

Pontesbury CofE Primary School

Bogey Lane, Pontesbury, Shrewsbury, SY5 0TF

Inspection dates 14–15 October 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Early years provision		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- Pupils make outstanding progress and reach high standards in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Outstanding teaching enables pupils to make very rapid progress in all aspects of their work.
- Teachers use their excellent knowledge of what pupils already know to plan work which is highly challenging for pupils of all abilities.
- Teachers use excellent questioning skills to probe pupils' understanding and to challenge pupils further.
- Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is outstanding and leads to excellent progress.
- Teachers' very high-quality marking and feedback to pupils helps them to understand how to improve their work.
- An exciting and vibrant range of topics across all subjects helps pupils apply their outstanding literacy and mathematical skills in many different contexts.
- There is an exceptionally calm, purposeful and happy atmosphere in all classes based on respect, good humour and enthusiasm for learning.
- Pupils work very hard because they are extremely happy at school and feel very safe. Their outstanding behaviour and attitudes to learning contribute exceptionally well to their progress.
- Pupils, staff and parents express a very high level of satisfaction and confidence in the work of the school.
- The new headteacher's urgent drive for further improvement has led to very rapid development which is building upon the already high standards of teaching and pupils' achievement. All staff are highly committed to pupils' success.
- Governors undertake extensive training so that they have an excellent understanding of the school's strengths and areas to develop. They are very skilled in checking the school's work and holding staff to account.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed lessons and an assembly. They also listened to pupils reading, looked at their workbooks and checked information about their progress.
- Meetings were held with pupils, parents, governors, a representative of the local authority and school leaders.
- Inspectors examined the 67 responses to the online Parent View survey and 24 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- A range of documents were considered. These included the school’s analysis of how well it is doing, its improvement plan and policies (including those relating to staff performance), minutes of governing body meetings, and safeguarding, behaviour and attendance records.

Inspection team

Lynne Bradbury, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Dennis Brittain

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are of White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action is average, while the proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs or the new education, health and care plan is below average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils eligible for support from the pupil premium funding (those known to be eligible for free school meals or looked after by the local authority) is below average.
- The headteacher joined the school in September 2014. An acting headteacher had been in place since January 2014. Some new subject leaders were also appointed within the school in September 2014.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that subject leaders use their work with the local partnership of schools to establish appropriate arrangements for assessment within the new curriculum.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The new headteacher has established a drive and urgency for further improvement to build on the high standards attained in 2014. This has inspired all staff and governors to adopt new policies and procedures to make pupils' progress even more rapid.
 - Systems to check pupils' progress are used very effectively by leaders and governors to identify strengths and what needs to improve, and in making plans which result in very rapid improvement. For example, pupils' workbooks over the last two terms show the rapid impact of measures introduced across the school to extend opportunities for problem-solving and investigative work to stretch children of all abilities. The success of these developments are judged by pupils' rates of progress.
 - Outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is evident in all subjects and aspects of school life and is one of the highest priorities in school. Pupils show a high level of enthusiasm and excitement in learning, a willingness to care for others, and an understanding and tolerance of difference. They treat the learning environment, adults and peers with great respect and are keen to take part in their work with a school in Zambia.
 - High-level English and mathematics skills are applied well through the vibrant and exciting topics which cover many subjects. For example, in a topic on Stonehenge, pupils making models were engaged with solving problems and investigating weighing and measuring at appropriately changing levels for all abilities and in using high-level vocabulary about shape.
 - Pupils' greatly enjoy the extra opportunities offered in art, music and sport. They produced extremely high-quality work with an art specialist who came into school last term.
 - The outstanding progress made by all groups of pupils in all classes demonstrates the school's excellent commitment to equal opportunities. Extra staff and equipment supported through additional funding has enabled disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, and those who are disadvantaged, to make outstanding progress.
 - The sports funding has been used to employ sports coaches and to ensure that pupils have high-quality sporting experiences within the school day and after school. Extra opportunities in football, cricket, tag rugby and netball have encouraged pupils to take an interest in these activities beyond the school, and they show great enthusiasm and excitement in these sports. The school has ensured that staff have received training to develop their teaching skills in sport and physical education.
 - Parents praise the level of communication by the school and the opportunities to share pupils' achievements. Pupils particularly like the system where the headteacher sends texts to parents for immediate feedback about special work.
 - New subject leaders have quickly established very high expectations of themselves and the whole school community. Although there are plans to do this in partnership with other local schools, they have not yet developed new procedures for pupil assessment within the new curriculum.
- **The governance of the school:**
- Governors undertake extensive training and use their professional skills so that they can judge the work of the school for themselves and challenge its standards. They have rigorous systems for checking staff performance and holding them to account against ambitious targets for pupils' achievement. Their judgements are reflected in decisions about pay rises and career progression. Governors evaluate their own work and the work of the school carefully in terms of pupils' progress, to identify appropriate areas for development. Finance is matched to improvement plans and carefully managed and monitored. Governors have checked on the impact of extra funding, such as the additional school sports funding, and have ensured that the pupil premium has been used to improve the progress of disadvantaged pupils. The governing body ensures that safeguarding procedures

