

The Henry Cort Community College

Address: Hillson Drive, Fareham, Hampshire, PO15 6PH

Unique reference number (URN): 116466

Inspection report: 20 January 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

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

Pupils' attendance has improved steadily over recent years, and pupils now attend regularly. Leaders put in place effective support for those who struggle to attend. As a result, the number of pupils who miss large amounts of school is rapidly reducing.

Pupils behave well. They feel welcome at school and share a real sense of belonging. Even on a wet, stormy day, shared spaces are calm and orderly. Pupils know school routines well and respond to staff positively.

The school has high expectations for pupils' behaviour and conduct. Staff adeptly ensure that pupils rise to these expectations. Teaching about respect and tolerance is frequent and carefully targeted. This means that pupils share an age-appropriate understanding of how to expect to be treated and how to treat each other.

In lessons, pupils' attitudes to learning are typically positive. Low-level disruption is rare. The school's new approaches are effective at addressing poor behaviour, should it occur.

Staff offer sensitive support to pupils who find behaving well more difficult. Consistent expectations from staff help pupils to know what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. As a result, the rate of suspensions, or other serious consequences, has reduced significantly.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

Inclusion is an important aspect of the school's culture. Staff identify potential barriers to pupils' education effectively. Plans for pupils who need additional support, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, are comprehensive. Support for pupils' wellbeing is particularly effective.

Staff receive appropriate training to equip teachers with the knowledge they need to support pupils well. Where training is used successfully, this has a positive impact on pupils' learning. However, there is some variation in the quality of adaptive teaching. Leaders rightly recognise the need to swiftly strengthen this aspect of their work.

The school ensures that pupils have a range of ways to check how they are feeling and their readiness to learn, for example through shared language, regular check-ins and specific pastoral support where needed. Pupils are reassured by these processes. They recognise that, even if they do not personally use this support, it shows how much the school cares for them.

The school's use of alternative provision is well judged and tangibly helps pupils, including the most vulnerable, to overcome barriers to their education.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders have a detailed understanding of the school's strengths and where more development is required. Consequently, they have a range of programmes in place to deliver high-quality and consistent teaching to continue to strengthen attendance and to improve attainment. While these are having a positive impact, those around pupils' achievement and teaching quality are in their earlier stages.

Governors share school leaders' high ambition for pupils. They have recently reorganised the way that the governing body oversees the school. This means that they now have a deeper insight into how effectively the school is meeting its strategic aims. As a result, governors are able to provide the necessary support and challenge.

Staff training is systematic and targeted, including for early career teachers and non-teaching staff. Leaders ensure that training responds to any aspect that needs further development, and they carefully check for impact. As a result, staff have a shared understanding of leaders' expectations.

Staff are very positive about working at the school. They share a commitment to working in the best interests of pupils, particularly those who are more vulnerable, such as pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Staff recognise the advances that leaders have made. They are keen to play their part to develop and improve the quality of provision across the school.

Similarly, parents and carers recognise the recent positive improvements in the school. They welcome how well the school knows pupils and the support for families that it provides.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

The school has developed a coherent and appropriate personal development programme that includes all of the necessary content pupils need to learn. Pupils welcome that they learn about important aspects such as staying safe, both online and offline, and consent. As pupils move through the school, the detail and content they are taught develop in a way that is age appropriate. When pupils, including some with special educational needs and/or disabilities, need to learn aspects of personal development in a different way, leaders adapt the curriculum so it still covers the important knowledge. As a result, pupils are well prepared for their current stage of education and for what comes next.

Pupils have a detailed understanding of fundamental British values. They link the school council's work with the concept of democracy. Pupils are proud of the school council and the difference it makes, such as in recent changes to the school's uniform requirements.

Pupils enjoy a variety of arts and sports activities, including the school play. An increasing number of pupils get involved in these activities. This helps to develop their talents and interests. Leaders continue to refine the school's extra-curricular offer to help engage as many pupils as possible.

The school's careers programme is impactful and links well with pupils' other personal development learning. Pupils develop a broad understanding of their future options and are

interested in exploring the world of work. Year 10 work experience helps pupils to be ambitious and draws on leaders' detailed understanding of local workforce information. Pupils know about a range of qualification types, including apprenticeships and academic options, as well as universities and local colleges. Consequently, the large majority of pupils progress to employment with training, or further study, after year 11.

Needs attention

Achievement

Needs attention 

Pupils' progress through the curriculum is variable. As a result, there are gaps in pupils' knowledge that mean they are not fully prepared for their next steps. This means that they do not achieve as well as they should.

Leaders have plans in place to raise achievement. These are starting to make a difference across the school. For example, pupils achieve well in lessons where teaching and learning are consistently effective. This means that pupils are increasingly able to build on their prior learning. This helps them to be ready for their next steps.

Many pupils' attainment was much improved in recent GCSE examinations. However, this trend is not established or consistent across all groups. The attainment of disadvantaged pupils remains below others. Further work is needed to strengthen the quality and consistency of teaching and assessment so that pupils achieve as well as they should.

Curriculum and teaching

Needs attention 

There is too much variability in the quality of teaching. This means that some pupils do not learn all that they should. Additionally, pupils' misconceptions or gaps in knowledge are not always identified. This means that they find it difficult to build on their prior learning. As a result, some pupils are not as prepared for their next steps as they should be.

