

Hollington Primary School

Address: Hollington Old Lane, St. Leonards-on-Sea, TN38 9DS

Unique reference number (URN): 150267

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 

Pupils typically achieve well from their starting points. Overall, they acquire the knowledge and skills that they need to be well prepared for their next stages in education. While this is not reflected in published outcomes data from previous years, in 2026, pupils' outcomes at the end of key stage 2 had improved greatly, reflecting the improved achievement over time across the school. Current pupils across all year groups develop the core skills they need in reading, writing and mathematics.

Leaders prioritise reading from the moment pupils begin at the school. This work is successful and, by the end of Year 1, pupils have the phonics knowledge that they need to become increasingly successful readers.

Pupils who need additional support, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities or who face other barriers to learning, receive this at the right time. This helps them to make suitable progress from their starting points.

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

Attendance is a high priority for the school. It is everyone's responsibility. Leaders have high expectations of pupils' attendance and communicate these effectively to parents and carers, pupils and staff. Leaders monitor attendance closely, and this enables them to identify pupils who may need help to overcome barriers to attending school as often as they could. They work closely with external agencies and families to ensure these pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, receive the support they need. Leaders' actions to reduce absence, including persistent absence, are having a positive impact.

Leaders have high expectations for pupils' behaviour. They ensure that all staff understand the school's approach to managing pupils' behaviour. This means that the school feels calm and settled. Typically, pupils behave well in school. They respect each other and the adults they work with. They feel safe and do not worry about unkindness or bullying. In lessons, pupils show positive attitudes to learning and take pride in the work they produce. Staff know pupils well, and pupils who require additional support receive this quickly. As a result of the actions leaders have taken, the number of suspensions has reduced.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Leaders have designed a broad curriculum that is well planned. It ensures that pupils build their knowledge and skills in a range of subject areas.

Leaders have an accurate and informed understanding of the quality of the curriculum and teaching within the school. They keep the curriculum under careful review and prioritise improvements. Leaders ensure they support staff to develop their expertise. As a result, teachers deliver the curriculum well.

Teachers have secure subject knowledge of the curriculum areas they teach and typically check pupils' understanding carefully during lessons. By doing so, teachers quickly identify pupils who need additional help, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Occasionally, the adaptations that teachers make to learning are not as precise as they could be. Therefore, some pupils do not access learning as well as they could.

Leaders prioritise the core skills that pupils need to access the broad curriculum. They ensure that pupils learn to read from the moment they begin school and that staff teach phonics effectively. Recently, leaders have reviewed their approach to handwriting. This is helping pupils to improve their written work, although leaders recognise they need to continue to prioritise this area of the school's work.

Early years

Expected standard 

Children make an effective start to their education in the early years. This is because leaders are determined for all children to develop a love of learning from the moment they begin school.

Leaders have carefully designed the curriculum considering the developmental needs of children and their individual starting points. Overall, staff deliver the curriculum well. This means that children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) or those who are disadvantaged, typically achieve well from their starting points.

Reading is prioritised from the moment children start in the early years. In Nursery, children learn to recognise different sounds. In Reception, skilled staff teach children phonics. Staff ensure that the environment is language-rich. They use stories and rhymes well to help children to develop their enjoyment of books and early speaking and language skills. Children also learn key knowledge in writing and mathematics.

Leaders ensure that staff work closely with parents and carers to support transition. This ensures that staff get to know children well. This helps school staff to know how best to support children who may have additional barriers to learning, including pupils with SEND.

Staff establish warm and nurturing relationships with children. They help them to successfully settle into school. They care for their wellbeing and know how to keep children safe.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

This is an inclusive school where leaders and staff know their pupils well. Leaders and staff share the same high ambitions for all pupils to achieve well. They have clear processes in place to identify pupils' barriers to learning and/or wellbeing when they join the school.

Leaders ensure that pupils' needs are identified quickly and accurately, including those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and those who have other additional barriers or vulnerabilities.

Leaders ensure that pupils typically receive the support they need to reduce barriers to learning and/or wellbeing. 'The Bridge' provides carefully thought-out support for pupils with

SEND, while the nurture provision provides targeted support for pupils with social, emotional and/or mental health needs. This helps these pupils progress through the curriculum from their individual starting points.

Leaders take proactive steps to develop positive relationships with parents and carers. This is central to the school's approach. This means that parents feel included in decisions about their child's education. Leaders also work with external professionals when required.

Leaders ensure that additional funding is well targeted to support pupils' progress, including attendance and participation in wider opportunities. This has a positive impact on these pupils.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders know their pupils and the community they serve well. They have an accurate understanding of their school and have identified the correct priorities to work on with the support of the trust. For example, leaders have taken effective steps to reduce the number of suspensions and improve pupils' attendance.

Those responsible for governance are knowledgeable about their statutory responsibilities. The trust has ensured that across its governance structure, there are effective processes in place to enable governors and trustees to make the checks they need to so they can assure themselves about the school's performance. This means that they support and challenge leaders constructively.

Leaders ensure that staff are well supported. Alongside those with governance responsibilities, leaders consider the wellbeing and workload of staff. Leaders ensure that members of staff have access to a learning programme that supports their ongoing professional development. Leaders ensure that this is well matched to the school's priorities. Staff speak highly of leaders' support for their wellbeing and workload.

