

Widden Primary School

Sinope Street Gloucester, GL1 4AW

Inspection dates 3–4 October 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The school is fully inclusive and provides pupils with a good start to their education, especially those from a diverse multicultural community. From often very low levels of understanding of English, pupils make good progress and achieve well in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils are well cared for, safe, greatly enjoy school, and behave well in classes and outside. This is reflected strongly in their good spiritual, moral, social and cultural education.
- There is a much improved and ambitious senior management team, which, with better subject leadership, has driven a number of significant improvements in the school since the last inspection.
- Leaders and governors of the school have been robust in improving their management of teaching, providing many opportunities for teachers' professional development.
- As a result, teaching is now consistently good, and builds successfully upon the universal enthusiasm for learning of pupils, resulting in better achievement for the great majority of them.
- The governing body secures effective financial management, including the well-focused use of the pupil premium funding.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Although most teaching has improved and is good or better, some inconsistencies remain, in particular the provision of individualised learning opportunities for all pupils in order to improve their learning.
- Pupils do not always know or understand the learning targets given to them through target sheets or the teachers' marking.
- In spite of several school initiatives, many parents and carers have too little contact with the school and do not respond to the school's efforts to involve them in their children's learning.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 24 lessons or part lessons taught by 18 teachers.
- Meetings were held with pupils, the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, members of the senior management team and subject leaders, representatives of the governing body, and an officer from the local authority.
- Inspectors observed the school’s work, looked at safeguarding arrangements as well as other information including policies, procedures, school development plans and self-evaluation, external evaluations and a range of pupils’ work.
- Inspectors took account of nine responses to the online Parent View survey, as well as other verbal responses from parents and carers.
- Inspectors also examined questionnaire responses from 10 members of staff.

Inspection team

Rodney Braithwaite, Lead inspector	Additional inspector
Carol Warrant	Additional inspector
Lesley Voaden	Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Widden Primary is larger than the average-sized primary school. A large majority of pupils come from a wide range of ethnic heritages. Nearly a third of the pupils are new arrivals in the last two years from several Eastern European countries. Nearly half of the pupils are Asian or Asian British. A very small minority are White British.
- Over three quarters of pupils speak English as an additional language, with nearly a quarter speaking little or no English when they enter the school.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported by school action is above average; the proportion of pupils supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is broadly average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium funding is higher than the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectation for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The proportion of pupils who join or leave the school at other than the usual times is much higher than average.
- The school manages a children's centre on the same site, which is subject to separate inspection.
- The school provides a daily early morning breakfast club, which is managed by a community group and funded by the governing body.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that the improved achievement and progress of pupils in English and mathematics is sustained over time by:
 - supporting and guiding teachers in developing more precise individual learning opportunities, especially in Years 1 and 2
 - remedying identified weaknesses in teaching as soon as possible, so that all teaching becomes consistently good or better
 - regularly checking that pupils know and understand their learning targets and the teacher's guidance to them through the marking of work.
- Develop and expand the school's partnership and communication with parents and carers by:
 - introducing further initiatives to help parents and carers understand more clearly how they can help and support their children's learning
 - giving parents and carers greater confidence and opportunities to involve themselves in the school community.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- From low starting points, children make good progress and achieve well in their learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage, especially in their language and personal and social development.
- Progress is steady in Years 1 and 2 but pupils remain below the expected attainment nationally in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2. Inspection evidence indicates that attainment is now rising in these years as the school's new strategies, especially in English, take effect.
- Progress in Years 3 to 6 is good, with a significant number of pupils making better than expected progress in reading and writing, so that more pupils than in the past are now reaching the expected standards for their age. Progress and achievement in mathematics have not been quite as rapid, but the school has already started to put in place fresh resources and plans for accelerating pupils' progress. Nearly all pupils who enter the school in Reception and remain until the end of Year 6 make good progress and achieve well in English and mathematics.
- The achievement of disabled pupils and pupils with special educational needs is good and continues to improve. The many pupils from different ethnic backgrounds make varying rates of progress, mostly good, with much depending on their command of English on entry to the school and their experience of education previously. Overall, pupils with English as an additional language achieve well. Many of them learn English remarkably quickly, through a combination of good adult support and the help of other pupils.
- Pupils entitled to the pupil premium also make good progress, because the school has used the funding effectively for better provision and management of learning for these pupils. The gap between their attainment and that of their peers has narrowed considerably.
- Reading standards, although being slightly below national expectations at the end of Year 6, have improved considerably in the last 18 months. This is due to the introduction of the teaching of letters and sounds (phonics), as observed to excellent effect in a Year 2 class, a much greater promotion of speaking and listening to check comprehension, and a strong focus on storytelling which appeals to all pupils.

