

Widewell Primary Academy

Address: Lulworth Drive, Roborough, Widewell Primary School, Plymouth, Devon, PL6 7ER

Unique reference number (URN): 139289

Inspection report: 31 March 2026

Exceptional	
Strong standard	● ●
Expected standard	● ● ● ● ●
Needs attention	
Urgent improvement	

✓ **Safeguarding standards met**

The safeguarding standards are met. This means that leaders and/or those responsible for governance and oversight fulfil their specific responsibilities and have established an open culture in which safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and concerns are actively identified, acted upon and managed. As a result, pupils are made safer and feel safe.

How we evaluate safeguarding

When we inspect schools for safeguarding, they can have the following outcomes:

- **Met:** The school has an open and positive culture of safeguarding. All legal requirements are met.
- **Not met:** The school has not created an open and positive culture of safeguarding. Not all legal requirements are met.

Strong standard ●

Attendance and behaviour

Strong standard ●

Leaders make attendance a clear and consistent priority. They monitor it closely each day and act quickly when concerns appear, working closely with families and external agencies. Their actions are having a highly positive impact for all groups of pupils, including those who face barriers to their learning and/or wellbeing. Pupils' attendance and persistent absence continue to improve, and the school can rightly celebrate this progress.

Leaders also place a great emphasis on promoting positive behaviour. Their approach has strengthened behaviour over time and ensures that pupils feel safe and supported. Staff manage behaviour well. Staff help pupils to understand situations, reflect on their behaviour and make better choices next time. This approach supports individuals effectively and improves behaviour across the school. When minor issues arise, such as disagreements or someone feeling left out, staff respond quickly and help pupils resolve them. Bullying is rare and dealt with promptly and appropriately. Suspensions are extremely rare. Pupils show positive attitudes to learning and respond well to the high expectations set by staff.

Pupils behave kindly and respectfully. In early years, for example, children reassure their classmates without being prompted. At break and lunchtime, pupils play and interact positively. Routines are well established and transitions between activities are smooth and calm.

Leaders' strong focus on attendance and behaviour creates a positive, nurturing environment where pupils feel settled, supported and ready to learn.

Inclusion

Strong standard ●

Leaders ensure that support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is well led and that all staff across the school understand and implement it well. Leaders use clear systems to plan help for pupils, review their progress and check what is working. They work closely with the trust and outside agencies, and staff receive regular training that is reflected in their daily practice. Because of this, pupils with SEND learn successfully alongside their classmates through thoughtful adaptations, scaffolding and responsive teaching.

Leaders show determination to support children and families. They use additional funding well, such as pupil premium funding, including bespoke help for service children. Leaders keep a close eye on pupils' progress. In Reception, staff use language assessments to identify children's needs accurately. Across the school, catch-up writing programmes help pupils working below expected levels to close gaps.

Pupils receive targeted support that meets their needs. They benefit from calm, well-designed classrooms. Staff use gentle reminders and quiet redirection to keep lessons focused. Pupils benefit from plans that clearly identify their needs and outline the support they will receive. Leaders provide effective support for pupils with social, emotional and

mental health needs. Regular monitoring ensures that this support remains effective. Transitions are carefully planned so every child feels ready for their next step.

Expected standard

Achievement

Expected standard 

Pupils make appropriate progress through a well-sequenced curriculum that helps them build knowledge and skills over time. Those who start from lower academic points are now keeping up more successfully with the demands of the curriculum. However, pupils' recall is stronger in some subjects than others. For example, in history, pupils speak confidently about Ancient Egypt, the afterlife and how the weighing of the heart against the feather of Ma'at shaped a person's destiny. They also make thoughtful links between ideas, such as comparing the idea of 'living life to the fullest' with their understanding of why rules and laws are still needed. Even so, pupils' depth of knowledge is still developing in some subjects.

Pupils typically achieve well in national assessments. Pupils' outcomes in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 2 remain close to the national average, including for disadvantaged pupils. Pupils perform in line with national figures in the phonics screening check, reflecting secure early reading provision. Pupils also perform well in the Year 4 multiplication check, demonstrating secure number knowledge.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Leaders have a clear and accurate understanding of teaching across the school. They make thoughtful decisions about the curriculum and are confident in making changes when needed. As a result, pupils follow a broad and balanced curriculum that is well sequenced and helps them build knowledge over time. Although teaching does not always help pupils to recall what they have learned as effectively as it could, pupils' progress is clear across the school.