Leaders carefully check the quality of the curriculum and teaching across the school. They have an accurate understanding of how well the curriculum is working and use this information to plan changes and improvements. For example, there is now a rich selection of subjects for pupils to study at GCSE, and the key stage 3 curriculum broadens pupils' education. Leaders ensure that teachers have detailed subject knowledge and receive ongoing training to help improve the quality of lessons. Where necessary, the school seeks external advice and guidance, including from the local authority, to help check for impact and strengthen practice.

Pupils who need extra help to develop their reading benefit from effective support through the school's reading programme. Regular checking and targeted teaching mean these pupils make rapid progress. Pupils frequently practise literacy techniques, which further strengthens their ability to communicate.

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

Pupils feel safe at school. They are typically kind to each other and staff. As a result, the school has a friendly atmosphere and pupils feel a sense of belonging. They are happy to attend. The school helps pupils who struggle with attendance to come in more regularly.

Pupils enjoy their learning, and most are committed to doing their best in class. However, there is variability in how well some teachers check what pupils know. There is an unevenness in how well pupils learn in different classes as a result. Pupils are not always able to recall their prior learning as well as they could. This means that they are not as well prepared for their next steps as they should be.

Staff know pupils well. Pupils appreciate this individual attention. Leaders have a detailed understanding of the potential barriers that individual pupils face, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Pupils' wellbeing is supported effectively throughout the school, including for those who may be more vulnerable. However, the school is less effective in overcoming barriers to pupils' learning. This is because teaching is not consistently adapted to their needs.

Pupils appreciate how fairly staff apply the school's clear behaviour expectations and routines. Pupils do not worry about bullying. They trust that should bullying occur, staff would deal with it quickly and well. Pupils' knowledge of people's differences is well developed. They understand that it is important to show respect and what is meant by consent. Pupils welcome the frequent assemblies and social and cultural education they receive because these help prepare them for life in modern Britain. The school provides a range of additional experiences, such as clubs and the school play. It is working to increase participation so that as many pupils benefit from these opportunities as possible.

Next steps

- Leaders should make sure that in-lesson curriculum and teaching adaptation consistently meet the specific needs of pupils, thereby enabling them to overcome any barriers to learning, leading to improved achievement across the curriculum.
- Leaders should ensure that assessment processes lead to any gaps in pupils' knowledge, or misconceptions, being systematically identified and addressed in order to raise achievement and readiness for next steps.
- Leaders should ensure that highly effective teaching is consistently embedded across the school so that all groups of pupils make strong progress across the curriculum.

About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors in this school is Tina Woodcock.

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 held meetings with the headteacher, senior leaders, special educational needs and disabilities coordinator, curriculum leaders and other staff.

The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school makes use of 2 alternative provisions, both of which are registered.

Principal: Chris Rice

Lead inspector:

Ed Mather, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Mike Serridge, Ofsted Inspector

Louise Agle, Ofsted Inspector

Nathan Thomas, Ofsted Inspector

Fae Dean, 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 20 January 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

856

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: 1,067

School capacity

900

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: 1,152

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

20.44%

Below average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years.

National average: 28.9%

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

2.10%

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: 3.09%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

17.29%

Above average

What does this mean?

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

National average: 13.4%

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

English and maths GCSE

Percentage of pupils who achieved grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (provisional)	43.0%	45.2%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	35.0%	45.9%	Below
2022/23 (final)	33.8%	45.3%	Below

Attainment 8

A measure of pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (provisional)	44.1	45.9	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	39.4	45.9	Below
2022/23 (final)	41.7	46.3	Close to average

Progress 8

How much progress pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	-0.56	-0.03	Below
2022/23 (final)	-0.20	-0.03	Close to average

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' English and maths GCSE grade 5 or above

Percentage of disadvantaged pupils achieving grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (provisional)	19.4%	25.6%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	13.0%	25.8%	Below
2022/23 (final)	15.8%	25.2%	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils' Attainment 8

A measure of disadvantaged pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (provisional)	30.1	34.9	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	30.3	34.6	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	31.2	35.0	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils' Progress 8

How much progress disadvantaged pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	-0.71	-0.57	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	-0.62	-0.57	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' English and maths GCSE grade 5 or above

Percentage of disadvantaged pupils who achieved grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2024/25 (provisional)	19.4%	52.8%	-33.4 pp

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2023/24 (final)	13.0%	53.1%	-40.1 pp
2022/23 (final)	15.8%	52.4%	-36.6 pp

Disadvantaged pupils' Attainment 8

A measure of disadvantaged pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2024/25 (provisional)	30.1	50.3	-20.2
2023/24 (final)	30.3	50.0	-19.8
2022/23 (final)	31.2	50.3	-19.1

Disadvantaged pupils' Progress 8

How much progress disadvantaged pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2023/24 (final)	-0.71	0.16	-0.87
2022/23 (final)	-0.62	0.17	-0.79

Destinations after 16

Destinations after 16

Percentage of pupils staying in education or employment for at least 2 terms after the end of secondary school (key stage 4).

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023 leavers (provisional)	86%	91%	Below
2022 leavers (revised)	92%	93%	Average
2021 leavers (revised)	95%	94%	Average

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)	8.2%	8.1%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	8.7%	8.9%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	9.4%	9.0%	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)	22.6%	21.9%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	26.8%	25.6%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	29.7%	26.5%	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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