

Pendle Primary Academy

Address: Walter Street, BB9 5AW

Unique reference number (URN): 139053

Inspection report: 25 November 2025

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

Achievement

Expected standard 

Across the school, pupils achieve well. They have an impressive recall of what they have learned. Older pupils make links between different aspects of their learning. For example, one group of pupils was able to talk about the concept of invasion, linking what they had learned about the Second World War with what they had learned about Vikings a few years before.

Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education. This is reflected in how well pupils achieve in national assessments. Standards have risen steadily over the last 3 years. By the end of key stage 2, pupils' attainment is typically in line with that found nationally at both the expected and higher standards. Disadvantaged pupils typically attain higher than disadvantaged pupils nationally. The progress that pupils make is on an upward trajectory.

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

Over the last year, pupils' attendance has increased dramatically. It has shifted from significantly lower than that seen nationally to broadly in line. Similarly, rates of persistent absenteeism have fallen dramatically. Leaders, ably supported by the recently appointed family support worker, have an astute understanding of the challenges that pupils and their families face. The school puts in place the necessary help, support and challenge to address these. The school provides robust challenge when pupils miss school due to family holidays. Pupils understand the importance of regular attendance.

Pupils behave well. They show positive attitudes to learning. They are polite and courteous towards one another. They hold doors open and stand aside to let others pass by in corridors. Pupils are motivated by the rewards on offer, including earning the different coloured star badges, 'Brain Box' awards and recognition in celebration assemblies. They say that poor behaviour, including bullying, is rare. Leaders keep a close eye on any emerging trends or patterns in behaviour. Any pupils who need support to live up to the school's expectations are given the help that they need. This has a positive, demonstrable impact.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Across all subjects and the early years, the school has implemented a well-designed curriculum. It makes clear what pupils should know and remember at each stage of their education. The curriculum is carefully constructed so that, across different subjects, pupils' knowledge builds cumulatively. For example, texts included in the reading curriculum are chosen to increase pupils' vocabulary and understanding in history and geography. A well-designed training programme ensures that teachers, including early career teachers, have the knowledge, skills and support necessary to teach the curriculum and to ensure that pupils remember what they have learned.

The school ensures that pupils typically have the foundational knowledge they need to succeed. There is a strong focus on oracy. This results in pupils' vocabulary and communication skills developing well over time. Pupils achieve highly in phonics. Any pupils who fall behind are helped to catch up. Teachers typically check on how well pupils learn the curriculum and are quick to address misconceptions.

The school has a well-designed handwriting curriculum. However, in a small number of cases, teachers do not always identify and address occasions where pupils form letters incorrectly or do not join letters correctly.

Early years

Expected standard 

Children get off to a positive start in the early years. It is a happy and vibrant place. Children are well cared for and looked after. Working with parents and feeder nurseries, the school gets to know children well before they join. This fully rounded knowledge ensures that children hit the ground running when they arrive.

Staff expertly help children to develop their language and communication skills. Adult explanations are crystal clear, leaving children with no doubt about what is expected of them. The carefully structured use of stories, songs, traditional tales and nursery rhymes enables children to learn and participate. They do this with gusto and are eager to perform these individually to their peers. Adults model the use of new vocabulary and ensure that children learn and use this. The school's phonics programme is well organised. Again, pupils participate in these sessions enthusiastically.

The early years curriculum is well designed. The school checks carefully to ensure that no one is left behind. As a result, children achieve well and are suitably prepared for the next stage of their education. Children further benefit from a carefully planned transition programme into key stage 1.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

The school is inclusive. It develops a fully rounded view of the barriers that all pupils face.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities achieve well. Leaders identify pupils' needs swiftly and with precision. Staff are well trained and know when to make reasonable adjustments and curriculum adaptations for individual pupils. Pupils with education and health care plans who attend the 'Sunshine' and 'Rainbow' rooms benefit from a curriculum that is closely aligned to their needs.

Most pupils speak English as an additional language at this school. The school checks how well these pupils achieve closely. It quickly provides help where needed. Pupils who are new to the English language receive a personalised programme of induction and support. This offer is extended to parents and carers as part of the school's broad early help offer.

The school's pupil premium strategy accurately reflects the needs of the pupils. It makes a positive contribution to the high outcomes that disadvantaged pupils achieve at the end of

key stage 2. However, the school judges the success of the strategy too narrowly. It has not put in place mechanisms to check the impact of each initiative.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders and those responsible for governance have a clear, ambitious vision for the school. They aim for the school to be the beating heart of the community that it serves. This vision is realised. They have tailored all aspects of the school's provision closely to the needs of the pupils and community. Leaders have the unwavering support of pupils, staff and the local community. The school's 'SHINE' values run consistently through the school. These are known, understood and aspired to by all.

Leaders have an accurate understanding of what is working well at the school and where further improvements can be made. As a result, as reflected in outcomes of national assessments, pupils' achievement has improved significantly over the last few years for all groups of pupils. However, there is more to do to ensure that the impact of some initiatives, including the pupil premium strategy, can be measured and compared over time.

Those responsible for governance understand their roles and responsibilities. They provide well-balanced challenge and support that put pupils first.

The school has a cohesive team of staff who are proud to work at the school. Their workload and wellbeing are well considered. At all levels, staff are given the support and training needed to carry out, and get better at, their work.

Parents and carers value and appreciate the work of the school. One summed up several others when they said, 'Pendle Primary Academy is a wonderful school.'

Personal development and well-being

Expected standard 

Pupils benefit from a comprehensive personal development programme. It is underpinned by well-planned curriculums for personal, social and health education and relationships education. From the early years onwards, pupils learn about a wide range of people, cultures and communities from around the world. Pupils learn about a wide range of religions. They recognise and appreciate diversity. They develop an age-appropriate understanding of fundamental British values. The school's oracy programme enables pupils to debate and consider issues and to respect others' views, even if they do not agree with them.

