

# Widden Primary School

Sinope Street, Gloucester, Gloucestershire GL1 4AW

## Inspection dates

14–15 March 2018

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Early years provision	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- Leaders' evaluations of the quality of teaching are overly generous. This means that some weaknesses are not tackled quickly enough to raise standards.
- Leaders do not evaluate the impact of their strategies closely enough. As a result, they have not been swift enough to tackle some areas of underperformance.
- Leaders, including governors, ensure that systems are in place to hold others to account. However, these are not sufficiently refined or precise enough to ensure consistently high-quality teaching and learning.
- Leaders have not analysed exclusion information well enough, which has led to repeated exclusions for a few vulnerable pupils.
- Teaching in a range of subjects lacks sufficient quality and depth to ensure that pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, can make the best possible progress across the curriculum.
- Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are not always high enough. One effect is that the most able are not enabled to reach the highest standards in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Some gaps in teachers' and teaching assistants' subject knowledge mean that pupils do not always build well on prior knowledge, understanding and skills.
- Teachers do not consistently use assessment information well enough to match work precisely for pupils with differing abilities, including in the early years.

### The school has the following strengths

- The school serves at the heart of the community and is highly regarded by pupils, parents and carers, and staff alike.
- Staff and governors are passionate and highly motivated. Their shared aims and vision promote an inclusive, safe haven for pupils.
- The teaching of phonics enables pupils to begin catching up from very low starting points.
- Staff support pupils who are new to English (NTE) well. Consequently, pupils settle quickly and begin to catch up.
- An effective pastoral team ensures that pupils from complex and disadvantaged backgrounds are supported well to help them settle.
- Leaders give safeguarding high priority, which is effective.

## Full report

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' outcomes by ensuring that leaders and managers at all levels, including governors:
  - refine the quality and precision with which they monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of their strategies, including for disadvantaged pupils and the most able
  - analyse information about exclusions robustly in order to reduce the number of fixed-term exclusions for vulnerable pupils
  - ensure high-quality learning across the curriculum to support pupils to make the best possible progress.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning by:
  - ensuring that teachers accurately assess what pupils know, can do and understand, to match work precisely to pupils' different needs and abilities
  - raising teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve, especially in reading, writing and mathematics
  - ensuring that all teachers and teaching assistants have strong subject knowledge to support pupils to make strong progress.

An external review of governance and of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how these aspects of leadership and management may be improved.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Requires improvement

- Leaders' evaluations of the quality of teaching lack precision and are sometimes overly generous. This means that weaknesses are not always identified and tackled quickly enough to raise standards.
- Leaders do not consistently evaluate the effectiveness of their strategies closely enough. This is seen, for example, in weaknesses in checks on progress of identified pupils who need to catch up quickly. As a result, some groups and individuals are not making the accelerated progress needed to catch up with their peers. In the case of the most able pupils, they are not reaching the highest standards of which they are capable.
- Middle leaders, especially those who are new in their roles since September 2017, do not have a clear understanding of their levels of accountability. Although senior leaders have been effective in growing leadership capacity, middle leaders are not yet sufficiently knowledgeable when monitoring to challenge staff and hold them accountable for pupils' progress.
- Leaders have systems and processes for holding others to account. For example, teachers' appraisals reflect targeted pupils and school priorities. Meetings between senior leaders and teachers review pupils' progress. However, these are not sufficiently stringent or refined to raise achievement for some key groups and individuals.
- Leaders' analyses of information and records around exclusions have not, until most recently, been sufficiently rigorous or in-depth to identify trends, patterns or triggers in pupils' behaviour. Fixed-term exclusions, including repeated exclusions, remain high for a significant minority of the most vulnerable pupils.
- Leaders communicate and engage with the local community and parents well. The school works at the heart of the community and pupils, staff and parents alike regard it highly. Leaders' knowledge of, and care for, the diverse and complex needs of the school community ensures that pupils are well supported spiritually, emotionally and socially.
- Staff share leaders' vision, aims and passion. This has established an inclusive, welcoming and safe haven for pupils, including those who come from disadvantaged and challenging backgrounds, such as refugees and asylum seekers.
- Leaders ensure that staff morale is high. Staff feel well supported through ongoing advice and professional training. For example, newly qualified teachers receive their full entitlement to support and in one case told the lead inspector that leaders have 'restored my love of teaching'.
- Leaders ensure that an effective pastoral team provides tailored and beneficial support for pupils who come from disadvantaged and challenging backgrounds. For example, the designated safeguarding lead, the parental engagement coordinator and the school's welfare officer work closely to protect pupils and improve their attendance. In addition, the special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) and NTE coordinator work interchangeably to settle pupils into school.

