

Inspection of Penny Field School

Tongue Lane, Meanwood, Leeds LS6 4QD

Inspection dates: 18 and 19 April 2024

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Good
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

The headteacher of this school is Hannah Duffey. This school is part of Wellspring Academy 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), Mark Wilson, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Cheryl Hobson.

What is it like to attend this school?

Penny Field School is a calm and nurturing place to learn. The school has high expectations for the pupils who attend. All pupils have an education, health and care (EHC) plan. The school has carefully planned the curriculum across different pathways of learning. This enables pupils to achieve their potential.

Across the school, adults ensure pupils benefit from high quality interactions. Adults support pupils' personal development with care and understanding. Warm and caring relationships between staff and pupils help pupils to feel safe. The school has successfully established clear expectations and embedded routines for pupils. These positively impact on pupils' behaviour.

Parents and carers value the high levels of support the school provides. The school engages pupils in a wide range of activities to enrich their lives further. Leaders carefully plan opportunities for pupils within the local community. Pupils visit local shops and the library. This helps them to build their confidence and develop important independence skills.

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

The school has developed a well-sequenced curriculum. Pupils study the curriculum through different pathways. These are well matched to pupils' needs. Leaders and staff are highly skilled in engaging pupils in their learning. The school successfully ensures that pupils achieve the expectations of their learning pathway. Pupils' individual learning plans map out the knowledge and skills that pupils will learn clearly. Leaders purposefully plan opportunities for pupils to apply their learning in different contexts. For example, pupils benefit from opportunities to develop their skills in number. This includes buying produce in local shops.

The school prioritises communication and language across the school day. Staff ensure pupils have effective communication aids to help them interact with staff and each other. Pupils are eager to communicate. They share their understanding and feelings well.

Leaders have prioritised reading for all pupils. The school makes sure that pupils benefit from a wide range of texts, including poetry. Staff share stories with pupils regularly, including through sensory experiences. For example, during the inspection, pupils used sounds and textures to understand what it might be like if they were going on a bear hunt. This helps to bring stories to life for pupils and contributes well to their therapeutic support. Pupils who are learning to read enjoy sharing the different books they have read with adults. However, the school has not developed a consistent approach to the teaching of phonics. Staff use a range of different resources and strategies. The absence of one systematic phonics programme leads to inconsistencies in phonics teaching. This means pupils do not start their reading journey as effectively as they could.

Adults know the pupils well. The school has thoughtfully crafted a range of opportunities to enrich pupils' experiences. For example, pupils from other local schools visit and learn alongside pupils to sing and sign. The school benefits from strong partnerships with a local football club. Within school, older pupils support adults in their roles by shadowing their work. This helps pupils to experience the world of work. The school carefully plans and evaluates each activity effectively. Leaders match their enrichment offer to the interests of pupils. Pupils show consistently positive attitudes to school life. They are resilient and determined. The positive relationships between staff and pupils underpin this climate for learning. Leaders' high expectations are shared across all staff. Staff support pupils well during social times such as lunchtime.

The school works collaboratively with other professionals, such as physiotherapists and nurses. Leaders successfully integrate high quality therapies, such as hydro and rebound therapy, into pupils' daily offer. Teamwork is at the centre of school life. Staff are proud to work here. They should be. Leaders, staff and those responsible for governance, including the trust, share the same vision and ambition for pupils at the school. Together, they are working to develop the school with increasing precision.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- There is an inconsistent approach to the teaching of phonics. As a result, pupils who are ready to learn to read, do not make the best start to their reading journey. The school should ensure that they identify a consistent approach to the teaching of phonics and provide staff with the training and support they need to teach the chosen programme well.

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	145732
Local authority	Leeds
Inspection number	10323102
Type of school	Special
School category	Academy special sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	2 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	68
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Cheryl Hobson
Headteacher	Hannah Duffey
Website	www.pennyfield.org.uk
Date(s) of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school opened in July 2021.
- The school is part of Wellspring Academy Trust.
- The school provides education for pupils aged 2 to 19 with severe and complex needs.
- All pupils have an EHC plan.
- The school has health professionals who work on site with the education team.
- 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.

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

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Prior to the inspection, the lead inspector reviewed documents on the school's website, as well as published information about the school's performance.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these areas of learning: communication and language, including communicative literacy and phonics, functional numeracy, physical development and social, emotional and mental health. Inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons and spoke to teachers and teaching assistants. Inspectors looked at the learning journey of pupils through individual learning plans. Inspectors listened to pupils at the early stages of reading with a familiar adult. Inspectors met with leaders to discuss personal, social and health education.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector: 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 gathered views of parents informally, in person and formally through responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including free-text responses. The views of staff were considered in meetings and through Ofsted's staff survey. Pupils' views were considered during a meeting with the school council and a review of the school's work to capture pupil voice.
- Inspectors spoke the headteacher and members of the senior leadership team. Inspectors also spoke with representatives from the local governing board, the multi academy trust, including the chief executive officer for the trust who is also a trustee, and those providing school improvement support. Inspectors also met with health and education partners for the school.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in classes and during social times such as lunchtime.

Inspection team

Emily Stevens, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Stephanie Innes-Taylor

His Majesty's Inspector

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