

Holmesdale Community Infant School

Address: Alma Road, Reigate, Surrey, RH2 0BY

Unique reference number (URN): 145213

Inspection report: 21 April 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.

Strong standard ●

Attendance and behaviour

Strong standard ●

Leaders place great importance on high attendance and make expectations clear to families from when pupils join the school. School policies are clear, fair and applied consistently. Staff check attendance every day and act quickly if concerns arise. They work closely with families to remove barriers to attendance, especially for pupils who experience anxiety or emotional difficulties. As a result, attendance is consistently high. Attendance remains above national levels, with low numbers of pupils missing school regularly across all groups.

Behaviour across the school is a strength. The school provides a calm, welcoming and well-ordered environment where pupils behave well, feel valued and are kept safe. Pupils arrive ready to learn. Consistent routines help pupils settle quickly and act independently. Classrooms are calm and focused, and staff use consistent, positive language towards pupils. Playtimes and lunchtimes are lively, well organised and enjoyable. Pupils take part in a wide range of activities and play sensibly and cooperatively. They understand the rules and respond quickly to adult guidance. Bullying is rare and dealt with swiftly by staff. Leaders provide effective support for pupils who may need help managing their behaviour. Staff use individual support plans thoughtfully and focus on helping pupils succeed.

Early years

Strong standard ●

Provision in Nursery and Reception Year is a strength of the school and gives children an excellent start to their education. From Nursery onwards, staff focus on building children's confidence, communication, social skills and physical development. This prepares children well for learning and for getting along with others. Adults understand children's needs well and plan purposeful activities that reflect children's interests. As a result, children show high levels of engagement, stay focused and develop positive attitudes to learning. They work confidently on their own and with others and take pride in what they achieve.

Staff are well trained. They use their skills to plan stimulating activities and hold meaningful conversations with children. Developing language is a priority. Adults model speech well and introduce new vocabulary carefully. Children talk confidently about their learning. For example, children use words such as 'heavier' and 'lighter' in mathematics activities. Children enjoy writing and do so for real purposes, such as creating books or posters. This helps them understand why writing is important. The learning environment encourages independence and cooperation. Children learn to share, take turns and manage routines sensibly. Staff know children extremely well and support them sensitively to manage feelings and solve problems.

Early years provision is highly inclusive. Staff identify additional needs swiftly and work closely with families. Children with complex needs are fully included and make very secure progress. Leaders plan transitions carefully. As a result, children are happy, confident and very well prepared for Year 1.

Expected standard

Achievement

Expected standard 

Leaders expect all pupils to do well and, generally, they do. Reading and phonics are strengths of the school. Phonics results have remained well above national levels for the past 3 years, showing effective and consistent teaching. Pupils read confidently, use their phonics skills well and enjoy books that closely match their level.

In the early years, children have many opportunities to write. As they move through the school, pupils improve their spelling, handwriting and sentence writing. Behaviour and social skills are very positive. This creates a calm, welcoming environment where pupils can focus on learning. In mathematics, pupils follow an effective programme. This programme enables pupils to practise number skills regularly, explain their thinking and solve problems.

Pupils can recall earlier learning in some other subjects too. For example, Year 2 pupils spoke confidently about what they had learned about the Great Fire of London. However, in some subjects, learning is not always remembered securely over time. Leaders continue to support pupils in recalling the most important information they need. Despite this, pupils are generally well prepared for the next stage of education, particularly in reading, writing and mathematics.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Leaders have created a broad and ambitious curriculum that starts positively in the early years. Learning builds steadily as pupils move through the school. In the early years, an effective focus on communication, reading, independence and wellbeing helps children feel safe, curious and ready to learn. Consistent planning and carefully chosen teaching programmes usually help staff teach with confidence. Key knowledge and skills are planned thoughtfully and revisited so pupils, generally, remember what they learn. However, teaching is not always as effective as intended. In some lessons, particularly in foundation subjects, work and resources are not adapted carefully enough. This means not all pupils can take part fully or show the knowledge they understand. At times, too much lesson time is spent listening to adults or repeating previous work. As a result, this slows learning and reduces some pupils' chances to practise skills independently and remember important information.

Reading is a strength across the school. Staff teach phonics consistently well, and pupils use these skills confidently when reading, writing and making early marks. Pupils enjoy books and develop positive reading habits. Mathematics is taught through practical, hands-on activities. Pupils have time to practise and deepen their understanding. Teachers emphasise pupils' use of the correct mathematical language, which helps pupils explain their thinking appropriately.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

Leaders know the pupils well and expect every child to do their best, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are disadvantaged. Staff act quickly when pupils need extra help. They put clear support in place so pupils can learn

alongside their classmates. The school uses extra funding carefully to support programmes that help pupils communicate, manage emotions and develop learning skills. Leaders regularly check how well this support works and make changes when needed. Specialists, such as speech and language therapists, work closely with staff and pupils, particularly in the early years.

