

Bourton-on-the-Water Primary School

Address: School Hill, Bourton-on-the-Water, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire, GL54 2AW

Unique reference number (URN): 139291

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.

Strong standard ●

Attendance and behaviour

Strong standard ●

The school's warm, welcoming ethos encourages pupils to attend regularly. Leaders communicate clear expectations about the importance of daily attendance. They understand the impact that absence has on pupils' learning. Staff identify the underlying causes of absence. They work with external agencies to remove barriers for pupils and their families. Daily checks on pupils' attendance are thorough. Leaders analyse information carefully and act quickly when concerns arise. They draw on wider indicators, such as changes in pupils' behaviour, to guide their response. As a result of this well coordinated approach, attendance continues to improve for all groups of pupils, and rates of persistent absence are reducing.

Leaders model consistently high expectations for behaviour through their daily interactions with pupils. Pupils reflect these expectations. They conduct themselves as mature and responsible ambassadors for the school. Pupils are attentive in lessons and focused on their learning. Older pupils willingly take on roles such as prefects to support younger pupils. Staff use the school's traffic light system for rewards and sanctions fairly. It helps pupils understand the consequences of their actions. Staff teach pupils to recognise and manage their emotions. They offer effective support to those who need it most. As a result, pupils behave very well and enjoy positive relationships across the school.

Personal development and wellbeing

Strong standard ●

The personal development curriculum supports pupils effectively, including those who are disadvantaged or pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Pupils learn about factors that have an impact on their mental health and how to overcome them. Partnership work with other professionals ensures that pupils are equipped to know how to live mentally healthy lifestyles. When needed, leaders have put targeted interventions in place to help pupils to be ready for learning in the classroom. For example, some pupils benefit from equine, play and nurture therapy sessions.

Leaders use assemblies to provide rich opportunities for pupils to reflect on the lives of 'social heroes', such as Rosa Parks. Pupils understand values such as individual liberty. They know that every individual is unique and valued. Pupils have a detailed understanding of treating all fairly. This contributes to pupils' understanding of healthy relationships.

Leaders link elements of the curriculum to enhance pupils' learning. Pupils plan sales for the school fête, which enhances their economic understanding. Lessons on the food production of local cheese helps to develop pupils' awareness of their regional cultural heritage.

Pupils' safety is enhanced through the curriculum. They learn how to stay safe online. A programme of visits from the police helps pupils to develop a secure understanding of online risks when using the internet.

Alongside the taught curriculum, visits to a local farm and museum, as well as choir performances, enrich pupils' experiences. Their views inform the wide range of clubs available. Leaders track and support full participation in any activity. Residential experiences for older pupils build their confidence to tackle unfamiliar challenges.

The personal development programme supports pupils' development of their self-awareness, independence and understanding of faiths and religions. The safe and supportive environment ensures that pupils confidently express their thoughts or ask questions. Pupils develop into respectful and responsible citizens.

Expected standard

Achievement

Expected standard 

Published outcomes at the end of Year 6 in reading, writing and mathematics sit in line with national averages. In writing, disadvantaged pupils attain above disadvantaged pupils nationally. Performance in the Year 1 phonics screening check remains close to the national average. Year 4 multiplication tables check outcomes were in line with outcomes nationally last year. Nevertheless, the trend over time remains variable, and leaders are strengthening their work to raise standards further.

Across the curriculum, pupils learn new knowledge securely, building on what they already know. They recall prior learning confidently. For example, Year 4 pupils compare Tudor and modern homes using historical sources, and Year 6 pupils translate their preferences in French accurately. Leaders use experts in physical education, modern foreign languages and music to help pupils achieve well in the wider curriculum. Pupils are eager to deepen their learning, and they speak positively about the opportunities they receive.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

The curriculum is well sequenced from early years to Year 6. It establishes firm foundations in early reading, number and language so that pupils build knowledge securely over time. As a result, most pupils gain the essential knowledge they need for later learning.

Teachers carefully organise sequences within lessons, topics and year groups that support pupils' recall of prior learning. Pupils confidently use subject-specific vocabulary in subjects such as science, including terms like 'evaporation', 'water vapour', 'filtration' and 'dissolving'. They apply them accurately in context.