Pupils learn about the importance of physical and mental health and how to stay safe in a range of contexts, including online, such as helping pupils to understand artificial intelligence. Pupils know that they can access help and support through the school's wellbeing team. They are confident to do so.

The school provides a wide range of experiences that contribute well to pupils' cultural awareness. Leaders work closely with parents and carers and local places of worship to help pupils to develop mutual respect for a range of faiths. Teachers use books that celebrate global events.

Pupils are proud of the roles and responsibilities that they take on, including helping out around the classrooms and undertaking the ambassador roles, including for oracy, wellbeing and the outdoors. Pupils learn to support their local community by contributing to charities and fundraising events.

Pupils value the range of extra-curricular activities that are on offer. The school carefully tracks pupils' participation in these activities to ensure that no groups of pupils miss out. The school ensures that disadvantaged pupils benefit from these opportunities equally as well as other pupils.

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

Pendle Primary Academy is a happy school where pupils are looked after and nurtured. Relationships are consistently positive. Pupils work hard in lessons. They enjoy learning and go on to achieve well. This is reflected in the positive outcomes in national assessments at the end of key stage 2.

The school's 'SHINE' values are well known and understood. Pupils know that they are expected to be 'safe, here, inspired, neighbourly and excellent'. As one pupil summed up, 'It's what the school expects us to be.'

The school is inclusive. It develops a fully rounded view of the barriers that all pupils face, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, the many pupils who speak English as an additional language, those known to social care and those who are disadvantaged. The school ensures that pupils get the help they need to be happy, to thrive and to achieve.

Pupils are respectful and courteous. They are motivated by the rewards on offer, including earning star badges, 'brainbox' awards and recognition in celebration assemblies. They know who to turn to if they need help or support. Bullying is rare.

The school's work to develop pupils' oracy skills is of high quality. Pupils learn to listen, consider and debate issues. They are confident to ask others, including inspectors, to 'please reframe' questions when needed. From the early years onwards, pupils develop an equally impressive knowledge of British Sign Language.

The school provides a rich set of experiences. Pupils benefit from a wide range of trips, visits, visitors and extra-curricular activities. The annual pantomime is a firm favourite. The school's impressive use of technology in the 'Immersive Room' provides exciting experiences, including taking a London tube trip and being in the forest alongside Little Red Riding Hood. Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.

Next steps

- Leaders should evaluate the impact of its pupil premium strategy more closely to ensure that all initiatives benefit disadvantaged pupils as fully as possible.
 - Leaders should ensure that all teachers consistently identify and address errors in pupils' handwriting to help them make improvements.
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About this inspection

This school is part of Pendle Education Trust, which means that other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Anita Ghidotti, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Alison Chambers.

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 held meetings with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, trustees and governors, including the chairs of the trust and local governing body.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school uses no alternative provision.

There have been no significant changes since the last inspection.

Principal: Simon Thompson

Lead inspector:

Vic Wilkinson, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Anne Maingay, His Majesty's Inspector

Luella Dhoore, His Majesty's Inspector

Damienne Clarke, His Majesty's 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 25 November 2025

School and pupil context

Total pupils

423

Above 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

420

Above 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)

29.79%

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

3.07%

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

11.82%

Close to average

What does this mean?

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

National average: 15%

Location deprivation

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 maths

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

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	58%	61%	Close to average
2024/25	64%	62%	Close to average
2023/24	51%	61%	Below
2022/23	59%	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	72%	74%	Close to average
2024/25	78%	75%	Close to average
2023/24	68%	74%	Below
2022/23	71%	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	72%	72%	Close to average
2024/25	73%	72%	Close to average
2023/24	64%	72%	Below
2022/23	80%	71%	Above

Pupils reaching the expected standard in maths

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in maths.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	74%	73%	Close to average
2024/25	73%	74%	Close to average
2023/24	75%	73%	Close to average
2022/23	75%	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 maths

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

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	57%	46%	Above
2024/25	70%	47%	Above
2023/24	47%	46%	Close to average
2022/23	50%	44%	Close to average

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	74%	62%	Above
2024/25	78%	63%	Above

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24	71%	62%	Close to average
2022/23	72%	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	69%	59%	Above
2024/25	70%	59%	Close to average
2023/24	65%	58%	Close to average
2022/23	72%	58%	Above

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in maths

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

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	74%	60%	Above
2024/25	74%	61%	Above
2023/24	76%	59%	Above
2022/23	72%	59%	Above

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 maths

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

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	57%	68%	-11 pp
2024/25	70%	69%	0 pp
2023/24	47%	67%	-20 pp
2022/23	50%	66%	-16 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	74%	80%	-5 pp
2024/25	78%	81%	-3 pp
2023/24	71%	80%	-9 pp
2022/23	72%	78%	-6 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	69%	78%	-9 pp
2024/25	70%	78%	-9 pp
2023/24	65%	78%	-13 pp
2022/23	72%	77%	-5 pp

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in maths

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

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	74%	80%	-6 pp
2024/25	74%	81%	-7 pp
2023/24	76%	79%	-3 pp
2022/23	72%	79%	-7 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 (1 term)	5.0%	5.1%	Close to average
2023/24	7.3%	5.5%	Above
2022/23	7.9%	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 (1 term)	13.4%	14.3%	Close to average
2023/24	26.5%	14.6%	Above
2022/23	28.5%	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 standards expected of them.

Expected standard

The school is fulfilling the expected standard of education and/or care. This means they are following the standards 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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