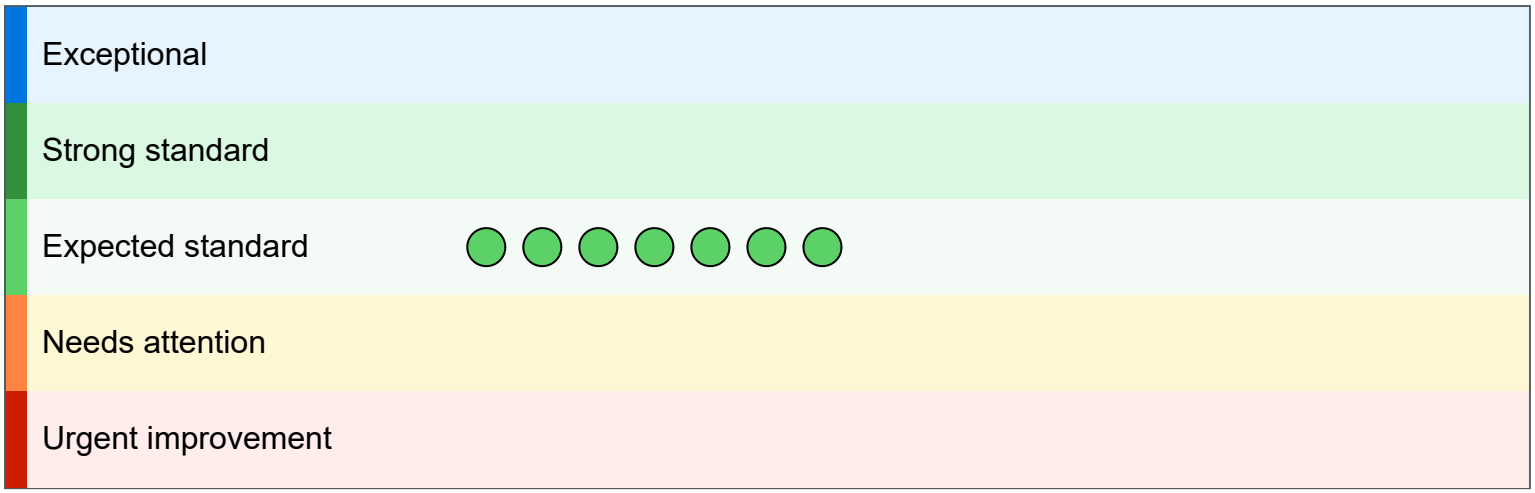
Hilltop First School

Address: Clewer Hill Road, Windsor, Berkshire, SL4 4DW

Unique reference number (URN): 109833

Inspection report: 6 October 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

Typically, pupils achieve well in the phonics screening check. They become fluent readers by the end of key stage 1. They develop secure number skills, such as times tables, and can apply these readily to different mathematical problems. For example, in Year 4, pupils used their knowledge of negative numbers to complete problems linked to temperature. Leaders have prioritised handwriting and this is improving, with pupils in key stage 2 joining their handwriting with increasing fluency. Most pupils make good progress from their starting points, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, disadvantaged pupils and those known to social care. However, some pupils could be achieving more. The quality of pupils' work varies and does not consistently show the standards they are capable of.

In the wider curriculum, pupils build their knowledge and skills over time. They typically achieve what was intended and use subject-specific language with increasing confidence. Overall, they develop the knowledge and skills they need for the next stage of their education.

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard

Overall attendance has increased and is now closer to the national average. Fewer pupils regularly miss school. Leaders work with families to understand why pupils are absent and agree on ways to help them attend more often. They maintain clear expectations for all pupils, while recognising that some need additional support. Attendance for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and disadvantaged pupils has improved over time but remains below the national average. Leaders understand the reasons behind some pupils' absences and provide support where they can. Leaders have taken appropriate steps to improve attendance, but they acknowledge that there is still work to do to ensure that all pupils benefit from attending regularly.

