet all the demands of the national curriculum, especially in reading and mathematics. Consequently, pupils make slower progress than they should in these subjects. Their attainment was too low in 2016 and pupils were not fully ready for secondary education.
- Current pupils' achievement in each year is improving but too few are reaching the higher standards.
- Teaching does not consistently challenge the most able pupils or sufficiently meet the needs of the least able. Teachers' planning is not precise enough to ensure that these pupils make the progress they should.
- Leaders, including governors, have too generous a view of the quality of teaching.
- The quality of teaching in science and some foundation subjects varies and is not consistently good.
- Checks on the accuracy of teachers' assessments of pupils' work are not consistently rigorous in most subjects, especially in reading and mathematics.
- Pupils have limited knowledge and understanding of different cultures and faiths that make up modern Britain.
- Pupils' reasoning skills in mathematics and spelling skills are not yet secure, as new teaching strategies are not fully in place throughout the school.
- Leaders' improvement plans, including subject action plans, are not as sharp as they could be. Success criteria are sometimes too vague to allow the governing body to hold leaders rigorously to account.

### The school has the following strengths

- Pupils are provided with a wide range of opportunities to develop their sporting skills and hobbies.
- The school's curriculum promotes pupils' social and moral skills extremely well.
- Pupils' conduct and manners are exemplary.
- The school is highly effective in ensuring pupils' well-being and safety.
- Pupils' writing skills are developed well.

## Full report

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment to accelerate pupils' progress, especially in reading and mathematics, by ensuring that all teachers:
  - plan activities and select resources more precisely to match the needs of different ability groups, particularly the most able and the least able pupils
  - consistently provide more opportunities in core and foundation subjects for pupils to deepen their understanding and tackle more complex thinking tasks, especially for the most able pupils
  - use the school's new strategies to improve pupils' spelling and their reasoning skills in mathematics more effectively.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
  - sharpening up improvement plans by including more precise and measurable success criteria so that the governing body can check progress more effectively
  - revising the curriculum for all subjects to ensure that it is suitably matched to the increased demands of national assessment framework
  - ensuring that the moderation of pupils' assessed work in mathematics and reading is as rigorous as that carried out for writing
  - checking the quality of teaching more effectively by identifying strengths and weaknesses more precisely and taking into account their impact on the achievement of different groups of pupils
  - providing governors with an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses so the governing body becomes more effective in holding leaders to account.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Requires improvement

- Leaders and governors have had a positive impact on a number of areas of the school since the last inspection. There have been considerable improvements, for example, in the quality of pupils' writing. They have not ensured, however, that teachers have adapted their practice to meet the challenges of the current national curriculum, especially in reading and mathematics.
- Pupils' outcomes in these subjects were too low in 2016. Leaders have improved standards in mathematics and reading for current pupils as a result of a review of the curriculum and improving teaching methods. Low-attaining pupils, however, are not consistently making the progress they should. Too few pupils, especially the most able, are reaching the higher standards. Pupils are not, therefore, achieving as well as they should.
- Some weaknesses in teaching have not been addressed quickly enough. Leaders have correctly judged the school's overall effectiveness as requiring improvement, but their view of the quality of teaching, which has been supported by external advice and guidance, is not wholly accurate.
- Whole-school improvement plans, including subject-specific plans, include a suitable range of activities to bring about improvement. Leaders have not identified clear, measurable and specific targets, however, by which progress can be judged. This weakens the governing body's ability to hold leaders to account.
- Subject leaders have improved their skills and taken advantage of the training opportunities senior leaders have provided, including visiting other schools. The moderation of writing assessments has been rigorous. Checks on the accuracy of assessment in other subjects, however, are not as thorough. Subject leaders of science and some foundation subjects have not ensured consistent high-quality teaching and the use of suitable resources.
- Leaders' use of the funding to support pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is largely effective in meeting the specific needs of pupils with an education, health and care plan. The support provided for low-attaining pupils who require additional support in the classroom, however, has not been consistently effective. The training of teachers and teaching assistants has been hampered by staffing instability. The special educational needs coordinator is skilled and knowledgeable but has only recently returned to school from a period of absence. The training of staff to meet the needs of pupils in the classroom has now resumed and is showing early signs of success.
- Effective systems are in place to manage the performance of staff. Staff, including middle leaders, value the range of support for them to develop their skills, including peer and joint observations of learning, and visits to other schools. Teachers are held to account for pupils' progress, especially for disadvantaged pupils.
- The pupil premium is spent wisely. Disadvantaged pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics is accelerating quickly towards that of their peers in school and nationally. Leaders' evaluation of the school's use of pupil premium funding is

becoming more rigorous.

