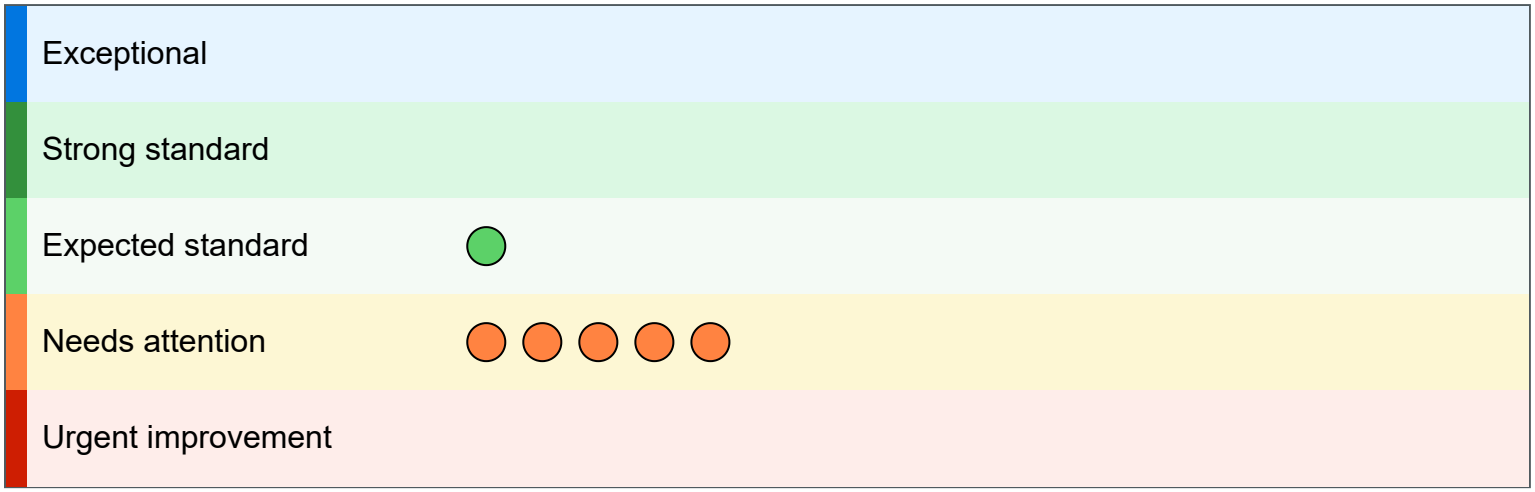
Holsworthy Community College

Address: Victoria Hill, Holsworthy, Devon, EX22 6JD

Unique reference number (URN): 145343

Inspection report: 29 September 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

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard

Leaders place a high priority on pupils' personal development. Through tailored pastoral care and support, pupils develop a strong understanding of respect, tolerance and kindness towards others. Well-trained staff provide targeted support for pupils who find it difficult to manage their feelings. This helps pupils build self-esteem, develop resilience and grow in confidence across all aspects of school life. Pupils benefit from a wide range of leadership opportunities that further strengthen their confidence, sense of responsibility and self-belief. For example, pupils train as anti-bullying ambassadors and reading ambassadors and contribute to the work of the school leadership team.

Pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, participate in a wide range of well-considered clubs and enrichment activities. Leaders have adapted this provision effectively to ensure that as many pupils as possible can take part. They monitor participation closely to identify and reduce any barriers to engagement. Staff plan educational visits carefully to enrich pupils' learning across the curriculum.

Leaders have carefully planned and sequenced the personal, social and health education programme to enable pupils to build their knowledge and understanding of the world around them. The programme is responsive to emerging contextual issues while also preparing pupils effectively for life in modern Britain. For example, pupils learn about the importance of equality, democracy and the rule of law. They develop an age-appropriate understanding of healthy relationships and consent. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe, both online and offline. They also have many opportunities to develop their physical health. Pupils are encouraged to eat healthily and look after their mental wellbeing.

Needs attention

Achievement

Needs attention

Over time, pupils have not achieved well in national examinations at the end of key stage 4, in some subjects. Typically, disadvantaged pupils achieve in line with disadvantaged pupils nationally. However, too many pupils do not attend school regularly enough to benefit fully from the curriculum. As a result, they miss important learning and do not achieve as well as they should. This also has a detrimental impact on their preparedness for their next steps in education, employment or training.

