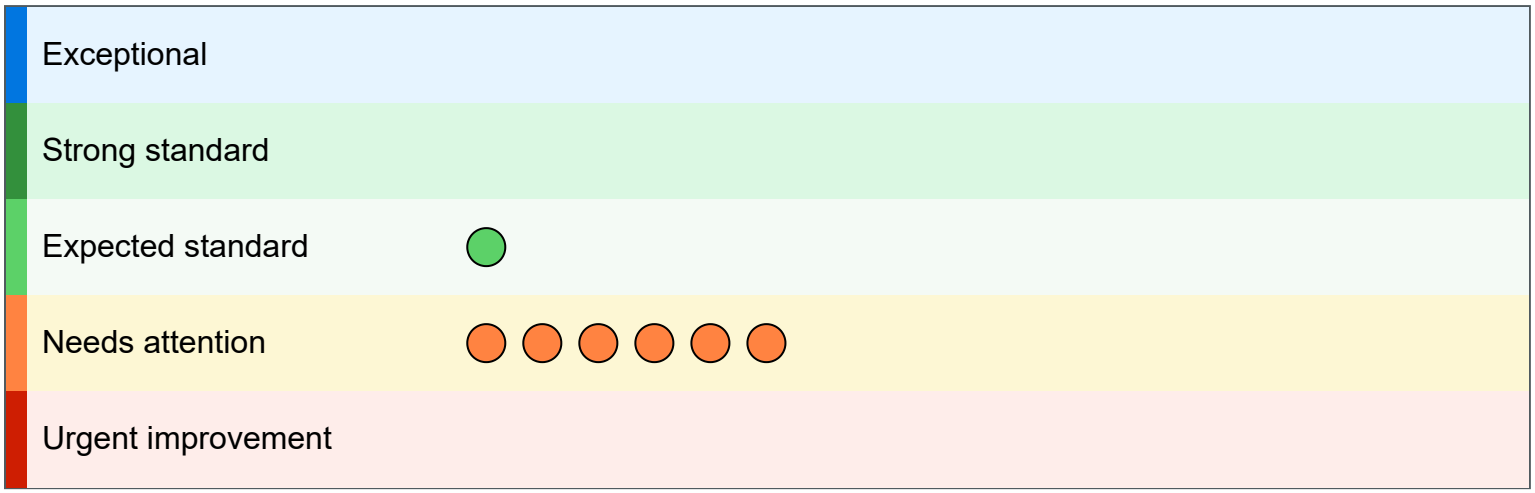
Widden Primary School

Address: Sinope Street, Gloucester, Gloucestershire, GL1 4AW

Unique reference number (URN): 150125

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 have designed an engaging personal development programme that extends beyond the academic curriculum. It reflects both the school's values 'aspire, believe, succeed' and the local context. For example, pupils learn about local cultural diversity through a range of assemblies, local visitors and in class teaching.

Leaders support the wellbeing of all pupils through an established pastoral team. Staff build trusting relationships with pupils and their families, which help them identify pastoral needs promptly. Trained staff deliver effective support. For example, pupils can access the school-based counsellor should they need to. Pupils can use the worry box if they have any concerns, and play therapy is also available to those who might need additional help. This supports pupils to understand the importance of mental health. A family liaison staff member carries out daily check-ins with pupils and families. The new food pantry has been well received by those who use it.

Pupils learn how to express their feelings and how to stay physically healthy. They know that vaping and smoking are not good for you. Pupils learn how to stay safe online. They celebrate difference and learn about fundamental British values and different types of families. Pupils experience anti-bullying days and learn about neurodiversity. This supports their understanding of life and its challenges in modern Britain.

Leaders provide a range of clubs that pupils benefit from. For example, they enjoy singing for elderly residents in the local care home and taking part in cricket and netball clubs.

There is a wide range of opportunities for pupils to be leaders in school. For example, they can be school councillors, sports leaders and digital leaders. This enables them to take on responsibilities and help to make improvements to their school and local community. Pupils are proud to make a difference. For example, sports leaders feel that they help to improve pupils' experiences during lunchtimes. School councillors were enthusiastic to share that they organised a new climbing frame to be built after gathering pupils' votes.

