

Penistone St John's Voluntary Aided Primary School

High Street, Penistone, Sheffield, South Yorkshire, S36 6BS

Inspection dates 26–27 February 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- This school is exceptionally successful in ensuring that pupils thrive academically and personally.
- From their individual starting points, pupils make rapid progress. At the end of Year 6, attainment is significantly above the national average in both English and mathematics.
- The school caters very well for more able pupils, and as a result, some reach extremely high standards. Teachers also pay careful attention to meeting the personal and learning needs of all pupils, including those whose circumstances may make them vulnerable, helping all to learn very well.
- The high quality of teaching makes a significant contribution to pupils' outstanding achievement. Lessons are often planned and taught with an impressive attention to detail. Explanations are precise and pupils' understanding is checked very thoroughly. Pupils are given many opportunities to develop their knowledge and skills through practical, relevant and stimulating activities.
- As a result, pupils enjoy school very much and relish the challenging work they are given. 'I love doing this' is frequently heard.
- Pupils are highly valued and respected as individuals and are cared for very well. This helps them feel extremely safe and secure. They flourish in the supportive atmosphere and develop high levels of confidence, independence and maturity.
- They behave extremely well and try hard to do what is expected of them at all times. They are proud of the school and want to contribute to its success.
- The headteacher, in close collaboration with the deputy headteacher, has a clear-sighted vision for the school and leads it with passion and determination. Other leaders and staff fully subscribe to this vision and form a very cohesive team.
- Senior leaders rigorously check how well the school is providing for pupils. They take firm and effective action to secure improvements, and constantly strive to improve teaching. They are aware that despite many strengths there is still some variability in the quality of provision and not all aspects yet fully match the quality of the best.
- The governing body also has a robust approach to its work. It checks on the effectiveness of the school very carefully and provides a high level of challenge and support to it.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 17 lessons and made 14 shorter visits to classrooms to look at pupils' work and to hear them read. Two lessons were observed jointly with the headteacher.
- Inspectors had meetings with school leaders and with groups of pupils. They also had meetings with representatives from the governing body and had a telephone conversation with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the views of the 44 parents who made their views known through the online questionnaire (Parent View) and those who did so to inspectors directly.
- Documents were scrutinised, including information relating to pupils' progress and attendance, safeguarding, minutes of governing body meetings, and monitoring and evaluation records.

Inspection team

Joan McKenna, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

James Hannah

Additional Inspector

Jane Salt

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is larger than the average sized primary school.
- The very large majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils with special educational needs who are supported at school action is below average. The proportion supported at school action plus, or with a statement of special educational needs, is average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is below average. Pupil premium funding supports those who are known to be eligible for free school meals, those in the care of a local authority and those whose families are in the armed forces.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school opened in January 2012, following the amalgamation of a local infant and junior school. It is housed on two sites a short distance apart.
- The headteacher is a local leader of education and the deputy headteacher is a specialist leader of education and a mathematics specialist teacher. They support other schools in the local authority.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue to rigorously check the effect the school is having on pupils' outcomes, and to act on the resulting information to ensure that all aspects of the school's provision consistently match the quality of the best.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- Children enter the school with a wide spread of attainment. Progress from their individual starting points is rapid and this shows in their rising attainment, which in the main is above average across the school and for the oldest, most-able pupils is very high.
- Attainment at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage in 2012 was above national figures, including for those who were below expectations on entry. At the end of Year 6 in 2012, pupils' attainment was significantly above average in both English and mathematics. Over half of the pupils gained high levels in the tests taken in both subjects. Attainment is also significantly above average for the current group of Year 6 pupils, and is above average across the school as a whole.
- For children and pupils of all ages there are high expectations of what each individual should achieve and strenuous and successful efforts are made to enable all to reach their full potential. For example, special provision made for the highest attaining pupils in Year 6 provides them with challenging intellectual demands, and this enables them to reach extremely high standards.
- All groups of pupils, including the small numbers who are eligible for the pupil premium or who have special educational needs, achieve very well. Points gained in assessments show that most of those eligible for the pupil premium, including those eligible for free school meals, do at least as well as other pupils, and some do better and are amongst the highest attaining pupils. For those who have particular needs which affect their progress, the school makes effective effort to ensure that they achieve as well as they possibly can.
- Having checked that the provision for more-able pupils is successful, leaders are now prioritising accelerating the progress of lower attaining pupils, even though they already are achieving well.
- Within the picture of outstanding achievement overall, there is some variability. Despite some excellent progress being made in writing, attainment in that aspect is not as high as in reading and mathematics, for example. Progress is fast across the school as a whole, but the exceptional rates seen in Year 6 are not matched in every year group. Although all groups of pupils achieve very well overall, there are some individuals who are not achieving as well as others. Leaders are aware of this and of the need for continued action to minimise any differences.

