



# Penshurst Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 118720  
**LEA** Kent  
**Inspection number** 280381  
**Inspection dates** 10 November 2005 to 10 November 2005  
**Reporting inspector** Robin Thelwell RISP

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Penshurst
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided		Tonbridge
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11		Kent TN11 8BX
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01892 870446
<b>Number on roll</b>	93	<b>Fax number</b>	01892 870446
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mrs Nicky Dent
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	4 December 2000	<b>Headteacher</b>	Miss Julia Armstrong

<b>Age group</b> 4 to 11	<b>Inspection dates</b> 10 November 2005 - 10 November 2005	<b>Inspection number</b> 280381
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## **Introduction**

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

## **Description of the school**

The school draws pupils from a wide area that encompasses nearby villages and the towns of Tonbridge and Southborough. The proportion of pupils having learning difficulties is below the national average. When children join Reception attainment is broadly in line with that expected for their age. There are no pupils whose first language is not English. Two of the four teachers joined the school at the start of this school year.

## **Key for inspection grades**

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

## **Overall effectiveness of the school**

### **Grade: 1**

This is an outstanding school that gives very good value for money. Central to its success is the vision of the headteacher. She has a determination that pupils should have the best possible environment in which to work and that they will achieve as much as they can. The school's caring, family ethos makes it a very welcoming place to be. The school is too modest in evaluating its effectiveness as good.

Because of the small number of pupils in each year group, standards vary from year to year. However, pupils' individual records show they achieve well and usually reach above average standards. In 2005, Year 6 pupils attained exceptionally high standards in English, mathematics and science. Teaching is most effective and takes very good account of the wide range of ages and abilities in each class. Pupils are set challenging targets and teachers check their progress towards them very carefully. Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding, and enthusiastic attitudes to learning underpin good achievement. Pupils benefit from a very well planned curriculum that is enriched by an impressive range of additional activities. Provision for children in Reception is effective and enables them to make good progress and achieve well. All pupils are cared for and supported very well.

Since the last inspection pupil achievement has risen and the school has made dramatic improvements to accommodation and learning resources. Outstanding leadership and management, together with highly effective teamwork amongst all staff, ensure the school has a good capacity to improve.

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

- Meet the targets already identified in its well structured school improvement plan.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Children join the school with levels of attainment broadly in keeping with those expected for their age. They make good progress in the Reception class, particularly in their personal, social and emotional development. Teachers make effective use of the extensive information they collect about children's progress. As a result many exceed the standards expected at the start of Year 1.

All groups of pupils, including those with learning difficulties achieve well, and some achieve exceptionally well. Comparatively small numbers in each year group can lead to fluctuating results when compared with national figures. However, in last year's tests for seven year-olds, attainment was significantly above average, particularly in reading. In tests for eleven year-olds, results were exceptionally high. This was partly because the school had used information from previous tests, together with evidence from pupils' work, to identify writing as a key area for development. As a result, carefully planned teaching led to significant gains in this aspect. When taking into account pupils' average attainment on entry, achievement was outstanding.

The standards of current work shows that achievement is good throughout the school and that pupils of higher ability achieve consistently high standards.

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

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils thoroughly enjoy school and take great delight in learning. Behaviour throughout the school is excellent and pupils know exactly what is expected of them. They are most polite and courteous to visitors. As a result of the outstanding emphasis given to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, pupils develop a sensitive approach to life and everyday issues, and appreciate the achievement of others. Pupils are very proud of their school. They consider it a good school where they feel safe and free from problems such as bullying. Attendance is consistently above the national average.

Pupils contribute very well to the school and local community. They show much initiative and enjoy taking responsibility. The school council is highly effective in contributing to the day to day life of the school. Through fund raising for a wide range of charities and good causes, pupils gain a clear understanding of those less fortunate than themselves. Pupils adopt healthy lifestyles. They have a secure awareness and understanding of the need for safety, regular exercise, and healthy eating. Pupils enjoy the 'fruit and vegetable' scheme and thrive on the many sporting events and activities provided for them. As such, they develop a very good range of skills that prepares them well for life beyond school.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teaching and learning are good with examples of outstanding lessons. Teachers know pupils very well, have high expectations of them, and plan work that successfully meets the needs of all pupils. Lesson plans are detailed and underpinned by teachers' very good command of subjects. Teachers explain clearly to pupils what they are going to learn and lessons proceed at a lively pace. In the Reception class, much learning is gained through play. Good teaching ensures children learn effectively through a range of enjoyable practical activities and investigations. Consequently, they make good progress in all areas of learning.

