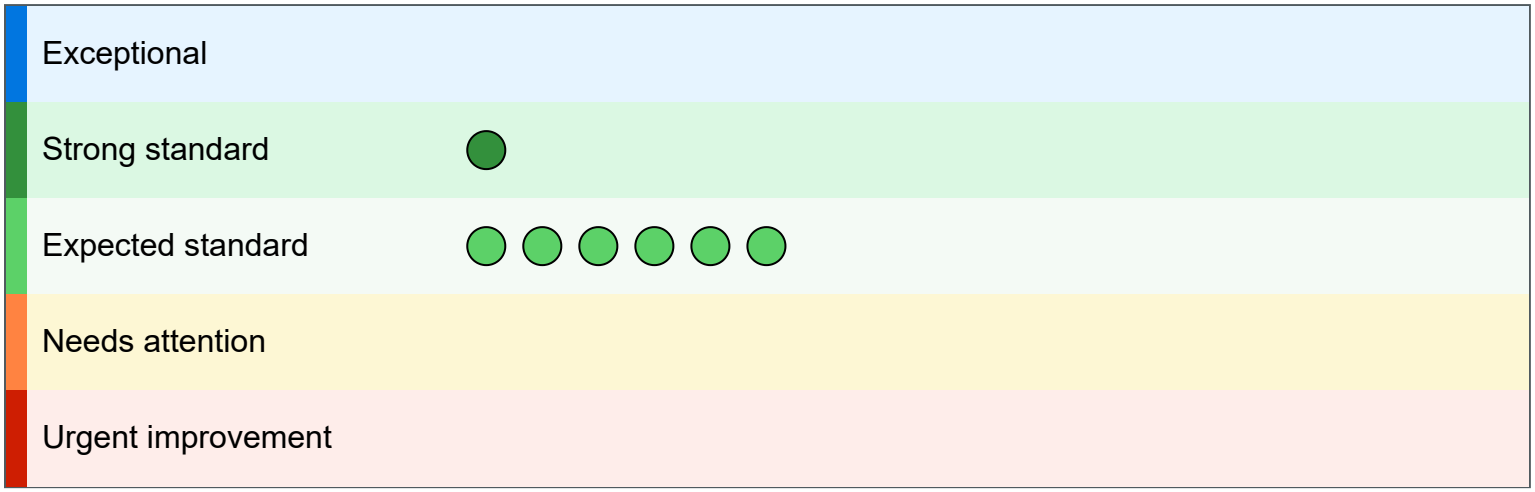
Harcourt Primary School

Address: Biggins Wood Road, Folkestone, Kent, CT19 4NE

Unique reference number (URN): 118871

Inspection report: 24 February 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

Inclusion

Strong standard

Inclusion is at the forefront of the school's work. Leaders have high expectations of what pupils can achieve, regardless of any barriers pupils may face. They ensure that pupils' needs are identified quickly and accurately, including for those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Leaders have successfully fostered a whole school approach to supporting pupils so that everyone plays their part. Staff benefit from a wide range of training opportunities. This ensures they have the knowledge and expertise to meet pupils' needs effectively. Disadvantaged pupils and those who face other barriers to learning benefit from highly effective and targeted support. Leaders check pupils' progress with great care, adjusting support in response to any emerging needs. As a result, pupils with barriers to learning access the curriculum successfully and make notable progress from their starting points.

Positive relationships with parents and carers make an important contribution to the school's success. Leaders work constructively with agencies, such as social care and a local specialist school for pupils with SEND, to ensure pupils benefit from appropriate support.

Leaders take deliberate action to ensure that disadvantaged pupils and those who face other barriers can access the wide range of enrichment opportunities provided by the school.

Expected standard

Achievement

Expected standard

Generally, pupils achieve broadly in line with national outcomes, including those who are disadvantaged. Pupils make suitable progress through the curriculum and typically develop secure knowledge over time, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The results of the Year 1 phonics check, and key stage 2 outcomes in writing, are consistently in line with the national average. Pupils develop a cursive script which contributes well to writing fluency. In 2025, the Year 4 multiplication tables check results increased significantly.

In 2025, key stage 2 outcomes in reading and mathematics dipped to below the national average. Leaders have taken effective actions to rectify this. As a result, pupils' achievement in reading and mathematics has improved. Leaders monitor pupils' progress closely to check that developments continue to make a positive difference to pupils' learning. They recognise that further work is needed to ensure that developments are consistently embedded across the school.

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard

Pupils' enjoyment of school is reflected in their regular attendance. Overall attendance is consistently in line with the national average, including for disadvantaged pupils. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities attend equally well. Their attendance has been above the national average for the past two years. Leaders prioritise pupils' attendance. They monitor attendance closely and work strategically and effectively with agencies to support pupils and their families. Current overall attendance rates are above the national average, confirming the school's ongoing success in making sure that pupils are positively engaged in learning.

