



# Pontefract Larks Hill Junior and Infant School

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 108188  
**LEA** Wakefield  
**Inspection number** 277921  
**Inspection dates** 1 February 2006 to 2 February 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Mr Robert Robinson CfBT Lead Inspector

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Larks Hill
<b>School category</b>	Community		Pontefract
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	5 to 11		West Yorkshire WF8 4RJ
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01977 722 845
<b>Number on roll</b>	207	<b>Fax number</b>	01977 722 845
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mr Jeff Allinson
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	5 April 2000	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Alison Smith

<b>Age group</b> 5 to 11	<b>Inspection dates</b> 1 February 2006 - 2 February 2006	<b>Inspection number</b> 277921
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

## Description of the school

This is an average sized primary school. Almost all children are of white, British heritage. The socio-economic circumstances of the area are above average, as is attainment on entry to Reception. The proportion of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average and only a few have statements of special educational needs. The school gained a School Achievement Award in 2002, the International Award in 2003 and Artsmark (silver) in 2004. The headteacher and deputy headteacher commenced their appointments during the past year. In Years 5 and 6 new teaching staff were appointed this academic year.

## Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

The overall effectiveness is good which agrees with the school's view. The headteacher, staff and governors lead and manage the school well. Standards are above average and children achieve well. In the national tests in 2005 standards in writing dipped because boys in Year 2 and higher attainers in Year 6 did not do as well as expected. Nevertheless, higher attainers are now making good progress and, in Year 2, boys and girls now progress at similar rates. Teaching is good overall, but varies a little. The curriculum is good; it is enriched well, particularly in Years 3 to 6. Provision in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory and standards by the end of Reception are above average. Children in the Reception make satisfactory progress. However, younger children, mainly boys, do not get enough opportunities to work independently and show initiative in their learning. Children's personal development is good. Attendance rates are above average. Children enjoy coming to school and they respond well to the supportive care they receive. The school has improved well since the last inspection particularly in the development of information and communication technology (ICT). This has been accomplished while maintaining high standards in other subjects. The school has a good understanding of its strengths and areas for development. It has identified, rightly, the need for more rigorous monitoring of teaching and learning. The commitment of the staff and the effective leadership and management indicate that the school has good capacity to continue to improve. The school provides good value for money.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Increase monitoring to spread good practice in order to raise the quality of teaching and learning in all lessons to good or better.
- Provide more opportunities for children in Reception and Year 1 to learn through practical tasks and to work independently.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

Achievement and standards are good overall. Children in the Reception class make satisfactory progress relative to their above average starting points. By the time they enter Year 1 standards are above the local authority average in all the areas of learning. In Years 1 and 2, children continue to make satisfactory progress. In the 2005 national tests at the end of Year 2 standards were significantly above the national average, overall. However, boys' standards in writing were much lower than those of girls. This was identified by the leadership and acted upon. There are now no significant differences between the performance of boys and girls in Year 2.

By the end of Year 6, standards are significantly above the national average, as has been the case since the last inspection. In Years 3 to 6 pupils achieve well because of good and sometimes outstanding teaching. In the 2005 national tests at the end of Year 6 the school met its demanding targets in mathematics. It almost met its targets

in English. However, in English, although still above the national average, standards were depressed compared to previous years' performance because of lower than expected results in the tests in writing at the higher level. The headteacher has taken steps to improve standards in writing and these are working.

Children, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, enjoy their learning and achieve well because of good teaching and the effective help they receive from teaching assistants.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Children's personal development is good. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is promoted well. Children enjoy their work, particularly when it is well matched to their interests and abilities. Attendance is good and children are keen to learn.

Children are taught the difference between right and wrong, and their behaviour, both in class and around the school is good. They care for one another and are courteous and welcoming to visitors. There are good links with schools in other countries, and this contributes well to children's cultural understanding. The school's participation in the annual Pontefract Liquorice Festival gives them good insight into local industry and areas of cultural history.