Parents generally speak positively about the school. They value the work that leaders have done to strengthen the school community and engage with them. Leaders maintain a proactive approach to working with external agencies to ensure that pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities or those with other vulnerabilities, receive the support they need.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

Leaders implement a well-designed and age-appropriate personal, social and health education programme. Generally, this develops pupils' knowledge of how to stay safe, maintain healthy relationships and make positive lifestyle choices well. Pupils also learn about hygiene, healthy eating, physical fitness and the risks associated with modern technology, including artificial intelligence.

Pupils have a suitable awareness of the fundamental British values. Pupils discuss and debate their ideas with an appreciation of and respect for different views. They have a well-developed sense of right and wrong. They learn about challenging themes, for example

racism. The religious education curriculum ensures that pupils learn about the faiths and beliefs of others. This develops their understanding of equality and cultural diversity.

Leaders are committed to ensuring that pupils benefit from a broad range of experiences and have introduced 'The Pioneer Passport'. This enables pupils to gain experiences they may not otherwise get, for example attending an art gallery or museum or visiting the theatre.

Leaders ensure that pupils have access to a range of extra-curricular opportunities. They carefully track participation rates to ensure that pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities or those with other barriers, have access. Leaders seek pupils' input to find out the types of clubs that would spark their interest, and they act on this where possible. For example, pupils now have access to a 3-D model making club.

Pupils value the opportunities to hold leadership roles. They enjoy representing the school council or being a peer mentor, head pupil or play leader.

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

Pupils enjoy attending this school where staff know them as individuals and set high expectations. Pupils recognise that they learn in a school where they feel safe and where staff are committed to supporting them to be successful.

Pupils show kindness and say that bullying is rare. Pupils know that if they are ever worried, staff will listen to them and give them the help they need. Leaders ensure that staff develop nurturing relationships with pupils. Staff provide extra help to pupils who need support to manage their emotions and/or mental health. In the early years, children settle quickly into the school because of the warm relationships that staff establish with them from the moment children begin.

Leaders have introduced clear rules and routines to help pupils know how to behave. Pupils behave respectfully towards one another and the adults they work with. Pupils respond enthusiastically to the positive praise they receive for making the right choices.

Pupils enjoy opportunities to have experiences they may not otherwise have. Their 'Pioneer Passport' is a record of their experiences, including visits to museums and the theatre. These add to pupils' understanding of the world they live in.

Pupils take pride in contributing to school life through the leadership opportunities open to them. They enjoy participating in the wider life of the school and value the extra-curricular activities that are available to them.

Pupils' attendance is improving and most pupils now attend regularly. Leaders rightly acknowledge that they need to continue their work on attendance to make sure that all pupils attend school as often as they should.

Pupils make suitable progress from their starting points and typically achieve well. This includes pupils with additional barriers to learning, including those with special educational

needs and/or disabilities and those who are disadvantaged. Although this does not show in historical published attainment outcomes at the end of key stage 2, staff generally ensure that pupils acquire the knowledge and skills they need to be prepared for the next stage in education.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that their attendance strategy continues to reduce persistent absence and improve attendance.
 - Leaders should ensure that teachers use ongoing checks on pupils' learning in lessons consistently well and that they use this information to adapt their teaching precisely so that pupils achieve highly across subjects.
 - Leaders should continue to embed and strengthen consistency in the teaching of writing, including spelling and handwriting, across all subjects.
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About this inspection

This school is part of The Pioneer Academy, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Lee Mason-Ellis, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Jo Bouwens.

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

This inspection took place on 9 and 10 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.

Inspectors spoke with the headteacher and other senior leaders, including the special educational needs coordinator and trust leaders during the inspection. The lead inspector spoke with the CEO and those responsible for governance.

The school currently uses no alternative provision.

Headteacher: Grace McDougall

Lead inspector:

Luke Graham, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Louise Walker, His Majesty's Inspector

Michelle Payne, 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

264

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

390

Above 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)

67.34%

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

3.03%

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

21.59%

Above average

What does this mean?

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

National average: 15%

Location deprivation

Well 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		61%	
2024/25 (final)	35%	62%	Below
2023/24 (final)	33%	61%	Below
2022/23		60%	

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		74%	
2024/25 (final)	55%	75%	Below
2023/24 (final)	50%	74%	Below
2022/23		73%	

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		72%	
2024/25 (final)	61%	72%	Below
2023/24 (final)	42%	72%	Below
2022/23		71%	

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		73%	
2024/25 (final)	47%	74%	Below
2023/24 (final)	52%	73%	Below
2022/23		73%	

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		46%	
2024/25 (final)	22%	47%	Below
2023/24 (final)	32%	46%	Below
2022/23		44%	

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		62%	
2024/25 (final)	47%	63%	Below
2023/24 (final)	54%	62%	Close to average
2022/23		60%	

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		59%	
2024/25 (final)	56%	59%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	46%	58%	Below
2022/23		58%	

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		60%	
2024/25 (final)	38%	61%	Below
2023/24 (final)	51%	59%	Close to average
2022/23		59%	

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		68%	
2024/25 (final)	22%	69%	-47 pp
2023/24 (final)	32%	67%	-35 pp
2022/23		66%	

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		80%	
2024/25 (final)	47%	81%	-34 pp
2023/24 (final)	54%	80%	-26 pp
2022/23		78%	

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		78%	
2024/25 (final)	56%	78%	-22 pp
2023/24 (final)	46%	78%	-32 pp
2022/23		77%	

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		80%	
2024/25 (final)	38%	81%	-43 pp
2023/24 (final)	51%	79%	-28 pp
2022/23		79%	

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)	9.0%	5.2%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	10.0%	5.5%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	7.6%	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)	30.1%	13.0%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	33.8%	14.6%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	25.2%	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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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
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