- The social and moral aspects of the curriculum are promoted well. Assemblies and personal, social and health education (PSHE) encourage British values of respect and tolerance well. Teachers model these values in their day-to-day work. Pupils are accepting of differences. They are very welcoming to pupils joining the school who speak a language or come from a culture different from their own. The school's ethos of equality is communicated powerfully. Pupils are adamant that all pupils are treated equally. Pupils' spiritual and cultural development is not strong, however. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of the faiths and cultures that make up modern Britain are too limited.
- The headteacher is passionate about promoting sport and physical education. The use of the sports premium funding is effective. Leaders ensure that this fund is spent on a wide range of sporting opportunities for pupils of all abilities and aptitudes. Pupils have reached the finals in many local competitions such as Boccia, hockey and rugby. The school's sports coach also helps as a mentor for pupils. Pupils speak highly of their opportunities to take part and compete. Participation levels are high from all groups of pupils, including the disadvantaged.
- The school's wider extra-curriculum is comprehensive. Pupils are encouraged to pursue a wide range of interests, including cooking, music, dance, orienteering and swimming. In addition, there is a comprehensive range of residential trips in most year groups.
- Pupils' PSHE is promoted well. Pupils throughout the school have opportunities to undertake leadership responsibilities. Many take on voluntary work in the school, through formal applications. Pupils' views are heard through the Pennine Way Parliament. Pupils understand how to keep fit and eat healthily through science and physical education lessons. Older pupils are taught how to maintain good mental health in PSHE, well.
- Leaders have had a positive impact on pupils' behaviour and welfare. Pupils' conduct is exemplary around the school. The school places high priority on pupils' well-being and safety.
- Pupils, parents and staff are highly supportive of the school and its leaders. They particularly praise the school's caring and supportive environment. Pupils' behaviour around the school reflects the school's values and ethos well. Leaders' work to settle new pupils into the school is effective. They work effectively with feeder infant schools.
- The school buys in full advisory support from the local authority. Since being judged to require improvement, the school has received enhanced support, which has included links with other schools and bespoke advice on senior leadership, literacy and mathematics. This support has helped to improve the pupils' achievements in writing significantly. However, advisers from the local authority have not challenged the school's over-generous view of teaching in some subjects or the weaknesses in its strategic plans.

## **Governance of the school**

- Governors challenge school leaders, especially about the progress of disadvantaged pupils. However, the information they receive about the school's effectiveness is sometimes too generous. Consequently, the governing body has not fully grasped some of the school's weaknesses, especially those in teaching, and the impact they have had on the progress of key groups of pupils. The governing body is rightly reviewing the effectiveness of all its external support to ensure value for money.
- The governing body is not able to hold leaders fully to account as improvement plans and subject plans do not have sufficient measurable targets.
- The membership of the governing body has changed since the last inspection and an audit of governance has further strengthened the range of skills available to govern the school well. The chair of the governing body is experienced. She guides the governing body's monitoring activities well. Governors are well known to the staff and pupils, as they visit the school regularly.
- The governing body has fully supported the headteacher in ensuring that an effective system for the performance management of staff is in place.
- The governing body has ensured that government funding to support disadvantaged pupils, those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, and physical education and sport, is spent wisely. More robust evaluations of spending strategies are planned this year to fully ensure good value for money.
- Governors have not kept close oversight of the school's website to ensure that its content meets requirements.
- Governors support the school's wider engagement with parents and the local community. They attend school events and seek the views of parents regularly.

## Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The headteacher has ensured that the school has a strong team of safeguarding leaders. The policies translate well into effective practice and a culture of safeguarding in the school. Pupils, parents and staff agree that safeguarding is a priority and a strength of the school. Staff have a good understanding of the latest guidance on keeping children safe.
- Pupils are taught well how to keep safe online. The school's e-safety committee has parents, staff and pupils among its membership. Guidance is given to parents about how to keep their children safe online at home.
- School systems to record, report and analyse safeguarding concerns are strengthening and constantly reviewed.
- The curriculum is improving to help pupils understand and protect themselves from a range of risks. They understand democratic values through their student council. Older pupils engage in debates and discussions about topical issues during PSHE. In so doing, the school is helping to prevent pupils being drawn into extremism.

**Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

**Requires improvement**

- The quality of teaching, although improving, is not consistently good throughout the school. Some teachers do not have high enough expectations of what pupils, especially the most able, should be able to do. For example, most-able mathematicians are often required to complete basic number calculations that they can do easily. Teachers do not provide them with challenging enough opportunities to apply their number skills to everyday problems. In English, most-able pupils are prevented from thinking more deeply about the reading text because teachers' level of questioning is sometimes too low.
- Similarly, the progress of low-attaining pupils is slowed because teachers do not precisely plan for their learning. Teachers regularly devise different materials for them but these are sometimes too complicated and the level of vocabulary too difficult. Many teachers do not insist that low-attaining pupils complete their work or write at any length.
- As a result of analysing the 2016 test results at the end of key stage 2, teachers of mathematics have made a concerted effort to develop pupils' reasoning skills. Pupils have more opportunities to find emerging number patterns and explain their responses to problems than they had previously but the tasks are not consistently challenging enough to deepen pupils' thinking, especially for older pupils.
- Teachers encourage reading regularly and teach reading effectively. Most pupils use their phonics knowledge to segment words. For some pupils, reading books are not well matched to their ability. Teachers are developing pupils' comprehension skills well as a result of new approaches to reading texts in class.
- Teachers' checks on the accuracy of pupils' assessments in science, reading and mathematics have not been carried out as thoroughly as those for writing. Therefore teachers do not have a secure understanding of pupils' attainment and progress.
- Teachers in all subjects place high priority on spelling when giving feedback, as for many pupils this aspect of their writing is the weakest. Teachers' new approach of revising spellings 'little and often' is making a difference for some pupils. For others, however, the current strategies have not been effective, as they continue to make basic spelling errors.
- Teachers do not develop pupils' knowledge and skills across all subjects consistently well. Opportunities for pupils to carry out experiments in science are limited. Teachers do not develop pupils' evaluation skills as well as they could in art, design and technology, and science. Older pupils develop their knowledge and understanding in humanities subjects well, however, because teachers' subject knowledge is more secure.
- The teaching of handwriting is effective and improving. Younger pupils learn cursive writing early. Pupils' presentation skills are improving quickly throughout the school, as a result of leaders' effective strategies.
- Teachers have been most successful in improving pupils' writing skills, which was identified as a key weakness at the previous inspection. Pupils engage in a wide range of writing opportunities for different audiences, they write at length and edit their work diligently.
- Newly qualified teachers are supported well and are developing their practice

effectively. Leaders encourage them to be reflective practitioners.

- Teachers effectively develop pupils' personal, social and health education. They use a range of resources and engaging topics to motivate pupils well.
- Teachers are very successful in creating a good climate for learning in the classroom. Pupils enjoy their learning and ask questions freely.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils enjoy their lessons and value the opportunities to develop their sporting skills and hobbies. The participation rates are high for extra-curricular clubs.
- Pupils' leadership skills and sense of responsibility are developed well. They have a good sense of community spirit. Pupils regularly volunteer to run groups or help out in the canteen.
- Pupils hold members of the Pennine Way Parliament in high esteem. They trust that their views will be heard and they have a stake in improving the school. They say their voice is respected by teachers. The 'ask it basket' is well used by pupils to let teachers know of any problems or queries they have.
- The school provides a range of places where more vulnerable pupils can feel secure. The Lego Club is one example of a lunchtime club which pupils value and enjoy.
- Pupils are very welcoming to visitors. They are proud of their school. New arrivals to the school, including those from different countries, who may not speak English as their first language, are treated well and respected.
- PSHE lessons tackle important issues to help pupils understand themselves and the society in which they live. Older pupils learn to challenge stereotypes. Pupils, especially boys, are encouraged to speak about their feelings for better mental health.
- Pupils have a good sense of right and wrong. These are promoted well in their everyday interaction with teachers but also through messages delivered in assemblies. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 told inspectors that they accept everyone equally.
- Bullying is rare, including prejudice-based behaviour. Pupils feel safe; they are confident that they could go to any staff to report a concern. One pupil said of the school, 'It's like my safe place.'
- Pupils have some basic knowledge and understanding of other faiths and cultures that make up modern Britain, although they get confused between religions other than Christianity.

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.

- Pupils conduct themselves very well in and out of class. They are polite and helpful. Pupils in the canteen were observed chatting and eating calmly. All cleared up after themselves.
- There are few behaviour incidents. Pupils enjoy learning and are highly respectful of their teachers and each other.
- Pupils, staff and parents agree that behaviour is a strength of the school.
- Attendance for all pupils is at the national averages. The attendance of disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below that of their peers but it is improving.

