

# Pontesbury CofE Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	123493
<b>Local Authority</b>	Shropshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	292687
<b>Inspection dates</b>	16–17 May 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Paul Edwards

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	169
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Ann Thorne
<b>Headteacher</b>	Marlene Hotchkiss
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	18 September 2002
<b>School address</b>	Bogey Lane Pontesbury Shrewsbury SY5 0TF
<b>Telephone number</b>	01743 790226
<b>Fax number</b>	01743 792791

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Pontesbury Church of England Primary is a small school. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage and there are no pupils learning English as an additional language. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties is below the national average. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is much lower than that seen nationally. During the last two years, due to unavoidable circumstances, there has been a very high turnover in staff.

## Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

The school provides a satisfactory education for its pupils and there are some good features. Parents are overwhelmingly pleased with the way in which their children enjoy school. The views of one parent are typical of many others when stating, 'We were delighted how quickly our child settled at school and feel that this is largely due to the friendly atmosphere fostered by the school and the way older children look after the younger ones.'

Although overall standards by the end of Year 6 are above average, pupils' achievement is satisfactory because their progress is uneven. In particular, their very good progress in Key Stage 1 does not continue in Key Stage 2 and there has been a steady decline in writing standards over the last four years. Children enter the school with skills that are similar to those expected for their age. They are provided with a sound start to their education in the Reception class and most achieve the expected goals on entry to Year 1 although activities are not always appropriate for the pupils' age and maturity. By the end of Year 2, pupils attain standards that are significantly above average in all areas of learning. By the end of Year 6, standards in science are particularly strong and pupils also do well in mathematics. However, standards in writing are not as high as they should be. Pupils with learning difficulties do well because they are provided with well targeted and good quality support. Teaching and learning are satisfactory but are better in Key Stage 1, where pupils are consistently challenged to do well. In the Reception class, activities are not always matched to the children's age and maturity and, in Key Stage 2, teachers do not make the best use of assessment information to plan written work for pupils that is sufficiently challenging.

Pupils' personal development and well-being, including their social development, are good. Pupils thoroughly enjoy school, as demonstrated in their consistently good attendance. Pupils are confident, the result of the good relationship that exists between staff and children. Members of the school council show a high level of maturity and self-confidence. There are too few opportunities for children to develop their independent skills in the Reception class as activities are directed too much by the teacher. Throughout the school, pupils behave well and have good attitudes towards all aspects of school. Pupils understand the importance of leading a healthy lifestyle, as a result of the well structured programmes that are in place. Many eat healthily and take part in the very good range of physical activities on offer. Pupils are keen to talk of their involvement in fund raising activities and their participation in many community activities. The pupils' enthusiasm and enjoyment of school are enhanced because the good curriculum provides them with many rich and stimulating activities. For example, regular work with the local secondary school stimulates the pupils' enthusiasm for science and the specialist teaching of art has enabled pupils to produce some high quality work. The care, guidance and support provided for pupils are good. Pupils with learning difficulties are given a good level of support and this enables them to make good progress throughout the school.

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. The headteacher has a very clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The unavoidable, but very high, turnover of teaching staff has resulted in considerable disruption to the leadership of subjects and this has had a negative impact on pupils' achievement in English. The school has a wealth of assessment information but it is not easily accessible and procedures to ensure teachers make the best use of the information have not had sufficient impact on standards. The school has an accurate picture of what it needs to do to get better and is rightly focusing on raising

standards in writing. There is no complacency and staff are working hard to raise standards further. There is a satisfactory capacity for further improvement.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Raise standards and pupils' achievement in writing at Key Stage 2.
- Ensure teachers make more effective use of assessment information to provide pupils with writing activities that are sufficiently challenging at Key Stage 2.
- Ensure that activities in the Reception class are more suited to the age of the children so that they can be more active learners and enjoy the experience of their own investigations. A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory, but which have areas of underperformance, will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

Standards are above average by the end of Year 6 and achievement is satisfactory. Children make satisfactory progress in the Reception class and literacy and numeracy skills are sound when they enter Year 1. Children's independent skills and their ability to undertake their own investigations are limited and they do not make sufficient progress in these aspects. Pupils achieve very well in Key Stage 1, attaining standards that are significantly above average, a picture that has been seen for the last five years. Whilst standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 were above average overall, the pupils' very good performance in science tests, and to a lesser extent in mathematics, masks their underachievement in English, and particularly their writing. Standards in this subject have been declining over the last four years and pupils are not doing as well as they should. Pupils with learning difficulties make good progress throughout the school because of the good quality of support and guidance they receive.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' good behaviour plays a significant part in the standards of work they attain. They are willing workers and thoroughly enjoy their lessons and other activities. For example, they enthuse about the opportunities to undertake science activities at the adjacent secondary school. Pupils have a good awareness of how to stay fit, healthy and safe because this is promoted well in lessons. Many pupils try to follow the guidance by eating healthily and participating in the wide range of extra sporting opportunities that they thoroughly enjoy. Because they attend school regularly and arrive on time, pupils develop good work habits. Their understanding of the world of work is further enhanced by working in small teams and partnerships, for example, in activities to raise money for charities. Older pupils enjoy the extra responsibilities they have and are proud of their involvement with the school council. The pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Pupils' development of independent learning skills is satisfactory rather than good. They enjoy making choices in their learning but opportunities for them to do this are too limited.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 3

