

Berrycoombe School

Address: Berrycoombe Vale, Bodmin, Cornwall, PL31 2PH

Unique reference number (URN): 145757

Inspection report: 9 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

Achievement

Expected standard 

When compared to schools with a similar context to Berrycoombe, pupils typically achieve well from their starting points. Pupils who are disadvantaged, which is a significant proportion of the school, achieve in line with other disadvantaged pupils nationally. Leaders are taking action to improve pupils' achievement so that it is closer to national averages for all schools. The successful impact of this is reflected in writing outcomes over time and the increasing number of pupils in Year 4 passing the multiplication tables check. Leaders have a clear ambition for all pupils to achieve well so that they are fully prepared for the next stage in their education.

In key stage 1, leaders are strengthening how well pupils are supported to acquire basic skills, such as number and letter formation. The majority of pupils who start with the school in the early years benefit from this focus on reading, writing and number.

Pupils across the school retain their learning successfully in wider curriculum subjects. They produce work of high quality and have the opportunity to practise their basic skills further.

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

On the whole, pupils attend well. The school's attendance figures are below national averages as a result of a small number of pupils who have severely low attendance. Leaders' actions to reduce pupil absence are making a difference. They make appropriate adjustments and support pupils and their families so that barriers to attendance are addressed. Pupils understand the importance of high attendance. They value how the school recognises and celebrates this, for example, through assemblies, popcorn movies and pizza celebrations. Leaders track attendance and punctuality closely so that they can intervene at the earliest opportunity in order to maintain positive attendance habits.

Pupils show positive attitudes to learning. School routines and expectations are understood well, for example following the Berrycoombe School way, the use of transition cards across the school and the 'good as gold' recognition boards. These approaches begin in the early years. Pupils conduct themselves with respect for staff and each other around the school. Bullying, though uncommon, is dealt with effectively. Leaders' records enable them to have clear oversight of any patterns in behaviour. They use this to identify and respond to emerging concerns swiftly. Leaders provide suitable, personalised support for pupils who need extra guidance to manage their emotions and settle to their learning.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Leaders have made changes to the curriculum, which have increased the focus on important basic skills and made learning more memorable for pupils. For example, the introduction of fluency lessons, first in reading and now in number, is addressing gaps in pupils' knowledge. The impact can be seen in how pupils apply their number knowledge in reasoning and problem solving in mathematics lessons. The teaching of phonics is generally effective. The importance of reading is understood well and prioritised from the Nursery

through to Year 6. Important writing skills, such as vocabulary and handwriting, are addressed through English and the wider curriculum. Leaders' recent changes to how the wider curriculum is taught involve staff using their expertise and subject knowledge across subjects, such as history and art. This is strengthening what pupils know and can remember over time.

At times, the embedded approaches to teaching the curriculum do not always give staff enough opportunity to flex their skills to what pupils need in the moment. This can limit staff's precise consideration of what pupils are learning and how they will reach the intended learning end point. Leaders recognise the need to develop this consistently high standard of teaching across the school to impact positively on the outcomes that pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, achieve.

Early years

Expected standard 

In the early years, children make a positive start to their schooling. Leaders prioritise children's communication and language and their personal, social and emotional development. Staff typically model this well during high-quality interactions. There is priority given to stories, rhymes and vocabulary to strengthen children's language development and prepare them well for key stage 1. Children typically acquire the knowledge they need for early reading, writing and mathematics. Where necessary, children benefit from targeted support to help them to be ready for Year 1. There is a clear progression in development and learning from the 2-year-old children in Nursery through to the 4- and 5-year-old children in the mixed Reception and Year 1 classes.

Staff create nurturing and caring relationships. They know the children well. This enables the early identification of children's needs and barriers to development, supporting the school's inclusive culture. Children engage well with each other and adults. They grow in their curiosity, independence and resilience.