In all lessons teachers make learning interesting. For example, in an excellent science lesson pupils in Years 5 and 6 successfully used computer technology to set up an investigation to discover why penguins huddle together in freezing conditions. They also discovered the explanation of why the penguins regularly change positions with each other. Teaching assistants work in close cooperation with teachers and make a significant contribution to pupils' learning.

The school makes very effective use of a wide range of assessment information. Teachers carefully track how well pupils are doing and use this information to plan

what is to be taught next and to set new targets. All pupils know their own targets and this motivates and encourages them to do well. As a result they are enthusiastic learners who achieve well.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The school makes good provision for all pupils. Teachers have successfully worked together to plan a curriculum that makes coherent links between subjects and emphasises practical experiences. This motivates pupils and is helping, for example, to develop literacy through other subjects. Pupils' enjoyment and their appreciation of the wider world are fostered through an impressive range of visits and experiences. Particularly good examples include visiting a pizza restaurant to learn how food is produced on a commercial basis, and foraging locally for fungi as part of their work in science. A range of specialist teachers and other visitors also help bring learning to life. Local residents recount their Second World War experiences to illustrate history, while professional musicians work with pupils to prepare concerts.

Parents and pupils are overwhelmingly appreciative of the quality of opportunities provided.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

The high level of care and support given to pupils throughout the school contributes significantly to their enjoyment of school and their eagerness to learn. The school values highly the views of pupils and parents which it gathers and uses very well to improve provision. Parents are most confident that children are safe and well cared for in school. Pupils work in a safe environment. Procedures for child protection and health and safety are effective. Rigorous risk assessments are made before pupils go on visits. The focus the school gives to promoting healthy lifestyles effectively shapes pupils' attitudes to health, including the importance of healthy diets and physical activities.

In class pupils receive much ongoing support and encouragement. Teachers mark pupils' work carefully and give very clear guidance as to how pupils can improve. The support and guidance for pupils with learning difficulties and for those identified as gifted and talented is very effective.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 1**

Leadership and management are outstanding. Rigorous assessment of pupils' achievement has been used successfully to set challenging targets for improvement. These have been followed through by leaders at all levels so that every area of the school's performance is at least good, with some excellent features.

The school evaluates its performance realistically. It regularly seeks the views of parents and pupils, and makes good use of additional expertise and experience in the governing body. Governors are well trained and know the school well. They visit regularly to observe lessons so they are able to form an accurate view of strengths and weaknesses. Governors are very active in contributing to, and securing the success of, the school's plans for improvement. An example of this has been the development of provision for information and communication technology. This is now a strength of the school and rated highly by pupils.

The headteacher rightly strives for high standards of teaching and care. This permeates the school so that staff seek and view feedback in a positive light. Equally importantly, pupils themselves view learning in this way. This was illustrated well by a Year 4 boy who remarked to his teacher, "You are not criticising us, just helping us to get better."

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## 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>	<b>16-19</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>	1	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

### Achievement and standards

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

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	1	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	NA
The behaviour of learners	1	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1	NA

### The quality of provision

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

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

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	1	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	1	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	1	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy</b>	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
<b>The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe</b>	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
<b>The extent to which learners make a positive contribution</b>	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being</b>	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

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

Penshurst Church of England Primary School Penshurst Tonbridge Kent TN11 8BX

Thursday 10 November 2005

Dear Pupils

Thank you very much for making us feel very welcome when we visited your school. We very much enjoyed coming into your lessons and looking at your work. We especially enjoyed talking to some of you about your school.

These are some of the things we are most pleased about:

you work hard in lessons and show great interest in your work

how well you are learning and making progress

you enjoy school and look forward to coming each day

you are extremely well behaved and are polite and helpful to each other and visitors

you enjoy the interesting work your teachers give you, and the help they provide in lessons to help you to do well

all the adults in school look after you very well and help you to feel safe and keep healthy

that you really appreciate all the extra opportunities the school gives you, especially visits

the way in which your headteacher, staff and school governors run the school.

Your headteacher and teachers already know what they need to do in order to make your school even better. We have asked them to make sure that they work hard to carry out their plans for the next year.

Yours sincerely

Robin Thelwell Lead inspector