## Outcomes for pupils

## Requires improvement

- Since the last inspection, pupils' outcomes in reading, writing and mathematics have been inconsistent. In 2015, pupils' progress in reading and mathematics at the end of key stage 2 was in line with national averages. Their progress in writing was below average. In 2016, however, middle- and low-attaining pupils made slower progress than others nationally in reading and mathematics. Pupils' progress in writing in 2016 was significantly above national averages.
- The attainment of current pupils in mathematics and reading is improving compared to last year but some weaknesses in teaching are holding back the progress of some groups, such as the most able and the least able pupils. Consistently, in all year groups and across subjects, too few pupils are reaching the new high standards.
- Disadvantaged pupils throughout the school are supported well and their progress in most subjects is accelerating. In 2015, the progress in mathematics of disadvantaged pupils leaving Year 6 was broadly in line with and sometimes better than that of other pupils nationally. In a dip in 2016 results, however, disadvantaged pupils' progress and attainment were not significantly different from those of other pupils nationally, apart from in mathematics, where they were lower.
- The difference in attainment at the end of Year 6 in mathematics and reading between boys and girls was stark in 2016, as boys' attainment was much higher than girls. Currently, there is very little difference between the attainment of boys and girls in these subjects.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make inconsistent progress. The school works effectively with agencies to support pupils with acute and specific needs. In 2016, pupils with an education, health and care plan did better than those requiring only support in the classroom. Currently, the support pupils receive in the classroom is improving as a result of a whole-school review of the effectiveness of additional support in the classroom and they are making faster progress.
- The school's assessment records and work in pupils' books show that disadvantaged pupils make a slow start when they enter school but, by Years 4 and 5, they are catching up to reach similar standards to other pupils, particularly in mathematics and writing. Most high-attaining disadvantaged pupils are making as much progress as their peers.
- In 2016, the proportion of pupils at the end of Year 6 who attained the new expected

standard in grammar, punctuation and spelling was below the national average, and particularly so for those who were disadvantaged. The proportion of pupils achieving the higher standard was well below average. Currently, attainment in this aspect of English is improving, but mostly for older pupils, as a result of some new initiatives to improve spelling.

- Pupils' knowledge and skills in science are not developed fully. Pupils' attainment in this subject in 2016 was in line with that of others nationally. Work in pupils' books shows they have few opportunities to undertake experiments, despite having some use of a science laboratory in a local secondary school. Pupils' knowledge and understanding are not consistently stretched.
- The school is developing its curriculum for foundation subjects. Pupils enjoy and acquire appropriate skills and knowledge in practical subjects like physical education, computing, design and technology and art. Pupils' knowledge and understanding in geography and history are developed well. In all these subjects, however, the most able are not challenged sufficiently to achieve highly.
- The school has developed a clear strategy to improve pupils' reading skills, which is mostly successful. Reading is encouraged through regular reading sessions, reading diaries and a well-stocked library. Pupils' reading skills are tracked well. Records show that, as a result of intensive support for pupils with low literacy skills, their reading ages rapidly improve.
- The school has prepared pupils very well, socially and emotionally, for the next stage of their education, but last year's test results show that many pupils had not reached age-related standards in a range of subjects and were therefore not academically ready for secondary school. This year, pupils in Year 6 are better prepared, as standards are improving.

## School details

Unique reference number	137543
Local authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	10031168

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	364
Appropriate authority	The academy trust
Chair	Mari Potter
Headteacher	Richard Mansfield
Telephone number	01283 223697
Website	<a href="http://www.pennineway.derbyshire.sch.uk">www.pennineway.derbyshire.sch.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:headteacher@pennineway.derbyshire.sch.uk">headteacher@pennineway.derbyshire.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	10–11 June 2015

## Information about this school

- The school does not meet requirements on the publication on its website of information about assessment results and the curriculum.
- The school does not comply with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish about governance.
- Pennine Way is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The very large majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is slightly higher than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is much higher than the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Year 6.

- The school runs a daily before-school club for its own pupils and for those attending a local infant school.
- The school is supported by the headteacher of a local good school and a literacy consultant. This support is organised by the local authority.
- The school is a member of a number of local forums and support groups including the Swadlincote School Improvement Partnership, the South Derbyshire Junior Headteachers' Forum and the South Derbyshire School Sports Partnership.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in over 20 lessons. The headteacher jointly observed four of these and carried out a work scrutiny of pupils' work alongside inspectors.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read and talked with them about their reading.
- Inspectors held discussions with members of the governing body, staff and pupils, as well as with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors examined a variety of documents, including those relating to pupils' performance, safeguarding and the school's improvement planning.
- The inspectors took account of the 36 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including responses to the free-text facility. They also took account of seven responses to the staff questionnaire and 30 to the pupil survey. Inspectors also took account of the school's own surveys, and spoke with parents to gather their views.

## Inspection team

Zarina Connolly, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Jayne Ashman	Her Majesty's Inspector
Pete Strauss	Ofsted Inspector

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