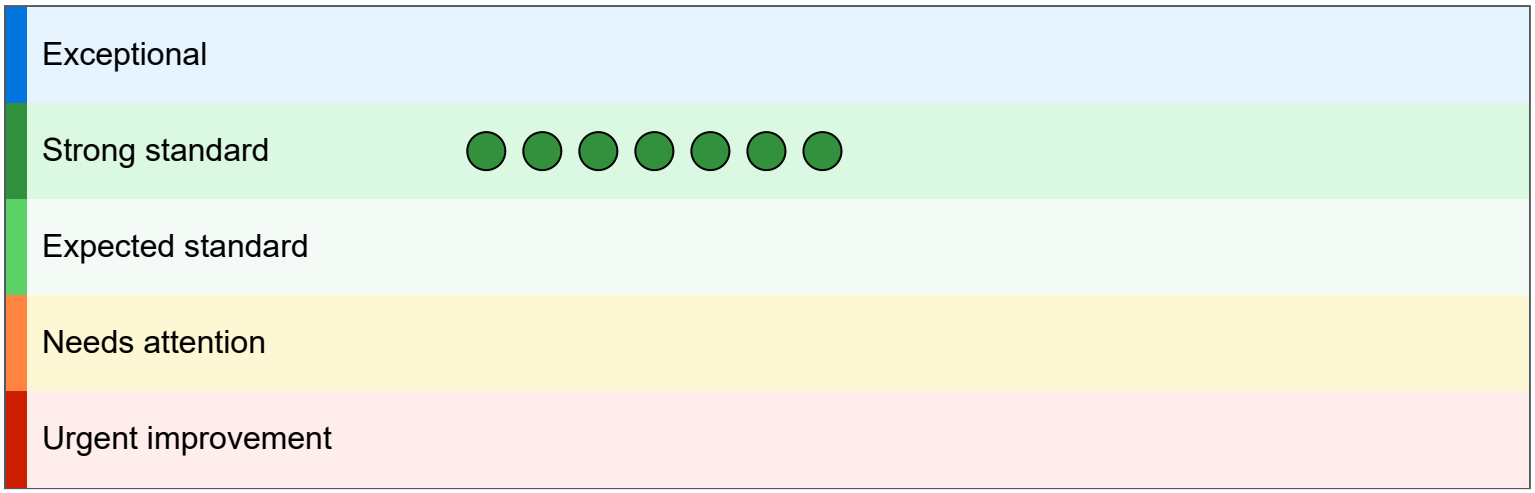
Portswood Primary School

Address: Somerset Road, Southampton, Hampshire, SO17 3AA

Unique reference number (URN): 138626

Inspection report: 16 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.

Strong standard

Achievement

Strong standard

Pupils achieve extremely well. This is reflected in their achievement in national tests, including for disadvantaged pupils, and in their progress across the wider curriculum. Pupils' books demonstrate clear progression, with a focus on subject-specific vocabulary. Pupils' writing across the curriculum demonstrates improving handwriting, spelling and sentence structure. This is reflective of teachers' high expectations and pupils' pride in presentation. Learning is sequenced effectively, enabling pupils to build securely on prior knowledge. Targeted support ensures that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities or other barriers to their learning make meaningful progress across the curriculum.

Pupils confidently recall and talk about key knowledge across subjects. Pupils develop strong social and emotional skills alongside academic success, so are ready for their next stage of education. For example, children in the Reception Year acquire the knowledge that they need to be very well prepared for Year 1, and pupils in Year 6 are well prepared for secondary school.

Attendance and behaviour

Strong standard

Pupils' attendance compares favourably with national averages. It shows improvements over time. Leaders place a high priority on attendance and punctuality. They work closely with families to address barriers to pupils attending school effectively. Targeted work with disadvantaged pupils has led to clear improvements in their attendance. Leaders promote a culture in which attendance is a shared responsibility among staff, pupils and families. Leaders communicate their expectations clearly to the wider school community. Leaders have established robust systems for recording and analysing attendance and enable staff to monitor attendance closely for all pupils.

Pupils' behaviour across the school is excellent. Leaders and staff share their high expectations through clear explanations and careful modelling. Pupils are kind and polite and conduct themselves with integrity. They consistently show high levels of respect and rarely need reminders about positive behaviour. Staff implement the behaviour policy fairly and consistently, and leaders adjust approaches when needed. Pupils understand what bullying is and say it is rare. They trust staff to act quickly if concerns arise. Leaders track behaviour patterns carefully, including serious incidents, and use this information to strengthen practice. Pupils who need more support with their behaviour are supported effectively and with kindness.

Curriculum and teaching

Strong standard

Leaders have designed a well-structured and ambitious curriculum that sequences knowledge from the early years to Year 6. Leaders have an astute understanding of its quality and make informed decisions as to how it should evolve. The school has designed a coherent approach to help teachers make highly effective choices about the content and order of the information that they deliver. High-quality professional development develops teachers' subject knowledge. This enables them to astutely adapt learning and support

individuals and groups. A robust assessment system ensures that teachers' checks on learning routinely identify and address any gaps in pupils' knowledge. Teachers take timely action to ensure that these gaps are addressed successfully.

