

Almeley Primary School

Address: Almeley, Hereford, Herefordshire, HR3 6LH

Unique reference number (URN): 116645

Inspection report: 2 June 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

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

Leaders manage attendance strategically using effective systems. They track absence and work with families to support pupils who experience barriers to positive attendance. An important part of leaders' strategy is to ensure that pupils feel they belong so that they want to come to school. This results in very low persistent absence and overall attendance that is typically high. Disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities attend well.

Behaviour across the school is positive. Pupils learn in a calm, orderly environment that makes it easy for them to concentrate. Occasionally, a small number of pupils do not focus as well, but this is not typical. If a pupil experiences barriers to making the right choice, leaders work with professionals to design support plans. These include provision such as movement breaks and self-esteem support. The behaviour policy focuses on restorative practice to teach pupils how their actions affect others. As a result, pupils manage their emotions well and learn to make consistently positive choices. On the rare occasion that bullying or discrimination happens, leaders deal with it thoroughly and effectively.

Early years

Expected standard 

Leaders ensure children have a positive start to life at Almeley Primary School. Beginning in Nursery, children settle quickly and build secure relationships. This continues across the early years. Staff and children interact warmly with one another. Children learn in a calm, warm environment. This helps them to feel safe and happy. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and disadvantaged pupils access effective support. Staff consistently draw them into conversations and activities. This means they have lots of opportunities to practise language and work with others.

Leaders consider the unique needs and aspirations of each cohort and tailor the curriculum to the children. For example, they introduce additional fine motor and pencil grip work where they identify this as a barrier. This ensures children progress well from their starting points. Leaders check the quality of the environment, teaching and children's achievement. They evaluate this accurately. They identify the right training for staff to develop the provision further. As a result, staff have the expertise to support children well.

Staff design activities that build knowledge across the 7 areas of learning. Children enjoy working together and solving problems. They show resilience and sustained focus. Staff lead high-quality interactions that develop children's language and vocabulary. Occasionally, activities last too long or lack precise learning outcomes, which means staff sometimes miss opportunities to develop children's learning further.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

Leaders quickly identify barriers to learning and/or wellbeing when children start school. Some pupils join during the school year. When this happens, leaders check whether pupils need extra support. This means that these pupils access help at the earliest possibility.

Leaders design support plans precisely. Generally, staff implement these well, especially for pupils with physical disabilities or health needs. They make reasonable adjustments to support pupils, such as specialist furniture and visual timetables. As a result, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities integrate well into the classroom. Leaders implement interventions appropriately. They measure the impact of these effectively. This means support is responsive and evolves according to pupils' emerging needs.

Leaders use funding for disadvantaged pupils well. They consider individual barriers and put the right support in place to reduce them. This results in academic progress and full involvement in school life. Pupils known or previously known to social care also access effective support. Leaders access training from the virtual school to ensure policies support the most vulnerable. The school has an inclusive ethos and a relationships-focused approach. This helps pupils experiencing barriers to wellbeing to feel they belong.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Since the last inspection, there have been changes to leadership and governance. Leaders accurately evaluate the school's strengths and areas for development. They have focused on the right things, in the right order. Everything they do is in the best interests of pupils. As a result, key areas of the school's provision have quickly improved. For example, leaders have implemented highly robust attendance and safeguarding procedures. This has led to better attendance, including for vulnerable pupils, and effective support for those known or previously known to social care. Leaders have rightly identified that there is more work to do to improve the consistency of teaching and achievement. They have started to take action to address these areas, but it is too soon to determine the impact of this work.

Governors have a clear vision for the school. They participate in focused visits, analyse data and review improvement reports. As a result, they know the school well. This enables them to support and challenge leaders effectively. Governors fulfil their statutory duties and ensure pupils are safe.

Staff say that leaders support them with their workload and wellbeing. A well-considered professional learning programme ensures staff develop expertise. Where leaders identify gaps in expertise, they provide appropriate training and support. Staff have a say over which areas of professional expertise to focus on in meetings. They collaborate to solve problems. Leaders work with other schools and organisations to learn from different settings. This all results in a culture of ongoing improvement. Leaders establish constructive partnerships with the community. Parents are highly positive about the school's work.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

Leaders have established an effective personal development programme that ensures pupils feel they belong. They have tailored it to the needs and aspirations of the community. For example, they adapt sports clubs so that pupils with physical disabilities can access them. Leaders have embedded diversity, cultural understanding and acceptance into school life. As a result, pupils show high levels of respect to all, regardless of difference.

Leaders provide trips, clubs and opportunities that enrich pupils' experience of school. These include pupil-led clubs such as card games, and overnight sleepovers and

residential. Every pupil learns an instrument and many take part in sports competitions. These opportunities help pupils to build social skills and nurture interests and talents. Where there are barriers to access, leaders work with pupils and families to support them. This means that the full school offer is an entitlement for all.

Pupils have an appreciation of fundamental British values such as democracy and the rule of law. They vote for pupil leaders and understand why it is important for everyone to have a say. Pupil leadership is meaningful. For example, the Pupil Parliament group worked with leaders to choose a religious education programme that is interesting and engaging.

Pupils know how to keep themselves safe online and outside of school. They understand the risks and know how to manage them. They speak confidently about keeping themselves physically and mentally healthy. Pastoral support helps those who may experience barriers to wellbeing. A wellbeing lunchtime club provides a safe space for those who need to talk. Highly trained staff and external professionals provide effective mental health support. As a result, barriers to wellbeing reduce over time, which enables pupils to feel happy and confident.

