

Bridstow CofE Primary School

Address: Bridstow, Ross-on-Wye, Herefordshire, HR9 6PZ

Unique reference number (URN): 116869

Inspection report: 22 September 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 have established a clear and effective approach to promoting attendance. They monitor attendance carefully and work closely with families, the local authority and other agencies to remove barriers, where these arise. Clear systems, including first-day calling, home visits and regular attendance reviews, enable leaders to identify concerns early and provide timely support. As a result, attendance is above national averages and persistent absence has reduced over time. Leaders pay close attention to pupils who are at greater risk of absence, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those facing additional challenges.

Pupils' behaviour is positive and is underpinned by warm and respectful relationships between staff and pupils. Pupils describe the school as a kind and inclusive place, where everyone is welcomed. Staff establish clear expectations and pupils understand and follow school routines. Bullying is rare, and pupils are confident that adults will listen to concerns and deal with issues promptly and effectively. Leaders have appropriate systems to record, monitor and respond to behavioural incidents. When learning is purposeful and well matched to their needs, pupils participate enthusiastically, collaborate effectively and sustain their attention. Where individual pupils experience difficulties with behaviour or emotional regulation, leaders provide appropriate support and work effectively with external agencies to help them meet the school's expectations.

Early years

Expected standard 

Children receive a positive start to their education. Early years provision is well organised, welcoming and safe. Children settle quickly into established routines and develop positive relationships with adults and their peers. Staff pay close attention to children's welfare and wellbeing, including safe care practices and the development of independence and social skills. As a result, children are happy, secure and ready to learn.

Leaders have established a curriculum that focuses appropriately on the knowledge and skills children need for future success. Staff understand children's needs well and use assessment information effectively to identify next steps in learning. High-quality interactions are used purposefully to develop children's vocabulary and communication skills across the provision.

Children, including those who are disadvantaged and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, are identified quickly and supported appropriately. Early identification of need is a particular strength. Adults provide targeted support that helps children develop communication, language and social skills successfully. Children demonstrate positive learning behaviours, engage enthusiastically in activities and work cooperatively with others.

Children achieve well from their starting points and are developing the basic knowledge and skills they need for Year 1. Children make positive progress and are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Leaders have established a coherent personal development programme that reflects the school's context and helps prepare pupils for life beyond their rural community. The programme combines personal, social, health and economic education, relationships education and wider experiences to develop pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding. Leaders place a strong emphasis on respect, inclusion and understanding others. Visits to places of worship help pupils develop an appreciation of different faiths, cultures and backgrounds. As a result, pupils demonstrate positive attitudes towards difference and understand the importance of treating others fairly and with respect.

Pupils benefit from a broad range of opportunities that develop their talents and interests. Enrichment is carefully linked to the curriculum and includes residential visits, educational visits, music, sport and outdoor learning. Pupils speak enthusiastically about learning musical instruments and attending sporting events. Leaders take appropriate steps to remove barriers to participation, ensuring that pupils from different backgrounds are able to access these opportunities. Consequently, pupils benefit from a wide range of experiences that broaden their understanding of the world and support their wider development.

The school promotes pupils' physical and mental wellbeing effectively. Pupils understand the importance of healthy lifestyles, including healthy eating and physical activity. They can explain how to stay safe online and know the importance of protecting personal information. Pastoral support is carefully targeted and includes external therapeutic support where appropriate. Leaders and staff know pupils well and provide effective support, when it is needed.

Pupils develop positive attitudes towards inclusion and demonstrate respect for others. They understand the importance of making others feel welcome and treating people fairly. Pupils benefit from a rich range of experiences and are generally prepared well for life in modern Britain.

Needs attention

Achievement

Needs attention 

Pupils do not consistently develop the knowledge and skills set out in the curriculum as securely as they should. Achievement varies across subjects and year groups because the quality of teaching and curriculum implementation is inconsistent. Gaps in pupils' basic knowledge, including aspects of reading, writing and mathematics, are not addressed effectively enough. Consequently, some pupils do not retain and build knowledge over time, and the quality of work they produce does not consistently reflect the ambition of the curriculum.