- Leaders use the variety of ethnic backgrounds and cultures effectively to promote British values. Equality, democracy and tolerance are cornerstones of the school's work which enables pupils to interact and mix well. This helps them to be well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Not all subjects across the curriculum are taught to the same high standards. For example, science is not taught consistently well enough to develop the skills, knowledge and understanding of pupils with different abilities. However, the full range of extra-curricular activities and provision, including trips, visits, music, drama and sports clubs, ensures that pupils benefit from a wide range of experiences to support their personal, social and emotional development.
- Leaders' use of the additional funds for disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities has variable impact. Checks are not robust enough to ensure that vulnerable pupils consistently make strong progress to meet academic standards of which they are capable. As a result, there are persistent differences between their outcomes and those of others nationally. However, leaders use funding effectively to provide opportunities which support pupils socially and emotionally. An example is the breakfast club, which gives pupils a good start to the school day.
- Leaders, including governors, check the sports and physical education funding. They use this well to promote different sporting activities, events and clubs, as well as external coaching. Pupils enjoy sport, and staff encourage them to participate as part of an approach to healthy lifestyles.
- Leaders have a productive partnership with the local authority. The local authority adviser visits the school and has a good understanding of its context. There has been some focused training to target school priorities, such as writing and improving teaching for the most able. The local authority uses the school as a model of good practice for supporting pupils who speak English as an additional language.

## **Governance of the school**

- Governors are not sufficiently stringent in challenging leaders to improve the quality and consistency of teaching across the school and in a range of subjects. They have systems in place to hold leaders to account, including planned visits, reporting arrangements and other processes, including appraisal of the headteacher. This provides them with useful first-hand knowledge which they use to make decisions, but does not always go far enough to challenge leaders to bring about more rapid improvement.
- Governors' records and minutes show that they ask a range of questions about the school's performance and pupils' achievement, especially through the curriculum and standards committee. These are not always followed up robustly, so some issues persist over time, such as with standards in reading, writing and mathematics.
- However, governors have a secure understanding of the general strengths and weaknesses of the school. This ensures that they have appropriate priorities in the school development plan, for example to improve provision and outcomes for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities.

- Governors understand the school's context and the challenges this brings. Since the last inspection and over the previous couple of years, they have started to take the right steps to introduce some key strategies to improve the school. For example, their ambition to take over the Nursery and two-year-old provision means that an early start to school is helping children to overcome barriers.
- Governors have also spent funds wisely on training staff to implement a daily phonics programme which supports pupils who need help with learning basic letters and sounds, including disadvantaged pupils and pupils who speak English as an additional language. Furthermore, there have been essential workshops for parents, all of which are beginning to make a difference for pupils.

## Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders are tenacious and diligent in their safeguarding duties. Their records for checking staff, including vetting them before they are appointed, are robust. Training for all staff meets statutory requirements. In addition, leaders implement further training based on the staff's own audit of needs. As a result, staff are knowledgeable and keenly aware of how to respond to pupils and keep them safe in a range of situations.
- Leaders ensure that they deal appropriately and quickly with any concerns about pupils that are reported. Staff are keen champions for the pupils and liaise effectively with other professional agencies and experts to keep children safe.
- Governors work effectively with leaders to check that safeguarding procedures are robust. This provides a further layer of accountability to ensure that the school's culture and practice place safeguarding at the heart of its work.
- Pupils report that they feel safe. They trust staff and have confidence in them to resolve any issues or concerns they have. Pupils say that incidents of bullying are rare and swiftly dealt with. The effective therapeutic work of staff in helping vulnerable pupils, including those who start at school following traumatic experiences overseas (including refugees and asylum seekers), enables pupils to settle well and feel valued in the school community.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

## Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching across a range of subjects and classes is not consistently good. For example, work in science is not planned well enough to support and challenge pupils of different abilities. This slows pupils' progress and prevents them from applying their skills and knowledge across the curriculum.
- Teachers' use of assessment information to plan the right next steps for pupils is not good enough. This varies between classes and subjects so that work for pupils can be either too easy or difficult. This sometimes includes pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities, as well as those who have been targeted by the school as making slow progress.
- Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are not high enough, especially in

accelerating progress for some non-mobile pupils (a non-mobile pupil is defined as one who has been in the school throughout both Year 5 and Year 6). In particular, limiting aspirations prevent the most able pupils from reaching the highest standards of which they are capable, in reading, writing and mathematics.

