



Dear Parents and Carers,

I am pleased to share with you our final Ofsted inspection report, which accompanies this letter. Following the completion of Ofsted's quality assurance processes, the report has now been finalised and published and I wanted to take this opportunity to reflect on the many strengths that inspectors identified during their visit.

First and foremost, this report is a testament to the collective efforts of our entire school community. Governors, staff, pupils, parents, carers and our wider partners should all feel incredibly proud of the school community we have built together. The report recognises not only the improvements made across the school, but also the caring, inclusive and welcoming culture that sits at the heart of Pottery Primary School.

One of the most pleasing aspects of the report is the recognition of the strong sense of belonging that exists within our school. Inspectors noted that pupils enjoy the warm welcome they receive each morning and described a school where children are happy, feel safe and are eager to begin their day. They found that pupils speak positively about their teachers, value the care they receive and trust adults to listen and support them when needed.

As many of you will know, we often talk about Pottery being one family, a place where everyone belongs and where every child matters. It was therefore particularly meaningful to read that pupils themselves told inspectors that everyone is welcome and included within our school community. Inspectors recognised the respect pupils show for one another, the positive relationships across the school and the way children look out for each other.

The report highlights significant improvements in behaviour and attendance. Inspectors found that behaviour around school is calm, that routines support learning effectively and that relationships between staff and pupils are strong. They also recognised the extensive work undertaken to support attendance, particularly for pupils facing additional challenges, noting that attendance is improving steadily.

We are also delighted that our Early Years provision was recognised as a strength. Inspectors described it as welcoming and well organised, noting that children settle quickly, enjoy learning and make secure progress from their starting points. The report praises the work of staff in developing children's communication, language and early reading skills while ensuring that children feel safe, cared for and ready for the next stage of their education.

The school's commitment to inclusion is another area identified positively. Inspectors recognised the work that has taken place to identify pupils' needs early, remove barriers to learning and provide tailored support. They acknowledged the care shown towards pupils with additional needs and the increasingly effective systems that are helping all children access learning and participate fully in school life.

Inspectors also praised the leadership of the school. They recognised the clarity and direction that have been established following a period of change and highlighted the positive impact of developments in behaviour,

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attendance and curriculum improvement. Staff spoke positively about the support they receive and governors were commended for their knowledge of the school, their commitment and their careful challenge and support.

Another aspect of the report that fills us with pride is the recognition that personal development sits at the centre of the school's work. Inspectors found that pupils learn about equality, respect and diversity, understand British values and benefit from a wide range of experiences that broaden their horizons. Importantly, they recognised that pupils feel they belong and that they are valued members of our community.

Of course, the report also identifies areas where improvement must continue. We welcome this feedback, especially as they are already areas marked for development over the coming year. School improvement is a journey and we remain ambitious for every child. Encouragingly, inspectors recognised that the actions already taken are having a positive impact and that the school is building on a secure foundation for sustained success.

I would like to thank everyone who has contributed to this achievement. The dedication of our staff, the commitment of our governors, the enthusiasm and character of our pupils and the support and trust of our families have all played an important part.

This report confirms much of what we see every day: a school community built on care, belonging, inclusion and high aspirations. Together, we have created something special at Pottery Primary School and I know that everyone connected with the school can feel immensely proud of what has been recognised.

Thank you for your continued support as we look forward to the next stage of our journey together.

Yours sincerely,

Darren Hooley

Headteacher

Pottery Primary School

Pottery Primary School

Address: Kilbourne Road, Belper, Derbyshire, DE56 1HA

Unique reference number (URN): 112787

Inspection report: 23 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

The school has strengthened its approach to attendance through clearer systems, closer checks and earlier action for pupils at risk of absence. Leaders monitor attendance carefully and use a graduated response to support pupils, including work with families and external agencies. Pupils' attendance continues to improve steadily, including for disadvantaged pupils. Leaders work with agencies to provide support for pupils with school-based anxiety and avoidance. Leaders adapt their approach to reduce attendance barriers, for example through part-time timetables and pastoral support. Over time, these approaches help some pupils increase their time in school and engage in learning more consistently.