Leaders are ambitious for pupils' social, emotional and academic success. They are taking appropriate action to address weaknesses in the teaching of the curriculum and their actions are beginning to have a positive impact. For example, leaders are identifying pupils' starting points more quickly and with greater precision. This enables support to be tailored more effectively to pupils' individual needs and supports their achievement over time. However,

improvements in teaching have not yet led to consistently positive achievement across the curriculum.

Attendance and behaviour

Needs attention

Too many pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, do not attend school regularly enough. Leaders recognise that rates of persistent absence remain too high. In response, they have established a more precise approach to monitoring attendance. Leaders draw effectively on information from a range of sources to develop an understanding of the barriers that pupils face in attending school. This enables them to engage appropriate external agencies and professionals where necessary. While there have been some early signs of improvement in pupils' attendance, it is too soon to see the full impact of leaders' actions.

Leaders have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Pupils generally conduct themselves with respect, politeness and empathy in lessons and around the school. They understand and follow the school's routines well. Relationships between staff and pupils are warm and supportive. Pupils respond positively to the care and encouragement provided by staff. Most staff apply the school's behaviour policy appropriately. This contributes to a calm and orderly environment. Bullying is uncommon and staff deal with concerns quickly and effectively when they arise. The rate of permanent exclusion is below the national figure. However, although the proportion of suspensions is reducing over time, it remains too high.

Curriculum and teaching

Needs attention

The quality of teaching is inconsistent across the curriculum. Staff do not make effective use of assessment information to pinpoint and address gaps in pupils' knowledge. Consequently, some pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, do not learn successfully because they do not build on what they already know. This means that gaps in some pupils' knowledge remain unaddressed.

Leaders have strengthened the identification of pupils' reading, writing and numeracy needs on entry to the school. They have introduced additional support for pupils who struggle with literacy and numeracy to help them catch up with their peers. However, staff do not consistently support pupils across different subject areas to develop and apply their reading, writing and mathematical knowledge and skills. In particular, some pupils lack the literacy skills they need to read with fluency and write accurately about what they have learned across different subjects.

The curriculum is well organised, ambitious and broad. Most teachers demonstrate secure subject knowledge and benefit from ongoing professional development that supports their work in the classroom. Leaders have established a coaching programme to further develop teachers' practice. However, this initiative is in its early stages. It is therefore too soon to see its full impact on the quality of teaching and pupils' outcomes.

Inclusion

Needs attention

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), do not achieve as well as they should. Leaders have strengthened the identification of pupils' needs and have a secure understanding of their starting points. However, there remain inconsistencies in how effectively staff implement strategies and deploy resources to support these pupils. Information about pupils' needs is not always shared with staff. This limits the impact of the support provided. Consequently, staff do not adapt teaching effectively to meet the needs of pupils with SEND. In particular, staff do not consistently support pupils to develop the reading, writing and numeracy skills they need to access the curriculum with confidence and accuracy.

Leaders have created an inclusive environment in which all pupils, including those supported through the Communications and Interactions Resource Base (CAIRB), participate fully in the academic and wider life of the school. They use the funding they receive for disadvantaged pupils appropriately to reduce barriers to learning and achievement. Leaders work well with external professionals, including the Virtual School, to gather and use important information about pupils' needs. They also ensure that any alternative provision used by the school is suitable and safe.

Leadership and governance

Needs attention

The leadership at this school has experienced a period of turbulence. Until recently, leaders have not acted with sufficient urgency to halt the decline in standards. This has particularly been the case for the quality of the curriculum, teaching and attendance. However, newly appointed leaders have secured positive improvements to the school's provision. Leaders have accurately identified, and are implementing, a range of strategies to address these weaknesses.

Leaders successfully ensure that pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. Pupils are ready to learn and demonstrate positive attitudes towards their education. However, wider strategies to improve the provision have not had sufficient time to embed. The achievement of many pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, is not consistently preparing them for their next steps.

The trust, school leaders and trustees are working together to drive improvements across the school. Those responsible for governance provide suitable challenge and support. Staff, including early career teachers, appreciate the support that leaders provide for their wellbeing and workload. They are overwhelmingly positive about the professional learning programme. This is carefully designed to strengthen their knowledge and skills. Leaders place the interests of pupils at the heart of their decision making. They maintain a clear focus on improving pupils' experiences and outcomes. Most parents are positive about the school and the quality of education and care their children receive.

