

Pentland Primary School

Address: Pentland Avenue, Billingham, TS23 2RG

Unique reference number (URN): 144542

Inspection report: 3 February 2026

Exceptional	
Strong standard	
Expected standard	
Needs attention	
Urgent improvement	

Safeguarding standards met

The safeguarding standards are met. This means that leaders and/or those responsible for governance and oversight fulfil their specific responsibilities and have established an open culture in which safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and concerns are actively identified, acted upon and managed. As a result, pupils are made safer and feel safe.

How we evaluate safeguarding

When we inspect schools for safeguarding, they can have the following outcomes:

- **Met:** The school has an open and positive culture of safeguarding. All legal requirements are met.
- **Not met:** The school has not created an open and positive culture of safeguarding. Not all legal requirements are met.

Expected standard

Early years

Expected standard 

Children get off to a positive start in the early years. Leaders have established a well-designed curriculum that reflects a secure understanding of children's starting points. Working closely with parents and carers, staff quickly identify where children require support. Assessment is used effectively to identify any gaps in children's skills and knowledge, with a clear focus on communication, language and vocabulary development. This ensures that the foundations for future learning are securely established. Staff are trained in important aspects of children's learning, which supports consistently high-quality language modelling throughout routines and interactions.

Staff prioritise the teaching of early reading. Children engage well in phonics lessons. Learning is purposeful. Children benefit from activities that help them to practise important skills, such as handwriting. They are provided with structured opportunities to build their posture and develop early writing skills. Adults interact positively with children and use clear modelling of letters to ensure children develop early literacy skills. Children progress well. They are increasingly well prepared for Year 1.

Leaders have successfully developed a nursery provision for 2-year-olds. Children in the Nursery Year settle quickly and learn to behave well. They follow routines, respond to adults and show developing independence. When children become upset, adults respond sensitively. Resources in the early years reflect children's lived experiences, such as the home corner promoting belonging.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

Leaders have an effective approach to supporting those who are disadvantaged and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They ensure that pupils receive consistent, well-coordinated support. Working closely with parents and carers and a wide range of external agencies, leaders ensure that pupils' needs are accurately identified and met. This joined-up practice strengthens pupils' engagement and readiness to learn.

Despite the very low starting points of some pupils, pupils achieve success over time. Targets and support for pupils with SEND are specific and evaluated to ensure that pupils make progress through the curriculum. This individualised approach greatly reduces barriers. Pupils who access the specially resourced provision for pupils with SEND benefit from carefully structured programmes that promote regulation and successful participation in learning.

Staff receive appropriate training so that they know how best to support pupils who face barriers to their learning. In lessons, staff ensure that disadvantaged pupils get the support that they need. These pupils typically achieve as well as their disadvantaged peers nationally.

The pupil premium strategy is well considered. It provides a range of strategies that enable pupils to participate confidently in all aspects of school life. These include adaptations, targeted interventions and support to access opportunities beyond the academic.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

The school has experienced a period of significant instability and change. The new leadership team has acted swiftly to improve key areas of the school. For example, the new specially resourced provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities ensures that the right support is in place for pupils with social, emotional and mental health difficulties.

Leaders have driven rapid and purposeful change, rebuilding staffing structures and raising expectations. Their actions, well supported by trust leaders, have already improved pupils' behaviour, aspects of curriculum delivery and staff confidence and expertise. Support for early career teachers is well coordinated and valued. Staff appreciate that leaders consider their wellbeing and take their workload into account. Staff benefit from well-matched training opportunities that support the school's key priorities for improvement.

Leaders show a deep understanding of the school's context. They have ensured that the curriculum is ambitious and well designed. Leaders, including those responsible for governance, demonstrate a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. Pupils' best interests are at the centre of leaders' actions.

The trust and governors fulfil their statutory responsibilities, including around safeguarding. They demonstrate an effective grasp of school data, contextual issues and improvement priorities. They monitor attendance, behaviour and vulnerable groups of pupils to hold leaders to account for the decisions that they make. There is a sharp focus on the positive difference that the school is making for disadvantaged pupils. Together with the trust, governors and leaders share an aligned vision for sustained improvement.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

Leaders effectively promote their vision of ensuring fullness of life while celebrating individuality. The programme for pupils' personal development is highly tailored to the specific needs of pupils, ensuring that disadvantaged pupils benefit equally. Pupils learn about positive mental health and healthy relationships in an age-appropriate way. Leaders provide experiences that are specific to pupils' own experiences in the community, including railway safety. This ensures that pupils develop the knowledge and resilience required to navigate their community safely and confidently.

A wide programme of extra-curricular activities enhances pupils' personal development. Clubs such as chess, table tennis and gymnastics are provided free of charge. Leaders monitor participation to ensure that all pupils are encouraged to take part. Appropriate adjustments and adaptations are made to ensure that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are fully included in these opportunities alongside their peers.

