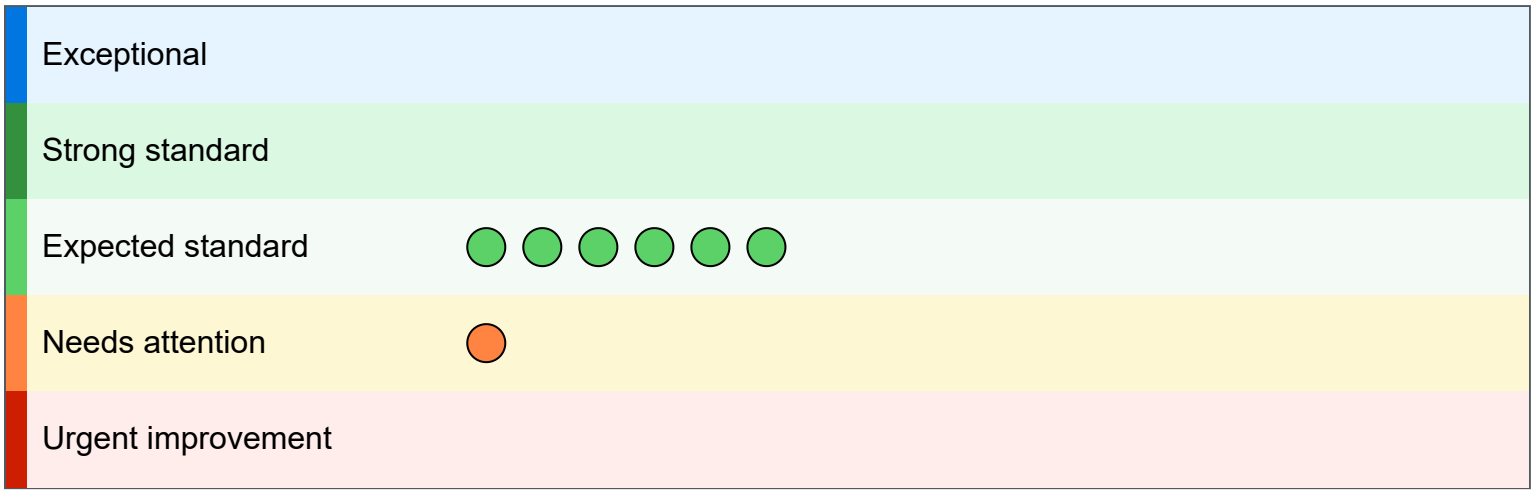
Homer First School and Nursery

Address: Testwood Road, Windsor, Berkshire, SL4 5RL

Unique reference number (URN): 109873

Inspection report: 9 June 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.

Expected standard

Achievement

Expected standard

Pupils generally achieve well across the curriculum and secure the knowledge they need for the next stage of their education. In reading, mathematics and subjects such as science, most pupils build their understanding over time. They recall prior learning and use subject-specific vocabulary with increasing confidence. Leaders' focus on early reading has improved phonics outcomes, with attainment moving closer to national figures and most pupils developing fluency and accuracy.

Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and disadvantaged pupils, typically make progress from their starting points, although some continue to require phonics support into Year 2 and beyond.

In the wider curriculum, pupils study a broad range of subjects. Occasionally, the quality of pupils' work varies, and they do not achieve highly. Handwriting and spelling sometimes limit how clearly some pupils communicate their understanding across subjects.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard

Leaders ensure that pupils study a broad and ambitious curriculum. They set out the knowledge and skills pupils need to learn and place a clear emphasis on building secure foundations. This is particularly evident in reading and mathematics, where teaching follows agreed approaches and assessment helps staff identify and address gaps. As a result, pupils, including those who need additional support, generally build their knowledge securely. Reading is prioritised, and staff promote pupils' enjoyment of reading across the school.

Teachers have secure subject knowledge and present new learning clearly. They help pupils connect new learning to what they already know. Leaders prioritise important skills such as handwriting and presentation. Pupils develop these securely in core subjects, although expectations are less consistent across the wider curriculum. A shared approach to teaching is evident in many classrooms, although this is not always consistent.