Needs attention

Achievement

Needs attention 

Although pupils' achievement in national examinations at the end of key stage 2 is improving, it is still too low. Too many pupils do not secure the important mathematics, reading and writing knowledge they need to be successful in the next stage of their education. Because staff do not always adapt tasks according to pupils' starting points, some pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make less progress than they should.

Nevertheless, many pupils achieve well in some subjects, especially younger pupils. Over time, phonics-check results are in line with national averages. This demonstrates the impact of leaders' recent work to improve early reading. In addition, end of key stage 2 outcomes in reading and mathematics have improved every year for the past 3 years. Writing attainment is more variable. Across the wider curriculum, pupils generally learn the intended content.

Curriculum and teaching

Needs attention 

The effectiveness of teaching is inconsistent. Although staff typically explain concepts clearly, they do not check pupils' understanding well enough when teaching new content. This means that some pupils who do not understand the learning wait too long to access the support they need. In addition, staff do not always adapt tasks according to pupils' starting points. As a result, the challenge of the work can be too high or too low, which means pupils do not experience the success they are capable of. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Leaders are aware of these issues and have started to provide training to address these gaps in staff expertise.

Leaders have implemented a well-sequenced curriculum suitable for mixed-age classes. It provides a breadth of coverage and includes learning about different cultures and traditions. Leaders prioritise important mathematical, writing and reading knowledge. They set out a clear sequence of learning to build this over time. Staff teach this knowledge, including phonics, effectively. Because this is a recent improvement, some older pupils have not accessed the same rigour of teaching. This means they have gaps in their knowledge. Where this is the case, leaders implement interventions to address some gaps in learning.

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

Almeley Primary School is a welcoming and inclusive community where pupils feel they belong. From the moment they start school, children build positive relationships with adults and with each other. In this small school, everyone knows each other well, which helps pupils to feel recognised and valued.

There are lots of opportunities to do interesting things. Pupils enjoy the clubs on offer, such as choir and cookery. They visit places that enhance their learning, including museums that support their history learning. Pupils say that leaders ensure everyone has a chance to take part in everything, so no one misses out. They learn about a range of cultures, heritages and traditions, which helps them to value difference. The 'Pupil Parliament' works meaningfully with leaders to affect genuine change. This gives pupils a voice in shaping the school's provision.

The school's caring, relationships-based approach to behaviour creates a calm and settled atmosphere. Across the school, pupils behave well. Pupils typically work hard. Classrooms are free from disruption. They trust adults to deal with bullying, and they feel safe. There is lots of help available for those who may struggle with mental health or wellbeing. As a result, pupils feel happy and secure. Because they enjoy school, pupils attend well. If they are finding it hard to come to school, they access help quickly. This reduces barriers and helps them to attend more often.

Overall, pupils' achievement is gradually improving over time. However, there are still gaps in important reading, writing and mathematics knowledge for too many older pupils. Most younger pupils generally secure these important foundations at an early stage. Sometimes, work is not adapted to pupil's starting points, which means they do not always progress as much as they could. Pupils enjoy lessons and value the support that adults provide for them.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that all pupils develop secure foundational knowledge in reading, writing and mathematics so that they are better prepared for their next steps in education.
- Leaders should ensure that teachers consistently use assessment effectively to identify when pupils have misconceptions or errors and adjust their teaching accordingly.
- Leaders should ensure that staff take pupils' starting points into account to make consistently suitable adaptations to the curriculum so that pupils, including those with

special educational needs and/or disabilities, progress well.

- Leaders should ensure that all activities in the early years are planned with clear learning purposes, appropriate challenge and appropriate vocabulary, so that children benefit from purposeful learning throughout the day.

About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors in this school is David Willis.

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.

Inspection activities:

Inspectors spoke with school leaders, including the headteacher, the early years leader and the special educational needs and disabilities coordinator. They also spoke with representatives from the governing body.

The school currently uses no alternative provision.

The school has undergone significant changes since the last inspection. The acting headteacher is now the substantive headteacher. There is a new chair of governors.

Headteacher: Jo Keeble

Lead inspector:

Matthew Seex, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspector:

Roberta Hannon, 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 2 June 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

51

Well 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

63

Well 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)

23.53%

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

5.88%

Above 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

21.57%

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

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	33%	61%	Below
2024/25 (final)	44%	62%	Below
2023/24 (final)	38%	61%	Below

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2022/23 (final)	14%	60%	Below

Pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in reading.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	63%	74%	Below
2024/25 (final)	67%	75%	Below
2023/24 (final)	63%	74%	Below
2022/23 (final)	57%	73%	Below

Pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing

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

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	58%	72%	Below
2024/25 (final)	56%	72%	Below
2023/24 (final)	75%	72%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	43%	71%	Below

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	46%	73%	Below
2024/25 (final)	67%	74%	Below
2023/24 (final)	50%	73%	Below
2022/23 (final)	14%	73%	Below

Disadvantaged pupils' performance

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

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

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

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	17%	46%	Below
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	50%	62%	Below
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	33%	59%	Below
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	67%	60%	Close to average
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	17%	68%	-51 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	50%	80%	-30 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	33%	78%	-44 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	67%	80%	-13 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)	4.3%	5.2%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	6.6%	5.5%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	5.5%	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)	8.0%	13.0%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	13.5%	14.6%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	12.8%	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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