Pupils benefit from the recently introduced careers education programme. This includes visits from professionals, such as scientists and those from the emergency services.

Together with practical workshops from local industry, these opportunities help pupils to understand their possible future pathways. Many pupils speak enthusiastically about their aspirations. Residential visits, provided at significantly reduced cost, further support pupils' independence, confidence and social development.

Pupils show a deep understanding of diversity and are developing their knowledge of the fundamental British values. Pupils describe how they vote for members of the pupil parliament, including a 'prime minister', and ambassadors. These roles help pupils to lead meaningful school improvements. Pupils are interested in learning about other cultures and religions. They visit places of worship, such as the Gurdwara. They show a developing understanding of different faiths and world views. Pupils understand that discrimination is wrong and value the importance of equality.

Pupils feel safe in school. They demonstrate a secure understanding of online safety and ways to understand and deal with their emotions. Trained staff provide more tailored emotional support when pupils need it.

Needs attention ●

Achievement

Needs attention ●

Over time, pupils have not been as prepared as they should be for their next stages in education. There continues to be a significant number of pupils who have not secured the important knowledge and skills they need to achieve well. Pupils' performance in national assessments over time is inconsistent. Over the last 3 years, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in reading and mathematics has been below that of pupils nationally. Leaders are addressing this swiftly. For example, there is a greater focus on pupils gaining language and handwriting skills. Leaders' actions to close gaps in reading, writing and mathematics are beginning to have impact. However, it is too early to see this in full across all subjects where achievement is hindered because of gaps in foundational knowledge.

In phonics, pupils achieve well. Many pupils become fluent readers. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and disadvantaged pupils typically achieve well. Disadvantaged pupils achieve close to national averages over time.

Attendance and behaviour

Needs attention ●

Too many pupils do not attend school often enough. While overall attendance is now close to the national average and showing some improvement over time, persistent absence remains high for some, including disadvantaged pupils. Leaders are taking action to improve these pupils' attendance rates. They monitor attendance patterns closely and provide individualised support to help families to overcome barriers to attending school. Leaders make sure that pupils and families understand why regular attendance is important. Pupils understand that this is important to be successful in their learning. They enjoy the incentives for having high attendance. While leaders' actions have improved attendance overall, the attendance of some pupils, particularly those who are disadvantaged, remains low.

Leaders demonstrate highly effective work to reduce incidents of poor behaviour and suspensions. Behaviour across the school is calm and positive. Pupils feel safe, secure and learn in an environment characterised by respectful relationships and well-established routines. In lessons, pupils are engaged and respond well to teachers' expectations. Staff apply the behaviour policy with consistency and sensitivity, supporting pupils who may find managing their emotions more challenging. Pupils are courteous and demonstrate polite behaviour, such as holding doors for others. Pupils report that bullying is rare. When concerns arise, leaders act promptly and effectively.

Curriculum and teaching

Needs attention 

Teaching is not consistently effective across the school. Leaders have improved how the most important key knowledge is taught in reading, writing and mathematics. They identify pupils with gaps in this knowledge and provide extra help to close these gaps quickly. However, in lessons, what pupils do not know, particularly in their writing skills, is not focused on sharply enough. Gaps in key knowledge are not consistently plugged before introducing new learning. While teachers generally make effective adaptations to remove barriers for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, they do not consistently match these to pupils' gaps in knowledge. Leaders have identified the weaknesses in the delivery of the curriculum. They have taken steps to improve teaching. Staff receive training and support to develop their expertise. However, pupils' experiences in lessons remains variable.

The curriculum is thoughtfully designed and responsive to the changing needs of pupils. Across all subjects, the curriculum makes clear what pupils should know at each stage of their education. Leaders check that the curriculum is being taught effectively. In mathematics, there is an intentional focus on foundational knowledge. Teachers identify pupils with gaps in knowledge and provide extra help to close these gaps quickly.

Phonics teaching is delivered well with effective use of assessment. Pupils receive extra help if they need it. Consequently, pupils demonstrate secure knowledge and read confidently.

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

This school is welcoming and caring. Staff get to know pupils well and they develop relationships that help pupils to feel safe. The school's nurturing ethos particularly supports pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are disadvantaged, helping them to feel that they belong.

Children in the early years make a successful start to their education. Pupils enjoy their learning as they progress through the school. They generally show determination to succeed. Typically, staff ensure that pupils get the help they need. Following a period of change at the school, pupils are benefitting from improvements to the curriculum and to their learning. However, there is still work to do to ensure that pupils' experiences are more consistent.

Pupils who are disadvantaged broadly make progress that is close to that of other pupils nationally. However, pupils' achievement is inconsistent. Outcomes of national assessments have been lower than those found nationally over the last 3 years. This means that pupils are not as well prepared for the next stage of learning as they should be.

Pupils behave respectfully in lessons and during social times. Bullying is rare. Pupils feel confident that adults will deal with any issues quickly and appreciate the friendship club. Pupils enjoy receiving rewards and recognition for positive behaviour.