Staff build positive relationships with parents and carers. Parents are encouraged to take an active part in their children's learning and development. Children in the early years are well cared for. Leaders ensure that all welfare requirements are met.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

Leaders have high ambitions of what they want to achieve for their vulnerable pupils. The enhanced provisions of the Nest and the mixed class are testament to this. However, the school's inclusive culture is not limited to these 2 classes. It is evident in the priority given to special educational needs and/or disabilities across the school. It is clear in the dedicated staffing and partnership working focused on enabling pupils, no matter what their needs or barriers are, to thrive and feel a sense of belonging from the Nursery upwards. The nurturing ethos of the school supports pupils well who are known or previously known to social care. Alternative provision is commissioned appropriately. This is enhanced further by effective use of the pupil premium funding.

Staff use appropriate systems to identify pupils' needs swiftly. For some pupils, these present significant barriers to learning and development. On the whole, staff have the knowledge and expertise to do this well, supported by established and effective partnerships

with external agencies. This contributes to pupils generally making sound progress and having their needs met well.

At times, the focus on disadvantaged pupils' academic success has not been balanced as well as it needs to be with pupils' social and emotional needs. For example, some individual plans are not as precise as they could be to enhance pupils' learning and progress through the curriculum. Leaders are aware of their next steps to build on the success of their pastoral work. They have addressed this in their development plans to ensure that disadvantaged pupils are prepared as well as they can be for their next stage in education.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders, including those from the trust and those responsible for governance, understand the school's context well. They are fully committed to the community that the school serves. They show this in the care and nurture that they invest in pupils and their families. It is a culture that is shared and replicated successfully by staff.

Leaders make decisions in the best interests of pupils. They target developments and resources to where they are needed most. The professional learning programme for staff is linked to the school's improvement priorities. They have an accurate view of the school's strengths and what aspects need to be improved. This is informed by a thorough and robust oversight of provision and the impact it has on pupils. As a result, leaders' next steps are to build on the embedded, effective provision in place and secure consistently high standards across the school.

The local monitoring committee and trustees know their roles and uphold their statutory responsibilities successfully. They provide effective and impactful support and challenge to school leaders. They make appropriate checks on how leaders manage staff workload and support staff wellbeing. Staff are positive about leaders' work and impact across the school and the support available to them.

Parents' and carers' views on the school are typically positive, particularly their experiences in the areas that leaders have prioritised, such as early years, inclusion and welcoming pupils who start at different points in their education.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

Pupils' wider development is a school priority. It is designed to build from the Nursery through to Year 6. Staff nurture and strengthen pupils' emotional and social skills well. They use their knowledge of pupils to support them well to be ready for the demands of class-based learning. Clear systems and routines ensure caring, targeted support is readily available for pupils. This includes daily check-ins and support for pupils' emotional wellbeing.

This is supported by an effectively planned personal, social and health education curriculum. The curriculum is adapted well to meet pupils' diverse needs. Leaders closely monitor this provision. This enables pupils, including those with special educational needs, to develop an age-appropriate understanding of how to maintain healthy relationships and understand

risks to their safety and wellbeing, including online. Pupils understand the importance of consent and speaking out if they feel unsafe.

Pupils enjoy participating in a range of clubs and enrichment activities. For example, the school choir gives pupils experience of public performances, including at the Hall for Cornwall. Pupils say that this helps to build their confidence. Leaders are determined that vulnerable pupils access these activities and have opportunities to broaden their interests beyond the curriculum, in line with their peers. Pupils are encouraged to develop a sense of responsibility. For example, pupil play leaders help younger children at lunchtime, and assembly monitors take responsibility for Friday celebration assemblies. In these ways, and through activities such as fundraising for charity and visits to a local care home, pupils make contributions to the school and wider community.

Leaders promote pupils' understanding and respect for differences between people, including different faiths and cultures. This helps prepare pupils for life in modern Britain. Pupils speak confidently about everyone having equal rights to learn. Pupils describe their school as being built on kindness and are confident that things such as discrimination, bullying and racism are not tolerated in their school.

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

Berrycoombe School provides a sanctuary for pupils where they feel a sense of belonging and have the support of caring, knowledgeable staff. As a result, pupils want to be in school, have pride in their school and trust the staff that help and teach them. This is grounded in a well-understood and successful inclusive culture. The school community is diverse in terms of the needs and barriers to learning its pupils face. Pupils are welcoming and respectful of each other's differences and challenges that they may encounter during their time at the school. There are regularly new pupils starting at the school. They settle quickly into Berrycoombe as it lives up to the pupils' description of 'a school built on kindness'.

