

The Winchcombe School

Address: Maple Crescent, Shaw, Newbury, Berkshire, RG14 1LN

Unique reference number (URN): 135079

Inspection report: 10 February 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.

Expected standard

Early years

Expected standard 

The early years provision demonstrates a clear understanding of the statutory framework. A well-thought-through curriculum meets the needs of the youngest learners at the school. Warm relationships underpin the strength of the provision. Leaders engage with parents and carers to support children to settle quickly. Care routines are handled sensitively, and children show increasing maturity in managing their emotions. The learning environment is well organised, indoors and outdoors, encouraging independence and exploration. Children in Nursery are confident and settled, benefiting from stimulating activities and secure routines that help them feel safe. Leaders have a clear focus on the teaching of essential skills, informed by careful checks on how well children are developing. This approach is frequently tailored to the cohort as well as individual children, ensuring that children transition confidently into key stage 1.

Personal, social and emotional development is a notable strength; pupils interact positively and understand expectations relating to this. Leaders prioritise communication, language, early literacy and mathematics, ensuring that these foundations are woven effectively through the daily provision for children. Vocabulary development and phonics teaching have both strengthened following recent training. Staff understand how young children learn and engage them in purposeful play that promotes curiosity and sustained interaction. High-quality dialogue is evident, for example when children created a Valentine's 'love potion', sparking rich vocabulary use and creative thinking.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

Leaders have constructed a well-considered personal development programme. It is a notable positive of the school offer for pupils, providing rich experiences built on clear values. This inspires pupils to be eager to contribute positively to their school and the wider community. A structured framework of opportunities promotes responsibility and citizenship from an early age. Pupils take on a wide range of meaningful roles, such as play leaders, eco-citizens, house captains and school councillors. Older pupils take pride in supporting younger pupils with their reading. These experiences build pupils' confidence, strengthen their sense of belonging and give them a genuine sense of the impact that they can have on others.

Pupils understand and apply the school's values with maturity. They talk convincingly about tolerance, empathy and respect. These principles are reflected in the generally harmonious relationships seen across the school. Teachers model positive interactions. Pupils typically respond with courtesy, openness and kindness. They appreciate difference. Pupils enjoy learning about a diverse range of cultures, beliefs and family structures, recognising how this broadens their understanding of the world.

Enrichment is another benefit. Pupils speak enthusiastically about clubs, such as steel pans, sewing, choir and football. They appreciate the range of trips, residential stays and visits that extend their learning. These opportunities develop pupils' resilience, independence and curiosity. The personal, social and health curriculum further supports pupils' character development. Many pupils are able to articulate a clear understanding of the protected

characteristics, fundamental British values and how to navigate the challenges of growing up. Pupils also recognise the importance of healthy lifestyles and physical activity. Older pupils demonstrate a clear awareness of online risks and how to seek help. Most older pupils feel prepared for secondary school. They appreciate the support that the school gives them for this. Overall, the personal development offer prepares pupils well for the next stage of their education and life.

Needs attention

Achievement

Needs attention 

Pupils' achievement across the school is variable. Disadvantaged pupils perform significantly worse than their non-disadvantaged peers at the end of Year 6. Typically, they achieve less than half the outcomes of their national peers in the combined measure of reading, writing and mathematics. This puts them at an increased risk of not succeeding at secondary school. Attainment in the phonics screening check at the end of Year 1 is weak. Too many pupils achieve below the standards expected in this check of pupils' early reading skills. However, disadvantaged pupils or those with barriers to learning typically achieve well in the core subjects of reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6. Pupils also achieve well at the greater-depth levels in reading and mathematics, but not in writing. Pupils generally enjoy their learning in the wider curriculum, and can recall positively what they know in subjects such as design and technology and history.

Attendance and behaviour

Needs attention 

Overall, pupils' attendance is broadly in line with national figures. However, the low attendance of pupils who face barriers to attending school regularly is a concern. Disadvantaged pupils' attendance has been below national averages over time. Persistent absence rates for this group of pupils are high. Although leaders use first day calling and targeted support, their monitoring and analysis require further rigor. This means that persistent absence is becoming harder to shift as it has become entrenched over time.

Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around school is generally positive, supported by secure relationships and established routines. Positive reward systems contribute to a calm climate. Leaders have identified appropriate priorities to strengthen behaviour, with many aspects of the revised policy beginning to embed. However, leaders recognise that consistent implementation by staff is not yet secure. The staged white, yellow and red card system provides clear expectations, and most staff now implement it with increasing consistency. Leaders ensure more significant incidents are well recorded and have appropriate follow-up, including for more serious cases such as bullying. Individual behaviour plans help pupils with more complex needs. Leaders use suspensions proportionately, with reintegration meetings supporting pupils' return and re-establishing expectations.

Curriculum and teaching

Needs attention 

Despite the curriculum's clear intent, teaching is inconsistent across the school. Leaders have started to address this through additional training for staff. However, some weaker practice remains. For example, the teaching of early reading is not as precise as it needs to be. This includes the support provided for older pupils who struggle to read. Similarly, for some pupils, weaknesses in their handwriting and letter formation persist without being corrected quickly enough. The curriculum to develop writing clearly focuses on the progression of writing knowledge and skills. It is clear what pupils of each age should be taught. However, this is not taught consistently well. In addition, sometimes expectations of pupils' writing are not high enough. This limits the development of some pupils' writing skills.