Leaders ensure that pupils secure the foundations of reading, writing and mathematics from the start. The school makes sure that pupils consistently learn the basics of reading through high-quality phonics teaching. Staff receive the training that they need to teach reading expertly.

Staff group pupils where necessary so that teaching support from adults meets pupils' needs closely. Movement between groups is fluid, ensuring that all pupils access appropriate challenge. Pupils draw on prior learning to deepen understanding. Pupils are proud of their work and pay attention to their presentation.

Early years

Strong standard

Children settle quickly into school due to consistent and well-established routines. Staff and children build secure relationships that help children feel confident and ready to learn.

Children benefit from a well-resourced and purposeful learning environment. It is intentionally organised with resources that promote independence, purposeful play and sustained engagement. Staff deepen children's thinking through carefully organised tasks that engage and motivate children as they learn through play. Staff engage children in high-quality interactions and help them to articulate their learning. Staff model language highly effectively. Children are confident learning successfully on their own, in groups or with staff.

Leaders sequence the curriculum carefully, so children learn the key knowledge they need by the end of Reception Year. Staff teach phonics with precision. Early writing and number skills are taught equally effectively. Children are exposed to high-quality texts that foster a love of stories and rhymes. They recall traditional tales with enjoyment. Children become enthusiastic and curious learners.

Staff make appropriate adaptations to the curriculum and learning activities so that children with special educational needs and/or disabilities thrive. Staff consider children's different starting points and work effectively to reduce any barriers that children face. As a result, children are well prepared for Year 1.

Inclusion

Strong standard

Celebrating inclusion and diversity is a significant strength of this school. Leaders are determined to realise their commitment to inclusion by understanding each pupil on an individual basis. This means they work tirelessly to identify pupils' needs and strengths, so every pupil receives exactly what they need to succeed. Leaders make skilled use of robust, well-established procedures to identify pupils' needs quickly and accurately. This includes the needs of disadvantaged pupils, those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who face other barriers.

Leaders take a systematic approach to supporting pupils, which is underpinned by high-quality teaching. Staff skilfully adapt lessons using research-based strategies so that all

pupils can access learning. When more support is needed, leaders engage highly effectively with external agencies. Leaders track progress effectively through rigorous assessment and meticulous record-keeping to ensure that actions are timely and thorough. Leaders set ambitious targets for all pupils, and pupils make notable progress against these. Families are involved purposefully, with the school securing support for whole families where appropriate.

The strategy for additional funding to support disadvantaged pupils aligns with school improvement priorities. Funding is targeted effectively, and interventions are reviewed to ensure ongoing impact.

Leadership and governance

Strong standard

Leaders have a sophisticated understanding of strengths and priorities of the school. They identify areas for improvement before they become challenges. Leaders' lack of complacency drives a continuous cycle of refinement to improve pupils' outcomes. Leaders' decisions at all levels are firmly rooted in the belief that all pupils will succeed, particularly disadvantaged pupils.

Leaders work seamlessly with the trust to help every child achieve highly and flourish. Trust executives and trustees use information from a range of sources to robustly support and challenge the school. This helps leaders make decisions in the best interests of all pupils. Trustees comprehensively meet their statutory duties.

Staff, including early career teachers, benefit from an excellent training package that supports personal interests and the needs of the school. The school accesses the most up-to-date research to inform its practice. Staff share expertise across the trust and within local area networks.

Leaders make sure that all staff feel valued and are supported effectively to do their jobs. Staff appreciate leaders' consideration of their wellbeing and workload.

Leaders forge constructive relationships beyond the school. They successfully work in partnership with parents and the local community. Parents are extremely supportive of the school and the education their children receive. Leaders sustain a culture in which pupils experience a positive and enriching school life.

Personal development and wellbeing

Strong standard

Leaders weave pupils' personal development through every aspect of school life. For example, key messages about wellbeing and tolerance are not only delivered as isolated lessons but through assemblies and the wider curriculum. This means that personal development is a coherent, lived experience for pupils. Pupils talk confidently about friendships, bullying, online safety, healthy living and mental health, showing that the curriculum is relevant, memorable and responsive to need. Staff know pupils well and check on their wellbeing routinely. The mantra that wellbeing is, 'Feeling happy, safe and healthy. The ability to cope with life's challenges' is known by all pupils. Pupils know that big emotions are to be expected but also know when they become too much and how to manage them. Leaders have created an environment where pupils feel safe.

The school provides rich opportunities for character development. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is sophisticated. They reflect on beliefs, understand fairness and kindness and work collaboratively. Assemblies and curriculum experiences broaden pupils' cultural understanding. Pupils are genuinely interested in each other's cultures. This adds to the inclusive nature of the school. Pupils deliver assemblies on religious festivals that are important to them.