Teachers receive the training and resources they need to teach the curriculum well. Across the school, teachers use consistent approaches, so pupils know what to expect and how to learn successfully. Teachers model learning clearly, helping pupils become more independent. Staff teach reading through the school's chosen phonics programme and deliver it effectively. This ensures pupils become fluent, confident readers before moving into Key Stage 2, where their reading skills and love of books continue to grow.

Leaders remain focused on securing the essential handwriting and spelling skills for younger pupils. Core skills in writing and mathematics are taught step by step, and teachers identify and address gaps quickly. Teachers plan adaptations and support carefully so that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and those with other barriers to learning, can learn alongside their peers.

Early years

Expected standard 

Leaders place a strong focus on the early years. This ensures children get the best possible start to school and are well prepared for Year 1. The provision has a clear emphasis on developing children's language through high-quality interactions and building early thinking and problem-solving skills. Important foundations, such as early handwriting and phonics, are taught well, and staff use assessment carefully to pinpoint each child's next steps. Staff identify children who need additional support, such as those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and provide appropriate support. The school works closely and effectively with external agencies and families.

Staff play a key role in supporting learning. They join children's play with purpose, model rich language and introduce new vocabulary naturally. For example, staff make and wear a suit of armour alongside the children, sparking imaginative conversations and new ideas. The environment is full of language prompts, and staff use questioning techniques matched to each child's needs.

Children benefit from a broad and balanced curriculum. Adult-led groups focus on key skills such as letter formation and understanding number. Children show strong engagement, independence and pride in what they achieve. Leaders ensure that early reading is prioritised. Staff use books, songs and rhymes across all areas of learning to further develop children's language and vocabulary.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders have a clear and accurate understanding of the school's strengths and the areas that need further development. This clarity helps them set the right priorities, and they work closely with the trust to secure the support the school needs. Their actions are firmly rooted in pupils' best interests. The improvements leaders have made are now evident across the school. Leaders also make effective use of the trust's shared expertise, which creates enhanced opportunities for pupils and staff.

Leaders make decisions based on pupils' needs and secure additional funding to support targeted groups. They ensure staff have the skills and knowledge required to fulfil their roles effectively, drawing on specialist support when needed. Teachers at all stages of their career benefit from professional learning that develops their practice.

Governors and trustees know the school well. They are committed to continually strengthening the school and provide constructive challenge and support through the trust's governance arrangements. They hold leaders to account appropriately across key areas of the school's work.

Leaders also show a strong commitment to staff wellbeing and workload. They offer support when needed and create a positive working environment where staff feel valued.

Pupils show a strong and confident understanding of the school's 'DREAM' values that encourage pupils to be determined, resilient, enquiring, aspirational and mindful. Pupils explain each value clearly and recognise that success can look different for every individual. Pupils talk proudly about how these values help them learn, behave and support one another.

Pupils say they feel safe and happy in school. Staff provide effective emotional support, helping pupils regulate their feelings and develop confidence. Pupils speak positively about the help they receive and know exactly who they can approach if they are worried.

Pupils understand how to stay safe online, including not sharing personal information, avoiding unknown people and following the school's rules for safe behaviour. They also speak thoughtfully about different families, cultures and beliefs, which helps all pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, feel represented. Pupils' grasp of some personal, social and health education content, such as what makes a healthy relationship, is less secure. However, they show a growing understanding of world religions and can explain concepts such as gods, sacred items and places of worship. For example, pupils describe the River Ganges as sacred and understand how people use the water to symbolically wash away sins. Pupils understand the importance of inclusion and tolerance, saying, 'Anyone in the world is welcome at our school.'

Leadership and character development are strong features of school life. Pupils take on meaningful and influential roles, such as music captains, school parliament members and sports leaders. A wide range of clubs and opportunities enrich pupils' experiences, including 'Little Marchers', 'Belonging Club', residential visits and community activities such as litter picks and the Widewell Wolves team. These experiences help to build pupils' pride and confidence and a strong sense of belonging.

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

Widewell Primary School is a welcoming and supportive community where pupils, including service children, feel they belong. Staff work hard to make sure every child feels known and valued from the moment they join the school. Even on their very first day in Nursery, children are greeted by name as they cross the road, helping them feel part of the school straight away.

