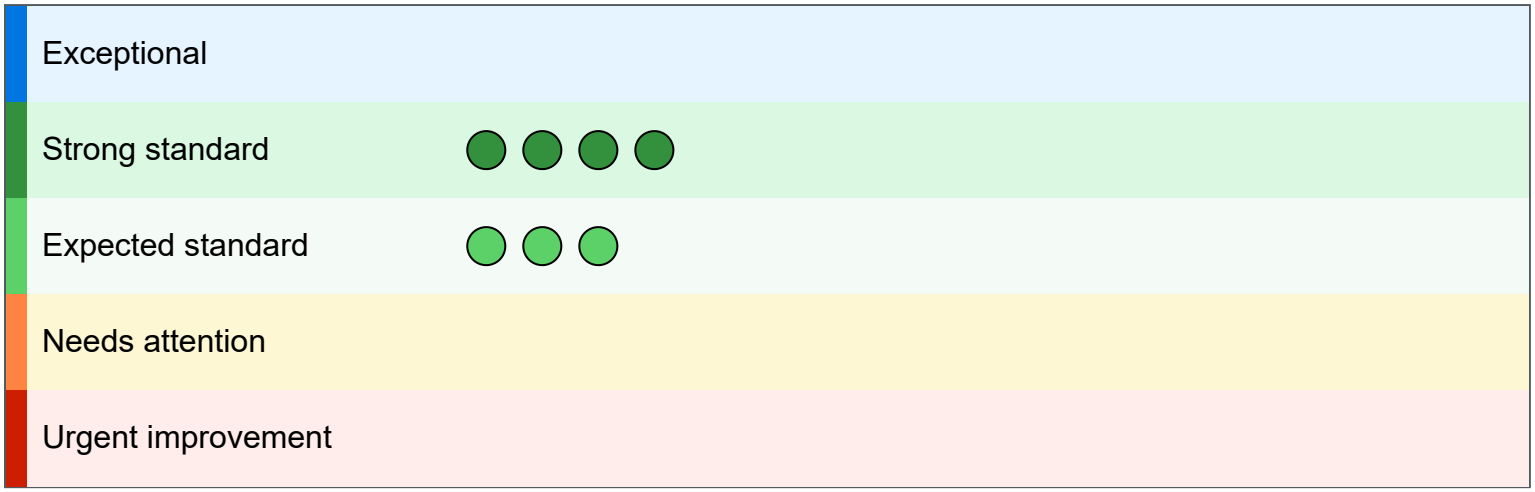
Holmer Green First School and Pre-School

Address: Watchet Lane, Holmer Green, High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire, HP15 6UG

Unique reference number (URN): 110268

Inspection report: 29 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

Attendance and behaviour

Strong standard

Leaders communicate their high expectations for attendance clearly. They closely monitor pupils' attendance and punctuality and act quickly when concerns arise. Leaders know pupils well and understand the barriers to attendance that they face. They constantly strive to help these pupils to attend regularly. Consequently, pupils attend well at the school. The number of pupils who are regularly absent is low.

Pupils' behaviour is excellent. Leaders embed the school's high expectations from the moment pupils join the school. These high expectations are underpinned by respectful and caring relationships. Pupils understand the rules and follow the set routines. As a result, the learning environment is calm. Pupils show positive attitudes to their learning. They listen carefully and participate enthusiastically in discussions and activities. Pupils show high levels of respect when speaking to each other and to adults. Bullying is rare. Pupils know that, if it does happen, leaders would deal with it swiftly. Leaders track any behaviour incidents closely. They take appropriate action if required. Staff make careful adjustments to support pupils who need it. As a result, pupils learn to manage their emotions effectively.

Early years

Strong standard

The early years provision is highly effective. Adults build close relationships with children. This means children feel safe and happy. Leaders have designed a curriculum that is ambitious and builds from pre-school to the end of the Reception Year. Leaders are extremely knowledgeable about how children learn best in this phase. They focus on the key knowledge and skills children need, such as handwriting, spelling and early number. Phonics is taught well. Children learn the sounds they need to read words accurately.