meet statutory requirements.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Their exceptionally positive attitudes help them to make good progress. They are extremely enthusiastic about their learning, do their best and take care with their work. They present their work to a very high standard and take account of teachers' marking and comments to improve their work.
- There are exceptionally good relationships between staff and pupils in all classes. These are built on clear expectations and a nurturing environment for learning. Pupils are exceptionally sensible and very supportive of each other, whether they are playing in the playground or working together in the classroom. They show great respect for people who are different in some way.
- Pupils are extremely polite and respectful of adults, and each other. They greatly enjoy the responsibilities they take on around the school; classmate readers are very sensitive and supportive in helping younger pupils with their reading, and playground buddies help pupils who have concerns or worries.
- During the inspection, there were no disruptions of any kind to lessons. Pupils spoken with and the school's records confirm that this is normal for the school.
- Teachers use praise and rewards well to encourage pupils' positive attitudes and to help them feel proud of their achievements.
- Pupils enjoy the wide range of subjects in their exciting topic work and are keen to take part in extensive sports and clubs outside lessons. They enjoy football, rugby, tennis and many other opportunities which have grown out of the use of the primary sports funding.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Safeguarding processes fully meet statutory requirements. The high priority given to all aspects of safeguarding reflects the commitment and determination of all members of staff. Policies and practices are implemented rigorously and checked regularly by governors. The attention to the detail of the policies by every member of the school staff is exemplary, as is their commitment to following through every concern raised. The school makes appropriate checks on visitors, including supply teachers, sports coaches and those who lead assemblies.
- Pupils feel very safe at school and they have a very good understanding of how to keep themselves safe. They know about the different forms that bullying can take, including those which involve mobile phones and the internet. They say that bullying does not happen in their school but, if it did, it would be dealt with very quickly by the staff. Pupils are extremely confident in successfully and peacefully sorting out any friendship problems without staff involvement, but they know who to ask for help if it is needed.
- Pupils say that staff check very carefully that pupils do not use derogatory language or say negative things about groups of people who are different in some way.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

- The excellent understanding that staff have of what their pupils can already do ensures that they plan very demanding work for pupils of all abilities, and this moves their learning on quickly. As a result, pupils make outstanding progress.
- Staff use the school's tracking systems to check the progress of all pupils very carefully so that they can identify any pupils at risk of falling behind and give them immediate extra support.