Across subjects, teachers typically use their secure subject knowledge to help pupils learn the knowledge they need in reading, writing and mathematics. Teaching uses a range of strategies effectively that support learning and make new content accessible. Where a small number of older pupils require additional help, staff provide targeted support to close the remaining gaps. However, occasionally, teaching does not model for pupils the most accurate or efficient methods to use in their learning.

Teachers use assessment to shape their teaching and refine curriculum content. They make adaptations for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and for those who are disadvantaged, that help pupils to progress well from their starting points.

Early years

Expected standard 

The early years provision offers a stimulating environment where children develop skills for lifelong learning. Staff check on children's learning and development carefully. They adapt activities based on this information. Children are well prepared for Year 1.

Staff use high-quality texts and interactions to link learning and develop children's understanding. They select books that enhance children's knowledge of rhythm and rhyme and expand their vocabulary, for example of sea creatures such as squid, jellyfish and turtles. Predicting which object will float or sink is used to develop scientific concepts early.

Younger children in the pre-school are well catered for. Adults understand that early language development underpins all areas of learning and children's personal development. Activities, such as melting ice blocks with warm water to reveal frozen vegetables, are used well to provoke children's curiosity. Staff share children's learning regularly with their families. They offer guidance on how families can support early reading, language development and exploration at home.

Early reading, writing and mathematics are taught effectively. Children improve their letter formation and early writing techniques when using the 'writing toolkit'. They develop their mathematical language as they share, respond, expand and talk about their thinking. Staff follow the phonics scheme carefully, enabling most children to learn the sounds that letters make accurately.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

Bourton is an inclusive and caring school. Pupils feel welcome. Pupils who are disadvantaged, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and those with other barriers to their learning or their wellbeing receive the support they require to meet their specific developmental needs. Additional funding is targeted effectively to support pupils' individual circumstances. This helps to ensure that all pupils can take part in the wider life of the school.

Leaders identify pupils' needs quickly. They check the needs of pupils with SEND, disadvantaged pupils and pupils known to social care. Leaders work with families and external professionals to design appropriate support. This helps many pupils improve their wellbeing. Very occasionally, teaching does not match pupils' needs. As a result, some pupils do not make the progress that they could.

Staff are trained well and ensure that pupils with SEND can easily access useful resources to help them learn. For example, visual timetables support pupils to learn well. However, at times, some of the school's approaches are not applied consistently by staff. This can limit pupils' understanding. Leaders work with specialist staff to provide effective additional support for those pupils with the most acute levels of need. Leaders check that pupils in alternative provision are kept safe and supported.

Leaders, including governors, demonstrate high ambition for the school and have high expectations of all. Staff share leaders' passion and actively seek further improvement. Training broadly supports the continuous improvement and the leadership development of all staff. Leaders make decisions based on a range of information to act in the best interests of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Consequently, by Year 6 most pupils reach standards in line with other pupils nationally and thrive.

Leaders maintain a focus on continuous improvement. They base their actions on timely checks of teaching, the curriculum and information on pupils' academic progress. Clear follow-up actions improve key aspects of the school's work, for example pupils' personal development and wellbeing, their behaviour and their attendance. However, leaders' improvement actions and follow-up checks on the quality of teaching and pupils' academic progress lack precision. Some actions lack sufficient focus on how teaching impacts pupils' learning.

Across all their work, leaders offer kindness, warmth and a visible presence. Leaders carefully consider staff wellbeing and workload when making decisions. They ensure that expectations are manageable. Leaders also work closely with parents and carers and a wide range of external experts and partners. They know their pupils well. Leaders remain ambitious and keep working to strengthen the school's provision, for example, through the recent introduction of nurture-based support, which helps pupils develop their emotional and social skills. They set a clear vision for the development of this provision. Governors demonstrate a secure commitment and use their wide range of expertise to contribute significantly to the school's ongoing developments.

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

On arrival at Bourton-on-the-Water Primary Academy, staff warmly greet pupils and treat them with kindness. Pupils feel safe and attend regularly. During their time at the school, they build lasting friendships. Teaching motivates pupils to learn and to behave maturely. Most pupils progress well to reach the standards expected by the end of key stage 2.

