

Pontefract Halfpenny Lane Junior Infant and Nursery School

Halfpenny Lane, Pontefract, West Yorkshire, WF8 4BW

Inspection dates

11–12 March 2015

| Overall effectiveness | Previous inspection: | Not previously inspected as an academy | |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|--|---|
| | This inspection: | Good | 2 |
| Leadership and management | | Outstanding | 1 |
| Behaviour and safety of pupils | | Outstanding | 1 |
| 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.

- As a result of dynamic and dedicated leadership and management, this is a rapidly improving school with very strong capacity to improve further.
- Extremely committed senior leaders, middle managers, governing body and staff share the common aim of providing the best education possible for pupils.
- Governors are very knowledgeable and are fully involved in the life of the school. As a result, they are in a strong position to support leaders as well as challenge the school on its performance.
- Behaviour is outstanding. Pupils are extremely keen to learn and thoroughly enjoy school. They work and learn in an exceptionally calm and caring environment.
- Pupils say they feel very safe and have absolute confidence in staff to help them with any difficulties they may have. Parents agree with this sentiment.
- All staff promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well through the subjects taught, as well as through the wide range of musical, theatrical and sporting opportunities.
- The quality of teaching is good and some elements are outstanding. Lessons excite and engage pupils in their learning. Pupils are willing participants in lessons and benefit from good quality questioning and regular discussions about their work. Vibrant classroom displays support pupils' learning extremely well.
- Skilled teaching assistants provide highly effective support within the classroom, in small groups or one to one. They provide valuable support for pupils.
- Achievement is good. From sometimes low starting points when they join school, pupils make good progress. Disadvantaged pupils, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, receive consistently good support which enables them to achieve well. Standards in English and mathematics are rising.
- Provision in the early years is good. Children settle into good routines very quickly. These ensure they are well equipped for life in school.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The impact of actions to close the attainment gaps between disadvantaged pupils in school and other pupils nationally are not being seen in published data.
- Children in the early years have too few opportunities to use a wide variety of information and communication technology.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited several lessons or parts of lessons, five of which were observed jointly with the headteacher or acting deputy headteacher. Inspectors looked at a range of pupils' work and heard a number of pupils from Years 2 and 6 read.
- Meetings took place with the headteacher, senior leaders, staff and groups of pupils. Inspectors also met the Chair, vice-chair and another member of the governing body and representatives from the academy trust and the local authority.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documentation, including the school's data on pupils' progress and records relating to pupils' behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.
- Inspectors observed movement around the school at playtime and at lunch breaks. Displays around school and also in classrooms were scrutinised.
- Inspectors took into account the 57 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View), as well as the results of a recent parent questionnaire carried out by the school. Inspectors also held a telephone conversation with one parent and spoke informally with a number of others.
- The 15 responses to the staff questionnaire were also considered

Inspection team

| | |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------|
| Christine Millett, Lead inspector | Additional Inspector |
| David Matthews | Additional Inspector |
| Derek Pattinson | Additional Inspector |