- Teachers plan a wide range of problem solving and investigations to challenge pupils of all abilities in their learning. During lessons, staff are extremely skilled in asking probing questions to assess pupils' learning and then amend the level of challenge to move them on even further.
- Pupils practise and extend their excellent skills in reading, spelling and number work in well-focused homework. They also enthusiastically follow up and research topic areas, often producing large quantities of excellent quality work.
- Staff use the rewards system extremely well so that pupils take the greatest possible pride in their achievement and behaviour.
- Learning ladders, which make clear for pupils, the exact stages in their learning, focus pupils' targets for each lesson. Exceptionally high-quality marking by all staff helps them to know how to improve their work. Staff show pupils exactly what they have achieved and give them great detail about how to improve their work. This is very effective in raising standards because teachers ensure that pupils act on the advice they are given in order to improve their next piece of work.
- All staff have very high expectations of all pupils. For example, in a writing lesson, pupils recapped their own prior learning and, at every stage of the lesson, had the opportunity to try out and experiment with language before the teacher modelled the task using pupils' ideas. This was typical of work across all age groups.
- Throughout the school, teachers are caring and supportive. There is a great deal of good humour and fun in lessons, which adds to pupils' enjoyment of learning.
- High-level reading, writing and mathematics skills are developed in exciting topics. Pupils greatly enjoy and work hard in all subjects to achieve high standards. For example, in a mathematics lesson, pupils were successfully applying their skills at a very high level to show equivalence of fractions, percentages and decimals within problem-solving situations.
- Teaching assistants make an exceptional contribution to pupils' achievement. They lead small-group work or support disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, and they contribute to the care for all pupils.
- Outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural skills are developed through all subjects and experiences in school. Staff give opportunities for reflection about right and wrong, working together and understanding people of other faiths and backgrounds. Learning tasks help pupils to be excited and fascinated about the world and to develop exceptional respect and tolerance of others.

The achievement of pupils is outstanding

- Pupils, including the most able, make outstanding progress and reach high standards as they move through the school. In 2014, pupils in Year 6 reached standards which were well above the national average for the previous year in English and mathematics. In mathematics they were a year ahead of pupils nationally, and their progress from Key Stage 1 was well above what is expected across all subjects. This high level of achievement is evident in workbooks and lessons observed across the full age and ability range.
- Pupils in all year groups develop their skills in phonics (letters and the sounds they make) and spelling extremely rapidly. In 2014, Year 1 pupils achieved levels above those nationally in the Year 1 phonics check. Pupils in Year 2 achieved well above-average standards in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Workbooks and assessments show that, like pupils of all other abilities, the most-able pupils make rapid progress, develop skills in analysing and reasoning within their work, and reach very high standards by the end of Year 6. This is because of the extensive opportunities for them to undertake problem solving and investigations in all areas of their work.

- Pupils in all classes are passionate about their reading. They talk with great enthusiasm about authors and their books, and know how to use these to research and understand topics across many subjects.
- Pupils' workbooks and school tracking information confirm the exceptionally high level of skills achieved by pupils in English and mathematics and applied across other subjects.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make outstanding progress because teachers check their work in lessons and results from assessments rigorously, in order to adapt their tasks whenever necessary.
- There were too few pupils who received support from the pupil premium in 2013 or 2014 to make comparisons of their attainment with those nationally or their peers in school. In all year groups, these pupils are making progress at least in line with and sometimes at even higher rates than their peers.

The early years provision

is outstanding

- Children join the Reception class with skills and knowledge which are generally in line with those typical for their age. Very exciting learning activities in the classroom and outside help them to make outstanding progress because they offer them the opportunity to follow up their own interests and to learn together through talk and active involvement in learning.
- Children explore mathematics as they build models, writing as they write notices about the bike area and reading as they work on their understanding of phonics. Children move to Year 1 with a good level of development, and the confidence and skills to move rapidly forward with their learning.
- Exciting topics and learning about the world make children's learning extremely interesting and enjoyable, and help children to reflect upon their experiences in school and beyond.
- Staff have a very close working relationship with the local nursery and make sure that children have lots of interesting visits to school before they join the class. As a result, children join the Reception class already confident and happy, and they quickly settle in. Staff engage parents in assessing children's skills so that they can plan work to challenge them at the appropriate level.
- Systems to track children's progress and to plan new learning are key to children's excellent progress. Staff in the Reception class understand what pupils can already do and carefully plan activities in each area of learning which build upon this knowledge.
- Staff help the children to build strong relationships, and children's friendships are evident even at this early stage of the term. Children make outstanding progress because they settle to work confidently, persevere with their tasks, and their behaviour and attitudes are exceptional.
- Leaders have an excellent understanding of the strengths of the Early Years provision through their careful checking of children's progress. They then successfully address areas which need to improve. For example, they have ensured that the opportunities for problem solving and investigation in learning adopted in older age groups begins in the Reception class, and that learning activities give children of all abilities the appropriate level of challenge.

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	123493
Local authority	Shropshire
Inspection number	448916

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	185
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ann Thorne
Headteacher	Richard Langford
Date of previous school inspection	15 March 2010
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