The quality of teaching

is outstanding

- The commitment of teachers and teaching assistants to ensuring that pupils learn as well as they can shines through in almost all lessons. Expectations of what pupils can achieve are very high, and adults act upon their responsibility to enable this to happen.
- A feature of the very best lessons is the precision with which they are planned and taught. Teachers are very clear about what pupils need to learn, and what they have to do to enable this. Pupils' different starting points are taken fully into account and they are given work that is very well-matched to their different needs.
- Explanations are crystal clear and teachers make sure that everyone understands what they have to do and why. Pupils' progress is checked regularly throughout lessons, and, when appropriate, pupils are moved on or receive additional help. Pupils may be moved into a different group, for example, or a teaching assistant's attention may be redirected within individual lessons.
- Teachers are very precise in their use of language, using subject and technical vocabulary appropriately and expecting pupils to do likewise. Insightful, targeted questioning encourages pupils to give reasons for their answers and to explain their thinking. Promoting effective speaking and listening is prominent, and pupils' ability to articulate their reasoning and to formulate questions helps to speed up their progress in whatever they are doing.
- The teaching of pupils' basic skills of reading, writing, numeracy and information and communication technology have a high profile, and take place not just in lessons designated for that purpose, but across all subjects and through activities outside classrooms as well.

- The tasks given to pupils are stimulating, relevant and often practical. This promotes high levels of enjoyment and makes learning meaningful. For example, children in the Early Years Foundation Stage were given real sandwiches for them to write labels. In a Year 6 mathematics lesson, pupils were given the hypothesis 'the longer the time fruit has been in transit the more bad oranges there will be' when drawing scatter graphs and lines of best fit to find the correlation between two sets of data. In this latter lesson, the very advanced language and conceptual demands made of pupils promoted intellectual confidence and involvement.
- Pupils receive much helpful and detailed guidance on how to improve through the marking of their work and through the use of individual targets.
- Teaching is outstanding because the above features are present in a significant proportion of lessons and even when not all are evident, teaching is nevertheless good and ensures that pupils learn very well over time.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils' pride in and enjoyment of school, and the extent to which they feel secure and confident that adults will do all they can to help them, is very evident. The ethos is warm and caring yet aspirational.
- The supportive and respectful relationships that staff model are adopted by pupils too. Even the very youngest pupils spontaneously thank others, such as when one of their peers has said something in a discussion.
- A lot is expected of pupils, and within the very encouraging environment, they rise to the challenge. They develop high levels of independence, as typified by a child in the Early Years Foundation Stage who persevered until he had done up his zip and fastened every popper on his coat at home time, to the Year 6 pupil working by himself on a GCSE paper.
- Behaviour in lessons and around the school is excellent. While they exude the normal levels of energy seen at playtimes, they know how to channel this in lessons when they adopt a serious but involved approach to their learning.
- They understand different kinds of bullying and say that very little occurs, and that on the very rare occasions any pupil is upset by the action of another, it is dealt with quickly and effectively.
- Attendance is usually above the national average. Atypically high levels of illness this winter have lowered it, but it is nevertheless still in line with the latest national figures.
- Care and concern for pupils, and dealing with the challenges that some face so they can gain maximum benefit from what school offers, is paramount. This was confirmed by comments made by parents, such as: 'The headteacher and her staff have worked tirelessly to provide a secure, stable and nurturing environment for not just my child but also myself.'

The leadership and management are outstanding

- Under the excellent leadership of the headteacher, the drive and determination shown by leaders, staff and governors to provide the best for pupils is very strong. The amalgamation of the two schools has been very well handled so that staff are unified and are very positive about the benefits that being one school has brought.
- Despite the school's success, there is no complacency. Rigorous monitoring means that senior leaders have a very clear awareness of where practice is not as strong as in the best cases. They are taking well-judged and firm action to improve these areas. The performance of staff and the quality of teaching is carefully checked and professional development is targeted according to the needs identified.
- The school ensures not just outstanding provision for English and mathematics, but for other subjects too. The richness of the curriculum is seen in the displays of excellent work in many subjects. High quality art work abounds.

- Through the excellent curriculum and the high quality promotion of their personal development, pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils are kind, reflective, and responsible young people. They are aware that discrimination should not be tolerated, and embody the school's strong promotion of equal opportunities.
- Keeping pupils safe is accorded a high priority and arrangements meet all statutory requirements.
- The local authority gives a light touch to this very successful school, but nevertheless keeps a watching brief over it. There are strong links between the two, however, and the local authority uses leaders and teachers from St John's to support others in the locality.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body carries out its responsibilities very well. It is provided with exceptionally detailed information from the headteacher about all relevant aspects, including pupils' progress, the quality of teaching and staff performance. It also has mechanisms in place for gathering first-hand information which it examines very carefully and so it ensure its monitoring is rigorous. It manages finances well and is aware of how the pupil premium funding is spent and how relevant pupils are progressing.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
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

Unique reference number	136941
Local authority	Barnsley
Inspection number	400292

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	377
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	The Reverend David Hopkin
Headteacher	Antoinette Drinkhill
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01226 762496
Fax number	01226 766623
Email address	penistone.stjohns@barnsley.org

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