Children's communication and language skills are developed precisely. Staff engage children in high-quality interactions at every opportunity. They skilfully expand on what children say so that they hear and use more complex word choices and sentence structures. Consequently, children become confident young communicators. Adults use well-chosen stories, songs and rhymes to help develop children's language. Children also create their own stories. This encourages creativity and helps them connect language to written words.

Staff make personalised adaptations for children who are disadvantaged or have special educational needs and/or disabilities. They address emerging gaps in learning quickly. Children achieve well and transfer smoothly to Year 1 ready for the next stage in their learning.

Inclusion

Strong standard

Leaders have established a very effective culture of inclusion where every pupil is represented, valued and able to achieve their potential. Leaders have highly effective processes for identifying pupils with additional needs and other barriers to their learning. They work proactively with external agencies and gain the expertise needed to support pupils' current and emerging needs. Staff receive regular, high-quality training. Leaders

ensure that staff have the expertise to support all pupils, including those with more complex needs.

Staff use thoughtful strategies to support all pupils with their learning. For example, they use pictures alongside words to help pupils understand and remember new vocabulary. Leaders also provide targeted support for pupils who need extra help. Staff create precise plans and targets alongside pupils and their parents and carers. Leaders carefully monitor these plans to ensure that the support has maximum impact. Pupils progress well from their starting points as a result.

Leaders use additional funding effectively to support pupils who are disadvantaged or known to social care. Leaders make sure that pupils get the help they need. This includes any academic or emotional support necessary to enhance pupils' experiences.

Personal development and wellbeing

Strong standard

Leaders place personal development at the heart of the school's work. They have created a highly inclusive personal development programme that reflects the needs of their pupils and community. Personal, social, health and relationships education is well structured and delivered with expertise. As a result, pupils develop a secure understanding of how to keep themselves physically and mentally safe, including online. For example, pupils know that they should not watch videos over their age range. Pupils gain an age-appropriate understanding of healthy relationships and how to manage the ups and downs of friendships.

Leaders teach pupils about the fundamental British values using uniquely created characters such as ‘Leah Liberty’. As a result, pupils develop an impressive understanding of these values and how they apply to their lives.

Leaders ensure that pupils recognise, value and celebrate differences between people. Staff promote this through effective teaching and by providing deliberate resources that reflect the diverse world in which pupils live. For example, small-world figures represent a range of ethnicities and physical disabilities.

Leaders give pupils many opportunities to develop their interests and contribute to their community. Pupils take on leadership roles and take part in charitable events often. These experiences help pupils develop confidence, independence and a sense of responsibility for others. Pupils enjoy the vast range of clubs and enrichment activities. For example, they take part in themed weeks such as 'Happy Hearts, Healthy Minds' and enjoy planned activities including drumming fitness sessions.

Leaders ensure that pupils who need additional support take part fully. They remove barriers wherever possible so that pupils can enjoy the same experiences as their peers. Staff provide carefully targeted support to help pupils build emotional resilience, understand themselves and develop positive relationships. As a result, pupils grow in confidence and develop the knowledge and skills they need for the next stages of their lives.

Expected standard

Achievement

Expected standard

Pupils typically achieve well. They consistently achieve above the national average in the Year 1 phonics check. Most pupils secure the knowledge they need to read accurately and fluently by the end of Year 2. They develop a confident understanding of number and other vital foundations for successful later learning in mathematics. Pupils remember important knowledge from across the curriculum. For example, they can recall key facts about Florence Nightingale. Pupils also develop basic writing skills. However, they do not readily apply their writing skills to produce work of a consistently high standard when working outside of the focused writing lessons.

Pupils who face barriers to learning, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, progress well from their starting points. Pupils gain the knowledge and skills they need to be successful in the next stage of their education.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard

Leaders have designed a well-sequenced curriculum. They have clearly identified the essential knowledge, skills and vocabulary pupils need to learn from pre-school through to Year 2. Teaching is effective. Staff explain and demonstrate new learning clearly using carefully chosen resources. For example, in mathematics, blocks support pupils' understanding of place value. Leaders and staff prioritise vocabulary development in their teaching. Their effective approach, including the school's 'traffic light' system, ensures that pupils frequently revisit important language. Pupils also repeatedly encounter the same key vocabulary in teaching resources. Staff teach phonics well. The school prioritises reading so that pupils are fluent by the time that they leave.