Pupils with additional needs take part fully in lessons and playtimes. They make progress from their starting points, both in their learning and emotional wellbeing. Staff plan support thoughtfully so pupils feel settled and ready to learn. Classrooms are well organised and include practical tools such as visual prompts and adapted seating. These help pupils stay focused, work independently and manage their behaviour, leading to calm and purposeful learning spaces. The school works closely with other services to support pupils and their families. Transition arrangements are effective, including positive links with nurseries and partner schools, which help pupils settle smoothly into the next stage of their education.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders are reflective, clear and focused on doing the best for pupils. They are visible, approachable and know the school well. Leaders and staff are honest about what works and what still needs improvement. Self-review is used positively to keep the school getting better. Training for staff is well planned and closely linked to school priorities so that teaching and care improve over time. Leaders monitor teaching and learning closely, focusing particularly on the classroom environment, behaviour, relationships and engagement. Some aspects of teaching are not yet consistently implemented. However, leaders focus on developing staff expertise to ensure more precision and adaptations to pupils' needs are evident, through high-quality teaching.

Those responsible for the governance of the school are well informed and effective. Governors and trustees bring a wide range of relevant expertise and provide appropriate support and challenge. Trust leaders articulate a clear vision focused on pupils' progress, lifelong skills and enjoyment of learning. Collaboration underpins the trust's approach, with the school retaining its identity while benefiting from shared expertise. Leaders' oversight of safeguarding is robust.

Staff feel proud to work at the school. They describe it as supportive, inclusive and welcoming. Leaders value staff wellbeing and offer regular support and training. They include all staff, including support staff, in development opportunities. As a result, many staff stay at the school, build positive relationships and develop consistent teaching practice.

Parents are very positive about the school's care and culture. They describe it as a nurturing, inclusive and safe environment where children feel happy and valued. Parents praise staff commitment, strong relationships and clear communication. Parents trust the school leadership and they recognise its role in creating a calm, supportive culture.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

The school provides a warm and caring environment where pupils feel confident, supported and happy. The approach to personal development and wellbeing is well planned and reflects the needs of the school community. This begins in the early years, where children

regularly talk about how they are growing and improving. These activities help them build self-confidence, understand their feelings and feel proud of what they can do. Pupils describe the school as kind and safe, where adults listen to them and help them enjoy learning.

Pupils value opportunities to take on responsibility, such as being playground leaders, eco warriors or school councillors. These roles help pupils feel trusted, build confidence and learn how to work together. Pupils show sensible judgements and understand how their actions affect others. Playtimes and lunchtimes support pupils' social development well. Pupils enjoy a wide range of activities, play happily together and include one another. Staff promote positive behaviour effectively, and pupils move calmly between activities, showing respect for routines. Pupils also understand the importance of staying active and making healthy choices.

Pastoral care is a strength of the school. Staff help pupils manage their emotions and resolve difficulties calmly. Leaders work well with outside services to support pupils and families when needed. Pupils enjoy trips, clubs and special events and remember many experiences across the curriculum, particularly in science and history. However, pupils are less confident explaining what they have learned from some activities, in other subjects. Pupils understand the school's values and show an age-appropriate understanding of ideas such as personal boundaries, voting and following rules to stay safe. Awareness of difference and diversity is developing, and relationships across the school are positive.

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

Pupils achieve well in this happy and caring school, particularly in reading and phonics. They enjoy learning because adults make lessons engaging and enjoyable. Pupils feel well supported by adults who help them try new things and aim high. Pupils want to do their best. Children in the early years develop effective skills in language, reading and confidence. These skills help them become independent and curious learners. Early years provision is a strength of the school. Pupils benefit from activities that match their interests and needs, helping them stay focused, involved and positive about learning.

Pupils who need extra help receive it quickly. This includes pupils with barriers to the learning and wellbeing. Early, and swift, support helps pupils learn alongside their classmates and make positive progress from where they start. Specialist help, such as speech and language support, strengthens this work and helps pupils feel confident and included, both in learning and emotionally.

Pupils feel a strong sense of belonging. They describe the school as kind and welcoming. They know adults listen to them and support them when they feel worried. Roles such as school councillors and playground leaders help pupils build confidence, teamwork and a belief that their views matter. Pupils enjoy clubs, trips and special events. For example, pupils in Years 1 and 2 recalled visiting a local castle and confidently used words such as 'moat', 'turrets' and 'drawbridge' to describe their experience.

Pupils behave well, follow routines and feel safe. They show respect for one another and enjoy coming to school. Pupils' high attendance reflects this. Pupils develop independence,

resilience and positive attitudes, leaving the school well prepared for the next stage of their education and ready to play an active role in their community.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that all staff consistently design tasks that help pupils to secure key knowledge and skills precisely.
 - Leaders should ensure that all staff increase their confidence and skills when checking what pupils know and understand, to adapt their teaching during lessons and use this information to plan future learning.
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About this inspection

The school is part of Greensand Multi-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), Sue Wardlow, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Simon Garret.

The chair of the board of governors (school committee) in this school is Greg Scott.

The 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.

The inspectors spoke with the CEO, the director for learning, the chair and members of the governing body and trust, the headteacher, senior leaders and a range of staff during the inspection. They spoke with pupils to consider their experiences of school.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school does not make use of alternative provision.

Headteacher: Sharon Mullarkey

Lead inspector:

Lascelles Haughton, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Kirstine Boon, Ofsted Inspector

Susan Kelly, 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 21 April 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

281

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

330

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)

3.19%

Well below 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

1.07%

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: 3.5%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

3.20%

Well below average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with reported special educational support needs 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
2024/25 (2 term)	4.0%	5.2%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	4.1%	5.5%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	4.8%	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 (2 term)	8.2%	13.3%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	6.8%	14.6%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	8.9%	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.

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.

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