Pastoral support is appropriate and effective. Pupils learn how to stay safe online and offline. Leaders actively seek pupil voice to refine provision, so it remains responsive to pupils' needs. Pupils understand consent, healthy relationships and how to seek help. Leadership roles give pupils meaningful responsibility and reinforce British values through real participation.

Pupils have high aspirations for the future. Leaders have consciously exposed pupils to a wide range of potential future careers. Visitors explain their jobs to help bring those roles to life. As a result, pupils are very well prepared for life beyond primary school in the wider world.

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

Pupils thrive at this diverse and inclusive school. Leaders and staff celebrate pupils as individuals and share warm, respectful relationships. They have high expectations for every child. Pupils want to come to school. This is reflected in their positive attendance.

Pupils enjoy learning a broad, balanced and challenging curriculum that builds knowledge over time. Pupils recall and apply important knowledge securely across all subjects. They speak with pride about what they know and use subject-specific vocabulary confidently. Children in the early years talk excitedly about their learning and demonstrate secure development in each area of the curriculum. Achievement at this school is very strong. All pupils, including those who are disadvantaged or have special educational needs and/or disabilities, achieve well from the early years onwards. They are well prepared for secondary school.

Social times are joyous, with pupils of all ages mixing with respect and kind consideration. Older pupils look after younger children. Hotly contested playground games, such as 'Four Square', are open to all. Staff know pupils and their families well, and this contributes significantly to pupils' sense of security and belonging. Pupils behave extremely well. Instances of unkind behaviour are rare. Pupils who need extra help to manage their feelings are well supported by staff. Pupils know what bullying is and trust staff to help if needed. Pupils listen to their teachers and try hard. Pupils know what is expected of them due to well-established routines.

Pupils talk proudly about how their leadership roles, such as school councillors, help to improve the school community. Pupils' understanding of the world is strengthened through a wide range of activities designed to develop their interests and talents. Residential visits, trips and experiences such as Engineering Week, Roman Week and the Royal Banquet provide memorable experiences that pupils recount with delight.

Next steps

- Leaders should continue to refine and embed their identified priorities for improvement in order to drive a sustained and transformational impact for all pupils.

About this inspection

This school is part of HISP 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, Amanda Parry OBE, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Sarah Ward-Lilley.

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 pupils, staff, the headteacher and other senior leaders during the inspection. They also met with directors of the trust and trustees.

Headteacher: Tony Head

Lead inspector:
Vanessa Mason, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:
Rachel Goplen, Ofsted Inspector
Rebecca Mayman, Ofsted Inspector
Julia Roberts, 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 16 June 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

433
Well above 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

420
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)

30.31%
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

3.00%
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

18.24%
Above average

What does this mean?

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

National average: 15%

Location deprivation

Close to 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	78%	61%	Above
2024/25 (final)	87%	62%	Above
2023/24 (final)	78%	61%	Above

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2022/23 (final)	68%	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	83%	74%	Above
2024/25 (final)	97%	75%	Above
2023/24 (final)	82%	74%	Above
2022/23 (final)	71%	73%	Close to average

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	84%	72%	Above
2024/25 (final)	87%	72%	Above
2023/24 (final)	83%	72%	Above
2022/23 (final)	81%	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	93%	73%	Above
2024/25 (final)	97%	74%	Above
2023/24 (final)	92%	73%	Above
2022/23 (final)	92%	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	76%	46%	Above
2024/25 (final)	85%	47%	Above
2023/24 (final)	86%	46%	Above
2022/23 (final)	50%	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	85%	62%	Above
2024/25 (final)	95%	63%	Above

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	93%	62%	Above
2022/23 (final)	58%	60%	Close to average

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	83%	59%	Above
2024/25 (final)	85%	59%	Above
2023/24 (final)	86%	58%	Above
2022/23 (final)	75%	58%	Above

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	91%	60%	Above
2024/25 (final)	95%	61%	Above
2023/24 (final)	93%	59%	Above
2022/23 (final)	83%	59%	Above

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	76%	68%	8 pp
2024/25 (final)	85%	69%	16 pp
2023/24 (final)	86%	67%	18 pp
2022/23 (final)	50%	66%	-16 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	85%	80%	5 pp
2024/25 (final)	95%	81%	14 pp
2023/24 (final)	93%	80%	13 pp
2022/23 (final)	58%	78%	-20 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	83%	78%	5 pp
2024/25 (final)	85%	78%	7 pp
2023/24 (final)	86%	78%	8 pp
2022/23 (final)	75%	77%	-2 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	91%	80%	12 pp
2024/25 (final)	95%	81%	14 pp
2023/24 (final)	93%	79%	13 pp
2022/23 (final)	83%	79%	4 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 (3 term)	4.7%	5.2%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	4.9%	5.5%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	5.6%	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 (3 term)	9.3%	13.0%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	11.1%	14.6%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	14.2%	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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