Achievement over time has been too variable. While some pupils achieve well from their starting points, this is not typical across the school. Disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities do not consistently make sufficient progress because support is not always matched closely enough to their needs. As a result, gaps in

knowledge and skills persist for too many pupils. As a result, many pupils do not achieve as well as they should and are not fully prepared for the next stage of their education. Although leaders have recently taken appropriate action to improve achievement, these improvements are not yet embedded and have not secured consistently positive outcomes across the school.

Curriculum and teaching

Needs attention 

Leaders have established a broad and ambitious curriculum that identifies the knowledge and experiences pupils should acquire across subjects. The curriculum places appropriate emphasis on developing pupils' vocabulary, discussion skills and wider experiences. Where activities are practical, purposeful and discussion-rich, pupils are engaged and learn well.

However, curriculum implementation is too inconsistent. Although leaders have correctly prioritised securing strong foundations in reading, writing and mathematics, teaching does not consistently enable pupils to build the knowledge and skills intended by the curriculum. Learning activities are not always matched well to pupils' needs. Tasks frequently lack sufficient challenge or provide limited opportunities for pupils to apply and extend their learning independently. Teaching does not address gaps in basic knowledge consistently enough. As a result, pupils do not consistently secure the knowledge and skills needed for future learning.

Leaders have considered adaptations for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and other pupils who face barriers to learning. However, these adaptations are not consistently effective. Consequently, some pupils participate in lessons and complete activities but do not make enough progress towards addressing gaps in their knowledge and understanding. Pupils' learning is not checked thoroughly or consistently enough to identify misconceptions and adapt teaching effectively. While leaders have recently taken appropriate action to improve curriculum implementation and teaching, these improvements are at an early stage and have not yet secured consistent practice across the school.

Inclusion

Needs attention 

Leaders identify pupils' needs quickly and accurately, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), disadvantaged pupils and those known (or previously known) to children's social care. However, support does not consistently reduce barriers to learning and achievement. As a result, some disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND do not make the academic progress of which they are capable.

Leaders have established a clear approach to identifying and supporting pupils with SEND. Learning plans are reviewed regularly and leaders have a secure understanding of pupils' needs. Parents are engaged well in this process and value the support provided. Pupils benefit from a range of pastoral and therapeutic support, including specialist advice from external agencies.

However, classroom support is too often characterised by additional adult assistance rather than carefully planned adaptations to teaching, resources or curriculum content. As a result, some pupils do not make sufficient progress towards their individual learning targets. Monitoring of the impact of SEND provision and classroom adaptations is not sufficiently

rigorous. Consequently, leaders do not ensure that support is implemented consistently effectively. Similarly, pupil premium funding is used appropriately to support wellbeing and attendance, but its impact on improving academic achievement is less secure. As a result, barriers to achievement are not reduced consistently enough for some disadvantaged pupils.

Leadership and governance

Needs attention 

Leaders have not ensured that their actions have secured a consistently strong quality of education across the school. Strategic oversight of the curriculum, teaching and inclusion lacks sufficient rigour. Leaders have identified many of the right priorities for improvement. However, their actions have not secured rapid enough improvement following several years of weak outcomes. Leaders understand the school's context well and have recently taken appropriate action to raise standards, although it is too early to determine the full impact of this work. They have responded positively to areas of need, including attendance, safeguarding and inclusion. Staff value leaders' support and describe a positive culture in which wellbeing is prioritised and workload is carefully considered. Leaders provide staff with professional development opportunities. However, this has not yet secured consistently effective classroom practice. As a result, weaknesses in teaching, curriculum implementation and support for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities remain too variable across the school.

Governance is not sufficiently effective in holding leaders to account for pupils' outcomes. Governors fulfil their statutory responsibilities and provide appropriate oversight of safeguarding and attendance. However, challenge regarding weak outcomes over time has been limited, and there has been insufficient scrutiny of the effectiveness of leaders' actions. Monitoring activity does not focus sharply enough on the areas of greatest need. Consequently, governors do not have a sufficiently precise understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Although governors are increasingly aware of the school's priorities and have begun to strengthen monitoring arrangements and refine their strategic focus, this work is at an early stage and its impact is not yet evident.

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

Pupils are happy, safe and valued members of this caring school community. They enjoy positive relationships with staff. Pupils say that teachers are kind and approachable, and they are confident that adults will help them if they have a worry. Parents share this positive view and speak warmly about the nurturing atmosphere. Children in the early years make a positive start to school life, settling quickly, learning routines and developing strong social skills in a warm and welcoming environment.

