

Orchard Primary School

Address: Cherry Orchard, Pershore, Worcestershire, WR10 1ET

Unique reference number (URN): 144457

Inspection report: 3 February 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.

Expected standard

Early years

Expected standard 

Children get off to a positive start in the early years. Warm, trusting relationships help them settle quickly and feel secure. Staff establish clear routines that develop children's confidence, cooperation and independence. They make sure that their conversations with children are purposeful. They model vocabulary clearly and encourage children to talk about what they are doing, which strengthens children's communication and language. Staff work closely with parents and carers to share information about children's needs and interests, helping to ensure that support at home and school is well coordinated.

Reading is prioritised. Phonics is taught daily. Most children learn new sounds securely and read books that match what they have been taught, helping them practise early reading skills. Staff provide additional phonics sessions when children need more support, although early writing, including letter formation, is not consistently well promoted.

The curriculum covers all areas of learning and is sequenced so that children build knowledge effectively through well-planned play. Indoors and outdoors, activities support children to revisit and practise learning. In the pre-school, children benefit from rich exploratory activities. Staff identify children who need extra help promptly and work purposefully with families and external professionals. By the end of Reception, most children are ready for Year 1.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

The school provides a broad and carefully sequenced programme for pupils' personal development. Through the curriculum, assemblies and wider activities, pupils learn how to stay safe, develop healthy habits and understand the importance of respectful relationships. They talk confidently about keeping themselves safe online, and they recognise that everyone should be treated with kindness and respect. Pupils demonstrate increasing awareness of diversity and describe situations in which they would challenge unkind behaviour.

The personal, social and health education curriculum is well designed and implemented. It covers themes such as relationships, emotional well-being, consent, equality, and suitable age-appropriate content for relationships, sex education and health education. Leaders supplement this with carefully chosen external organisations who provide guidance for pupils on issues affecting the local and wider community, including online risks and safety. Pupils learn how to support their mental and physical health and can describe strategies for managing worries and seeking help. Pupils are developing their understanding of different faiths and fundamental British values.

Pupils benefit from a wide range of enrichment opportunities that broaden their interests and experiences. These include visits from local community organisations, trips linked to curriculum themes, musical performances, sporting competitions and drama events. Younger pupils engage in learning about potential careers through role-play experiences that introduce them to different occupations. Leaders' positive relationships with families and external professionals help ensure that pupils who face additional challenges receive

compassionate, well-coordinated support and opportunities. Leaders are aware of the need to improve their tracking of pupils' uptake of the school's enrichment opportunities to ensure particularly the most vulnerable pupils benefit from the school's offer.

Across the school, pupils enjoy taking part in wider events, contributing to charitable fundraising and taking pride in representing their school in concerts and competitions. These experiences help pupils develop confidence, resilience and a sense of belonging to the school community.

Needs attention

Achievement

Needs attention 

Pupils' achievement is not secure across the school. The nationally recognised combined attainment in reading, writing and mathematics has been below national averages for the last 3 years. Achievement in mathematics and in grammar, punctuation and spelling is significantly below national averages, meaning that too many pupils do not reach the standards expected for their age. However, outcomes in the Year 1 phonics screening test and the Year 4 multiplication check over time are significantly above the national average. Similarly, pupils' attainment in writing at the end of key stage 2, has also been consistently above the national average.

Current pupils make inconsistent progress through the curriculum. The quality of pupils' written work varies considerably in different subjects. Some pupils who need additional help, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, do not achieve as well as they could because teachers do not adapt their teaching or learning to meet pupils' needs consistently well. These weaknesses limit how well pupils learn and achieve and impact their preparedness for the next stage of their education.

Attendance and behaviour

Needs attention 

Pupils' attendance is too low and has remained below national averages over time. The proportion of pupils who are more persistently absent from school is significantly higher than seen nationally, including for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Leaders have systems to follow up absence, such as improved and considered communication with families and targeted support for pupils with higher absence. However, their actions have not yet secured sustained improvements in pupils' attendance. A considerable number of pupils are on part-time timetables or attend alternative provision for significant periods of time during the week. As a result, too many pupils do not benefit from regular, continuous learning.

