

Bishops Tawton Primary School

Address: School Lane, Bishops Tawton, Barnstaple, Devon, EX32 0AE

Unique reference number (URN): 113134

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.

Expected standard

Achievement

Expected standard 

Most pupils achieve well by the time they leave Year 6, which is reflected in national tests. However, the proportion of pupils working at a higher level in writing has been below the national average. In addition, not enough pupils met the national standards in the Year 4 multiplication test. Leaders have subsequently raised expectations by supporting teachers to teach these important skills to pupils at an earlier stage. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are disadvantaged progress well from their starting points.

Pupils take pride in their work. Their work shows they apply their learning of spelling and handwriting successfully. Pupils talk positively and confidently about what they have learned. For example, they explain clearly the importance of local historical figures as well as demonstrating an understanding of British history such as the Great Fire of London and the importance of the work of Samuel Pepys. Pupils are well prepared for their next stage of their education.

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

Pupils enjoy coming to school. This is reflected in the high rates of attendance which are above the national average. Leaders quickly identify pupils whose attendance becomes a concern. The school then works effectively with pupils and families, providing personalised support, to improve rates of attendance. When necessary, the school works with external agencies to provide specialised support.

Throughout the school, staff and pupils radiate close and trusting relationships. The school is calm and routines are established. Pupils are consistently kind and polite to one another. Incidents of bullying are rare. When incidents of poor behaviour do occur, staff are quick to address and resolve them. Staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. The school's values of being ready, respectful and safe are reflected in how pupils treat each other. In class, pupils have positive attitudes to learning. They respond promptly to teachers' instructions and are keen to contribute. As a result, classrooms are generally calm places where pupils learn effectively. During breaktimes, pupils take full advantage of the range of activities available to them and play safely with their friends.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Leaders generally have an informed and accurate view of teaching and the curriculum. The curriculum is rich in knowledge and designed well to build skills progressively from the early years through to Year 6. End points are identified and teachers use these to check how well pupils are learning the expected curriculum. Leaders have also set out the important vocabulary they want pupils to learn and remember. Throughout the school, pupils use this vocabulary in their work and when explaining their learning. Pupils skilfully link what they have learned across different subjects. For example, in geography lessons pupils use their mathematical knowledge of co-ordinates. In most subjects, teachers check pupils' understanding effectively. They use this information to adapt the curriculum to ensure it

meets the needs of pupils. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities progress well from their starting points.

The school has an appropriate phonics curriculum. Most pupils learn the skills they need to become confident readers. However, some staff do not have the subject knowledge they need to teach phonics consistently well. This means that some pupils do not progress as quickly as they could when learning to read.

Early years

Expected standard 

Children in the early years get off to a positive start. They settle quickly and establish purposeful routines from a young age. Staff get to know children well from the time they start in pre-school. Home visits to meet parents and carers also ensure that there is a smooth transition for children when they start school. Care routines for younger children are established and appropriate.

Leaders have ensured that the curriculum is well planned. They are ambitious that children learn the important knowledge and skills they need to be ready for the next stage of their education. This includes a focus on ensuring children develop appropriate handwriting skills. As a result, many children are able to form and write letters appropriately.

Activities in the continuous provision are linked to current topics and provide children with an opportunity to build on their knowledge and skills. Children show sustained levels of engagement and are keen to learn. However, at times, staff do not always probe children's understanding effectively. This means some learning activities are not always swiftly adapted to enhance children's learning further.

Overall, children, including those who are disadvantaged or those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, progress well from their starting points and typically leave Reception well prepared for Year 1.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

The school is committed to ensuring all pupils are included in all aspects of school life. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and those pupils who are disadvantaged learn alongside their peers and have access to the full curriculum.

The school quickly identifies any barriers to learning that pupils may face. Whenever new pupils join the school, teachers get to know pupils' starting points quickly. This information is used well to ensure that targets for these pupils are achievable and precise. Adjustments to learning are made in a timely fashion. The school's SEND team provides effective oversight and it regularly checks the effectiveness of the support pupils receive. As a result, pupils with SEND progress well from their starting points.

School leaders have put in place appropriate extra reading support and pastoral care for those pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium. Leaders have also identified ways to support these pupils with extra-curricular activities, such as learning to play a musical instrument. Regular monitoring supports leaders to measure the impact of the actions they take to support disadvantaged pupils.

Leaders ensure that alternative provision, accessed by a small number of pupils, is appropriately matched to their needs.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders understand the school's context and know the areas for development. They make decisions in the best interests of all pupils, particularly those who are disadvantaged, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities or those who face other barriers to learning. School leaders ensure that these pupils receive the support they need to succeed.

Staff generally have high expectations for what pupils can achieve. Leaders generally take appropriate action to address the school's priorities. However, at times leaders' oversight of some subjects lacks the rigour needed to ensure actions have a swift impact and lead to an improvement in pupils' work.

Governors are committed to the school and carry out statutory duties effectively. They have a broad overview of the needs of the school. However, their knowledge and oversight, at times, lacks appropriate precision. This means that sometimes governance is not focused on the most appropriate areas of school development so it does not have the intended impact.