Leaders set clear expectations for behaviour and build positive relationships with pupils. Pupils understand the school's rules and routines and arrive ready and motivated to learn. They behave well in lessons and move calmly around the school. Staff remind pupils of expectations respectfully and consistently when needed. Pupils say that bullying is rare and that kindness is at heart of the school. Leaders look for patterns in behaviour and provide extra teaching or support for pupils who need help understanding and following the rules.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard

Leaders have a clear understanding of the quality of the curriculum and teaching. They provide a broad programme of study and organise learning so that it builds on what has been taught before. Teachers focus on key knowledge in reading, writing and mathematics. They teach phonics well and give older pupils opportunities to read fluently and develop their understanding of what has been read. Important skills such as handwriting and vocabulary development are taught robustly. However, expectations of their use are not consistent across the curriculum.

Teachers have secure subject knowledge and generally explain new learning clearly. Leaders have made inclusive teaching a priority. Teachers usually adapt lessons and support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and pupils with other barriers to learning well. They use agreed approaches to help pupils to connect new learning with what they already know. Teachers check pupils' understanding and use this information to decide what to teach next. However, these strategies, although evident in many lessons, are not consistently used in all classes and subjects.

When pupils develop gaps in their learning, staff provide small-group teaching to help them catch up. Staff support pupils effectively while also encouraging independence.

Early years

Expected standard

Children make a positive and settled start in the early years. Leaders know the children well. They shape the curriculum around their starting points, previous experiences and needs. The curriculum is carefully planned and sequenced. It identifies the key knowledge and skills children need for later learning, while rightly focusing on language development. Staff use regular interactions to effectively build children's vocabulary and extend their thinking. They provide opportunities for children to tell and act out their own stories. This supports children to become more confident communicators.

Phonics is a clear priority. Children develop secure knowledge of sounds and have regular opportunities through the day to practise this learning. Staff also ensure that pupils develop early writing skills, such as secure pencil grip and early number fluency. They use assessment effectively to adapt their teaching and to target support, including for disadvantaged children and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. This ensures that gaps in learning are identified and addressed promptly.

Staff know children and their families well. Parents are encouraged to engage with the children's learning through regular family song and rhyme sessions. They establish clear routines that help children to feel safe, confident and happy. As a result, children are well prepared for Year 1.

Inclusion

Expected standard

Leaders are rightly proud of the school's inclusive culture. The school has focused on high-quality inclusive teaching in the classroom so pupils with barriers to learning can effectively work alongside their peers. These strategies include the use of visual aids to support language development and targeted group teaching. Leaders provide staff with high-quality training, so they typically deliver agreed strategies well.

Leaders know the needs of the pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) well. Staff identify barriers that some pupils face and put support in place. They work closely with parents and external agencies to develop effective plans that set appropriate next steps in learning and explain how pupils will be supported. Small-group support helps to address gaps in pupils' learning. For example, pupils who need it get additional phonics support. As a result, pupils with SEND and pupils with other barriers achieve well from their starting points.

Pupils within the school's specialist Dandelion resource benefit from support that is well matched to their needs. Skilled staff support these pupils to progress well through a curriculum that is suitably adjusted to meet pupils' needs. Leaders use additional funding, such as pupil premium, appropriately to improve achievement and broaden opportunities for disadvantaged pupils.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard

Leaders know the school's context, strengths and areas for development well. They focus on the right areas for improvement, and their work is strengthening teaching practice. Leaders have created an ethos with inclusion at its heart. They have high expectations for what pupils can achieve. Leaders support pupils to overcome barriers so that they can fully benefit from the school's provision.

Leaders have developed a culture where professional learning is encouraged and supported. Staff value the training they receive, both within the school and through external agencies, where appropriate. This work builds expertise and has a positive impact on classroom practice. Staff feel valued and speak positively about how supportive and approachable leaders are. Staff wellbeing is a priority, and workload is managed carefully.

Governors fulfil their statutory duties and are committed to the school's vision. They maintain regular contact with leaders and staff and fulfil their safeguarding responsibilities. They understand the school's key priorities and provide appropriate support and challenge.

Leaders contribute positively to the wider education system through work across the local authority and collaboration with other schools. They have generally built positive relationships with parents, carers and the wider community. However, leaders acknowledge that these could be strengthened further.

