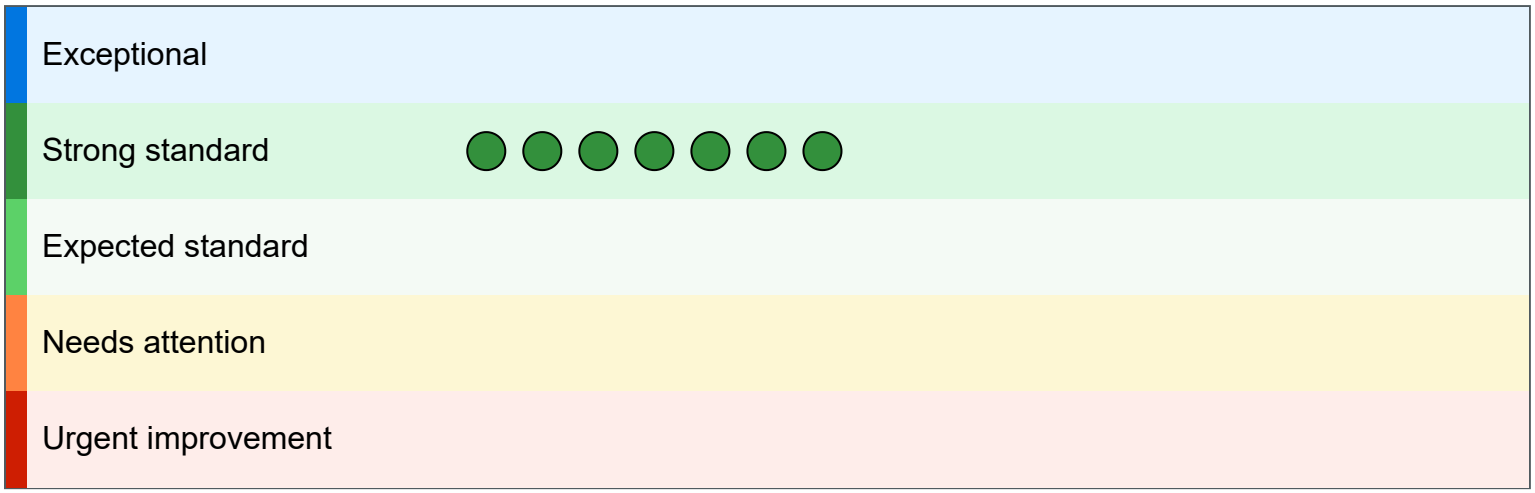
Highfield Church of England Primary School

Address: Hawthorn Road, Highfield, Southampton, Hampshire, SO17 1PX

Unique reference number (URN): 116395

Inspection report: 15 September 2026



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.

Strong standard

Achievement

Strong standard

Across subjects, pupils achieve very well. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are disadvantaged, develop deep and detailed subject-specific knowledge. They produce high-quality work and explain their ideas with confidence and clarity. For example, in science, pupils explain their scientific understanding, using technical vocabulary with confidence. In geography, pupils use secure prior knowledge to retrieve increasingly complex information from maps. Pupils who need additional support to learn well, receive well-targeted, bespoke support which enables them to make rapid progress from their starting points.

Pupils' understanding of important reading, writing and mathematical knowledge is impressive. They read with fluency and comprehension, write clearly, spell accurately and recall important mathematical information with confidence. Pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, routinely achieve above-average results in national tests. This sets them up very well for their next steps in learning.

Attendance and behaviour

Strong standard

Pupils' attendance is high. Leaders maintain meticulous oversight of pupils' attendance. They act quickly to address attendance concerns. Leaders and staff take appropriate and reasonable steps to support pupils to attend regularly and on time. This includes supporting pupils who may struggle to attend through no fault of their own. Leaders take swift, decisive action to prevent pupils from becoming persistently absent. They work closely with families to identify and address any barriers to regular attendance. As a result, persistent absence levels are well below the national figures.

Pupils behave very well. Right from the very start of early years children learn to organise themselves independently and follow routines consistently. In lessons, pupils' behaviour is excellent. They demonstrate highly positive attitudes, focusing diligently on their learning and working hard. The school's high-quality pastoral support successfully teaches pupils to manage their emotions and relationships with their peers and with adults. As a result, pupils behave with high levels of respect around the school. Pupils feel very safe from any bullying or discriminatory behaviour. Incidents of this kind are incredibly rare. However, when they do occur, leaders address them promptly and effectively.

Curriculum and teaching

Strong standard

Leaders have designed a well-sequenced curriculum in all subjects. Right from the start of the early years, leaders prioritise the teaching of basic knowledge in English and mathematics. This includes a sharp focus on ensuring pupils develop a wide vocabulary and learn to communicate effectively. Expert staff teach reading very well. They provide carefully targeted support for those pupils who need additional help to learn to read. In mathematics, the curriculum provides many opportunities for pupils to secure and deepen their understanding of important mathematical concepts.