From pre-school to Year 6, leaders work hard to identify and overcome pupils' mental health needs. Their approach is very successful in supporting disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Leaders' efforts set the culture and foundations for successful learning. They are ambitious to improve teaching further. Currently, teaching for a small minority of pupils does not match their precise needs closely enough.

The school's values of 'Challenge, Amaze, Respect and Enjoy' make a powerful difference to pupils' character and preparation for Year 7. Pupils behave well, enjoy their learning and show consistently positive attitudes. Pupils' behaviour and attitudes are a strength. They act with care, tolerance and kindness towards others. They work hard, persevere and show pride in their work. This means they are well prepared for secondary school. 'Happiness Heroes' busily 'help anyone who is sad'. Bullying is rare, but dealt with quickly, if it occurs.

Trips to a wildlife park and local art trails, combined with the many extra-curricular clubs, enrich pupils' experiences.

Children in the early years develop their communication and language skills effectively. They also build the personal, social and emotional development needed to ensure a positive start to their schooling.

Leaders show high ambition for all pupils and the school. Through the school's values, curriculum and community links, pupils learn how to contribute positively to their school and their local and wider community. They learn to play an active role in life in modern Britain.

Next steps

- Leaders need to ensure that teaching is consistently precise so that pupils can develop secure and effective strategies for their learning.
 - Leaders need to ensure that agreed approaches to supporting pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, are applied consistently so that all pupils benefit from them.
 - Leaders and governors should strengthen their skills in identifying what needs to improve and evaluate the impact of their work clearly.
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About this inspection

This school is a single-academy trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. One of the co-headteachers, Lindsay Connor, also acts as the chief executive officer of the trust. The trust is overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Andrew Bell.

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 co-headteachers, senior leaders and a group of staff to consider their views. The lead inspector held a discussion with members of the trust board. An inspector spoke with a representative from the alternative provision used by the school and the local authority.

Inspectors visited lessons, spoke with pupils and looked at curriculum information and pupils' workbooks.

Inspectors spoke with some parents at the start of the school day. They considered responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including free-text comments.

Inspectors also considered responses to Ofsted's staff and pupil surveys.

Information about this school:

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school makes use of one alternative provider, which is unregistered.

The school also, under the same registration, runs a pre-school for 2- and 3-year-olds.

Co-Headteachers: Lindsay Connor and Jo Kilbey

Lead inspector:

Richard Light, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Paul Smith, Ofsted Inspector

Lorna Buchanan, 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

274

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

315

Close to 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)

17.88%

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

2.55%

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

16.42%

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

Well 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	62%	61%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	61%	62%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	50%	61%	Below
2022/23 (final)	76%	60%	Above

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	74%	74%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	74%	75%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	69%	74%	Close to average

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2022/23 (final)	80%	73%	Above

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	80%	72%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	76%	72%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	75%	72%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	88%	71%	Above

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	75%	73%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	68%	74%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	69%	73%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	86%	73%	Above

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	55%	46%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	58%	47%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	13%	46%	Below
2022/23 (final)	89%	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	69%	62%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	67%	63%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	50%	62%	Below
2022/23 (final)	89%	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	72%	59%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	75%	59%	Above
2023/24 (final)	50%	58%	Close to average

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2022/23 (final)	89%	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	59%	60%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	58%	61%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	25%	59%	Below
2022/23 (final)	89%	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 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	55%	68%	-12 pp
2024/25 (revised)	58%	69%	-11 pp
2023/24 (final)	13%	67%	-55 pp
2022/23 (final)	89%	66%	23 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	69%	80%	-11 pp
2024/25 (revised)	67%	81%	-14 pp
2023/24 (final)	50%	80%	-30 pp
2022/23 (final)	89%	78%	11 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	72%	78%	-5 pp
2024/25 (revised)	75%	78%	-3 pp
2023/24 (final)	50%	78%	-28 pp
2022/23 (final)	89%	77%	12 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	59%	80%	-21 pp
2024/25 (revised)	58%	81%	-22 pp
2023/24 (final)	25%	79%	-54 pp
2022/23 (final)	89%	79%	10 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)	5.6%	5.2%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	6.6%	5.5%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	6.4%	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 (2 term)	12.7%	13.3%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	16.1%	14.6%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	15.1%	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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