Across other subjects, pupils generally build knowledge in a logical sequence. However, in some areas, activities do not consistently help pupils to retain and apply key knowledge. At times, teaching does not adapt the curriculum precisely enough for all pupils. As a result, some pupils do not build knowledge as securely, while others are not consistently supported to deepen their understanding.

Early years

Expected standard

Leaders prioritise the early years and provide children with a positive and secure start to their education. They have designed a well-sequenced curriculum that helps children build knowledge and skills over time, taking account of children's starting points. Children in Nursery and Reception settle quickly, follow routines and form positive relationships with adults. They engage well in learning and develop increasing independence and confidence.

Early reading, writing and number are prioritised. Staff introduce phonics early and provide regular opportunities for children to practise and apply their learning. Children enjoy sharing books and develop positive attitudes to reading. Writing forms an important part of the curriculum, and children produce purposeful outcomes, including designing and creating their own books. Staff plan a range of activities across indoor and outdoor provision. Children engage confidently, sustaining their interest across different areas of learning.

Staff know children and their families well and provide support where needed. As a result, children, including those with additional needs, make progress from their starting points. Staff interact regularly with children and support thinking through questioning and guidance. However, these interactions do not always extend children's thinking or develop vocabulary precisely, particularly during independent learning time.

Inclusion

Expected standard

Leaders have established an inclusive culture with a shared ambition for all pupils to succeed. They use well-structured approaches to identify pupils' additional needs quickly and accurately. Leaders draw on information from education, health and care plans and personal education plans to shape support. They plan intervention programmes carefully so that pupils can catch up or keep up with the curriculum. Pastoral provision also supports pupils' social, emotional and mental health, including access to calm spaces when needed.

Leaders organise training that supports staff to use adaptive approaches. In most lessons, staff adapt learning well. For example, they use visual prompts, structured routines and regulation strategies to help pupils access learning. Adaptations typically help pupils engage with new learning and build their knowledge, although this is not consistent across all classes.

The 'Homer Hub' provides a structured environment with targeted learning and therapeutic support. Pupils use this provision flexibly to help them concentrate well and participate in learning. Leaders support pupils to move between the hub and mainstream classes as part of a wider inclusive approach.

Leaders use additional funding appropriately to support disadvantaged pupils. They identify barriers and provide targeted support, enabling these pupils to make steady progress from their starting points.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard

Leaders have a clear and accurate understanding of the school's strengths and priorities. They focus on the right areas for improvement, and their work is strengthening teaching practice. Leaders consider staff workload and wellbeing carefully, and staff value the support they receive. Leaders have an accurate understanding of the curriculum and how well it is taught. They use regular monitoring and focused professional development to strengthen practice, especially in phonics and mathematics. Staff recognise how this strengthens their knowledge and improves their practice.

Parents speak very highly of the school and value the sense of community that leaders promote. Most would recommend the school, and parents of pupils with special educational

needs and/or disabilities appreciate the support their children receive. Leaders engage families positively through a range of opportunities, including whole-school events such as community picnics. These events help to build positive relationships between families and the school and contribute to a welcoming and inclusive culture.

Governors are committed to the school and share leaders' ambition for its inclusive ethos. They understand the school's vision and values and ensure that pupils are supported as individuals. Governors engage in relevant training, maintain regular contact with leaders and staff, and fulfil their safeguarding responsibilities. They understand the school's key priorities.

Leaders have identified the appropriate priorities for improvement but have not yet secured consistently rapid and sustained gains in attendance, particularly for the most vulnerable pupils. Governors draw on a range of information to understand the school's work; however, they need to ensure that their oversight and challenge consistently hold leaders to account for securing further improvement.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard

Leaders have established an inclusive programme for pupils' personal development, rooted in a shared sense of community. They prioritise pupils' wellbeing and demonstrate this through daily routines and relationships. Pupils learn how to stay safe and healthy, including understanding bullying, healthy eating and fire safety. The school places a clear emphasis on emotional literacy and belonging. Approaches such as nurture provision help pupils to understand and manage their feelings effectively. As a result, the school provides a calm, supportive and inclusive environment where pupils feel safe and valued.