Pupils demonstrate consistently positive attitudes to learning. They behave very well in lessons and around the school. Pupils enter the school in an orderly fashion at the start of the school day. They play and socialise harmoniously during break times. Pupils' impressive conduct reflects leaders' success in maintaining a culture of high expectations, respect and tolerance. Staff are knowledgeable about strategies they can use to support pupils' behaviour. They implement the school's behaviour policies consistently. This ensures that pupils are clear about expectations. Bullying is never tolerated. Leaders keep a careful check on pupils' behaviour and respond quickly on the rare occasions that concerns about bullying arise.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard

The school's carefully designed curriculum is ambitious, broad and balanced. It ensures that pupils' learning is appropriately sequenced across the curriculum. Leaders keep the curriculum under careful review and refine it when necessary to help pupils to learn better. They make sure that teaching revisits and reinforces prior learning regularly, so that pupils' learning is secure.

Effective teaching in early years and key stage 1 ensures that most pupils acquire secure foundational knowledge in reading, writing and mathematics. The school promotes the development of pupils' vocabulary well. Teaching in key stage 2 builds securely on pupils' prior learning. Leaders use training thoughtfully to ensure that staff have the knowledge and expertise needed to deliver the curriculum effectively. Teachers' secure subject knowledge helps them to shape the delivery of the curriculum so that it works for their pupils. They routinely check pupils' learning and adjust the curriculum accordingly.

There is a clear and purposeful drive to improve reading and mathematics across the school, including revising the curriculum in these subjects and providing targeted staff training. Developments have secured notable improvements in the quality of pupils' learning. However, further work is needed to ensure that developments are in place consistently across the school.

Early years

Expected standard

The early years curriculum is well structured and includes all areas of learning. Leaders give the development of children's language, vocabulary and communication skills a high priority. Purposeful and engaging teaching ensures that children progress well in all areas of

learning. The quality of interactions between staff and children makes an important contribution to children's learning. An increasing proportion of children, including those who are disadvantaged, leave the early years with the foundations they need for the next stage of learning in key stage 1.

Clear expectations and well-established routines provide a firm framework for children when they start school. Staff assess children's starting points and needs effectively. They develop productive relationships with parents and carers so that they can support their children at home. Staff take great care of children. They make sure that they are safe, secure and comfortable. As a result, children settle into school life well. They enjoy making friends and join in enthusiastically with the wide range of activities provided. Children quickly grow in independence and self-esteem. They play together happily during playtimes, under the watchful eye of an adult. Children know what to do if they feel that someone is being unkind and are confident that staff will help.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard

Leaders work together effectively to oversee the school's work. They have developed robust systems to enable them to review the school's performance. As a result, leaders have a clear and well-informed understanding of the school's context, its strengths and areas for development. They have taken effective action to improve the school's work, as illustrated by developments in the teaching of reading and mathematics.

Pupils' interests are always at the forefront of leaders' decisions and actions. The achievement and wellbeing of disadvantaged pupils, those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and pupils with other vulnerabilities are given a high priority. The positive outcomes of leaders' actions are reflected in pupils' personal and academic development.

Governors provide effective support and challenge for school leaders. They hold leaders to account rigorously for pupils' achievement and wellbeing. Governors use a wide range of strategies to help them to check the school's work, such as external reviews of teaching, safeguarding and the curriculum. They give staff and parent and carers' views careful consideration. Governors understand and carry out their statutory responsibilities well.

Leaders have developed a carefully structured schedule of staff training which is based on reliable research about effective education. The schedule is designed to address school improvement priorities as well as to support individual staff's professional development needs. Staff value the training provided and the strong sense of teamwork in the school. They speak positively about leaders’ careful consideration of workload and wellbeing. Leaders' thoughtful approach supports high morale across the school and helps to foster a positive, cohesive sense of community.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard

The school's personal, social and health education programme provides suitable coverage of a wide range of topics and themes, including relationships, sex and health education. Staff have been trained in its delivery. The school is outward looking, ensuring that pupils develop a sense of the contribution they can make to the local and wider community. For instance, the school sets class challenges, such as reducing food waste. Learning about

different countries and cultures is embedded in the history and geography curriculum. Assemblies are used well to supplement pupils' understanding of different beliefs and cultures. Leaders are understandably proud of the school's achievement of the International Schools Award. Pupils know why fundamental British values are important and can relate these to their own lives. They have a clear sense of fairness and explain eloquently why equality is important both in and out of school.