Pupils, staff and parents and carers feel that behaviour in school has improved significantly. Conduct around school is generally calm and routines support settled starts to learning. Typically, pupils behave well in lessons and relationships between staff and pupils are positive. Unkind behaviour or bullying is rare. Pupils say that when issues arise, staff deal with them quickly. The school provides clear support for pupils who find positive behaviour more challenging. This helps these pupils to regulate and take part in learning. Leaders continue to ensure that the curriculum is well matched to pupils' needs so that learning and behaviour remain positive and productive.

Early years

Expected standard

Early years is a welcoming and well-organised environment where children settle quickly and enjoy learning. Clear routines help children to feel confident. The provision supports all areas of learning. There is a focus on developing communication and language, alongside emotional regulation, as these are areas that the school has identified where children need extra support in readiness for Year 1.

Staff use their detailed knowledge of the children to guide their teaching. They model language effectively, ask pertinent questions and help children to build their vocabulary. Children take part in talk and use new words with growing confidence. Phonics is taught well and children use this knowledge readily when reading and writing. There are many chances to write, and many children form letters accurately when playing independently.

Children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make secure progress from their starting points. Staff adapt activities carefully and give extra support when needed. Children feel safe and cared for. They build positive relationships and work well with others. They work together to make junk model boats to test, for example. Most children gain the knowledge and skills they need for the next stage. Staff use external support well to provide the right help for children with barriers to learning.

Inclusion

Expected standard

Leaders check pupils' needs early and use this information to plan support. The school has developed a clear graduated response and has improved records to check the impact of the support that it provides to pupils. Staff help pupils through small-group work, one-to-one

help and targeted pastoral support. These approaches help to reduce barriers so that pupils can take a full part in learning. The new systems are beginning to help staff match provision more closely to pupils' needs. This work continues to develop across the school.

Leaders use pupil premium funding effectively to support disadvantaged pupils through targeted provision. This includes support for these pupils' wellbeing, learning and additional transition work in readiness for secondary school. Staff continue to develop their understanding of the barriers that these pupils face so that support can be targeted precisely.

Leaders have strengthened how they promote inclusion. They have introduced clearer processes and expectations, and staff adapt learning with increasing confidence. These approaches remove obstacles and help pupils access learning. Pupils known to social care and those with English as an additional language receive the right support to meet their needs. Leaders continue to embed the school's inclusive practices to ensure that support matches pupils' needs consistently.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders have focused on stabilising the school following a period of change. They have acted quickly to bring clarity and direction. They have introduced clear systems and expectations across the school. These changes are beginning to improve consistency in teaching and the school's wider work. Leaders have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement.

External support has been used well to build leadership capacity across the school, including for middle leaders. The impact of this work can be seen in the improvements to the curriculum, and in behaviour and attendance. As a result, staff at all levels are growing in confidence and are taking positive and well considered decisions to improve the school.

Staff speak positively about how the school is led. They value the professional learning they receive and how this develops their practice. Staff feel supported and say leaders consider workload and wellbeing. This helps staff feel valued and committed to helping the school improve.

Those responsible for governance receive clear information and provide appropriate challenge. Governors understand the school's context well and support leaders to take positive action to move the school forward. They meet their statutory duties and maintain a clear focus on school improvement.

Leaders work closely with families and the community. Parents and carers speak positively about the school and the recent changes. Leaders know pupils and their families well, involving the right agencies and support when needed. As a result, the school continues to improve and build on a secure foundation for sustained success.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

Personal development sits at the centre of the school's work. Leaders have designed a programme that supports pupils' wellbeing and increasingly prepares pupils for life in

modern Britain. Leaders understand the local context and pupils' experiences well. Systems to check the impact of the school's personal development programme are developing. Staff use daily interactions and pupil voice to continue to guide their work.