Full report

Information about this school

- Halfpenny Lane converted to become an academy school on 1 April 2013, becoming part of the Pontefract Academies Trust. When its predecessor school, bearing the same name, was last inspected by Ofsted it was judged to be satisfactory.
- Halfpenny Lane is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The school's part-time Nursery operates in the mornings and afternoons for two separate classes. Reception children attend on a full-time basis.
- The majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion speaking English as an additional language is well below average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils, those supported through the pupil premium funding, at 25%, is similar to that found nationally. The pupil premium is additional funding to support pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make up 10% of the school population. This is below the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- Since the school was inspected in 2012, there have been significant changes in staffing, including the appointment of the headteacher and other senior leaders. Many of the teaching staff are also new to the school.
- The school runs a daily breakfast and after-school club for its pupils.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue to close the attainment gaps between disadvantaged pupils in school and other pupils nationally.
- Widen the range of information and communication technology available to children in the early years.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The extremely motivated and tenacious headteacher, governors and other senior leaders share very high expectations of pupils and staff. The quality of teaching has improved and so pupil progress is speeding up. Regular meetings are held to discuss individual pupils and reduce the risk of them falling behind.
- Middle managers and subject leaders are a highly skilled group who are fully involved in the drive for continuous improvement. They have an excellent understanding of what works well and what needs improving and are extremely involved in the checking of pupils' progress. Middle managers lead well-regarded workshops for parents on particular aspects of the curriculum and present highly analytical subject reports to governors. The impact of their actions is being felt across the school in the high levels of collaboration amongst staff and the improvements being seen in pupil achievement.
- School leaders regularly check the quality of teaching. This has a highly effective impact upon improving learning. Targets for improvement are followed through and link to progression along the pay scales. Best practice is shared extremely well within and beyond the school with coaching and the modelling of lessons being extremely positive features. Staff needs are clearly identified in an effective programme of professional development. Underperformance is tackled rigorously.
- The tracking of pupils' progress is outstanding and embedded in all the school's work. This enables interventions to be targeted precisely to where they are most needed.
- A review of the use of the pupil premium has taken place in order to examine the school's plans for the use of the funding in order to improve the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and close any remaining gaps between them and non-disadvantaged pupils nationally. In-school data indicates that gaps are starting to close. The school provides pupils with a broad, balanced and vibrant range of subjects, including French, music and physical education. Extremely well-chosen topics combine a number of subjects in an exciting and engaging manner while still maintaining a good emphasis on literacy and numeracy. Pupils share and celebrate their achievements in assemblies.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted exceptionally well. The school has identified key activities that develop a sense of wonder and encourage tolerance and acceptance of others. Pupils learn about different religions and cultures and have a good understanding of life in modern Britain. The school's work to foster good relationships and tackle discrimination is highly effective.
- The school has an unquestionable commitment to ensuring every pupil has an equal opportunity to succeed. Senior leaders routinely collect information about individual pupils to identify those at risk of underachieving. The extra funding to support disadvantaged pupils has been used extremely effectively to ensure that these pupils make at least similar progress to their classmates and that where gaps remained they are starting to close more rapidly. However this can not be seen in published data.
- The primary school sport funding is used extremely well to ensure more pupils take part in physical exercise. A wide range of activities are available such as dance and table tennis as well as the more traditional sports of netball, hockey and football. Teachers work with sports specialists to increase their own levels of confidence and expertise so they are more effective in improving pupils' skills.
- The local authority has provided a range of support and advice since the previous inspection and now recognises Halfpenny Lane as a good school.
- The school benefits from its links with other schools within the academy trust. These links include the sharing of expertise and resources.
- The majority of parents view the school positively. They have opportunities to attend meetings to discuss their children's work as well as celebration assemblies or information evenings. Regular newsletters keep parents up to date with the required level of attendance. The recent appointment of a parent involvement worker has helped improve communication between home and school as well as providing support for pupils and families. This was described by one parent as a 'fantastic asset' to the school.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is extremely knowledgeable about the school's performance through reports from the headteacher, presentations from other leaders and their own regular visits. Governors have an extensive range of skills and take full advantage of training opportunities to maintain their effectiveness. They know how well pupils are doing and how good teaching is. Governors offer support to the school yet ask searching questions.
 - Governors make sure funds are spent effectively to promote pupils' progress, for example, the pupil premium and primary school sports funding. Governors ensure the school's pay policy is linked to teachers' performance and that any underperformance is tackled promptly.
 - Governors are exceptionally clear about their roles and responsibilities. They make sure all legal

requirements are met, including those relating to safeguarding.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