Staff benefit from working with colleagues from other schools. Staff also benefit from ongoing opportunities for professional development. Staff are highly positive about the school and school leadership. Staff say that leaders and governors take their workload and wellbeing seriously. Parents are highly positive of the work of the school leaders and staff.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

The school's provision for personal development and wellbeing is designed to celebrate what is on offer in the local community as well as to prepare pupils for life in modern Britain. During assemblies and 'family-group time', pupils learn about current affairs and have the opportunity to reflect on these issues. At other times, pupils learn about the importance of consent, protected characteristics and fundamental British values. This supports pupils to develop deep levels of respect and fairness for those who may lead lives different to their own. However, while leaders are ambitious for what they want pupils to know and remember some pupils do not remember the key information they have been taught.

Pupils learn the importance of responsibility in their roles as play leaders, where older pupils support younger pupils in their play. Pupils develop an understanding of democracy by voting for their peers to become school councillors. Pupils value these roles and take pride in organising events to raise money for different charities.

Leaders ensure that pupils benefit from the school's rural and coastal location to enhance their learning. For example, in science, pupils climb a local hill at night to help their understanding of light and dark. Pupils visit local rivers to gather data for local scientists that helps pupils to develop their geographical knowledge as well as the importance of protecting the environment. Pupils also benefit from overnight residential trips to London that support them to develop resilience and independence. Pupils enjoy trips to outdoor education centres that help them to develop new skills such as kayaking and abseiling.

Pupils have the opportunity to learn a range of different musical instruments, including the recorder before progressing to saxophone. Pupils develop their confidence as they showcase their skills to parents during a musical concert.

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

Pupils are proud to be part of this caring school. Each morning, they are greeted by staff who know them well. Pupils are keen to learn and they settle quickly into their morning activities. High rates of attendance reflect that pupils enjoy coming to school. Pupils behave well and classrooms are purposeful learning environments. Children are consistently kind and polite to one another. Pupils are safe. They know that if they have any concerns there is a member of staff who they can turn to for support. Bullying is rare. If it does occur, pupils know staff will swiftly address it.

Pupils generally learn well across the curriculum. By the time they leave Year 6, most pupils are ready for the next stage of their education. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive appropriate support to progress well from their starting points.

Pupils benefit from attending a wide range of clubs at the school, such as tag rugby, netball and book club. These opportunities support pupils to develop their skills and interests. Local sports competitions, such as swimming and cross-country help pupils to extend their social network in preparation for secondary school.

Pupils also benefit from a well-resourced school playground which includes a bespoke outdoor learning environment. This supports pupils to develop practical knowledge of the outdoor world, such as fire lighting, in a safe environment.

Parents are highly supportive of the school and the staff. They appreciate the school's warm and nurturing atmosphere. They also value the stay and play sessions that help parents to learn more about what their children are learning as well as finding out what is available in the community.

Next steps

- Leaders should continue to provide training and support for staff so that they implement the school's phonics programme consistently well, enabling pupils to become fluent readers.
- Leaders should ensure that interactions between adults and children in the early years are used well to enhance learning and extend children's language and thinking.
- Leaders should support pupils to further deepen and retain their knowledge of the personal development curriculum.

- Governors should strengthen their oversight, support and challenge in specific aspects of the school's development work so that they are consistently robust across all areas.
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About this inspection

This school is part of the Two Rivers Federation.

The chair of the board of governors in this school is Pete Ong.

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 (HMI) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMIs.

Inspectors spoke with the executive headteacher, head of school, subject leaders and the special educational needs and/or disabilities coordinator.

The inspectors gathered parents' views by considering the responses to Ofsted Parent View and by talking with parents and carers. The inspectors also reviewed responses to Ofsted's online staff and pupil surveys.

The school has governor led pre-school for two- and three-year-olds.

There is a before- and after-school club for pupils who attend the school.

The school makes use of one unregistered alternative provision.

Head of school: Karen Lintin

Lead inspector:

James Gentile, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Mark Burgess, Ofsted Inspector

Claire Bunting, 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

159

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

168

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)

8.18%

Well 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

1.26%

Below 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

1.89%

Well below average

What does this mean?

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

National average: 15%

Location deprivation

Close to 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	66%	61%	Close to average

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (final)	54%	62%	Below
2023/24 (final)	75%	61%	Above
2022/23 (final)	73%	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	84%	74%	Above
2024/25 (final)	77%	75%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	85%	74%	Above
2022/23 (final)	91%	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	78%	72%	Above
2024/25 (final)	69%	72%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	80%	72%	Above
2022/23 (final)	86%	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	79%	73%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	65%	74%	Below
2023/24 (final)	85%	73%	Above
2022/23 (final)	91%	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	44%	46%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	S	47%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	46%	S
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	67%	62%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	S	63%	S

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	S	62%	S
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	56%	59%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	S	59%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	58%	S
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	89%	60%	Above
2024/25 (final)	S	61%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	59%	S
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	44%	68%	-23 pp
2024/25 (final)	S	69%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	67%	S
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	67%	80%	-13 pp
2024/25 (final)	S	81%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	80%	S
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	56%	78%	-22 pp
2024/25 (final)	S	78%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	78%	S
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	89%	80%	9 pp
2024/25 (final)	S	81%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	79%	S
2022/23 (final)	S	79%	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.

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)	3.7%	5.2%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	4.9%	5.5%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	5.2%	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)	4.7%	13.0%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	9.5%	14.6%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	9.5%	16.2%	Below

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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