

Pirton School

Address: High Street, Pirton, Hitchin, Hertfordshire, SG5 3PS

Unique reference number (URN): 117128

Inspection report: 6 May 2026

Exceptional	
Strong standard	
Expected standard	
Needs attention	
Urgent improvement	

Safeguarding standards met

The safeguarding standards are met. This means that leaders and/or those responsible for governance and oversight fulfil their specific responsibilities and have established an open culture in which safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and concerns are actively identified, acted upon and managed. As a result, pupils are made safer and feel safe.

How we evaluate safeguarding

When we inspect schools for safeguarding, they can have the following outcomes:

- **Met:** The school has an open and positive culture of safeguarding. All legal requirements are met.
- **Not met:** The school has not created an open and positive culture of safeguarding. Not all legal requirements are met.

Strong standard ●

Early years

Strong standard ●

Leaders make early years a clear priority. They understand children's needs extremely well and use this knowledge to shape teaching and learning. They review how well children are learning and make changes quickly when needed. For example, staff set regular targets for each child and adapt learning to meet these. This ensures children receive exactly the right support at the right time.

Children learn key skills in communication, early reading and mathematics very well. They also learn effectively across all other areas. Staff provide a wide range of opportunities that encourage children to talk, explore and play. As a result, children build a strong vocabulary and remember what they learn.

Well-trained staff teach effectively. They use talk, play and daily routines to develop learning. They make the most of every available opportunity to support children's development. Staff support children who need help and encourage quieter children to join in. This means all children stay involved and take part in learning fully.

Children achieve very well from their starting points. Many reach the high standards expected of them by the end of the Reception Year. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those facing other challenges also progress well. This is because staff know them and provide exactly the right support. Children are very well prepared for Year 1.

Personal development and wellbeing

Strong standard ●

Leaders give a high priority to pupils' personal development and wellbeing. They have created a clear, well-planned programme that helps pupils build their confidence and understand themselves and others. Staff know pupils well and respond quickly when they need support. As a result, pupils feel safe, valued and ready to learn. They talk positively about the strong relationships they have with staff and say that they listen to them and help them resolve concerns.

The personal, social, health and economic education curriculum helps pupils understand important topics. Pupils learn about relationships, staying safe, healthy lifestyles and mental health in an age-appropriate way. Staff plan lessons carefully so that all pupils can take part. Pupils explain clearly how to stay safe online and offline, manage risks and build healthy friendships. They understand how to seek help if they are worried. This supports them to make sensible decisions when in school and beyond.

Pupils learn about different beliefs and cultures through a well-sequenced curriculum. They respect others and understand that people may have different views and backgrounds. They talk confidently about democracy, fairness and equality, and link these ideas to their experiences in school. Pupils understand fundamental British values of, for example, tolerance and respect. They apply them in how they treat others day to day. Pupils show a mature understanding of different families and disabilities, including hidden disabilities.

Leaders make sure that all pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, take part in a wide range of opportunities. Most pupils attend clubs. Activities such as residential visits and safety events, including work with external agencies, widen pupils' experiences. Pupils enjoy these opportunities and explain how they help them develop independence, resilience and teamwork skills that prepare them well for the next stage of education.

Expected standard

Achievement

Expected standard

Most pupils develop the knowledge and skills they need and are ready for the next stage of their education. Pupils build confidence in reading, writing and mathematics, which helps them learn across different subjects. Results at the end of the key stage 2 national tests are broadly in line with national expectations.

Pupils progress steadily from their various starting points. Disadvantaged pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, usually achieve in line with their peers. This reflects the effective support they receive to take part in lessons and overcome barriers to learning.

Most pupils can apply their skills across subjects. However, in some subjects, pupils do not always use accurate spelling, writing or subject vocabulary like they do in English and mathematics. This means some pupils do not build knowledge securely, so they do not always produce the high-quality work they could across all subjects.

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard

Leaders make attendance a high priority. Attendance is above national averages and most pupils attend regularly. Leaders check attendance closely and work with families when it needs to improve. This supports pupils to attend more often and keep up with their learning. Attendance remains lower for a small number of pupils, including some disadvantaged pupils. Leaders understand the barriers that affect these pupils and are helping many to attend more regularly.

Most pupils behave well and have positive attitudes to learning. They follow routines and listen to staff. Pupils say that staff deal with bullying when it occurs and that unkind or discriminatory behaviour is not accepted. This helps pupils feel safe and supported. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive support to help them manage their behaviour and take part in lessons.