Leaders know what needs to improve and have identified the right areas to focus on. However, improvement priorities and actions are not set out clearly enough to help leaders and governors check progress regularly and evaluate the impact of their work.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard

Leaders provide a broad personal development curriculum that reflects the school's context and pupils' needs. Staff have the knowledge and skills to teach it effectively. Leaders make sure that the content is age-appropriate and meets statutory requirements.

Pupils learn how to stay safe and recognise risks online and offline. They know where to go for help if they need it. They learn about healthy relationships, personal boundaries and how to manage disagreements with family and friends. Pupils demonstrate an age-appropriate understanding of fundamental British values. For example, they talk about how rules make the school a happy place where everyone is safe. Pupils learn to respect the beliefs, feelings and values of others. They also reflect on their own thoughts and views, helping them to understand themselves and others more fully.

Pupils have opportunities to explore their interests and talents through a range of activities. They participate in clubs and take on leadership responsibilities, including roles such as eco

agents and sports leaders, who actively promote physical activity around the school. These opportunities help pupils to develop confidence and a sense of responsibility. Through choosing and promoting charity days, head boys, head girls and their deputies help foster empathy and an understanding of wider social issues among pupils. Enrichment experiences, including visits from a farm and a planetarium, bring learning to life and broaden pupils' experiences beyond the classroom.

Leaders carefully monitor pupils' engagement in the personal development programme. They make changes where needed so that all pupils can fully benefit. Leaders also ensure effective support for pupils with their emotional wellbeing. Trained adults provide tailored help when needed. As a result, pupils feel safe, valued and ready to learn.

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

Kindness is at the heart of this school community, where everyone feels included. Pupils talk confidently about their school values. They say the school is a happy place to learn and be with friends. Pupils build strong relationships with adults, and this makes them feel safe. They know who to speak to if they are worried. Pupils trust staff to resolve any concerns should they arise. They feel listened to and understood.

Pupils benefit from attending well. They enjoy learning and enthusiastically share their work. Pupils focus well in class and want to do their best. Leaders make sure that pupils who may face barriers to their learning or wellbeing are supported effectively so that they learn alongside their peers. Typically, pupils, including those who are disadvantaged and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, progress well through the curriculum.

Pupils behave well at the school. They are polite, well-mannered and respectful towards each other. As a result, pupils benefit from a calm learning environment. At social times, pupils engage in a range of activities, including games with the sports coach, and play cooperatively. Incidents of unkindness, including bullying, are rare.

Pupils value the opportunities they have to contribute to the life of the school. They take pride in leadership roles, such as being 'eco agents', mentors and school councillors. This develops pupils' sense of responsibility and shows them that they can make a positive difference to school life. Pupils particularly speak highly of the opportunity to run the school coffee shop. They learn key life skills while applying what they have learned in class. Pupils appreciate activities to develop their talents and interests, such as multi-sports. Pupils benefit from a range of curriculum enrichment activities, including technology week and musical instrument lessons. By the time they leave, pupils are ready for life beyond the school.

Next steps

- Leaders should continue to embed teaching strategies that help all pupils to achieve as highly as they can in all subjects.

- Leaders should strengthen their strategies to reduce absence so that more pupils benefit from attending school regularly.
- Leaders should further refine and sharpen their improvement priorities so that actions are precisely focused on clear, measurable outcomes and lead to greater impact across the school.

About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors in this school is Darren James.

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 the headteacher, senior leaders, teachers, governors, staff, pupils, parents and carers during the inspection.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school currently uses no alternative provision.

Headteacher: Lynn Bima

Lead inspector:
Richard Thomas, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:
William James, Ofsted Inspector
Stuart Bevan, 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 6 October 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

177
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

216
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)

24.39%
Close to 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

7.34%
Above 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

14.12%
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)

SEN unit

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)	6.0%	5.1%	Close to average
2024/25 (3 term)	7.5%	5.2%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	5.9%	5.5%	Close to average

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)	18.0%	14.4%	Above
2024/25 (3 term)	22.2%	13.0%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	18.0%	14.6%	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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