Needs attention

Achievement

Needs attention

Many pupils who take part in national tests will only have been in the school for a short period of time. They will not have experienced the full curriculum at the school. However, weaknesses in the delivery of the curriculum mean pupils do not progress from their starting points as well as they should in reading, writing and mathematics. Their knowledge across some wider curriculum subjects is not as secure as it should be by the end of Year 6.

Pupils can recall some key learning. For example, they remember what they learned in past religious education lessons. This core knowledge aids their understanding of more complex beliefs and faiths in older year groups.

Leaders have recently prioritised ensuring pupils gain the basic skills they need in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils are now taught to read well. There is also a focus on pupils closing gaps in their letter formation and handwriting. However, this is in its early stages and, therefore, the impact of this is not yet evident across pupils' work.

Attendance and behaviour

Needs attention

Some pupils do not attend school regularly enough. This has been the case for several years. While leaders have made some improvements, they have not been as substantive or rapid as they need to be. The school's attendance team build meaningful relationships with families. They use external partners to support their work. As a result of their actions, the attendance of some pupils has improved. However, attendance remains too low, especially for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Frequent and prolonged absences, as well as regular term time holidays, are having a detrimental effect on some pupils' achievement.

Behaviour is improving. In lessons, pupils typically listen and follow instructions. The expectations of staff are generally met. Pupils who struggle to manage their behaviour have clear plans to support them. As a result, suspensions have recently reduced and pupils say that bullying is very rare. In the early years provision, staff have already begun work to strengthen behaviour routines. However, not all staff have high enough expectations for pupils' behaviour. They do not always model the school's expectations clearly enough. Some pupils behave calmly in lessons, while others lose focus during transitions and group activities. Leaders have not ensured that all staff know how to manage pupils' behaviour effectively.

Curriculum and teaching

Needs attention

Since the previous inspection, leaders have strengthened the curriculum content. They ensure that pupils learn a broad and balanced curriculum that sets out clearly the knowledge they should know and remember in each subject.

While the intended curriculum is now secure, the quality of teaching is variable across year groups and subjects. Until recently, leaders did not routinely check on the quality of teaching and learning. Leaders now have clear expectations for the delivery of the curriculum. However, this is in its early stages. Staff require more training and support to embed these new strategies.

There is variability in whether appropriate adaptations for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and disadvantaged pupils, are made. When teachers make adaptations, they often do not match pupils' needs well enough. This is also the case in additional teaching spaces, where teaching is not routinely ambitious. Leaders have now taken steps to ensure that staff are clearer about what these pupils need to learn next.

The reading curriculum supports most pupils well. Pupils of all ages enjoy reading. Children begin to develop their knowledge of the relationship between sounds and letters in the Nursery and Reception Year. Teachers deliver the phonics programme with fidelity across

the early years and key stage 1. Pupils who struggle with reading receive support when they need it. However, the quality of this work is not reflected in the published phonics outcomes.

Early years

Needs attention

Leaders have taken steps to improve the quality of the early years provision. Adults respond sensitively to children's individual emotional needs. They build warm, positive relationships that give children a secure sense of belonging. This starts in the Nursery, where staff have taken appropriate steps to ensure that they focus on developing routines and independence. In Reception, the staff are confident to identify if a child may have additional needs. As a result, they are beginning to put suitable plans in place to support children's needs.

Leaders have recently made changes to the content and scope of the curriculum. It now provides opportunities for children to experience all areas of learning. Children typically engage in these activities and enjoy their learning. They enjoy climbing, making tracks for cars and writing letters in glitter. However, some of the activities provided do not precisely match what the children need to do next. As a result, children do not always concentrate on an activity for a sustained period. High-quality interactions, led by adults, are not as frequent as they need to be. As a result, many children are not well prepared for Year 1, as they have gaps in their letter formation, number recognition and language development.