- There are times when the subject knowledge of a minority of teachers and teaching assistants is not strong enough. This slows pupils' progress or, in the worst cases, introduces misconceptions, such as in mathematics.
- However, there are demonstrable strengths in teaching across the school. For example, pupils are taught to improve their writing through speaking and listening, and to practise what they are about to write. This is supporting pupils in their writing and encouraging them to 'have a go'.
- Teachers and teaching assistants have established positive relationships in lessons. Consequently, pupils feel supported and are encouraged to take risks in their learning. Pupils are comfortable to share their ideas and enjoy working together, for example when reading with each other in phonics sessions.
- The teaching of phonics is well organised into daily sessions which are well planned to meet the needs of different pupils. Teachers assess pupils and use this information to provide well-targeted help. This helps pupils to start catching up, including pupils who speak English as an additional language. Reading books are also well matched to pupils' phonic ability, especially in key stage 1. However, on occasion, the behaviour of a few pupils interrupts the learning of others in phonics group work.
- The school runs a range of interventions across the day. These are particularly effective for pupils new to English. Staff ensure that pupils who arrive with no English are quickly assessed and then supported through personalised programmes, led by well-trained staff. As a result, these pupils settle well and start to gain confidence and skills to speak, read and write in English.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Requires improvement**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement. In the main, pupils behave well in lessons and take responsibility for their learning. However, there are times when teaching is not meeting their needs or holding their attention. Consequently, pupils' behaviour deteriorates. This directly impedes the learning and enjoyment of some and slows pupils' progress.
- At times, pupils are not well supported or challenged to take pride in their work. This results in work in pupils' books which is not of a good enough standard. Low expectations impede the progress of a significant minority towards the academic outcomes that they may otherwise be capable of reaching.
- Staff work effectively to support pupils' personal, social and emotional development. Staff are skilled in working with pupils who have a range of complex needs. Staff have a good knowledge of pupils, which they use to provide therapeutic and one-to-one support so that pupils are nurtured and well looked after.
- Pupils are proud of their school and speak positively about the ways they contribute to

the school and beyond. For example, they enjoy fundraising for charity and recognise how important this is for others.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Until very recently, leaders' analysis and records of exclusions, including reintegration of pupils, have lacked the detail needed to reduce the high number of fixed-term and repeated exclusions. For a significant minority, this continues to be too high. However, leaders work closely with a range of external services and professionals to try to support pupils who are most at risk of exclusion.
- The deputy headteacher and welfare officer monitor pupils' attendance closely. They are diligent and 'go the extra mile' to encourage pupils to attend. They use a range of strategies to support and challenge parents to get their children to school. Overall attendance is below the national average. However, this is skewed heavily by the very low attendance of a particular minority ethnic group.
- Pupils conduct themselves well around school. They apply the school's 'FREE' values (Friendship, Respect, Excellence, Equality) through a strong culture of inclusion, tolerance and mutual understanding. This permeates the work of the school, where pupils from different ethnic groups, creeds, colour and religions interact respectfully towards each other.

## Outcomes for pupils

## Requires improvement

- Published end of key stage tests and assessments are not reliable indicators of the school's outcomes. This is because very high mobility of pupils in and out of the school, including a significant proportion who are new to English or speak English as an additional language, affects the headline data.
- However, detailed analyses of pupils' work show that some groups and individuals do not make accelerated progress to reach the standards of which they are capable. This is evident from detailed analyses of pupils' work in conjunction with other inspection activities and taking account of the school's own information. In particular, some of the lower-attaining pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and boys, are not gaining ground quickly enough.
- Standards in pupils' books in different subjects, including writing, science and mathematics, are not consistently high. Too few of the most able pupils reach the highest standards of which they are capable. This is particularly true of non-mobile and disadvantaged pupils.
- The progress of pupils who are targeted because they are at risk of falling behind is variable. Interventions are effective for some. In other cases, teaching strategies are not matched closely enough or reviewed with sufficient rigour to enable pupils to make the accelerated progress they need to catch up in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are similarly dependent on the variable quality of support they receive. This includes the precision and accuracy of next steps to improve their reading, writing and mathematical skills and knowledge. Where pupils

are not effectively supported, they do not make the progress that may reasonably be expected of them.

- Pupils' skills in the full range of subjects are limited, such as their enquiry, questioning and hypothesising skills in science. The benefits of high-quality cross-curricular learning are seen inconsistently. This restricts the acquisition and application of skills in new and varied contexts. However, there are successful examples, such as in Year 5, where pupils have been using their mathematical knowledge to work out the cost of flooring in a residential floor plan using materials in a sale.
- Pupils read fluently and are able to use their phonic knowledge to decode and read effectively. They show increasing confidence and speed in reading a variety of types of texts. However, pupils sometimes have difficulty in comprehending, drawing inferences from and explaining what they are reading. This is a focus of leaders' work, especially for pupils who speak English as an additional language and those who have started school speaking little or no English.
- The comparatively low outcomes in the school's published Year 1 phonics screening check results in consecutive years are also heavily affected by high mobility and very low starting points of pupils who are new to English or who speak English as an additional language. Phonics teaching enables pupils to make good progress to start catching up. Currently, the overwhelming majority of English-speaking (non-mobile) pupils who do not have SEN and/or disabilities are working at the standards expected for their age.
- The majority of pupils who are new to English make strong progress. They are well supported to start communicating quickly in English through the spoken and written word. This is a strength of the school's work and is recognised by pupils and parents alike.
- The majority of non-mobile pupils make progress that is broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics. However, their skills, particularly in writing, are not accelerating quickly enough. These are sometimes held back by weak command of writing structure and by grammatical errors that preclude them from reaching the expected standards for their age, especially those at 'greater depth'.

