

Pontesbury C of E Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123493
Local Authority	Shropshire
Inspection number	340353
Inspection dates	15–16 March 2010
Reporting inspector	Gerald Griffin

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	171
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dr Ann Thorne
Headteacher	Miss Marlene Hotchkiss
Date of previous school inspection	16 May 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Three quarters of the available time in school was spent observing learning. The inspectors visited 20 lessons taught by seven teachers. They joined an assembly, observed break times, and held meetings with governors, staff, groups of pupils and parents. Inspectors scrutinised pupils' work, progress records, teachers' lesson plans, school improvement plans, policies and reports. They analysed 118 pupils' questionnaires, 6 staff questionnaires, 38 parents' questionnaires and undertook a case study of several pupils whose circumstances have the potential to make them vulnerable.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the progress made by higher attaining pupils in writing at Key Stage 1 and for boys at Key Stage 2
- the quality of the challenge that teachers provide to secure good progress
- the effectiveness of improvement planning to accelerate progress and secure higher attainment.

Information about the school

Pontesbury is a smaller than average size primary school. Nearly all pupils come from White British families. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average. Most of these pupils have either specific or moderate learning difficulties. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below the national average. The school's Early Years Foundation Stage provision comprises a Reception class. The school has recently gained a number of awards including Basic Skills Mark. The Ark after school club on the site is managed privately and is inspected separately.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Pontesbury Primary provides a good quality of education within a safe, welcoming and caring atmosphere. Parents are very pleased with the quality of education that the school provides. Typically, one parent wrote, 'My children are happy at school. They make good progress and are growing up to be highly motivated and confident learners.' Children get off to a good start in the Reception class, where they progress well in all the areas of learning because their teaching is good. Good progress continues in Years 1 to 6 and attainment is above average. Since the last inspection, pupils' achievement, the quality of teaching and marking have all improved, and are now good. The school has experienced some staffing difficulties recently during which progress at Key Stage 2 slowed. Now that staffing is stable, the school's good leadership has successfully tackled this problem through effective improvement plans. Progress at Key Stage 2 is now good again and pupils have caught up on missed work. The staff enthusiastically embrace the headteacher's clearly articulated drive to improve the school and this leadership record, together with its largely accurate self-evaluation, shows the school's good capacity for continued improvement.

Pupils' personal development is good. They feel very safe in school and behave well. Pupils do their best to adopt a healthy lifestyle. Their enjoyment of all aspects of school is reflected in their high attendance. Pupil's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. However, their understanding of the diversity of British culture is only satisfactory rather than good because they do not all have enough opportunities to talk to and learn with their peers from backgrounds different to their own.

Relationships in lessons are positive and pupils are keen to learn because they find work interesting and relevant. Occasionally, learning slows during a lesson when work does not match precisely the needs of each pupil. Typically, this happens when teachers do not make the best use of their assessments to plan challenging next steps. The lively and interesting curriculum supports good learning and adds to pupils' enjoyment of school. Staff's use their detailed knowledge of the personal needs of each child well to provide pupils with a good standard of care guidance and support.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Sustain a good pace to learning throughout lessons by always making good use of assessment information to plan work that consistently matches closely the needs of each pupil so that they are fully stretched.

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- Improve pupils' understanding of the diversity of British culture by providing more opportunities for them to communicate and work with their peers from a range of different backgrounds to themselves.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

The learning observed in lessons was good throughout the school. For example, in a Year 2 English lesson, pupils were rapidly developing a good understanding of a glossary by writing definitions of technical words found in a written passage about rainforests. Pupils found the facts they were researching, such as the names and feeding habits of nocturnal animals, captivating. They enjoyed discussing what they had learned with a partner, which helped them clarify their thoughts and gave them confidence to skilfully write their definitions. Later, they worked hard to put their definitions into alphabetical order to make them easy to find in the glossary. In a Year 6 mathematics lesson, pupils were gaining a clear understanding of reflections. The class made good progress because each one of them found the level at which they were working appropriate and challenging. They used a good range of strategies to solve mathematical problems, including practical experiments and trial and error. This gave them self-confidence, helped their gaining of independence and added to their enjoyment of learning.

All groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, enjoy learning and their achievement is good. Boys' progress at Key stage 2, which was slower than the girls' last year, has accelerated because teachers provide resources and work that especially appeals to them, such as a topic on the Aztecs. Progress in writing of higher attaining pupils in Key Stage 1 was slow last year too. Their progress is now good because teachers' assessments of pupils' writing are more accurate and they use this information well to plan challenging work that means pupils work hard.

Pupils reflect maturely on their feelings and those of others, a typical feature of their good spiritual development. Their strong moral code supports their good behaviour. Occasionally, pupils lose concentration when they find work does not challenge them sufficiently. Pupils co-operate well in teams and are supportive of each other. While they have a deep respect for people who come from background different to their own, their understanding of diversity is a relative weakness.

The rare cases of bullying are quickly resolved by the school. Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe, for example when crossing the road and on the internet. They are keen to take plenty of exercise and eat a healthy diet. They have a good understanding of nutrition and the dangers of drugs and alcohol abuse. Older pupils feel well informed about the physical and emotional changes that happen to them as they grow up. Pupils readily take responsibility in school, for example as members of the school council. They collect generously for charity and enjoy taking part in local church activities. Their above average standards in literacy and numeracy, reflected in the school's national awards, high attendance and positive attitudes towards learning means pupils' preparation for secondary school and future employment is good.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teachers use computers and other resources well to engage pupils and to develop their learning. Marking and other feedback provide pupils with a clear understanding of what they need to do to reach their challenging targets. Teachers mostly use assessment well to plan each pupil's next steps so that they make good progress. Occasionally, learning slows during lessons because some work that teachers plan does not match pupils' needs sufficiently to sustain good progress. Teaching assistants support learning well, especially for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

The curriculum supports pupils' personal development well, for example through good opportunities to reflect on their own actions and those of others in lively assemblies. The many well-attended sports and other clubs raise pupils' aspirations and add to their enjoyment of school. Pupils receive specialist teaching in art, music and physical education, which enhances their progress in these subjects. Changes to the English and mathematics curriculum have improved learning in many aspects of these subjects. The school is aware that pupils do not have enough opportunities to express their ideas clearly in longer pieces of writing and to practise solving mathematical problems and has strategies in place to address this.