are outstanding

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils are thoughtful, articulate and a pleasure to talk to. They are unfailingly polite and well mannered and behave impeccably in and around school.
- Lunchtimes are very social occasions when pupils catch up with their friends, welcoming each other to their tables. Playtimes are active yet pupils get on very well together when outside. Well-established routines ensure quick and safe transitions back into classrooms and no time is wasted.
- Pupils' attitudes to school and learning are exemplified by pupils' own comments. They describe their school as being 'amazing', 'joyful', 'fun', 'happy', and 'caring'. Pupils are very proud of their school and were very keen that the inspectors should enjoy their time there. Pupils are very clear about the high expectations of work and behaviour and respond accordingly. 'There's no time for messing around!'.
- In the lessons observed, no time was lost due to inappropriate behaviour. In fact, classrooms are a hive of activity. Pupils are actively encouraged to discuss their work with their classmates and take it in turns to coach each other. This high level of collaboration fosters strong and trusting relationships within classes.
- Pupils enjoy the responsibilities they are given and tackle their roles very conscientiously. Older pupils are excellent role models for the younger children and pupils. For example, the school council work together to improve the school for the benefit of all, digital leaders are always ready to help each other, and adults, with information technology, and young sports leaders plan and teach activities to pupils in Years 1 and 2.
- The whole school takes part in democratic elections of the school council, giving pupils a sense of belonging to a community and an understanding of British values. These are promoted further in the negotiations that take place in each class around the need for rules and laws and how these relate to their own classrooms.
- Attendance is average. The school works tirelessly to support the small number of families where attendance is lowest. The importance of good attendance is well publicised throughout the school and in weekly newsletters. Class and individual rewards are in place and the school works closely with the education welfare officer.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding.
- Pupils say they are very comfortable in school and feel very safe. Parents fully support this view.
- Pupils have a good understanding of the term bullying and clearly know the difference between that and falling out. They know there are different forms of bullying. Pupils are quick to point out that incidences of bullying are very rare and staff are quick to sort out any problems they may have, fairly. Pupils know that staff care and are always there to help them.
- The school is extremely effective in increasing pupils' awareness of how to keep themselves safe through regular effective teaching, in lessons or assemblies, about e-safety and cyber bullying as well as aspects relevant to school trips and residential visits. As the school is located near a railway line railway safety is covered.
- The school has its own nurse permanently on site who not only attends to any injuries but teaches first aid to pupils. All the school's policies to protect and keep children safe are in order.

The quality of teaching

is good

- The quality of teaching and learning throughout the school, including in the early years, is good.
- Outstanding facets of teaching include very strong relationships based on trust and respect between pupils and staff. Consequently, there is an extremely positive climate for learning. Teachers convey very high expectations of work and behaviour which pupils meet by paying attention and always doing their best.
- Lessons are well planned so that pupils are clear about what they are learning and how they can achieve their targets. Pupils have regular opportunities to practise their skills in reading, writing and mathematics in other lessons. For example, in their topic on China Year 6 pupils used their reading skills to gather information which was then represented in graphs.
- Teachers' subject knowledge is good. They ask probing questions that require reasoned, detailed answers

that check pupils' understanding and progress within lessons. This enables teachers to adapt lessons to provide more challenging work or further explanation, as appropriate. In this way, teachers ensure tasks are well matched to pupils' abilities. This is particularly evident in the work of disadvantaged pupils where over time there have been gaps in attainment between this group of pupils and others in school. However, progress is now accelerating and gaps starting to close.

- Teaching assistants play an important role in lessons and make valuable contributions to pupil progress as they have received appropriate training and are given time to discuss pupils' achievements with teachers. This enables them to carry out their roles so effectively.
- Writing is well taught. During the inspection, groups of pupils were observed writing high-quality rhyming couplets in the style of Shakespeare and then reciting them for the rest of the class. Pupils' vocabulary was effectively extended and their self-confidence, when reciting, grew considerably.
- Reading is promoted well across the school. Pupils say they like reading and are given many opportunities to read in class. They have access to books in the extremely attractive library and enjoy reading books by favourite authors as well as discovering someone new. Pupils are able to describe with great clarity how they would work out unfamiliar words using the different methods they have been taught and use dictionaries with ease in order to check on meaning.
- The teaching of mathematics is also good. Pupils are able to draw upon a range of methods in order to carry out mathematical tasks independently. Very occasionally pupils are not moved on rapidly enough and do too much of the same task even when it is clear they have grasped the concept.
- Very attractive displays of pupils' work in classrooms and throughout the school not only provide useful points of reference in lessons but also show that pupils' work is valued.
- Pupils' progress is supported well through personalised homework which provides further practice in a particular area as requested by the pupils themselves. Activities such as reading, spelling and times tables are also set.
- Marking is regular and consistent across the school. Encouraging comments are usually followed by something that can be done to improve the work.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Strong leadership and management have ensured that progress is starting to accelerate rapidly across the school with the result that standards are rising. Weaknesses in teaching have been addressed, expectations raised and more challenging targets set.
- Children make good progress in the early years and by the end of the Reception class the proportion of children who have reached a good level of development is above average.
- Results for the Year 1 national screening check for phonics (letters and the sounds they make) are slightly above the national average. By the end of Year 2, most pupils have reached the required standard and are able to apply this knowledge in their reading and writing.
- Standards at the end of Year 2 are starting to rise. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels is now above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- For the vast majority of pupils, progress in Key Stage 2 is good and achievement is improving. In 2014, the results in national tests were the best they have been for a number of years. Attainment in reading, writing and mathematics improved and, while reading was in line with the national average, writing and mathematics were above.
- The most recent test results show that, from their starting points, by the end of Year 6, the proportions of pupils making expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics are similar to or better than those found nationally. The proportions making more-than-expected progress are above the national average in writing and are similar in reading and mathematics.
- The proportion of disabled pupils or who have special educational needs varies from year-to-year as does the complexity of their needs. Their progress is tracked rigorously to ensure that they make at least similar levels of progress as their classmates and support is put in place as and when appropriate.
- The school has recognised that while disadvantaged pupils make similar levels of progress to other pupils nationally in mathematics, reading and writing there are gaps in attainment between them and other pupils nationally. It is now a school priority to ensure remaining gaps close more rapidly than has been the case in the past.
- Results in national tests in 2014 show that there were gaps of approximately three terms between the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and other pupils nationally in reading, writing and mathematics. However, these gaps are not as great as in previous years. The in-school gaps are similar, being approximately three terms but again, narrower than in previous years. Following a review of the use of