Pupils benefit from the commitment and tenacity of leaders and staff to do the best by them. Pupils achieve well from their starting points. The curriculum is designed to be memorable. Pupils enjoy their learning. It prepares them well for their education beyond primary school. Pupils work hard to meet the high expectations of their conduct and attitudes to learning. Relationships between staff and pupils typically provide pupils with what they need to manage their emotions. When pupils struggle with this or need more support, they generally get the help they need. Pupils have time and space to identify and talk about worries or concerns, including when these are about how others behave around them or towards them. They know that staff help them to understand and address this so that they continue to feel safe in school.

Pupils benefit from attention to their wider development. Pupil voice is held in high regard. It has an important role in school improvement. Pupils develop important values, such as kindness and respect, and grow in confidence and resilience. This enables them to conduct themselves well and make positive contributions to different communities as they move on from Berrycoombe.

Next steps

- Leaders should establish strategies that consistently enhance the learning and experiences of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities or who have barriers to their learning or development, preparing pupils for greater success, particularly academically.
 - Leaders should work to ensure that the design and the teaching of the curriculum are of a consistently high standard across the school to impact on the outcomes that pupils achieve.
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About this inspection

This school is part of Truro and Penwith 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), Jennifer Blunden, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Anita Firth.

Inspectors carried out this full inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Following our renewed inspection framework, all inspections are now led by His Majesty's Inspectors (HMIs) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMIs.

Inspectors spoke with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the special educational needs and disabilities coordinator, staff and pupils during the inspection. The assistant director of education, the deputy CEO and other trust leaders were also part of meetings and inspection activities. The lead inspector spoke with the CEO, members of the local monitoring committee, including the chair of the committee, and the chair of the board of trustees.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school currently makes use of one unregistered alternative provision.

The school also, under the same registration, runs a nursery for children from 2 years old.

The recorded number of pupils on roll does not fully reflect the number of pupils who attend the school. This is because the school experiences higher-than-average numbers of pupils starting at the school and moving away from the school. The current number of pupils on roll in the school is 151, with 18 children in the Nursery.

Headteacher: Craig Robertson

Lead inspector:

Leanne Thirlby, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Mark Burgess, Ofsted Inspector

Matthew Barnes, His Majesty's 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 9 September 2026

School and pupil context**Total pupils**

197

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: 268

School capacity

226

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)

44.97%

Well above 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

6.60%

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: 4.1%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

15.74%

Close to average

What does this mean?

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

National average: 15%

Location deprivation

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)

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	54%	61%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	55%	62%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	54%	61%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	53%	60%	Close to average

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	66%	74%	Below
2024/25 (final)	62%	75%	Below
2023/24 (final)	71%	74%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	63%	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	74%	72%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	72%	72%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	71%	72%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	78%	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	65%	73%	Below
2024/25 (final)	62%	74%	Below
2023/24 (final)	66%	73%	Below
2022/23 (final)	66%	73%	Close to average

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	43%	46%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	50%	47%	Close to average

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	37%	46%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	44%	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	57%	62%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	56%	63%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	58%	62%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	56%	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	64%	59%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	69%	59%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	58%	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	52%	60%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	56%	61%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	47%	59%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	56%	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	43%	68%	-24 pp
2024/25 (final)	50%	69%	-19 pp
2023/24 (final)	37%	67%	-31 pp
2022/23 (final)	44%	66%	-22 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	57%	80%	-23 pp
2024/25 (final)	56%	81%	-25 pp
2023/24 (final)	58%	80%	-22 pp
2022/23 (final)	56%	78%	-23 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	64%	78%	-14 pp
2024/25 (final)	69%	78%	-10 pp
2023/24 (final)	58%	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	52%	80%	-27 pp
2024/25 (final)	56%	81%	-24 pp
2023/24 (final)	47%	79%	-32 pp

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2022/23 (final)	56%	79%	-24 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 (3 term)	6.5%	5.2%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	8.4%	5.5%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	7.8%	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)	17.1%	13.0%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	29.3%	14.6%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	26.5%	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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