Pupils' behaviour is mixed. While many pupils conduct themselves sensibly around school and respond well to established routines, low-level disruption occurs in some lessons. For example, at times, in some classes, a small minority of pupils require repeated reminders to stay focused on learning. Staff do not manage pupils' behaviour consistently well. In classes where low-level disruption occurs, pupils can lose focus or become disengaged, which interrupts learning for themselves and others. The number of suspensions over time has

been high and remains a concern, with several pupils receiving repeated suspensions. Bullying is rare and dealt with effectively.

Leaders have begun to take appropriate steps to improve behaviour and attendance but it is too soon to see the impact of this work.

Curriculum and teaching

Needs attention 

Leaders have not ensured that the curriculum and strategies for teaching are implemented consistently across the school. Their expectations for how pupils should learn important knowledge, including handwriting, spelling and early writing, are not applied with sufficient precision. Teachers do not consistently address pupils' misconceptions, and opportunities for pupils to deepen their understanding vary between classes. As a result, across the school, pupils' experiences of learning differ widely.

Leaders have adopted structured approaches for the teaching of English and mathematics. A new mathematics curriculum has been introduced and sets out a clear lesson design for teachers to follow. This has secured greater consistency in pupils' learning. However, it is too early to evaluate the impact of this on pupils' achievement in mathematics.

Teachers do not routinely adapt teaching effectively for pupils who need additional support, including disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Variability in teachers' subject knowledge affects how confidently and accurately they present new curriculum content for pupils.

In classes where teaching is more secure, clear modelling and physical resources help pupils to understand new ideas and practise them successfully. Pupils respond well to practical activities and discussions and show genuine interest when staff use intended teaching approaches effectively.

Inclusion

Needs attention 

Leaders do not have secure oversight of the impact of the school's work to support the needs of disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The quality of teaching and support which these pupils receive varies in effectiveness. Staff are not fully equipped with the skills they need to identify pupils' needs with accuracy and consistency. As a result, teachers' adaptations to learning and the strategies they use to support pupils vary between classes, and some pupils with SEND and some disadvantaged pupils do not benefit from a consistently inclusive curriculum.

Weaknesses in the school's approach to inclusion contribute to the wider pattern of some pupils' low achievement. Leaders have not used additional funding to support disadvantaged pupils effectively enough to address and remove barriers to learning so that disadvantaged pupils are supported to learn well. Leaders have not checked the impact of their use of additional funding with sufficient rigour.

Pupils benefit from staff who know them well and respond thoughtfully to their day-to-day needs. Staff show warmth and patience, helping particularly vulnerable pupils to feel settled and understood. Positive relationships with families and external professionals help staff to

access additional guidance when they need it to better support pupils. These positive interactions are supporting leaders to build a more consistent and effective approach to inclusion.

Leadership and governance

Needs attention 

Leaders have not ensured that their actions have secured a consistent quality of education across the school. Strategic oversight of the curriculum, teaching and inclusion lacks rigour. Leaders' evaluation of the school's strengths and weaknesses does not reflect the variability in pupils' experiences. As a result, improvement plans do not address the most urgent priorities and lack sufficient precision.

Leaders' checks on the curriculum are not thorough enough to identify where teaching does not align with the intended curriculum. This has contributed to inconsistent expectations and gaps in pupils' achievement. Systems to monitor the effectiveness of provision are weak, meaning that leaders cannot reliably judge whether decisions are improving pupils' learning or well-being.

Those responsible for governance do not yet provide the level of scrutiny and support the school requires. The trust does not work closely enough with the school to ensure that improvement priorities are understood or addressed with sufficient urgency. As a result, weaknesses in areas such as inclusion, curriculum implementation and attendance remain unchecked for too long. The trust has not ensured that local governors receive the training and guidance they need to understand the school's performance securely or to challenge leaders effectively. This limits their ability to hold leaders to account for the education and care of disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. However, despite these weaknesses, most parents are positive about the school and staff value the day-to-day support they receive. Positive relationships contribute to a caring culture.

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

Pupils are welcomed warmly each morning and arrive ready to start the day. They respond positively to familiar routines and form trusting relationships with staff, who take time to listen and provide reassurance when concerns arise. Pupils feel safe in school and know which adults they can approach if something is worrying them. They value the ways they can share concerns, knowing that staff will offer support.

Most pupils enjoy practical activities and spoken discussions, particularly in subjects such as physical education and design and technology. Children in the early years are curious and eager learners. Established routines help them to settle quickly and feel well cared for. Older pupils appreciate the opportunities offered beyond lessons, including visits, performances and sporting events. Pupils are polite and welcoming to visitors. Many are proud of their school and want to do well. They understand the importance of being respectful and can talk about ways to stay healthy and safe. They enjoy contributing to school life, whether through clubs, performances or helping others, and these opportunities help them develop a keen sense of belonging to the school community.