the pupil premium funding the school has taken action to reduce gaps further and this is starting to show in many parts of the school but is not fully established.

- The school has accurately identified where there are potential gaps in other year groups. The school's own data and inspection evidence from the scrutiny of pupils' books indicate that overall the progress made by pupils in all year groups in the school is often above average and that standards are set to improve even further.
- The most able pupils are making at least good progress and, by the end of Year 6 the proportion reaching Level 6 are similar to the national average.
- As a result of improving standards and progress, pupils are now leaving the school well prepared for their secondary school careers.

The early years provision

is good

- Children in early years behave exceptionally well. They respond well to the very well-planned opportunities to work either in small groups with an adult or to choose an activity for themselves. In these situations, children show great perseverance when completing tasks. Children are curious to learn and follow routines well. They learn and play happily together learning to share as well as take responsibilities such as putting on their own coats or choosing their own snack.
- Children enter nursery with skills, knowledge and understanding below those typical for their age, particularly in personal, social and emotional development, and communication and literacy, although many are approaching expected levels. Most make good progress, particularly in personal development. However, achievement in technology is not as strong because children have too few opportunities to develop these skills using a wide range of technologies.
- Children, including disabled children and those with special educational needs, make good progress overall. Those supported by additional funding do not get off to such a strong start as others but this is improving as their needs are being identified earlier. As a result, most children are well prepared for Year 1.
- Adults provide a safe and caring setting where children are happy, secure and well looked after. They are taught about the importance of healthy practices such as hand washing and the importance of fruit in a healthy diet. They learn to share and play harmoniously alongside their classmates. Indoor and outdoor areas are well supervised by vigilant staff.
- Teaching in the early years is good. All adults work well together to provide stimulating learning experiences both indoors and out. Children develop a wide range of skills across all areas of learning. The exciting range of activities provided stimulates children's curiosity and includes memorable moments such as watching chicks hatch or digging in the mud kitchen. Adults question children skilfully to promote good learning, and model and develop language skills.
- Leadership and management of the early years is having an effective impact on provision and standards, with increasing numbers of children now reaching a good level of development. A highly positive and supportive atmosphere exists amongst staff who all play their part in raising standards. Regular meetings of all early years' staff take place in order to discuss children's achievements, ensure accuracy of assessment or determine any additional help or support that children may need.
- There is a consistent approach to learning across the Nursery and Reception classes ensuring seamless transition from one class to the next. As both classes share outdoor resources the Reception children are often on hand to model routines and reinforce teachers' expectations for behaviour.
- Effective links with parents are established through, for example, attendance at open days, or the sharing of children's learning. Parents value the good start to education that their children receive.

What inspection judgements mean

| School | | |
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| 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

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| Unique reference number | 139502 |
| Local authority | Wakefield |
| Inspection number | 449928 |

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

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| 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 | 469 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | David Watson |
| Headteacher | Martyn Broom |
| Date of previous school inspection | Not previously inspected as an academy |
| Telephone number | 01977 703270 |
| Fax number | Not applicable |
| Email address | headteacher@halfpennylane.net |

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