Pupils feel that they belong. They behave well, show respect towards one another and describe the school as an inclusive place, where everyone is welcomed and treated fairly. Bullying is rare. Older pupils explain that if someone is left out, others will actively include them. Attendance is a strength. Pupils attend regularly and leaders work closely with families and external agencies to help ensure that pupils are in school and ready to learn.

Pupils benefit from a wide range of experiences that extend their learning beyond the classroom. They speak enthusiastically about trips and outdoor learning. The school's work to broaden pupils' understanding of different faiths, cultures and communities helps them develop respect for others and a strong sense of belonging. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), disadvantaged pupils and those facing other challenges are included in school life and benefit from caring pastoral support.

However, pupils do not achieve as well as they should. Across the school, pupils are most successful when learning is engaging. They participate enthusiastically in activities that encourage discussion and exploration. However, these positive learning experiences are not consistent. In some lessons, activities do not match pupils' needs closely enough, provide sufficient challenge or help pupils build securely on prior learning. As a result, some pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND, do not develop knowledge and skills as securely as they could. While pupils enjoy school, inconsistencies in teaching, curriculum implementation and support mean that too many pupils do not consistently achieve well enough or develop the secure foundations needed for the next stage of their education.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that teachers adapt learning more effectively so that support is closely matched to pupils' individual barriers to learning and enables pupils who are disadvantaged and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities to achieve well from their starting points.
 - Leaders should strengthen teachers' use of effective pedagogy, so that learning consistently develops pupils' thinking and provides sufficient challenge for all pupils, including those who are disadvantaged and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
 - Leaders should continue to strengthen recent work on securing consistently high-quality teaching and assessment, so that a greater proportion of pupils build secure reading, writing and mathematics knowledge, achieve well and are ready for the next stage of their education.
 - Leaders and those responsible for governance should strengthen their oversight, ensuring that monitoring focuses sharply on pupils' outcomes and the impact of leaders' actions to improve achievement, particularly for disadvantaged pupils.
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About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors in this school is Paul Mason.

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 school leaders, including the executive headteacher and the head of school. They also spoke with governors, a representative from Herefordshire Local Authority and a representative from the Diocese of Hereford.

Inspectors visited lessons to look at pupils' work and the curriculum and to speak with pupils about their learning and wider school activities. Inspectors also spoke to pupils at social times and met with groups of pupils.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

This school is registered as having a Church of England religious character. It is in the Diocese of Hereford. The latest section 48 inspection took place in November 2025.

The school also runs, under the same registration, an on-site pre-school provision for children aged 3 and 4 years.

The school provides wraparound care.

The school currently uses no alternative provision.

Executive Headteacher: Dan Brearey

Lead inspector:

Matt Fletcher, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspector:

Gary Richards, Ofsted Inspector

Facts and figures used on inspection

This was the data available at the time of the full inspection, taken from [different sources](#). More recent data may have been published since the full inspection took place.

 The inspector(s) used this data during the full inspection on 22 September 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

86

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: 268

School capacity

105

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)

21.05%

Close to average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals at any point in the last 6 years.

National average: 26.5%

Pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan

3.49%

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: 4.1%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

11.63%

Below average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with reported special educational needs support 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	28%	61%	Below
2024/25 (final)	22%	62%	Below
2023/24 (final)	46%	61%	Below
2022/23 (final)	24%	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	58%	74%	Below
2024/25 (final)	57%	75%	Below
2023/24 (final)	69%	74%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	53%	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 (final)	61%	72%	Below
2023/24 (final)	69%	72%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	53%	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	40%	73%	Below
2024/25 (final)	43%	74%	Below
2023/24 (final)	54%	73%	Below
2022/23 (final)	24%	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	0%	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	42%	62%	Below
2024/25 (final)	S	63%	S
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	50%	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	8%	60%	Below
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	0%	68%	-68 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	42%	80%	-38 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	50%	78%	-28 pp
2024/25 (final)	S	78%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	78%	S

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
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	8%	80%	-71 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)	5.0%	5.2%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	5.9%	5.5%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	7.2%	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 (3 term)	8.5%	13.0%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	15.1%	14.6%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	16.3%	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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