Teachers make good use of interactive whiteboards to stimulate the pupils' interest and they have high expectations of behaviour. Consequently pupils behave well and are keen to learn. Learning support assistants are very well utilised and they have a good impact on the achievement of pupils with learning difficulties. Pupils learn well in science and mathematics because the teachers make effective use of assessment information to plan work that is challenging for all groups of pupils. Although assessment information is available in English, not all teachers are making sufficient use of it when planning writing activities at Key Stage 2. There are occasions when teachers are not challenging pupils sufficiently and, consequently, pupils are not doing as well as they should. The high turnover in staff, and changes to subject leadership, has resulted in incoming teachers not always having sufficiently high aspirations for what the pupils are capable of doing in their writing.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 2

The school rightly gives good attention to developing the pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. However, considerable attention is devoted to providing them with a varied and stimulating range of activities. Strong links with the secondary school significantly enhance the school's sporting activities and their interest in science. The employment of a specialist teacher for art has enabled the pupils to produce high quality work, successfully extending their knowledge of art from a wide range of cultures. The pupils' well-being is successfully promoted through a good programme of personal, social and health education. The school's success in enriching the curriculum has seen the introduction of a French club and a wealth of sporting, art and musical activities. In addition, visits and visitors contribute significantly to the pupils' education. This wide range of enrichment activities contributes very well to the pupils' enjoyment of school and their behaviour. The provision for children in the Reception class is satisfactory. Opportunities to use the outdoors are limited in inclement weather and children are given too few opportunities to make choices in their learning.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 2

Parents rightly feel that their children are well cared for and supported. Every effort is made to ensure pupils are safe and secure, and procedures are fully in place for child protection and for vetting staff. Risk assessments are thorough. The good links with external agencies help to ensure that pupils with learning difficulties are well supported. Teachers' marking in pupils' books on how individuals could improve their work is good and consistently applied. The school has set challenging targets for pupils to achieve and the pupils themselves are aware of what they need to do to improve. However, the school recognises that it is not ensuring all pupils do as well as they should in their writing at Key Stage 2. Pupils with learning difficulties are supported well and many parents reflected on the progress their children make. Learning support assistants are well briefed and have a good impact on the progress of these pupils.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 3

The headteacher knows the school well and the school's self-evaluation is an accurate reflection of its strengths and weaknesses. The leadership has continued to build on its strengths in science and mathematics, making good use of effective links with other schools. Whilst the leadership has rightly identified the need to improve standards in writing at Key Stage 2, it has been hampered by the high turnover in teaching staff and subject leaders. Monitoring of pupils' progress in writing has been undertaken but it has not yet had the desired effect of raising standards throughout Key Stage 2. The school recognises that the tracking of pupils' progress needs to be streamlined and more easily accessible to enable teachers to make better use of it when planning lessons. There is some evidence that standards in writing in Year 6 are improving as a result of booster and intervention strategies. The leadership of the Foundation Stage has been in a state of limbo due to the turnover of staff and planned changes have not yet been implemented. Governors are very supportive, are regular visitors and know the school well. They recognise the need to challenge the school to raise standards in writing further. Links with parents are good and questionnaires returned prior to the inspection commented on the good relationships between school and home. Several parents commented that, although they had concerns regarding the high turnover of staff, they appreciated the meeting called by the headteacher to discuss the problem.

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## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	<b>School Overall</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	3
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	2
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	2

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

## **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

18 May 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Pontesbury CofE Primary School, Pontesbury, SY5 0TF

Thank you very much for the warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school recently. The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory and it is providing you with a satisfactory education.

Here are some of the highlights

- Your mathematics and science skills are of a good standard.
- You behave well and enjoy your lessons and other activities.
- You are provided with interesting work and there is a good range of clubs and other activities for you to enjoy.
- You have good relationships with one another and with the staff.
- Adults look after you well and keep you safe.
- You have a good understanding of how to keep yourselves healthy and safe.

These are the things we have asked the school to do now

- Give the youngest children more opportunities to choose activities and provide a wider range of interesting tasks.
- Help pupils in Key Stage 2 to do better in writing.
- Help teachers make better use of information that tells you how well you are doing in your writing.

I hope you continue to work hard and enjoy your time at school.

Yours sincerely

Mr P Edwards Lead Inspector