Sometimes, expectations for learning and behaviour are not applied consistently. At times, teaching does not engage pupils or sustain their attention. Staff do not always reinforce routines or address low-level disruption promptly. As a result, learning is interrupted and some pupils are not focused on their work. Leaders are addressing this, but improvement is not yet embedded.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Leaders have improved the curriculum since the previous inspection. They have set out clearly what pupils need to learn and in what order. This helps pupils build their knowledge step by step and remember more over time. The curriculum focuses on helping pupils learn the basics well, especially in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils practise key skills regularly and revisit important knowledge. For example, younger pupils practise letter sounds and use these in their writing. This helps pupils become confident readers and writers and prepares them for future learning.

Teachers usually deliver the curriculum well. They explain new learning clearly and use helpful resources. They adapt lessons so pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, can take part fully and complete tasks. This helps most pupils keep up with their learning and develop the skills they need across subjects. However, at times, staff do not check pupils' understanding carefully enough or address gaps in their basic knowledge promptly. This means some pupils do not build new knowledge as securely as they could.

Teachers use a range of approaches and provide pupils with opportunities to practise and improve their work. This helps pupils understand how to develop and build confidence in their learning. Across the school, pupils benefit from a curriculum that is planned to include a wide range of subjects and experiences.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

This is an inclusive school where staff identify pupils' needs accurately and early. Leaders use clear and well-thought-through systems to review pupils' needs. As a result, disadvantaged pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, receive effective support and achieve.

Learning is successfully adapted so pupils can access the curriculum. Teachers use a variety of resources, give clear explanations and provide pupils with effective extra help. Teachers deploy additional staff carefully so pupils receive this help when needed. This work enables pupils to learn alongside their peers and develop independence in their learning.

Leaders use pupil premium funding effectively. This helps disadvantaged pupils to be included in school life and develops their confidence in and beyond the classroom. Many pupils take part in clubs and wider opportunities and receive effective, targeted support. For example, staff support pupils with social or emotional needs well through clear plans and work with external services when needed. This helps most pupils behave well, stay in class and continue learning.

Leaders make appropriate use of alternative provision. They work with other services to support these pupils effectively.

Leaders understand what the school does well and what needs to improve. Since the previous inspection, they have made changes to improve what pupils learn through a revised curriculum. They focus on helping pupils learn what they need for the next stage of school. The school has had some changes in staff in recent years. Leaders have worked to reduce the impact of this by helping the new staff and keeping expectations clear. This has helped pupils experience increased consistency in their learning.

Leaders support staff's wellbeing and workload. Staff say they feel supported and that leaders consider their health and work-life balance. Leaders provide regular training for staff. This includes support for teaching subjects and meeting pupils' needs, such as those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. This helps staff improve their teaching and support pupils more effectively over time.

Governors understand their roles and hold leaders fully to account. They make sure important duties are carried out and ask appropriate questions about how well the school is improving. They also seek external advice to strengthen their work. This helps governors understand the school more clearly so the right improvements are made for pupils.

Leaders communicate regularly with parents and carers. They offer them opportunities to take part in school life. Many parents are positive and feel informed. Some parents have different views, especially about communication. Leaders and governors are working to improve this and to build stronger relationships with all parents.

What it's like to be a pupil at this school

Pupils experience a welcoming school where they are known and well supported. They follow the school's rules to be safe, be kind and be positive and use these to guide how they behave. This helps create a calm atmosphere where most pupils feel respected.

Pupils enjoy coming to school. They like practical activities, trips and chances to create and make things. For example, pupils talk about visits to places such as an Anglo-Saxon camp and various museums. These experiences help them understand their learning more deeply and remember it. Pupils take on roles such as play leaders and reading ambassadors. This helps them build confidence and feel part of the school community. Leaders ensure that pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and disadvantaged pupils, take part in clubs, trips and activities. These help to remove barriers and build pupils' confidence and resilience.

Pupils feel that they belong here. They learn about different families, beliefs and cultures. Pupils show respect for others. They understand that everyone is different and that this should be valued. Opportunities to share their own interests through presentations of their choice help pupils feel confident and included.

Pupils usually behave well and understand the school's routines. At breaktimes, they enjoy the large outdoor spaces and play areas. Most say bullying does not happen often and that

adults deal with it quickly and fairly if it does. As a result, most pupils feel safe and know whom to talk with if they are worried.

Pupils achieve well and are ready for their next steps. However, occasional low-level disruption means some pupils do not always learn as well as they could. Leaders are fully aware of this and are working to improve it for all pupils.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure pupils apply their reading, writing and vocabulary skills accurately across all subjects, and that staff identify and correct errors quickly, so pupils build knowledge securely over time.
 - Leaders and governors should strengthen communication and engagement with parents and the wider community to further build trust and consistency, while continuing to support staff wellbeing and manage workload.
 - Leaders should ensure that expectations for behaviour and learning are applied consistently, so that pupils remain focused and complete their work without interruption.
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About this inspection

The co-chairs of the board of governors in this school are Valerie Hudson and Owain Lister.