Pupils learn about equality, respect and diversity through lessons and wider opportunities. They talk about these ideas with confidence. They understand British values and explain what these look like in school. Pupils say that everyone is welcome and that they feel part of the school community. They show this through how they treat others and work together. Pupils benefit from opportunities such as music tuition, sporting activities and visits, which broaden their experiences.

Staff teach pupils how to stay safe through the school's relationships programme, assemblies and everyday discussions. When issues arise, staff provide additional support. For example, staff add extra lessons to ensure that pupils develop secure knowledge of road safety and online use. Leaders act early to help pupils understand how to manage risks. This learning allows pupils to make safe choices and manage risks with increasing confidence, for example, when using lunchtime equipment and resources, or during visits and experiences beyond the classroom.

Staff know pupils well and respond quickly when concerns arise. They support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those with anxiety, through thoughtful adaptations. Targeted support helps these pupils access the same wider opportunities as their peers. These approaches build pupils' confidence and allow them to take part more fully. Staff work closely with families and external agencies. As a result, pupils feel supported and develop the skills they need for the next stage of their education.

Needs attention

Achievement

Needs attention 

Over time, outcomes for pupils at the end of Year 6 have been low. Gaps in pupils' foundational knowledge have limited how pupils build on prior learning and apply key skills across the curriculum. Previously, disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities have not achieved well from their starting points.

Leaders have taken action to address weaknesses in pupils' outcomes. Improvements in the curriculum and the school's processes to identify and support pupils with barriers to learning have strengthened. As a result, pupils can now recall the curriculum with more confidence. In the early years and key stage 1, pupils develop their early reading skills well. The school has introduced more fluency work in mathematics to improve pupils' recall of key mathematical facts. Pupils are beginning to build their knowledge across subjects and apply their learning with greater confidence. However, these improvements are not yet evident in published outcomes.

The impact of curriculum and teaching on pupils' achievement is not yet secure. Pupils do not always apply key skills with accuracy or build knowledge consistently across classes. In some areas, pupils do not develop secure transcription and foundational skills. This limits how well they deepen their understanding over time. The quality of learning varies, particularly when expectations and adaptations are not aligned fully to meet the needs of all pupils.

Leaders have undertaken a whole-school review of the curriculum. They have introduced a more structured and sequenced approach with clearer expectations for what pupils should learn. They have raised expectations of what pupils should achieve. This is having a positive impact on how well current pupils learn key knowledge over time.

Staff have the knowledge and skills necessary to teach phonics well. They provide targeted support to those pupils who have gaps in their reading knowledge. As a result, pupils use the sounds they learn in their reading and writing with increasing confidence.

Leaders continue to embed the school's recent curriculum developments. They are focused on strengthening the consistent delivery of teaching across the school and ensuring that pupils practise and apply their key knowledge and skills accurately.

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

There is a clear sense of belonging among pupils at Pottery Primary School. Each morning, pupils enjoy the warm welcome and high-fives from staff. Most pupils arrive happy and some run into school, keen to start their day. For a few, a tailored start helps them settle and be ready to learn. It also supports their wellbeing and attendance, allowing these pupils to engage more consistently with their learning. Pupils speak positively about their teachers and value the care they receive. They know who to talk to if they have a worry and trust staff to listen and act.

Pupils appreciate how the new behaviour systems help them to learn with fewer interruptions. Typically, pupils behave well in lessons and take part with interest. Pupils say lunchtimes have vastly improved because of new resources that help them to share ideas, solve problems and resolve disagreements in a positive way. Bullying is not common and pupils feel confident that staff will deal with it when it happens.

Pupils value roles and responsibilities that mean they can contribute to school life. For example, the school council fund raise for new books and the 'wellbeing warriors' help others with their feelings and emotions. Pupils look out for each other and treat others with respect. They talk about a school where everyone is welcome and included.