Staff subject knowledge is impressive. Staff explain new concepts clearly and design thoughtful tasks that enable pupils to develop detailed knowledge and understanding. They make regular checks on what pupils know and can do. Staff use this information expertly to determine when pupils are ready to move on to the next steps in their learning. Furthermore, pupils have regular, carefully planned opportunities to review previous learning. This helps them to remember their prior learning, make connections with new learning and deepen their understanding further.

Across the curriculum, staff use a range of well-considered and often bespoke adaptations to enable pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and those from other disadvantaged groups, to access an appropriate curriculum consistently well.

Early years

Strong standard

Children get off to a great start in the early years. Staff ensure that they get to know the children and their needs right from the very start. They use this information expertly to engage children in learning and to build caring, warm relationships with them. This helps children to feel safe and secure and settle very quickly into school life.

Staff are determined that children will learn to read and develop a secure understanding of number. Children learn important knowledge such as phonics right from the very start. Staff also prioritise developing children's vocabulary and knowledge of how language works. For example, children enjoy regular story sessions and the opportunity to join in with songs and rhymes.

Leaders have designed a comprehensive curriculum, which identifies exactly what children must learn to be successful. Staff provide a well-resourced and stimulating early years environment that enables children to learn very well through purposeful play. Adults maximise every opportunity to develop children's understanding. Staff use a wide range of highly effective strategies to interact purposefully with children and develop children's thinking and understanding systematically. Staff provide targeted support for those children who may need additional help to achieve well. As a result of this highly effective teaching, children achieve very well.

Inclusion

Strong standard

Leaders make inclusion an absolute priority. Leaders, staff and governors share the same high ambition for ensuring that the most vulnerable pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), have every opportunity to achieve their very best and thrive, both academically and socially. Leaders ensure that they identify pupils' individual barriers to success rapidly through a range of rigorous and well-established strategies.

Expert, diligent leaders of inclusion ensure that staff benefit from high-quality, regular training. This gives staff the knowledge and skills they need to support pupils' additional needs robustly. Staff consistently use a range of highly effective strategies to ensure that pupils with SEND and those from other vulnerable groups have every opportunity to achieve well. These strategies are highly effective in enhancing the opportunities and experiences

for these pupils. In addition, leaders work extensively with external specialists to provide tailored support for pupils who need this.

Leaders keep a close eye on the effectiveness of the school's inclusion work. This includes ensuring that additional funding for disadvantaged pupils improves provision for them. Leaders' monitoring enables them to make careful adaptations to provision swiftly and knowledgeably when needed. As a result, pupils from all disadvantaged groups achieve very well.

Leadership and governance

Strong standard 

Leaders are determined to provide pupils with a great education that helps them to achieve highly. Leaders consistently identify the right priorities to improve the school and take appropriate action to bring these to fruition. There is a real sense of staff working together as a team to take the school from strength to strength. Adults have worked tirelessly since the previous inspection to embed high-quality provision across the school.

Staff value the way in which leaders support them to develop professionally and manage their wellbeing and workload. Through providing relevant, high-quality professional development opportunities, leaders ensure that staff have the knowledge and skills they need to do their very best for pupils.

The school engages well with parents, carers and the local community. Parents are highly positive about the school. They appreciate the care and support that their children receive and the academic progress that they make. Parents are very complimentary about the improvements that leaders have made to the school in recent years.

Governors fulfil their statutory duties effectively. They work closely with leaders to understand what the school does well and what it needs to improve further. For example, governors analyse data well to provide themselves with appropriate and insightful information, which they triangulate effectively. Governors have secure systems in place to assure themselves that disadvantaged pupils receive effective support to achieve well. Governors also maintain appropriate oversight of safeguarding to assure themselves that pupils are safe.

Personal development and wellbeing

Strong standard 

The school has a comprehensive personal development programme. It is carefully tailored to pupils' needs and to promote the school's deep-rooted values of peace, respect and courage. Pupils learn the knowledge and skills they need to be very well prepared for life in modern Britain. Pupils value diversity and enjoy learning about different cultures and beliefs.

Pupils demonstrate detailed understanding of their personal development learning through their knowledge and their attitudes. For example, younger pupils articulately describe how to keep themselves safe in a range of situations and how to be a good friend. In their attitudes towards each other, pupils demonstrate tolerance and respect. For example, they defer to their peers when someone is speaking and wait their turn sensibly. Older pupils value learning important financial information. They are proud of the fact that they learn 'how to

spend wisely and save'. Pupils also have complete clarity about how to keep themselves safe, both online and in the community.