Inspectors carried out this full inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Following our renewed inspection framework, all inspections are now led by His Majesty's Inspectors (HMIs) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMIs.

Inspectors spoke with the headteacher, other school staff, members of the board of governors and a representative of the local authority. They also spoke with groups of pupils, visited a sample of lessons and looked at pupils' work across a number of curriculum subjects. Inspectors also spoke with some parents and carers.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school currently makes use of 2 alternative provisions, including one that is unregistered.

Headteacher: Jenn Magdeburg

Lead inspector:

Sarah Stevens, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspector:

Michele Geddes, Ofsted Inspector

Facts and figures used on inspection

The data was used by the inspector(s) during the inspection. More recent data may have been published since the inspection took place.

 This data is from 6 May 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

135

Below average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils currently at this school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 272

School capacity

175

Below average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils who can attend the school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 300

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

17.78%

Below average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years.

National average: 26.3%

Pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan

2.22%

Close to average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan. This covers pupils with more support than is available through special educational needs support.

National average: 3.5%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

19.26%

Above average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with reported special educational support needs at the school.

National average: 15%

Location deprivation

Below average

What does this mean?

Based on the English Indices of Deprivation (2019) and the school's location, we have calculated whether the school is located in a more or less deprived area.

Resourced Provision or SEND Unit (if applicable)

No resourced provision

What does this mean?

Whether school has Resourced Provision or SEND unit (if applicable).

All pupils' performance

Pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standards in a combined reading, writing and mathematics measure.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	56%	61%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	65%	62%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	50%	61%	Below
2022/23 (final)	50%	60%	Below

Pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in reading.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	72%	74%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	75%	75%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	92%	74%	Above
2022/23 (final)	59%	73%	Below

Pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	74%	72%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	70%	72%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	83%	72%	Above
2022/23 (final)	73%	71%	Close to average

Pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	67%	73%	Below
2024/25 (final)	70%	74%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	67%	73%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	64%	73%	Below

Disadvantaged pupils' performance

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after.

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average		46%	
2024/25 (final)	S	47%	S

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24		46%	
2022/23 (final)	S	44%	S

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average		62%	
2024/25 (final)	S	63%	S
2023/24		62%	
2022/23 (final)	S	60%	S

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average		59%	
2024/25 (final)	S	59%	S
2023/24		58%	
2022/23 (final)	S	58%	S

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average		60%	
2024/25 (final)	S	61%	S
2023/24		59%	
2022/23 (final)	S	59%	S

‘S’ in the table above indicates the data has been suppressed, which is usually due to small cohorts. The suppression rules applied by the DfE when publishing the data have been mirrored and applied in the report card.

Disadvantaged pupils' performance gap

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after. The school disadvantage gap is the difference between the performance of the school's disadvantaged pupils compared to the performance of all non-disadvantaged pupils nationally.

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics, including the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average		68%	
2024/25 (final)	S	69%	S
2023/24		67%	
2022/23 (final)	S	66%	S

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading and the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average		80%	
2024/25 (final)	S	81%	S
2023/24		80%	
2022/23 (final)	S	78%	S

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing and the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average		78%	
2024/25 (final)	S	78%	S
2023/24		78%	
2022/23 (final)	S	77%	S

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics and the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average		80%	
2024/25 (final)	S	81%	S
2023/24		79%	

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2022/23 (final)	S	79%	S

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Absence

Overall absence

The percentage of all possible mornings and afternoons missed due to absence from school (for whatever reason, whether authorised or unauthorised) across all pupils.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (3 term)	4.4%	5.2%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	6.1%	5.5%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	6.3%	5.9%	Close to average

Persistent absence

The percentage of pupils missing 10% or more of their possible mornings and afternoons.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (3 term)	11.2%	13.0%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	13.8%	14.6%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	17.1%	16.2%	Close to average

Our grades explained

Exceptional 

Practice is exceptional: of the highest standard nationally. Other schools can learn from it.

Strong standard ●

The school reaches a strong standard. Leaders are working above the standard expected of them.

Expected standard ●

The school is fulfilling the expected standard of education and/or care. This means they are following the standard set out in statutory and non-statutory legislation and the professional standards expected of them.

Needs attention ●

The expected standards are not met but leaders are likely able to make the necessary improvements.

Urgent improvement ●

The school needs to make urgent improvements to provide the expected standard of education and/or care.

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