

# Pontefract Halfpenny Lane Junior Infant and Nursery School

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	108204
<b>Local Authority</b>	Wakefield
<b>Inspection number</b>	309616
<b>Inspection dates</b>	10–11 December 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Derek Pattinson

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	382
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr D Watson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Harry Armitage
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	23 June 2003
<b>School address</b>	Halfpenny Lane Pontefract West Yorkshire WF8 4BW
<b>Telephone number</b>	01977 722820
<b>Fax number</b>	01977 722820

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This is a larger than average primary school near the centre of Pontefract. Pupils come from a wide socio-economic background. Most live in the town itself, although a minority come from further afield. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is a little above average. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is similar to the national picture. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and the number for whom English is an additional language are much lower than found nationally. The school has been awarded Healthy Schools status, Investors in People and the Activemark, and is working towards the Investors in Pupils award and the Artsmark Silver award.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

This is a good school with particular strengths in the quality of its impressive curriculum and in the outstanding personal development of its pupils. Its successes owe much to strengths in leadership and management and teaching. All staff are ready to go the extra mile to ensure that pupils leave the school as successful individuals. Parents think highly of the school and of its 'friendly, professional, dedicated and approachable' staff, and overwhelmingly appreciate the excellent care the school takes of their children. The headteacher's high quality leadership has ensured that the school's track record of improvement is good. It is always looking forward in innovative ways and has a strong capacity for continued improvement.

Standards and achievement are good. When children enter the Nursery their skill levels are below average. By the end of Reception standards are average because of good teaching and provision. When pupils leave Year 6 standards are above average. Pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, achieve well because of good teaching, high quality support and very good relationships which enhance pupils' learning. Where teaching and learning are at their best, lessons are fun and enjoyable and pupils achieve particularly well. During these lessons, enthusiastic teachers match work well to pupils' abilities and give them lots of encouragement to sustain interest and involvement. However, in a few lessons this quality of teaching is not demonstrated consistently: the pace is not brisk enough, the lesson focus not clear enough, and so progress slows.

As a result of the outstanding quality of pastoral care, guidance and support, pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is excellent. This also helps to explain why many pupils demonstrate self-confidence and maturity in their attitudes and opinions and behave very well in and around the school. Attendance is satisfactory even though the school works hard to promote it. Assessment procedures are good because the school regularly checks on what pupils know and understand. However, the use of learning targets and marking to aid pupils' learning is not consistently effective to help guide their academic performance. Consequently, pupils do not always have a good understanding of what they are learning and what they need to do to improve further. Pupils find most lessons interesting, and often exciting, because the curriculum is diverse, creative, varied and innovative, and caters very well for all pupils, including the most able. The school makes many links between subjects and with community organisations and individuals to help develop important skills and enhance pupils' learning. An outstanding range of visits, visitors and very popular extra-curricular activities bring learning to life.

The headteacher leads the school well and has established an effective climate for sustained improvement. Arrangements for raising standards further are rigorous and embedded in the school's work. There is no complacency among senior managers who strive to give pupils a good education. The governing body plays its part in actively supporting the school and holding it rigorously to account. New governors are quickly brought 'up to speed' with their roles and responsibilities through training and support. The school's Healthy Schools award shows that it is successful in promoting the necessity for pupils to keep fit, healthy and safe. Pupils are prepared well for the world of work because important skills are given strong emphasis. Financial planning and management are of a high standard, thus securing good value for money.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

Standards and provision in the Foundation Stage are good. When children start school their skills are below national expectations for their age range and are particularly low in early literacy skills. They make good progress and most meet national targets by end of this key stage. Children experience a calm and happy start to their school life and, as a result, they thrive in a stimulating safe learning environment. Interesting, exciting learning activities inside and outside the classroom ensure they have fun while they learn. Children learn to cooperate with each other and develop positive attitudes, which equip them well for their school lives. Effective leadership and management are seen in the strong teamwork and in the progress made by the children. The impact of leaders can also be seen in the outstanding curriculum planned to bring a wealth of direct experiences into the classroom. Children become independent learners with their self-confidence clearly seen in the performance of a seasonal play for parents and friends of the school.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the consistency and quality of teaching throughout the school to that of the best.
- Ensure that pupils always have good knowledge of what they are to learn, what they have learnt and what they need to do to improve.
- Improve the levels of attendance and punctuality.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

Pupils' achievement is good and the standards they reach are above the national average. Pupils enter the Foundation Stage with below average skills. They make good progress due to the effective Early Years provision. By the time they enter Year 1, most children have reached the expected levels for their age although some are still a little behind, particularly in their language and literacy development. Over recent years, pupils' standards in reading, writing and mathematics in Key Stage 1 have varied. However, progress has been broadly in line with the national average, and achievement over time has been satisfactory overall. By the end of Year 6, standards in English, science and mathematics in particular, are above the national average and progress is good. Challenging targets contribute to the good achievement. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are very well supported and make similar progress to other pupils in response to the significant additional help they receive.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. Their enjoyment of school is reflected in their very positive attitudes to learning and exceptionally good behaviour in class and around the school. Pupils know the difference between right and wrong and incidents of bullying or racism are extremely rare. Relationships between pupils are very positive and their attitudes towards teachers and visitors consistently respectful. Pupils feel safe and always move around school in a calm and orderly manner. Attendance is satisfactory and the school works hard to promote it. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. They are developing a clear understanding of other cultures and beliefs through assemblies, work in lessons and via outstanding links with Rebonwe Primary School in South Africa. The school