Pupils are proud of their school and understand their role within it. They apply the school's values of being ready, respectful and safe in their daily interactions. Pupils show empathy towards others, including those with additional needs, and speak positively about the inclusive ethos. They take responsibility for aspects of school life, such as caring for the environment by tending to plant boxes. Pupils benefit from a wide range of opportunities, including trips, residential visits, leadership roles and charitable work. These strengthen their connection to the community and support their wider development. Disadvantaged pupils access these opportunities readily. Leaders also ensure that vulnerable pupils, including young carers and service pupils, receive appropriate and timely support.

The personal development curriculum helps pupils understand relationships, safety and aspects of equality and diversity. Pupils recall key learning about friendship, consent and online safety. They develop a secure understanding of different faiths and beliefs. Some pupils demonstrate an understanding of fundamental British values, although this is not consistently embedded. Leaders listen carefully to pupils' views and use these to shape provision, reflecting a clear understanding of their community.

Needs attention

Attendance and behaviour

Needs attention

Leaders do not analyse attendance information closely enough to identify patterns or support pupils who are most at risk of absence. As a result, persistent absence remains too high for some groups of pupils. Overall attendance has improved over time and is now broadly in line with national figures. Leaders have established clear systems and provide personalised support for vulnerable pupils. They work with families and external services to address barriers such as anxiety and medical needs. For some pupils, this support is beginning to improve attendance.

Behaviour is a strength of the school. Leaders have established a calm and purposeful environment where pupils learn without disruption. Pupils follow clear routines and expectations, and their conduct supports learning in lessons. Positive relationships with staff help pupils feel safe, supported and able to manage their behaviour. Leaders ensure staff understand and apply expectations consistently, and they consider pupils' individual needs carefully. As a result, serious incidents such as bullying or derogatory language are rare and managed effectively.

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

At Homer First School and Nursery, everyone shares the vision that 'When we work hard and we are kind, amazing things happen.' Pupils enjoy coming to school and feel known and cared for. They develop a sense of belonging within this close-knit community. Pupils feel safe, trust adults to help them and understand how to keep themselves safe, including online.

Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. Clear routines and expectations create a calm environment where pupils treat each other with respect and kindness. This includes children in the early years, who settle quickly and follow established routines. Bullying and derogatory language are rare. Many pupils attend regularly. Staff build positive relationships with families and act quickly when pupils are absent. However, leaders do not analyse attendance information closely enough to make sure that it improves for all pupils, particularly those who need the most support.

Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are disadvantaged, receive support that typically removes barriers to learning and wellbeing. This enables them to take part in school life. In the Homer Hub, staff support pupils effectively so that they engage confidently in learning.

Pupils enjoy breaktimes and play cooperatively, organising their own games and including others. They take pride in contributing to school life. Younger pupils care for resources and outdoor spaces, while older pupils take on roles such as school or eco council representatives. Clubs, visits and trips broaden pupils' experiences.

Pupils enjoy their learning and talk about what they know. However, learning does not always build securely on pupils' prior knowledge or deepen their understanding. Pupils do not consistently use accurate vocabulary or present their work well across subjects, so the quality of work varies across the curriculum.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure lesson activities enable all pupils to build securely on prior learning, deepen their understanding over time and produce consistently high-quality work across the curriculum.
- Leaders should ensure that staff skilfully identify and address any misconceptions in pupils' transcription skills so that all pupils apply their writing skills securely across the curriculum.
- Leaders should ensure that staff in the early years use consistent, high-quality interactions to maximise learning opportunities across all areas of provision.
- Leaders should continue to implement and evaluate their attendance strategy to secure consistently high attendance for pupils, including those who are disadvantaged.

About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors in this school is Mr Ashley Cox-Higgins.

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.

Inspectors spoke with governors, the headteacher, senior leaders and staff during the inspection. Inspectors also spoke to a representative of the local authority and with pupils, parents and carers.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school currently uses no alternative provision.

Headteacher: Gemma Sharma

Lead inspector:
Lorraine Greco, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:
William James, Ofsted Inspector
Clare Haines, 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 9 June 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

192
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: 272

School capacity

270
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)

17.06%
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: 26.3%

Pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan

4.69%
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

8.33%
Well below 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
2024/25 (3 term)	5.5%	5.2%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	6.5%	5.5%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	7.1%	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)	13.0%	13.0%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	19.4%	14.6%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	17.4%	16.2%	Close to average

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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