Inclusion

Needs attention

Leaders have only recently begun to put systems in place that identify barriers to pupils learning more effectively. Staff now identify those pupils with barriers or emerging needs more quickly. This work is still in its early stages. Leaders are beginning to raise the expectations that staff have for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). However, leaders have not ensured that all staff have the skills and expertise to support pupils with a range of needs to access the ambitious curriculum.

Historically, support plans for pupils with SEND have not been precise enough. As a result, staff are often unclear about which approaches will best support individual pupils with SEND. At times, teachers do not accurately match the work they give pupils to their starting points. When this is the case, it makes learning harder for them and hinders their achievement. Leaders have started to address the quality of support plans, and the training they provide, so that staff can support pupils effectively. However, it is too soon to determine the impact of this work.

Leaders have rightly prioritised reading in how they use funding received for disadvantaged pupils. This has had a positive impact on the quality of phonics teaching. However, some disadvantaged pupils still do not secure the important knowledge that they need in reading, writing and mathematics. They do not make sufficient progress through the curriculum.

Leadership and governance

Needs attention

Leadership at Widden has been through a turbulent time since the previous inspection. Unforeseen circumstances have meant that the new leadership team has only been in place for a short period of time. New leaders have a secure understanding of the school's current

strengths and priorities for development. They know the community that the school serves well. They have taken action to improve the teaching of phonics, and they have begun to improve the overall behaviour of pupils. Trust leaders ensure that leaders' plans for improvement are realistic and well resourced.

Trustees understand their statutory duties and carry them out diligently. They meet statutory responsibilities for safeguarding by checking safeguarding processes and procedures alongside reviewing safeguarding policies. They understand the journey, context and priorities of the school. Recent changes to local governance processes have been put in place to ensure that strategic challenge and support are given to the school. Trust leaders support school leaders well and consider their wellbeing.

Leaders have only recently launched a clear training programme for staff. School and trust leaders recognise that further training in the school's teaching methods and behaviour management would benefit the staff and pupils. Leaders are also aware that with the frequent changes in leadership over time, some staff feel overwhelmed and unable to deliver to the best of their ability.

The variability in provision over time has frustrated the parental community. However, parents and carers are encouraged by the recent positive changes that new leaders have introduced. They are positive about the improvements in provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

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

Widden Primary School embraces the diverse community that it serves. The school regularly welcomes new pupils and says goodbye to others. Therefore, staff need to get to know these pupils and their needs quickly. Many pupils who arrive do not speak English and understand very little of what their teachers say. Despite this, pupils from a wide range of cultural backgrounds feel welcome and included. Staff build warm relationships with them. Pupils acclimatise quickly and, as a result, they typically enjoy coming to school.

Pupils know that discrimination is wrong. They say that bullying is rare and dealt with quickly. They show respect for different cultures, beliefs and backgrounds. Pupils generally understand the behaviour rules of 'be ready, be respectful, be safe'. However, there are occasions during learning and social times when they do not consistently demonstrate these values. When pupils have a disagreement, staff do not always support them to resolve this as effectively as they could. Pupils' attendance is slowly improving. However, leaders know that too many pupils do not attend well and so do not benefit fully from lessons or wider opportunities.

Children in the Nursery Year settle well. Leaders make sure that children receive the support that they need for secure emotional and personal development. However, leaders do not ensure that children build consistently well on the knowledge that they develop as they progress into the Reception Year and beyond. Pupils do not achieve as well as they should, as reflected in published outcomes over time. The school has recently improved the teaching of phonics for younger pupils. However, a significant minority of pupils, including some with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are disadvantaged,

still have gaps in their reading knowledge.

Typically, pupils enjoy a range of clubs, outings and visits that broaden their knowledge and understanding of the world. Leaders ensure that pupils have equal opportunity to participate. Teachers encourage pupils to take on meaningful leadership roles, and older pupils speak with pride about the responsibilities they hold.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that all staff consistently model the school's high behaviour expectations so that pupils are respectful to adults and develop as resilient learners.
- Leaders should ensure that children in the early years benefit from high-quality interactions and well-planned activities that build their communication and language skills, so they are ready for the next stage of their education.
- Leaders should ensure that pupils' attainment in phonics, reading, writing and mathematics improves significantly for all pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, so that they are well prepared for their next stage of education. This includes the effective use of the pupil premium funding to support the achievement of disadvantaged pupils.
- Leaders should ensure that staff know how to adapt learning and provide targeted support more consistently so that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and those who are disadvantaged, are better supported to achieve well.
- Leaders should ensure that the agreed teaching strategies, that have recently been introduced, are embedded across the school so that any gaps in pupils’ knowledge close quickly.