Pupils enjoy learning and use new vocabulary in lessons and discussions. The school's new curriculum helps pupils make links in their knowledge, and understand diversity and British values. For example, pupils recall their learning about Sikhism and link this to their knowledge of the Silk Road trade. Occasionally, pupils do not apply basic key skills with

accuracy, so gaps in their earlier learning remain. At times, expectations for presentation affect how well pupils secure their understanding.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that the school's new systems and approaches to attendance, curriculum and behaviour continue to be implemented consistently, so that improvements are embedded securely and have a sustained and positive impact on pupils' outcomes.
 - Leaders should ensure that their vision for inclusion is applied consistently across the school, so that pupils with gaps in their learning benefit from well-matched support, allowing them to achieve in line with their peers.
 - Leaders should ensure that staff have consistently high expectations of pupils' transcriptional and foundational knowledge across the curriculum, so that pupils become increasingly fluent in these basic skills over time.
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About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors in this school is Rachel Pecz.

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

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

Inspectors spoke with the headteacher and other senior leaders, including the special educational needs and/or disabilities co-ordinator. Inspectors also spoke with staff, pupils, a local authority representative and governors during the inspection.

Inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The headteacher took up the post in September 2024.

The school currently uses no alternative provision.

Headteacher : Darren Hooley

Lead inspector:

Shaheen Hussain, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

CT Atwal, Ofsted Inspector

Liz Ellis, 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 23 June 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

302

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

318

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)

25.17%

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

4.64%

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: 3.5%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

9.27%

Below 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	34%	61%	Below
2024/25 (final)	23%	62%	Below
2023/24 (final)	26%	61%	Below
2022/23 (final)	52%	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	62%	74%	Below
2024/25 (final)	68%	75%	Below
2023/24 (final)	56%	74%	Below
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	48%	72%	Below
2024/25 (final)	38%	72%	Below
2023/24 (final)	40%	72%	Below
2022/23 (final)	65%	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	52%	73%	Below
2024/25 (final)	53%	74%	Below
2023/24 (final)	46%	73%	Below
2022/23 (final)	59%	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	8%	46%	Below
2024/25 (final)	12%	47%	Below
2023/24 (final)	8%	46%	Below
2022/23 (final)	0%	44%	Below

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	37%	62%	Below
2024/25 (final)	47%	63%	Below
2023/24 (final)	33%	62%	Below
2022/23 (final)	22%	60%	Below

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	29%	59%	Below
2024/25 (final)	29%	59%	Below
2023/24 (final)	25%	58%	Below
2022/23 (final)	33%	58%	Below

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	24%	60%	Below
2024/25 (final)	35%	61%	Below
2023/24 (final)	25%	59%	Below
2022/23 (final)	0%	59%	Below

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	8%	68%	-60 pp
2024/25 (final)	12%	69%	-57 pp
2023/24 (final)	8%	67%	-59 pp
2022/23 (final)	0%	66%	-66 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	37%	80%	-43 pp
2024/25 (final)	47%	81%	-34 pp
2023/24 (final)	33%	80%	-46 pp
2022/23 (final)	22%	78%	-56 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	29%	78%	-49 pp
2024/25 (final)	29%	78%	-49 pp
2023/24 (final)	25%	78%	-53 pp
2022/23 (final)	33%	77%	-44 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	24%	80%	-56 pp
2024/25 (final)	35%	81%	-45 pp
2023/24 (final)	25%	79%	-54 pp
2022/23 (final)	0%	79%	-79 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)	4.5%	5.2%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	5.6%	5.5%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	5.1%	5.9%	Below

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)	8.7%	13.0%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	15.2%	14.6%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	10.4%	16.2%	Below

Our grades explained

Exceptional

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

Strong standard

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

Expected standard

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

Needs attention

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

Urgent improvement

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

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