Pastoral care is good. Pupils confidently turn to an adult if they have a worry knowing their concern will be quickly resolved. The school works successfully with experts to support pupils' learning and promote their wellbeing. For example, close liaison with the

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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welfare service has secured high attendance rates. The school's targeted support for pupils whose circumstances have the potential to make them vulnerable is effective. A parent told an inspector that she could not speak highly enough about the school's support for her child, who has severe learning difficulties, who is fully integrated into the life of the school and making good progress.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Leaders articulate clearly to staff their ambitious targets and their plans to make the school better. The governors work hard on behalf of the school and challenge it robustly over its performance. Leaders' checks on pupils' progress towards their challenging targets are very regular and effective. These assessments are used well to spot and remedy quickly any slowing of progress. However, leaders do not always use this information to check the success of plans and to pinpoint the need for further improvements. Leaders have provided successful training that has sharpened teachers' lesson planning, for example to accelerate boys' progress at Key Stage 2.

The school places a high priority on safety and safeguarding. Child protection procedures are robust, regularly updated and fully meet current safeguarding requirements. The checks that the school makes on the suitability of adults to work with children and pupils are rigorous. The way the school has tackled previous gender inequalities shows its thorough commitment to promoting equal opportunities and eliminating discrimination.

The school has evaluated its religious, ethnic and socio-economic context thoroughly, and the school is a happy harmonious society. The school has a link with a school in Birmingham, which is starting to provide pupils' with an insight into communities that are different to their own. Links to communities abroad are developing.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate	
Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms	
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Most children enter the school with levels of attainment expected for their age and many of them reach above average levels by the time they start Year 1. Boys and girls make similar progress overall. Children are well behaved and polite to each other and adults and their personal development is good. Children are cared for well in the stimulating learning atmosphere of the setting. Parents feel well informed about their child's progress.

Learning is good. For example, children were thoroughly engrossed in learning about how their heart beat rises when they exercise. Teachers' good planning includes an appropriate balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities. Occasionally opportunities are missed to use the well-resourced outdoor area to enhance learning and develop children's gaining of independence.

Detailed assessments of each child's progress are used well to plan their learning. For example, recent assessments showed that boys' skills of accurate manipulation of tools and apparatus are a little behind that of the girls. In response, boys are now given more opportunities to use tools and apparatus to build objects, which are accelerating progress in this area. Training is constantly updating and improving the skills of adults working in the Reception class. These features are typical of the good leadership of the setting.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

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About one fifth of parents returned a questionnaire. Many added positive comments about how much their children enjoyed school, the good care their children receive and their good progress. Inspectors agree with these positive views. A few said that they have concerns about the way the school prepared its pupils for the future. Inspectors found that Year 6 pupils largely felt confident about their move to secondary school and that this area of their personal development is good. However, inspectors found that pupils' understanding of diversity is a relative weakness. A few parents feel that the school does not take enough account of their views. Inspectors found that the school readily responds to parents' views and ideas. For example, it has increased the number of sports clubs offered following parents' requests for more. However, in response to this concern, the school is bringing forward its plan to gather parents' views through regular parents' forums so that it can respond to their ideas in the best way possible. A few parents had concern about the quality of the school's leadership. The inspection judges leadership as good.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Pontesbury C of E Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 38 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 171 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	25	66	12	32	1	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	25	66	13	34	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	23	61	9	24	3	8	1	3
My child is making enough progress at this school	20	53	15	39	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	23	61	14	37	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	23	61	12	32	1	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	23	61	12	32	3	8	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	18	47	11	29	5	13	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	22	58	15	39	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	17	45	18	47	2	5	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	16	42	14	37	7	18	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	17	45	14	37	6	16	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	21	55	16	42	1	3	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



Wednesday 17 March 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Pontesbury C of E Primary School, Shrewsbury, SY5 0TF

Thank you for being so polite and friendly when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed our visit and having the opportunity to talk to some of you and to see you in lessons and at play. I especially enjoyed sharing your many successes in assembly. You are rightly proud of the school's happy atmosphere in which you all get on so well together. Pontesbury is a good school. Here are some of the things we found out:

Your teachers ensure that you make good progress in all classes.

You enjoy school and feel very safe and secure.

You try your very best to eat a healthy diet and take plenty of exercise.

Your behaviour is good.

You have good relationships with your teachers and you try hard for them.

The curriculum provides you with exciting clubs and visits, which you enjoy.

Adults look after you well and are always ready to help you.

The headteacher and staff are working hard to make the school get better.

We have asked the school to do two things to help you do even better in your learning:

Make sure teachers always provide work for you that is neither too hard nor too easy so you make better progress.

Help you to meet and work with boys and girls from areas that are different to Pontesbury so that you have a better understanding of people from these backgrounds.

You can help the school by continuing to try your best in lessons, behaving well and attending regularly.

I wish you all success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Gerald Griffin

Lead inspector

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