council is involved in many different aspects of the school's life, such as the fitness trail, the bake sale and the rock-climbing wall. Pupils take on many responsibilities within school, such as running the healthy tuck shop, and develop a good understanding of life in the wider community by their active fundraising for a range of charities. Pupils are aware that they need a sensible diet and exercise to stay healthy. Many join in the wide range of sports activities and appreciate the drinking water which is always available.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Secure relationships, effective management of pupils and high levels of care successfully underpin the good teaching and learning. Pupils find most lessons interesting, challenging and fun. Teaching is especially successful when time is used to good effect, teachers give pupils much encouragement and praise and tasks are demanding to help them enjoy learning. Teaching assistants contribute very well to the quality of pupils' learning, especially those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and the most able pupils. In a small number of lessons, the pace is not brisk enough and teachers do not share clearly with pupils at the start what they have to learn, nor evaluate with them at the end what they have learnt. Teachers' marking of pupils' work always acknowledges their efforts but does not always indicate what they must do next to help them improve. Effective procedures are in place for assessing and monitoring pupils' progress.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 1**

The outstanding curriculum is well planned, linking subjects and developing pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding progressively from year to year. Careful planning ensures that pupils have the best provision for their age and for their abilities. Good provision for learning the basic skills of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology prepares pupils well for their future lives. Curriculum provision for the most able pupils is particularly well developed. Pupils are rightly proud of their achievements in art, music, dance, drama and sport. They have received high praise for their work in the performing arts, such as, in a recent musical production performed at a national music festival which members of the audience described as 'stunning'. Pupils in Key Stage 2 have weekly Spanish lessons and visitors to the school, concerts, performances and visits out of school are the norm. This innovative curriculum encourages self-confidence and develops self-esteem. A kaleidoscope of enrichment activities makes the school 'buzz' with interest and enthusiasm. The many extra-curricular activities allow the pupils to apply their learned skills in both competitive and fun settings.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 2**

The quality of care, guidance and support is good with some outstanding features. All staff, including the school's very own matron, and the well trained teaching assistants, are extremely committed to the inclusive care of individual pupils and this contributes exceptionally well to their personal development and well-being. The school's policies and procedures for risk assessment and child protection are securely in place and the systems for vetting staff and visitors to the school meet with the latest national guidelines. The school uses a range of outside

agencies very effectively to enhance this provision and the support for vulnerable pupils and those with low self-esteem is excellent.

Systems for monitoring pupils' progress and tracking their academic achievement and personal development are thorough and help to identify those who need extra support. However, approaches to involving pupils in their own learning are inconsistent. For example, some pupils do not know their targets well enough to give them ownership of what they need to do to improve.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The able and enthusiastic headteacher, supported well by the deputy head, senior teachers and the governing body, provides effective leadership which results in good strategic planning and organisation. His impressive knowledge of the school is reflected in the school's self-evaluation, which is honest and largely accurate, and which increasingly takes the views of staff, governors and parents into account. The emphasis on the development of inclusive and shared leadership and an intensive programme of professional development are positive features of the good leadership and management. This strong track record of continuous development shows good capacity for further improvement. Subject leaders are steadily becoming skilled at monitoring the school's work and performance. However, the quality of lesson monitoring lacks consistency and does not focus enough on the learning pupils are making to enable it to be of maximum benefit to teachers. The governing body is well led, well informed and works in close partnership with the school. New governors are receiving essential training to overcome their lack of experience and ensure that they are fully effective. As a result, the governing body increasingly plays its part in holding the leadership to account.

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## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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### Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

### Achievement and standards

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

### Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

### The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

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

## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

**Annex B****Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

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

Thank you very much for making Mr Anderson, Mrs Davies and me so welcome in your school. We really enjoyed talking with you and visiting your lessons. We were very disappointed that we could not see your Christmas concert, which you and many of your parents seemed to be enjoying so much when we were in school. After visiting your school for two days we now fully understand why many of you give your school ten out of ten and why almost all your parents think you go to a good school. We thought that you would like to hear what we found out about your school because there are many really good things happening there.

- You make good progress and reach high standards by the time you leave.
- You love school because teachers, teaching assistants, and other adults are kind and friendly and work very hard to give you a good education.
- You get on well with one another and with adults, enjoy taking responsibility and your behaviour and attitudes to learning are usually excellent.
- Your lessons are often interesting and exciting. There are many visits, visitors and special events organised to help you learn and develop new skills.
- Your teachers and other adults help you when you have problems, make sure that you are safe, and encourage you to stay fit and healthy.
- You have a good headteacher and, together with all staff, he makes sure that you are happy and successful in school.

A few of you don't come to school as often as you should. You must try to come to school every day so that you can benefit from all the good things that the school gives you. You will then be able to join in the fun of learning! We have asked your teachers to give all of you guidance on what you need to do to improve your work. You can help them by making sure you know what you have to learn in every lesson and by telling your teacher what you have learnt at the end. This way your teachers can always make sure that your work is exactly at the right level for you so that you can do your best. We have asked them also to try to make sure that all lessons are really good to give you the best possible chances to learn.

It was really good to find that all of you are happy at school and doing well.