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

Pupils are safe, valued and welcomed at Holsworthy. They benefit from positive and nurturing relationships with staff which help them to develop positive attitudes towards learning. They typically behave well in lessons and during breaktimes so there is a calm learning environment around the school. Pupils know who to turn to if they have concerns, such as bullying. They are confident that staff will support them if concerns arise.

Staff provide effective pastoral care and support for pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Leaders identify the barriers faced by some pupils with SEND and have begun to implement appropriate strategies to support them. For example, pupils who struggle with reading receive tailored and effective support. However, over time, pupils have not achieved well across a number of areas of the curriculum. While leaders have begun to address inconsistencies in how well staff teach the curriculum, published outcomes remain below national averages in many subject areas. Pupils do not develop their understanding or build on what they have learned before because staff do not consistently check what they know and can do. In addition, staff do not always ensure that pupils, particularly pupils with SEND, receive the support they need to succeed in their learning.

Pupils' attendance has been below the national average over time, including for disadvantaged pupils. Pupils who are frequently absent miss out on important learning and do not achieve well. While leaders' actions are beginning to bring about improvements in attendance, they recognise that further work is needed to secure sustained improvement.

Pupils experience a rich and varied programme of trips and enrichment activities that broaden and support their learning. For instance, pupils deepen their understanding of their local and national heritage through visits to the coast and London.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that staff make effective use of assessment to adapt teaching and, where necessary, the curriculum so that all pupils are supported to learn effectively.
- Leaders should ensure that staff identify and address gaps in pupils' literacy and numeracy so that they read, write and apply mathematical knowledge with fluency and accuracy to achieve more effectively across a range of subjects.
- Leaders should ensure that the attendance strategy is fully embedded and implemented consistently to improve overall attendance for all pupils, particularly for disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Leaders should ensure that behaviour support is implemented consistently so that the number of suspensions continues to reduce.

About this inspection

This school is part of Dartmoor 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 (CEO), Rachel Shaw, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Jessica Hardie.

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 carried out the following activities during the inspection:

Inspectors spoke with the headteacher, other senior and curriculum leaders, staff and pupils. The lead inspector spoke with trustees, including the chair of trustees. The lead inspector also met with the CEO and director of education for the trust.

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.

Inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The chair of trustees took up the role in July 2025.

The chief executive officer took up the role in November 2024.

The school makes use of two registered alternative provisions.

Principal: Andrew Sweeney

Lead inspector:
Susan Aykin, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:
Nadine Lapskas, Ofsted Inspector
Dan Chapman, Ofsted Inspector
Tanya Coleman, 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 29 September 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

551
Well 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: 1,063

School capacity

600
Well 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: 1,154

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

34.66%
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: 30.4%

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

6.17%
Well 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: 3.53%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

24.14%

Well above average

What does this mean?

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

National average: 14.0%

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 (final)	41.2%	45.4%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	24.8%	45.9%	Below
2022/23 (final)	31.9%	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 (final)	39.9	46.1	Below
2023/24 (final)	38.4	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)	-0.32	-0.03	Below
2022/23 (final)	-0.47	-0.03	Below
2021/22 (final)	-0.09	-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 (final)	37.5%	25.8%	Above
2023/24 (final)	11.1%	25.8%	Below
2022/23 (final)	15.4%	25.2%	Below

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 (final)	35.7	34.9	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	32.4	34.6	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	34.3	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)	-0.32	-0.57	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	-0.71	-0.57	Close to average
2021/22 (final)	-0.59	-0.55	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 (final)	37.5%	53.1%	-15.6 pp
2023/24 (final)	11.1%	53.1%	-42.0 pp
2022/23 (final)	15.4%	52.4%	-37.0 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 (final)	35.7	50.4	-14.7
2023/24 (final)	32.4	50.0	-17.6
2022/23 (final)	34.3	50.3	-16.0

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)	-0.32	0.16	-0.48
2022/23 (final)	-0.71	0.17	-0.87
2021/22 (final)	-0.59	0.15	-0.75

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 (revised)	86%	92%	Below
2022 leavers (revised)	88%	93%	Below
2021 leavers (revised)	92%	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
2025/26 (1 term)	11.7%	7.8%	Above
2024/25 (3 term)	12.4%	8.4%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	10.0%	8.9%	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
2025/26 (1 term)	33.9%	21.5%	Above
2024/25 (3 term)	33.3%	23.4%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	29.4%	25.6%	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.

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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