Pupils benefit from a wide range of rich opportunities to develop their talents and interests. They learn resilience and perseverance through live performance opportunities and through taking part in sporting competitions. Leaders also encourage a strong sense of aspiration. For example, leaders invite visitors into school, including accomplished musicians, scientists and professional sports people, to show pupils what is possible if they work hard.

Leaders provide comprehensive pastoral support for pupils' mental health and wellbeing. Pupils value this support. They understand how the strategies they learn to keep mentally and physically fit could help them in later life.

Pupils learn the importance of responsible citizenship through giving back to their school and the local community. In school, pupils willingly take on a wide variety of additional responsibilities. They support their local community through activities such as supporting charities and taking part in environmental initiatives.

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

Pupils love being a part of this caring, nurturing school. They arrive happily each day, relishing the warm welcome from staff, who know them well. Pupils strive to do their very best. Each day, pupils settle quickly to their work, confident in the knowledge that staff want them to have every opportunity to be successful. Pupils love learning. They talk confidently about what they know and can do and achieve highly.

Pupils behave very well. They concentrate diligently in lessons and work hard. Pupils show high levels of respect for their peers and for adults. Understanding, tolerance and respect is woven through pupils' learning. Right from the start of the early years, children learn important social skills, such as taking turns and about how to cooperate with each other. Pupils say that they 'should treat everyone as they want to be treated'. They demonstrate a deep understanding of this in their positive and inclusive attitudes towards each other. Bullying is very rare. However, if unkind behaviour occurs, staff address this quickly and effectively. Pupils are confident that staff support them well to stay safe.

Pupils benefit from a truly inclusive culture. This is a real strength of the school. Pupils display impressively inclusive attitudes, celebrating and valuing difference. At social times, they join in games and activities together, keen to ensure that no one is left out. Pupils with additional needs or barriers to their learning benefit in full from the school's work.

A comprehensive range of additional opportunities nurture pupils' talents and interests. For example, pupils enjoy opportunities to perform to a wide range of audiences, including achieving success in national performing arts competitions. Pupils also learn how to stay fit and healthy. They are encouraged to eat a balanced diet, get outside in the fresh air and understand the importance of getting enough sleep.

Next steps

- Leaders should continue their work to refine and enhance the school's strong practices to sustain and build on the high-quality provision across all areas of its work.

About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors in this school is Alan Hunt.

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

The inspection took place from 15 to 16 September 2026.

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.

During the inspection, the inspectors spoke with the headteacher and other senior leaders, members of the governing body and a representative of the Diocese of Winchester. The lead inspector also spoke to representatives from the local authority and the local community trust.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

This school is registered as having a Christian religious character. It is in the Diocese of Winchester. Its last section 48 inspection was in March 2026.

The school currently uses no alternative provision

Headteacher: Rosie Walford

Lead inspector:
Sue Keeling, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:
Rebecca Mayman, Ofsted Inspector
Donna Fox, 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 15 September 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

315
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

315
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)

12.70%
Below 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

2.54%
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

13.65%

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

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	74%	61%	Above
2024/25 (final)	78%	62%	Above
2023/24 (final)	67%	61%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	78%	60%	Above

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	85%	74%	Above
2024/25 (final)	84%	75%	Above
2023/24 (final)	82%	74%	Above
2022/23 (final)	89%	73%	Above

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	85%	72%	Above
2024/25 (final)	89%	72%	Above
2023/24 (final)	84%	72%	Above
2022/23 (final)	82%	71%	Above

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	84%	73%	Above
2024/25 (final)	82%	74%	Above
2023/24 (final)	76%	73%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	93%	73%	Above

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	53%	46%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	71%	47%	Above
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	76%	62%	Above

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (final)	86%	63%	Above
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	71%	59%	Above
2024/25 (final)	86%	59%	Above
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	65%	60%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	71%	61%	Close to average
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	53%	68%	-15 pp
2024/25 (final)	71%	69%	2 pp
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	76%	80%	-3 pp
2024/25 (final)	86%	81%	5 pp
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	71%	78%	-7 pp
2024/25 (final)	86%	78%	7 pp
2023/24 (final)	S	78%	S
2022/23 (final)	S	77%	S

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics and the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	65%	80%	-15 pp
2024/25 (final)	71%	81%	-9 pp
2023/24 (final)	S	79%	S
2022/23 (final)	S	79%	S

‘S’ in the table above indicates the data has been suppressed, which is usually due to small cohorts. The suppression rules applied by the DfE when publishing the data have been mirrored and applied in the report card.

Absence

Overall absence

The percentage of all possible mornings and afternoons missed due to absence from school (for whatever reason, whether authorised or unauthorised) across all pupils.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (3 term)	4.6%	5.2%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	4.2%	5.5%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	4.1%	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)	9.0%	13.0%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	8.5%	14.6%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	9.8%	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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