### Early years provision

### Requires improvement

- Leaders have been successful in bringing about some fundamental improvements to the early years. These include, most notably, improvements to the learning environment and the ways that staff interact with children. However, some improvements, for example the new approach to phonics teaching for three- and four-year-olds, are still too recent to show discernible impact on children's outcomes.
- Leaders ensure that children, including two-year-olds, are assessed when they start early years. Staff gather diagnostic information quickly, especially in relation to early communication, language, reading, writing and mathematical development. This shows that most children join the school with levels of development that are markedly below typical for their age.
- Despite gathering helpful baseline information, staff do not use it effectively to plan children's next steps to raise achievement. As a result, although some catch up well,



outcomes for children when they leave the Reception Year are still too variable. This includes outcomes for those capable of exceeding the age-appropriate expectations of the early learning goals.

- Leaders are reflective and continue to make ongoing changes to improve provision, teaching and assessment in the early years. These include, for example, the recent introduction of an online assessment system. They are determined to work as early as possible with children and families to diminish differences. This includes provision for two-year-olds and, most recently, 'stay and play' sessions run by school staff at the children's centre.
- Staff are positive and interact purposefully with children. They skilfully explore learning together, such as feeling different liquids and making and talking about shapes in the sand pit. Staff model language effectively and ask questions to encourage children to listen, speak and respond with increasing confidence.
- Children show curiosity and independence in their choices. They work with each other and adults to help them learn. This includes in the Reception Year, where some children read with each other as part of the school's approach to teaching phonics.
- Leaders and staff exude a welcome and warmth to children and families, which is strongly appreciated. Staff know the children well and provide effective personal, social and emotional support. Consequently, children enjoy their learning, which includes understanding expectations of behaviour and routines in readiness for school and key stage 1.
- Safeguarding is a high priority. This is effective and in line with the rest of the school's processes, systems and procedures.

## School details

Unique reference number	115481
Local authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	10045675

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	372
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ian Etherton
Headteacher	Tim Cooper
Telephone number	01452 520571
Website	<a href="http://www.widdenprimaryschool.net/">www.widdenprimaryschool.net/</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:admin@widden.gloucs.sch.uk">admin@widden.gloucs.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	3–4 October 2012

## Information about this school

- The school meets the government’s current floor standards, which set minimum expectations for the attainment and progress of pupils at the end of key stage 2.
- The school was awarded ‘school of sanctuary’ status in 2017 for its work in supporting vulnerable pupils and families who are from, or have experienced, dangerous situations, including refugees and those seeking asylum.
- The school has a very high proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language, as much as 77% in 2017 (compared to the national average of 21%).
- The school supports a significant minority of pupils who are new to English and therefore have little or no knowledge of the English language on arrival. Since September 2017, there have been 25 arrivals to the school who fall into this category.
- The school serves an area of deprivation. In 2017, the proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals was almost twice the national average.
- The school has a high proportion of pupils from different ethnic backgrounds, including

Eastern European, Bangladeshi and Indian. There are up to 40 different languages spoken in the school.

- The school experiences high degrees of mobility both into and out of the school. These are often due to complex social and cultural situations.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited lessons across all year groups, including the early years. Most of these visits were undertaken with the headteacher or other senior leaders. Inspectors also took the opportunity to speak to pupils about their learning and to look at the work in their books.
- Inspectors had discussions with the headteacher, other senior staff, teachers and support staff throughout the two days of inspection. In addition, the lead inspector spoke to members of the local governing body and a local authority officer.
- Inspectors talked to groups of pupils, including the school council.
- Inspectors looked at documents provided by the school, including via the website. These documents included the school's self-evaluation and development plan, records of pupils' achievement, safeguarding records and the single central record of pre-employment checks on staff.
- In making their judgements, inspectors took into account 116 responses to Parent View, including 25 free-text comments, and 23 responses to the staff survey. Inspectors also spoke to parents at the start of the inspection and met individually with some on request.

## Inspection team

Stewart Gale, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Marion Borland	Ofsted Inspector
Geraldine Tidy	Ofsted Inspector

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