Children say they feel safe and confident and trust all adults in school. The school council, although new, is having a growing influence, and current councillors are articulate and confident. Children build on their social skills and personal qualities through the many opportunities they have to take on responsibilities, such as through the introduction of playground 'buddies'. Healthy life choices and keeping safe are promoted well through a range of activities. By the end of Year 6, children are well prepared for the next stage of education because of their good acquisition of basic skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

The quality of teaching is good, overall, and leads to children making good progress in their learning. This matches the school's view. In the best lessons, teaching is well organised to develop children's learning of basic skills. Children are highly motivated because they are interested in their learning. All children are challenged at their level of attainment, including those children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Skilful questioning and feedback of teachers helps children to understand how well they have done and how to improve. Relationships between children and teachers are outstanding. The marking of children's work is of a high standard and children have a clear view of how well they have done and what they must do to reach their targets. In weaker lessons, children do not have sufficient opportunities to make choices about

their learning. There is too much instruction by teachers and children spend far too long listening rather than becoming actively involved in practical experiences to hurry their learning. This results in some children, particularly younger boys, losing interest and concentration which slows down their progress.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum is good. It meets statutory requirements and matches the interests of children well, particularly in Years 3 to 6. In Reception and Year 1, the planning of opportunities for children to extend their learning through practical activities and to work independently is sometimes limited. The school has successfully widened the curriculum; for example, Spanish is now taught in Years 3 to 5. The strong emphasis on art enriches and adds enjoyment to the curriculum. Artistic displays provide a stimulating learning environment and celebrate children's efforts. Visitors and visits are used well to provide an extra dimension to learning. A good range of out-of-school activities adds enjoyment to learning, such as a variety of sporting, artistic and music clubs. Increasingly, children are gaining a better understanding of healthy lifestyles, keeping safe and contributing to the community through personal, social, health and citizenship education.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

Care, guidance and support are good. Relationships between staff and children are generally good. As a result, children thrive and enjoy school. This shows in the way children become increasingly confident as they get older. Teachers know their children well and both academic progress and personal development are monitored closely. In particular, the close tracking of children's progress and the setting of targets assists their good progress.

Health and safety arrangements are effective and child protection procedures are thorough and well managed by staff. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are helped well. Good links with outside agencies benefit children's learning. Effective arrangements are in place to assist children when transferring to the next stage of their education.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The quality of leadership and management is good. Although the headteacher and deputy headteacher are new to their posts, they have taken the necessary actions to maintain the school's reputation for high standards. They work very effectively together with the governing body, and other managers, and this has ensured stability through a period of change.

The school's self-evaluation has been carried out thoroughly, and strengths and weaknesses accurately identified. Because the headteacher has only been in place since last year, there has not yet been time to implement fully actions arising from this audit. For example, monitoring of teaching has been undertaken, but has not impacted completely on identified issues.

The clear vision of the headteacher, to ensure that every child matters and that a broad and rich curriculum gives all the chance to flourish, is well promoted. The ease with which established teachers have adapted to new roles, and newcomers have quickly become effective members of the team, shows how effective her management has been. The head and deputy work very well as a team and this benefits both other staff and children. Parental support is good and their views and concerns are fully acknowledged.

The governors have a good overview of the school. They are very committed to the school, and fulfil their role as critical friends well. They are, rightly, proud of the school's success in maintaining high standards since the last inspection.

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## Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	<b>School Overall</b>	<b>16-19</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	3	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2	NA
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	2	NA
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	2	NA
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	2	NA

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy</b>	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
<b>The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe</b>	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
<b>The extent to which learners make a positive contribution</b>	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being</b>	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

## **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Thank you for welcoming us to your school and being so polite and friendly. We enjoyed our visit and we want to share with you what we thought about your school.

What we liked most about your school:

- you behave well and work hard in lessons and all get on so well together
- you have worked hard with teachers this academic year to improve standards in writing
- you are taught well so that you make good progress in your learning
- the headteacher, staff and governors look after you well and know how to make your school better
- your attendance is good.

What we have asked your school to do now:

- we have asked the headteacher and the staff to improve further the quality of teaching
- we want children in the Reception and Year 1 to have more opportunities to learn through practical tasks.

We appreciated talking to you about your work and watching you learn, we wish you well for the future.