Keeping safe is one of the school rules. The school makes sure that pupils learn what they can do to help them to keep safe and well. Pupils know some of the steps they can take to stay healthy. They recognise that it is important to be kind and treat each other with respect.

Leaders know pupils and their families very well. They ensure that those most in need of additional support receive it in a timely way. Targeted activities help pupils to develop their confidence and self-esteem. Pupils are confident to contribute their thinking and ideas during lessons. They develop a keen sense of personal responsibility for their own behaviour.

The school's personal development programme extends across the curriculum and school life. Pupils benefit from a wealth of clubs, trips and visitors to the school. Leaders make sure that disadvantaged pupils access clubs and other activities. Pupils enthuse about activities such as football club.

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

Harcourt Primary School is proudly inclusive. Its happy, welcoming ethos is clear from the moment you arrive. Pupils of all ages relish school and all it has to offer. They attend regularly and show a clear desire to be in school. Pupils enjoy learning new things. They arrive in the morning full of beans and eager to get started. Clear expectations and well-established routines ensure that pupils are soon in the classrooms and ready for work. Pupils greet visitors politely and with great interest.

Leaders and staff have high expectations for every pupil. They foster a palpable sense of community and belonging. Leaders maintain a focus on ensuring that every pupil is treated as an individual whose needs are met. Pupils achieve well and are effectively prepared for the next stage of their education, including disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

The school's calm and purposeful atmosphere ensures that everyone can get on with their work. Pupils know, understand and follow the school's rules consistently. They behave very well in lessons, during break times and when moving around the school. Leaders ensure that pupils can play and learn safely in school. Pupils feel well cared for and safe. They know what to do if they are worried. Bullying hardly ever happens but leaders act promptly if there are any concerns.

Leaders foster links with external partners, which help to provide pupils with experiences that they may not otherwise have, such as last year's trip to France. Singing is given a high priority. The school comes to life with the sound of song during singing assemblies. Pupils thoroughly enjoy opportunities to sing and to participate in events such as the 'Young Voices'

concert in London. Events such as these make a valuable contribution to pupils' self-esteem and wellbeing.

Next steps

- Leaders should continue work to ensure that teachers consistently make highly effective and well-informed choices about how to deliver the content of the reading and mathematics curriculum in order to raise standards further in these areas.
- Leaders should maintain their focus on ensuring consistently strong standards across all areas of the school's work.

About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors is Wendy Settle.

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.

Inspection activities:

Inspectors spoke with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, special needs and disabilities coordinator and key stage 2 leaders as well as other members of staff. The lead inspector met with representatives of the governing body, including the chair of governors. She also spoke with a representative of the local authority.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school does not use any alternative provision.

Headteacher: Anthony Silk

Lead inspector:
Julie Sackett, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:
Jo Hygate, Ofsted Inspector
Megan Underhill, 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 24 February 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

180
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

210
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)

31.67%
Close to 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

3.33%
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

18.33%
Above average

What does this mean?

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

National average: 15%

Location deprivation

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%	61%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	54%	62%	Below
2023/24 (final)	52%	61%	Below
2022/23 (final)	75%	60%	Above

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	75%	74%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	62%	75%	Below
2023/24 (final)	76%	74%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	86%	73%	Above

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	76%	72%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	77%	72%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	72%	72%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	79%	71%	Above

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	72%	73%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	65%	74%	Below
2023/24 (final)	68%	73%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	82%	73%	Above

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	43%	46%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	40%	47%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	33%	46%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	54%	44%	Close to average

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	69%	62%	Close to average

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (revised)	60%	63%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	67%	62%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	77%	60%	Above

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	60%	59%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	70%	59%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	58%	58%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	54%	58%	Close to average

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	57%	60%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	50%	61%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	50%	59%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	69%	59%	Close to average

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	43%	68%	-25 pp
2024/25 (revised)	40%	69%	-29 pp
2023/24 (final)	33%	67%	-34 pp
2022/23 (final)	54%	66%	-12 pp

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	69%	80%	-11 pp
2024/25 (revised)	60%	81%	-21 pp
2023/24 (final)	67%	80%	-13 pp
2022/23 (final)	77%	78%	-1 pp

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	60%	78%	-18 pp
2024/25 (revised)	70%	78%	-8 pp
2023/24 (final)	58%	78%	-19 pp
2022/23 (final)	54%	77%	-24 pp

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	57%	80%	-23 pp
2024/25 (revised)	50%	81%	-31 pp
2023/24 (final)	50%	79%	-29 pp
2022/23 (final)	69%	79%	-10 pp

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)	4.9%	5.2%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	5.3%	5.5%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	5.9%	5.9%	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
2024/25 (2 term)	15.4%	13.3%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	16.3%	14.6%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	15.7%	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.

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