Most pupils attend school regularly but some, including pupils who are disadvantaged, still miss too much school. This makes it harder for them to achieve all that they can.

Leaders ensure that there is a rich programme of experiences on offer. Pupils value the wide range of leadership opportunities available, such as becoming sports leaders or members of the pupil parliament. A range of clubs and activities develop their interests. Pupils enjoy debating topical issues in the news. Pupils are well prepared for life beyond the school.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that highly effective teaching is embedded across the school so that pupils progress well across the whole curriculum.
 - Leaders should ensure that pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, are supported to secure the foundational knowledge and skills that they need in reading, writing and mathematics so that they achieve well by the end of Year 6 and are ready for their next phase of education.
 - Leaders should ensure that their attendance strategy and work to reduce persistent absence has greater impact so that pupils' attendance improves more rapidly.
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About this inspection

This school is part of One Excellence Multi Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Lindsey Vollans, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Tom Cunningham.

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 the headteacher, deputy headteacher, staff and subject leaders. Inspectors also spoke with the early years leader in the trust, curriculum trust leader and the

executive headteacher for the trust. The lead inspector met with the CEO and representatives from the trust board and local governing body. This included the chair of the trust board and the chair of the local governing body. The lead inspector also held a telephone conversation with the school's improvement partner.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school includes a specially resourced provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. This provision is for 24 pupils and caters for pupils with Autism Spectrum Disorder and social, emotional and mental health needs. The proportion of pupils with education, health and care plans is well above the national average.

The school does not currently make use of any alternative provision.

The school also, under the same registration, runs nursery provision for 2-year-olds.

The school has undergone a significant change since the last inspection. A new headteacher, deputy headteacher, CEO and chair of the local governing body have taken up post.

Headteacher: Debbie Hamilton

Lead inspector:

Kathryn McDonald, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Ian Dawson, Ofsted Inspector

Gemma Jeynes, 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

254

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

363

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)

40.76%

Above 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

9.45%

Well 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

16.54%

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 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)

Resourced provision and SEN unit

What does this mean?

Whether school has Resourced Provision or SEND unit (if applicable).

Type of specialist provision (if applicable)

ASD - Autistic Spectrum Disorder

What does this mean?

The type of Special Educational Needs provision provided at the school (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	44%	61%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	34%	62%	Below

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	45%	61%	Below
2022/23 (final)	49%	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	61%	74%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	52%	75%	Below
2023/24 (final)	63%	74%	Below
2022/23 (final)	66%	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	60%	72%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	48%	72%	Below
2023/24 (final)	55%	72%	Below
2022/23 (final)	73%	71%	Close to average

Pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	57%	73%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	48%	74%	Below
2023/24 (final)	60%	73%	Below
2022/23 (final)	61%	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	36%	46%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	19%	47%	Below
2023/24 (final)	48%	46%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	38%	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	59%	62%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	31%	63%	Below

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	67%	62%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	71%	60%	Close to average

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	52%	59%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	25%	59%	Below
2023/24 (final)	57%	58%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	67%	58%	Close to average

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	48%	60%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	31%	61%	Below
2023/24 (final)	62%	59%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	48%	59%	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils' performance gap

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after. The school disadvantage gap is the difference between the performance of the school's disadvantaged pupils compared to the performance of all non-disadvantaged pupils nationally.

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

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

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	36%	68%	-31 pp
2024/25 (revised)	19%	69%	-50 pp
2023/24 (final)	48%	67%	-20 pp
2022/23 (final)	38%	66%	-28 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	59%	80%	-21 pp
2024/25 (revised)	31%	81%	-50 pp
2023/24 (final)	67%	80%	-13 pp
2022/23 (final)	71%	78%	-7 pp

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing

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

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	52%	78%	-26 pp
2024/25 (revised)	25%	78%	-53 pp
2023/24 (final)	57%	78%	-20 pp
2022/23 (final)	67%	77%	-11 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	48%	80%	-31 pp
2024/25 (revised)	31%	81%	-49 pp
2023/24 (final)	62%	79%	-18 pp
2022/23 (final)	48%	79%	-32 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)	6.4%	5.2%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	7.8%	5.5%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	8.2%	5.9%	Above

Persistent absence

The percentage of pupils missing 10% or more of their possible mornings and afternoons.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (2 term)	19.5%	13.3%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	19.9%	14.6%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	26.6%	16.2%	Above

Our grades explained

Exceptional

Practice is exceptional: of the highest standard nationally. Other schools can learn from it.

Strong standard

The school reaches a strong standard. Leaders are working above the standard expected of them.

Expected standard

The school is fulfilling the expected standard of education and/or care. This means they are following the standard set out in statutory and non-statutory legislation and the professional standards expected of them.

Needs attention

The expected standards are not met but leaders are likely able to make the necessary improvements.

Urgent improvement

The school needs to make urgent improvements to provide the expected standard of education and/or care.

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