

Inspection of Halfpenny Lane Junior Infant and Nursery School

Halfpenny Lane, Pontefract, West Yorkshire WF8 4BW

Inspection dates:	20 and 21 May 2025
The quality of education	Outstanding
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Outstanding
Early years provision	Outstanding
Previous inspection grade	Good

The headteacher of this school is Ian Shuttleworth. This school is part of Pontefract Academies Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Julian Appleyard OBE, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Phil Jones OBE.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils achieve exceptionally well at Halfpenny Lane Junior Infant and Nursery School. The school has a meticulous approach to ensuring that all pupils benefit from the excellent curriculum and opportunities to develop their character. The school's core values of 'be kind, be resilient, be ambitious, be Halfpenny' are clearly lived by staff and pupils across the school.

The school has a culture of high ambition and inclusion. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) access the full curriculum alongside their peers. The expertly sequenced curriculum, along with staff development from the trust, have embedded consistent high-quality curriculum delivery across the school.

Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. They are polite, respectful and follow the well-established routines in school. Pupils meet the high expectations of conduct. They celebrate 'random acts of kindness' seen in others, and they are motivated by the many ways staff recognise their efforts in lessons.

Pupils benefit from the breadth of leadership opportunities. The school has implemented well-chosen workshops and community projects to ensure pupils are extremely well equipped to be excellent citizens of the future.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

The school delivers a broad and highly ambitious curriculum. The curriculum is expertly sequenced and underpinned by strong subject knowledge across all areas. In lessons, the 'VIPs' represent the key knowledge and skills that pupils need to know and remember. Staff use a wide range of precise ways to check that pupils remember and build on prior knowledge. These practices are well embedded across subjects. As a result, any misconceptions or gaps in knowledge are addressed immediately. The school's approach to developing pupils' understanding of language is a strength, right from the early years, and is woven through the school. Pupils discuss their learning with clarity and confidence.

Staff identify pupils' needs quickly using a range of approaches and close collaboration with families and external professionals. This informs the provision of tailored support, ensuring that pupils with SEND can learn a curriculum that is ambitious and responsive to their individual needs. Staff benefit from high-quality professional development and shared expertise, which deepens their understanding of SEND and enables them to meet pupils' needs with confidence and care.

Reading is a high priority. Children learn to read quickly, fluently and with confidence. Expert teaching ensures that children quickly gain the skills they need. Pupils needing additional support receive daily, targeted support that enables them to catch up swiftly. By the time pupils reach the end of key stage 2, they read with exceptional skill and understanding, as reflected in published outcomes in 2024. Lessons draw on a rich and diverse reading canon. This broadens pupils' vocabulary and cultural understanding.

Children make a very strong start in the early years. Staff are adept at bringing lessons to life so that children are engrossed in their learning and develop strong conversational skills and levels of independence. Children are motivated to complete the weekly 'cookie challenges', and these help staff to check how well children are learning the curriculum. Both the indoor and outdoor provisions provide children with plenty of opportunities to develop their new skills. The school provides regular opportunities for parents and carers to actively participate in their child's learning. Children are happy, confident and exceptionally well prepared for Year 1.

Pupils conduct themselves with maturity. Incidents of poor behaviour are extremely rare. The school has embedded silent cues that pupils respond to well to maintain the calm and purposeful atmosphere in school. Pupils know what it means to be ready to learn. They engage confidently in discussions and listen attentively to differing viewpoints. This helps them to have respectful conversations. Bullying is not an issue. Pupils understand the school's 'zero-tolerance' approach. The school celebrates high attendance and pupils attend school well.

Pupils engage enthusiastically with the extra-curricular clubs and '50 experiences' that the school offers. These broaden pupils' experiences and interests brilliantly. Pupils benefit from the school's excellent approach to promoting positive mental well-being. Specialist staff and mindfulness techniques help pupils learn to manage their emotions independently. Special events, such as 'cultural diversity day' and 'careers week', raise aspirations and pupils' understanding of the world exceptionally well. Pupils also benefit from the financial education, eco-sustainability and entrepreneurship experiences that prepare them very well for life beyond primary school.

Leaders, and those responsible for governance, have a clear, highly ambitious vision, which is shared across the school and trust. Leaders rigorously check that the school's systems and policies are having a positive impact for pupils. The unwavering commitment to providing an excellent education for each child is felt throughout the school. Governance is highly effective. Those responsible for governance provide robust oversight and hold the school to account with accuracy. Staff development from the trust is a notable strength. Staff are rightly proud to work in this school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	139502
Local authority	Wakefield
Inspection number	10379381
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	443
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Phil Jones OBE
CEO of the trust	Julian Appleyard OBE
Headteacher	Ian Shuttleworth
Website	www.halfpenny.patrust.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	25 April 2024, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of Pontefract Academies Trust.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.

- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors spoke to senior leaders, including the CEO of the trust, representatives from the board of trustees and the school performance review board.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, geography and music. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also spoke to leaders about pupils' learning in some other subjects.
- Inspectors listened to a range of pupils from different year groups reading to a familiar adult.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors met the special educational needs and disabilities coordinator, spoke to pupils with SEND and reviewed plans to support these pupils. They visited lessons to see how pupils with SEND are supported.
- Inspectors visited the early years provision to check safeguarding arrangements and discuss the learning with children and leaders.
- Inspectors observed behaviour at the start of the day, at lunchtimes and in lessons.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's pupil and staff surveys. They also considered responses from parents to Ofsted Parent View, including any free-text comments.

Inspection team

Georgina Chinaka, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

David Taylor

Ofsted Inspector

Donna Waddington

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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