The school is strongly committed to helping pupils who face any kind of disadvantage or barrier. Staff have high expectations for all pupils and they make thoughtful adaptations so all children can learn alongside their classmates. Pupils benefit from teaching routines that help them understand what they have done well and what they need to work on next. Pupils enjoy learning and achieve well.

The school's caring, relationship-based approach to behaviour and inclusion creates a calm, settled and positive atmosphere. Staff are well trained and confident and have warm relationships with pupils. Pupils are polite, courteous and well mannered. Classrooms are

purposeful places where pupils are conscientious and serious about their learning. Bullying is rare and dealt with quickly and effectively should it occur. Pupils are enthusiastic about school and attend regularly. Staff ensure that pupils are well cared for and feel safe.

Pupils enjoy a wide range of clubs and activities, including some that reflect the school's unique community, such as the 'military kids' club. Pupils with parents in the Armed Forces particularly value the extra support and sense of community these clubs provide.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that all staff understand their role in improving the foundational skills, including writing, so that pupils' foundational knowledge is consistently developed and reinforced across the curriculum.
 - Leaders should ensure pupils develop detailed knowledge and skills and produce high-quality work across the wider curriculum.
 - Leaders should ensure that all pupils develop secure and detailed knowledge across the personal, social and health education curriculum.
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About this inspection

This school is part of Learning Academies 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), Simon Spry, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Debbie Taylor.

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, the deputy headteacher, the special educational needs and disabilities coordinator, the director of education, the CEO, the chair of the board of trustees, and the chair and vice chair of the local governing body.

The school joined Learning Academies Trust in September 2023. This is a change since the previous inspection.

The school does not use any alternative providers.

Head Teacher: Mrs Victoria Broughton

Lead inspector:

Sophie Hillson, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Nicola Bray, Ofsted Inspector

Matthew Shanks, Ofsted Inspector

Facts and figures used on inspection

The data was used by the inspector(s) during the inspection. More recent data may have been published since the inspection took place.

 This data is from 31 March 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

214

Close to 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: 272

School capacity

226

Close to 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)

19.80%

Close to average

What does this mean?

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

National average: 26.3%

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

2.80%

Close to average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan. This covers pupils with more support than is available through special educational needs support.

National average: 3.5%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

11.68%

Close to average

What does this mean?

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

National average: 15%

Location deprivation

Well below 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	58%	61%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	63%	62%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	70%	61%	Above
2022/23 (final)	41%	60%	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	67%	74%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	74%	75%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	77%	74%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	52%	73%	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	69%	72%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	70%	72%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	80%	72%	Above
2022/23 (final)	55%	71%	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	70%	73%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	70%	74%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	80%	73%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	59%	73%	Below

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	38%	46%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	57%	47%	Close to average

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	44%	46%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	20%	44%	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	46%	62%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	57%	63%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	56%	62%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	30%	60%	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	42%	59%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	57%	59%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	56%	58%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	20%	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	46%	60%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	57%	61%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	44%	59%	Below
2022/23 (final)	40%	59%	Below

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	38%	68%	-29 pp
2024/25 (revised)	57%	69%	-12 pp
2023/24 (final)	44%	67%	-23 pp
2022/23 (final)	20%	66%	-46 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	46%	80%	-33 pp
2024/25 (revised)	57%	81%	-24 pp
2023/24 (final)	56%	80%	-24 pp
2022/23 (final)	30%	78%	-48 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	42%	78%	-35 pp
2024/25 (revised)	57%	78%	-21 pp
2023/24 (final)	56%	78%	-22 pp
2022/23 (final)	20%	77%	-57 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	46%	80%	-34 pp
2024/25 (revised)	57%	81%	-23 pp
2023/24 (final)	44%	79%	-35 pp

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2022/23 (final)	40%	79%	-39 pp

Absence

Overall absence

The percentage of all possible mornings and afternoons missed due to absence from school (for whatever reason, whether authorised or unauthorised) across all pupils.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (2 term)	4.8%	5.2%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	5.6%	5.5%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	6.2%	5.9%	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
2024/25 (2 term)	12.5%	13.3%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	14.0%	14.6%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	18.5%	16.2%	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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