Adults carefully plan a rich range of activities that allow pupils to rehearse and apply previous knowledge. These are particularly effective in securing pupils' scientific and mathematical knowledge. However, in writing, these activities are not structured effectively enough for pupils to rehearse what they learn in adult-led sessions to a sufficiently high quality.

Leaders and teachers check pupils' learning effectively and respond promptly to address gaps in knowledge and understanding. When needed, targeted small-group teaching supports pupils to secure the key knowledge in reading, writing and mathematics so that they can access the full curriculum.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard

Leaders set high expectations for pupils and staff. They place pupils' needs at the centre of their decisions. Leaders are committed to inclusion and ensure that all pupils are supported to achieve well. Leaders are positive role models and have established a culture where staff feel valued, involved and supported. Staff are proud to work at the school. They appreciate the attention given to their workload and wellbeing.

Leaders have created a highly effective culture of professional learning. They link training closely to the school's priorities and use research and evidence to inform their approach. Leaders look beyond the local area to develop their own knowledge and bring useful expertise back into the school. For example, leaders attend conferences and invite specialists to work with staff to develop their practice effectively. This successfully supports the school's improvement priorities.

Governors know the school well. They make effective use of visits and meetings to inform their understanding. Governors provide appropriate support and challenge. The governing body has developed its own work to ensure that governance adds as much value as possible. Leaders and governors maintain very positive relationships with parents and carers. Parents speak highly of the school and the support it provides for them and their children.

Leaders are clear about the school's strengths and priorities for further improvement. They acknowledge that the teaching and achievement in writing is not as effective as it could be and are already planning ways to improve this in the school's ethos and approaches.

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

Pupils are proud to be part of this inclusive and vibrant school which sits at the heart of the community. They talk confidently about their school values and are clear that these are important skills for life. Pupils adore the school's mascot, 'Ned'. He reminds them to never give up, to encourage others and to do their best. Pupils build positive relationships with adults and are listened to and understood. Pupils feel happy and safe and develop a strong sense of belonging.

Pupils attend well and look forward to the play-based learning opportunities that adults plan. Typically, pupils achieve well, particularly in phonics. They are enthusiastic learners and take pride in sharing what they know and can do. Pupils behave well and treat each other with kindness and respect. They are polite and well mannered.

At social times, pupils enjoy a range of activities where they can play actively and collaboratively. They say that bullying does not happen at the school and that the school is a friendly place. Pupils know they have trusted adults they can talk to if issues arise.

Pupils benefit from a wide range of enrichment opportunities, such as clubs, trips and themed days. They value the leadership roles available, such as being a 'kindness ambassador'. These opportunities help pupils feel valued and show them that they can make a positive difference to school life. Pupils develop a strong sense of responsibility through their work on sustainability and caring for the environment. For example, travel ambassadors collect information about how pupils travel to school. They promote initiatives that encourage more pupils to walk.

Disadvantaged pupils, those known to social care and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities participate fully in school life. Adults successfully remove barriers for these pupils. By the time they leave, pupils are ready for life beyond the school.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that writing activities are carefully planned and structured so that pupils are able to apply, consolidate and develop their skills to a consistently high standard.

About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors in this school is John Hobson.

The inspection took place on 29 and 30 September 2026.

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

Following the 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 and other senior leaders, governors, staff and pupils. Inspectors also spoke with parents and carers at the start of the school day.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school currently uses no alternative provision.

The school, under the same registration, runs a pre-school for children aged between 2 and 4 years.

Headteacher: Gillian Jones

Lead inspector:
Richard Thomas, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:
Sara Tilbey, Ofsted Inspector
Ian Howie, 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 29 September 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

170
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

180
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)

8.24%
Well 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

0.00%
Well below 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

14.71%

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

Well 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).

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
2025/26 (1 term)	4.5%	5.1%	Close to average
2024/25 (3 term)	3.7%	5.2%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	3.5%	5.5%	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
2025/26 (1 term)	6.2%	14.4%	Below
2024/25 (3 term)	5.1%	13.0%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	5.1%	14.6%	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.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) inspects services providing education and skills for children and learners of all ages, and inspects and regulates services that care for children and young people.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: http://eepurl.com/iTrDn.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted
© Crown copyright 2026

© Crown copyright