Pupils' day-to-day experiences vary. While some pupils concentrate well and follow established routines, others do not. Staff do not routinely insist on high expectations for pupils' behaviour and learning. This means that some classes are calm and purposeful, while in others low-level disruption sometimes interrupts pupils' learning. Pupils say bullying is uncommon, but a small number feel that unkind behaviour is not always resolved as quickly as they would like.

Inconsistencies in curriculum and teaching and approaches to inclusion mean that some pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, do not learn or achieve as well as they should.

Attendance is low for all groups of pupils. Too many pupils are absent from school on a regular basis. This impacts negatively on how well pupils learn and develop personally.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that staff have the necessary skills to reduce barriers to pupils' learning and wellbeing effectively.
 - Leaders, including those responsible for governance, should ensure that the pupil premium strategy is appropriately focused on effective strategies to improve outcomes for disadvantaged pupils in reading, writing and mathematics.
 - Leaders should ensure that teaching and assessment are consistently effective and of high quality across the school so that pupils secure important foundational knowledge, particularly in reading, writing and mathematics, and achieve well.
 - Leaders should ensure that attendance improves and absence reduces, particularly for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
 - Leaders and those responsible for governance should improve their strategic oversight and effectively monitor the impact of the school's work to improve the school and ensure high standards of behaviour and the best possible outcomes and experiences for pupils.
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About this inspection

This school is part of the Avonreach Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Philip Hanson, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Andrew Longdon.

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 school leaders, including the headteacher and the deputy headteacher. They also spoke with representatives of the trust, including trust leaders, trustees and members of the local governing body, during the inspection.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school also runs, under the same registration, an on-site pre-school provision for children aged 2, 3 and 4 years.

The school provides wraparound care.

The school makes use of 3 unregistered alternative provisions.

Headteacher: Sarah Bitcon

Lead inspector:

Matt Fletcher, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Heather Simpson, Ofsted Inspector

Diana Pearce, 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 3 February 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

194

Close to 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

210

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)

22.16%

Close to 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

3.61%

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

25.77%

Well above average

What does this mean?

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

National average: 15%

Location deprivation

Well above 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	53%	61%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	50%	62%	Below
2023/24 (final)	55%	61%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	53%	60%	Close to average

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	68%	74%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	62%	75%	Below
2023/24 (final)	72%	74%	Close to average

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2022/23 (final)	70%	73%	Close to average

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	81%	72%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	81%	72%	Above
2023/24 (final)	86%	72%	Above
2022/23 (final)	77%	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	64%	73%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	58%	74%	Below
2023/24 (final)	66%	73%	Below
2022/23 (final)	67%	73%	Close to average

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	30%	46%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	14%	47%	Below
2023/24 (final)	17%	46%	Below
2022/23 (final)	57%	44%	Above

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	65%	62%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	57%	63%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	50%	62%	Below
2022/23 (final)	86%	60%	Above

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	65%	59%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	71%	59%	Above
2023/24 (final)	50%	58%	Close to average

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2022/23 (final)	71%	58%	Above

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	40%	60%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	14%	61%	Below
2023/24 (final)	33%	59%	Below
2022/23 (final)	71%	59%	Close to average

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	30%	68%	-38 pp
2024/25 (revised)	14%	69%	-55 pp
2023/24 (final)	17%	67%	-51 pp
2022/23 (final)	57%	66%	-9 pp

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	65%	80%	-15 pp
2024/25 (revised)	57%	81%	-24 pp
2023/24 (final)	50%	80%	-30 pp
2022/23 (final)	86%	78%	7 pp

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	65%	78%	-13 pp
2024/25 (revised)	71%	78%	-7 pp
2023/24 (final)	50%	78%	-28 pp
2022/23 (final)	71%	77%	-6 pp

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	40%	80%	-40 pp
2024/25 (revised)	14%	81%	-66 pp
2023/24 (final)	33%	79%	-46 pp
2022/23 (final)	71%	79%	-8 pp

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 (2 term)	8.6%	5.2%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	8.6%	5.5%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	8.3%	5.9%	Above

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 (2 term)	22.3%	13.3%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	26.1%	14.6%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	27.9%	16.2%	Above

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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