About this inspection

This school is part of Greenshaw Learning 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), William Smith, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Diana Barran.

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 spoke with the headteacher, other school leaders, the trust's CEO, the vice-chair of trustees and other trust leaders.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school does not currently make use of any alternative provision.

Since the last inspection, the leadership of the school has changed significantly. The current headteacher was appointed in September 2025.

Headteacher: Kirstin Couto

Lead inspector:
Thomas Brewer, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:
Julie Fox, Ofsted Inspector
Claire Mirams, Ofsted Inspector
Faye Pinner, 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

438
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: 268

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)

39.69%
Above average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals at any point in the last 6 years.

National average: 26.5%

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

3.65%
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: 4.1%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

14.61%
Close to average

What does this mean?

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

National average: 15%

Location deprivation

Well 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

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	R	R	R
2025/26 (provisional)	R	R	R
2024/25 (final)	36%	62%	Below
2023/24 (final)	20%	61%	Below

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	R	R	R
2025/26 (provisional)	R	R	R
2024/25 (final)	50%	75%	Below

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	35%	74%	Below

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	R	R	R
2025/26 (provisional)	R	R	R
2024/25 (final)	50%	72%	Below
2023/24 (final)	38%	72%	Below

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	R	R	R
2025/26 (provisional)	R	R	R
2024/25 (final)	43%	74%	Below
2023/24 (final)	28%	73%	Below

The Key Stage 2 data we used for this inspection has not yet been published; therefore, we have not provided it alongside this school's report card. ‘R’ in the table indicates that the data is not yet available. We will update the table when the Department for Education publishes the data for the latest academic year.

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	R	R	R
2025/26 (provisional)	R	R	R
2024/25 (final)	30%	47%	Below
2023/24 (final)	19%	46%	Below

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	R	R	R
2025/26 (provisional)	R	R	R
2024/25 (final)	40%	63%	Below
2023/24 (final)	31%	62%	Below

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	R	R	R
2025/26 (provisional)	R	R	R
2024/25 (final)	43%	59%	Below
2023/24 (final)	35%	58%	Below

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	R	R	R
2025/26 (provisional)	R	R	R
2024/25 (final)	33%	61%	Below
2023/24 (final)	23%	59%	Below

The Key Stage 2 data we used for this inspection has not yet been published; therefore, we have not provided it alongside this school's report card. ‘R’ in the table indicates that the data is not yet available. We will update the table when the Department for Education publishes the data for the latest academic year.

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	R	R	R
2025/26 (provisional)	R	R	R
2024/25 (final)	30%	69%	-39 pp
2023/24 (final)	19%	67%	-48 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	R	R	R
2025/26 (provisional)	R	R	R
2024/25 (final)	40%	81%	-41 pp
2023/24 (final)	31%	80%	-49 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	R	R	R
2025/26 (provisional)	R	R	R
2024/25 (final)	43%	78%	-35 pp
2023/24 (final)	35%	78%	-43 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	R	R	R
2025/26 (provisional)	R	R	R
2024/25 (final)	33%	81%	-47 pp
2023/24 (final)	23%	79%	-56 pp

The Key Stage 2 data we used for this inspection has not yet been published; therefore, we have not provided it alongside this school's report card. ‘R’ in the table indicates that the data is not yet available. We will update the table when the Department for Education publishes the data for the latest academic year.

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)	6.7%	5.1%	Above
2024/25 (3 term)	7.3%	5.2%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	9.1%	5.5%	Above

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)	23.1%	14.4%	Above
2024/25 (3 term)	22.9%	13.0%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	31.2%	14.6%	Above

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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