

Inspection of Pontesbury CofE Primary School

Bogey Lane, Pontesbury, Pontesbury CE Primary School, Shrewsbury, Shropshire SY5 0TF

Inspection dates:	11 and 12 February 2025
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Outstanding
Early years provision	Outstanding
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

Until November 2020, the school was exempt from routine inspection because it was judged as outstanding for overall effectiveness at its previous inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. The school has not been inspected under section 5 of the Act since October 2014. Since September 2024, schools have not been awarded an overall effectiveness grade.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils thrive at this warm and welcoming village school. Pupils, parents and carers are united in their belief that this is a wonderful school to attend. Pupils benefit from nurturing relationships with staff. This helps them to feel valued, happy and safe.

Pupils behave well throughout the school. They are extremely kind to one another and show respect to adults. The school actively seeks out and supports pupils' talents. Pupils take part in various clubs, including astronomy, and a range of sports and musical opportunities.

Staff want the very best for all pupils. The school's motto of 'aim high, climb higher' reflects the school's ambition for all pupils to achieve highly. Typically, they learn well across a range of subjects. Recent changes to the curriculum are supporting more pupils to achieve their full potential. Children in the early years get off to the best possible start. They flourish academically and personally in the school's nurturing and stimulating environment.

Parents of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) praise the way the school supports their children to develop. Staff are knowledgeable about the strategies that pupils with SEND need so that they can learn well alongside their peers.

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

The early years provision is highly effective. Staff have high expectations for what children can achieve. The curriculum provides a strong foundation for children's learning and development. Staff carefully design activities to ensure that they match the children's next steps in learning. Children are very well prepared for the next stage of their education.

The school has made recent changes to strengthen the curriculum to meet pupils' needs. It has identified precisely the key knowledge and skills in a logical sequence that helps pupils to understand and remember their learning over time. The school has ensured that staff receive training and support so that they deliver the curriculum with expertise. Staff identify and address any gaps in pupils' knowledge swiftly. As a result, pupils learn the curriculum well. However, sometimes, the quality of pupils' written work in wider subject areas does not reflect their true potential. Pupils are not supported well enough to address errors in presentation, spelling and punctuation. This means that pupils repeat mistakes over time, which impedes their learning.

The school prioritises the effective teaching of reading. It has responded swiftly to the low phonics outcomes in 2024 by ensuring that pupils who need additional help with reading receive regular, well-planned support. Staff are well trained to deliver the phonics programme, and they do so with high levels of consistency. Pupils recall familiar sounds and words at speed. Teachers present new sounds clearly. This helps pupils to develop confidence and fluency in reading. Older pupils enjoy reading a wide range of books across the curriculum. Staff help pupils to improve their understanding of plot and character through in-depth discussions.

This is a very inclusive school, and the provision for pupils with SEND is a strength. Staff swiftly identify the needs of these pupils. Staff have been well trained to provide carefully tailored support for pupils with SEND to enable them to achieve well alongside their peers.

Pupils are polite and courteous, and they behave well. They enjoy attending school. Attendance rates are positive. When any concerns arise around attendance, the school swiftly puts in place effective support to secure improvements.

The school has prioritised the wider personal development of pupils. Staff recognise the importance of pupils enjoying their time in school. Pupils enjoy learning outdoors and love the school's new outdoor learning provision, which enhances their playtimes. Pupils benefit from the wide range of opportunities the school provides, for example when visitors and interactive experiences bring their learning to life. Pupils learn how to stay safe and healthy. They understand that being active and having a balanced diet contribute to good health. They have an age-appropriate understanding of healthy relationships. The school supports pupils to develop their character and leadership skills through a variety of roles and responsibilities. These include librarians, house captains and school council members. While pupils demonstrate tolerance and respect to each other, their understanding of different cultures and fundamental British values is quite limited.

After some instability, leadership capacity has been strengthened and there is a strong shared purpose and vision. A skilled, enthusiastic and dedicated staff team ensures a strong culture of mutual support and teamwork at the school. Governors know their roles and responsibilities well. They seek external views on the school's work and hold leaders to account effectively.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The quality of pupils' written work across the wider curriculum is variable. Pupils' mistakes are not consistently corrected promptly. As a result, some pupils repeat the same mistakes, which impedes their learning. The school needs to ensure that staff support pupils to address errors in their written work so that they achieve well.
- Pupils struggle to recall parts of the curriculum that develop an understanding of different cultures and British values. Their knowledge of these concepts is not developed well enough. The school should ensure that pupils have a secure understanding of British values and different cultures so that they are well prepared for life in modern Britain.

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	123493
Local authority	Shropshire
Inspection number	10343853
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	207
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Ann Thorne
Headteacher	Tomaz Lowrie-Herz
Website	www.pontesburyprimary.org.uk
Dates of previous inspection	14 and 15 October 2014, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Since the previous inspection, there have been a number of leadership changes. Following an interim position, the current headteacher took up the substantive post in October 2023. The special educational needs coordinator was appointed in 2023, and the deputy headteacher was appointed in May 2024.
- The school is part of the Diocese of Hereford. The school received its last section 48 inspection of church schools in March 2020. The next inspection will be within five years of the last section 48 inspection.
- The school does not use alternative provision.
- The school runs a breakfast and after-school club.

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.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspectors met with the headteacher and senior leaders. They also met with governors and examined minutes from governing body meetings.
- The lead inspector talked to a representative from the local authority and the diocese.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, history and, art and design. 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 a sample of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also evaluated pupils' work in science and English.
- The lead inspector listened to pupils reading to a familiar adult.
- The inspectors looked at records of pupils' attendance and behaviour. They observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around school and talked to them about behaviour, bullying and welfare.
- 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.
- The inspectors spoke with several groups of pupils and observed their behaviour at breaktime and lunchtime.
- The inspectors met with groups of staff and pupils and considered the opinions expressed through the staff and pupil surveys.
- The inspectors met some parents at the start of the day and took account of the views expressed through the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, and the free-text responses.

Inspection team

Cathy Young, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

James Dean

His Majesty's Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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