The quality of teaching is good

- Children have a stimulating start in Reception because good organised teaching creates many learning opportunities for the children's specific needs.
- Teachers have good relationships with their pupils and build well upon their positive attitudes to learning and good behaviour. This was seen to good effect in a lesson in Year 5 about the storytelling of a myth about the creation where the quality of teaching was good. In another Year 5 class, a fast-moving and challenging lesson about finding factors and multiples in mathematics brought the best out of pupils because of the teacher's high expectations.
- Much of the teaching during the inspection was good and some outstanding. Over the last two years, there has been consistent improvement in teaching, although some inconsistencies remain, so that all teaching is not yet consistently good.
- Although assessment procedures are producing helpful data, a minority of teachers are not using this information enough to provide specific personalised programmes of learning for all pupils. As a result, some, mostly lower attaining pupils, have not made the progress expected of them. This has been mainly in Years 1 and 2 where, until recently, pupils' progress has been steady rather than good.
- Teachers have been effective in accelerating the progress of a wide range of learners, including those who speak English as an additional language, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. Learning has benefited from the good contributions of teaching assistants. Their multilingual skills have been invaluable in helping both pupils and their families who are new to England to settle in the community.

- Teachers have improved the effectiveness of provision designed to enhance learning in literacy. Pupils now have many more opportunities to write across a range of subjects, for example Madagascar, the Romans and the Aztecs. Pupils are also encouraged to develop their speaking skills through poetry recitation in Year 6 and drama sessions in Year 4, as well as in most lessons.
- Learning targets for pupils are now evident in all classes and a new marking scheme has been introduced. However, there are inconsistencies in how these are used by teachers. Consequently, in discussions, pupils were often vague about their targets or did not understand the suggestions made to them for their next steps in learning.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils behave well throughout all areas of the school and in the well-run breakfast club, and know how to behave safely, for example, when they frequently carry laptops into classrooms.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are happy and settle quickly into school routines.
- Pupils have good attitudes to learning and greatly enjoy school, often quite exuberantly; as one said, 'We all go home smiling and happy.' All cultures mix well together and racial tension or comments are very rare.
- The school is a lively but safe environment, where there is little misbehaviour because pupils have a good understanding of the school behaviour policy. Many pupils quote the school's guiding principles, FREE (Friendship, Respect, Excellence and Equality). There have been few exclusions in recent years.
- Pupils say there is not really any bullying, just 'being unkind to each other'. They understand the dangers of internet bullying, and feel they and the staff deal well with incidents of name-calling.
- Staff deal quickly and fairly with any rare complaints of physical bullying.
- There are effective links with external agencies to meet the needs of the most vulnerable pupils or those who may have difficulty in managing their own behaviour. The school takes great trouble to integrate the many non-English speaking pupils who enter the school in all year groups.
- Attendance in the school has been below average for some years, because many new arrivals are unused to the expectations of the school system. However this term, attendance and punctuality have shown considerable improvement.
- Although only nine parents and carers registered their views about the school online, these comments were positive about behaviour.

The leadership and management are good

- The leadership of the school has been considerably strengthened since the last inspection. A new deputy headteacher and assistant headteacher, together with the experienced headteacher, now form a strong senior management team, which has led a number of important improvements to the school's performance.
- Additionally, the management team has been strengthened by several skilled and enthusiastic subject leaders who are proving themselves to be effective and innovative managers.
- School self-evaluation is conducted rigorously, although the judgements made are sometimes generous.
- Significant improvements have been made across the school. These include good leadership and provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage, a more exciting curriculum geared to the interests and backgrounds of the pupils, better behaviour management including much greater understanding by pupils of what is expected of them, and a much higher proportion of good or outstanding teaching.

- These developments point convincingly to the school’s good capacity for sustained improvement.
 - The monitoring and management of teaching in the school have improved because leaders identify weaknesses quickly. They then use an increased level of performance management targets and professional development opportunities to improve teachers’ practice. This mainly ‘in-house’ training, led by the deputy headteacher, has been particularly helpful to teachers new to teaching.
 - Improvements in the curriculum and behaviour have reinforced the good provision for pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
 - The school is a beacon for multicultural harmony in the city, and promotes equal opportunities well.
 - The local authority has given good support to the school over time, and school leaders appreciate its support and guidance.
 - Parents’ and carers’ responses to the inspection team, although small in number, were very appreciative of the school. However, the school struggles to get many parents and carers to engage with it in order to form a strong partnership for learning. Leaders agree that further initiatives are required so that more parents and carers can become involved with the school, especially in order to understand and support their children’s learning needs.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - has improved in the last 18 months and governors are now more effectively involved in developing and challenging the school. Governors are benefiting from increased levels of training. This is a developmental process and has not yet had a significant impact upon the achievement of pupils.
 - ensures that safeguarding arrangements fully meet requirements, and that resources are used effectively, especially the funding for pupils eligible for the pupil premium.
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What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	115481
Local authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	405582

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	360
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ian Etherton
Headteacher	Tim Cooper
Date of previous school inspection	23–24 November 2010
Telephone number	01452 520571
Fax number	01452 311849
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