The curriculum is broadly well planned and sequenced for all subjects. It details the key knowledge, skills and vocabulary that need to be taught from the early years to Year 6. Pupils enjoy learning the breadth of the curriculum. Teachers usually demonstrate secure subject knowledge. In more-effective lessons, teachers check how well pupils are learning the key knowledge and provide support. However, this is not the case in all lessons. Adaptations made to learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are variable. Some pupils become overly reliant on adult support to complete tasks. They lack opportunities to independently practise their learning.

Inclusion

Needs attention 

The provision for pupils with a specific vulnerability or disadvantage across the school is inconsistent. Pupils with additional needs are initially identified well and appropriate plans are constructed. However, although some pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities achieve well, others do not achieve as well as they could. This is because of inconsistencies in how effectively teaching is adapted to meet these pupils' needs as precisely as it could. Leaders are working to address this.

Pupils in the specially resourced provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities experience highly effective teaching where pupils' needs are understood and met with precision. This enables them to make secure progress through the curriculum and participate well in lessons.

Leaders aim for pupils to feel included and part of the school. Leaders ensure that the care for pupils known or previously known to children's services is particularly palpable. The school's pupil premium strategy is coherent. It is making some noticeable difference to pupils' social and emotional needs and barriers to learning and wellbeing. Alternative provision is used appropriately.

Leadership and governance

Needs attention 

Leaders, including those responsible for governance, have identified the right improvement priorities for the school. The improvement plans that are now in place have a clear rationale. However, these plans are too recent for any demonstrable improvements to be evident.

Staff development is a priority for the school. Leaders are focused on professional learning to improve methods of effective teaching, support for pupils' academic and pastoral needs, and support for middle leaders to further secure increased high standards across the school. However, this work has been hampered as leaders' monitoring in recent times has been limited. This means that they have not been able to check on the impact of this training so far. Improvements have not been made as rapidly as necessary.

Governors are developing a clearer understanding of the school's priorities. They are providing increasing support and challenge where needed. Although this has strengthened their strategic oversight, governors recognise that further development is needed to ensure more consistent challenge across all areas of the school's work. Governors ensure that their statutory duties, including safeguarding and financial management, are typically well executed. Leaders are also mindful of staff's workload and wellbeing. Leaders are conscious of making decisions in the best interests of pupils.

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

Pupils benefit from a positive, caring environment where warm relationships and well-established routines help them feel safe. They know the school's values of respect, kindness, courage and curiosity. Pupils try hard to embody these traits in daily life. This ethos contributes to a clear sense of belonging. Behaviour is typically calm and orderly. Pupils understand the rules, which they view as fair and consistently applied. Bullying is rare, and dealt with successfully.

Many pupils build knowledge securely across a broad range of subjects. They engage well in subjects such as design and technology and history. However, too many younger pupils are not learning to read quickly enough. Additionally, writing is not taught as well as it should be across the school. Over time, large numbers of disadvantaged pupils have not achieved well in reading, writing and mathematics. This means that they leave Year 6 without the essential learning that they need for secondary school. Low attendance among disadvantaged pupils further restricts their progress and compounds gaps in their learning.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are typically well cared for, particularly those who attend the resourced provision, where support is well matched to pupils' needs. However, provision for pupils with SEND across the school varies. Some pupils with SEND do not benefit from the adapted teaching that they need to make secure progress through the curriculum.

Developing pupils beyond the academic is a clear strength of the school. Pupils benefit from a wide range of opportunities that help them to grow into confident, responsible young people. They take on meaningful leadership roles that build their independence and their sense of contribution to school life and beyond. Clubs, trips, residential visits and outdoor learning enrich pupils' wider experiences and broaden their horizons. Pupils also develop a secure understanding of diversity, respect and the fundamental British values, which is reflected in their thoughtful interactions with others.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that pupils, including older pupils who have not secured firm foundational reading knowledge and skills, receive precise early reading teaching and support.
 - Leaders should ensure that the writing curriculum is implemented consistently well, with a shared high ambition to raise pupils' achievement in this aspect of the school's work.
 - Leaders should analyse attendance patterns more closely to identify barriers and take swifter, more effective action to improve attendance rates, particularly for disadvantaged pupils.
 - Leaders should provide staff with regular, high-quality professional learning and rigorously monitor its impact to drive rapid improvement. This includes training focused on meeting pupils' needs, appropriate pedagogical choices and behaviour management.
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About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors in this school is Liam Anderson.

Inspectors carried out this full inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Following our renewed inspection framework, all inspections are now led by His Majesty's Inspectors (HMIs) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMIs.

Inspectors met with the headteacher and other leaders in the school. The lead inspector also met with governors, including the chair of the governing board, the lead of the virtual school and 2 educational representatives from the local authority.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The current headteacher took up post in September 2023.

The school has a specially resourced provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, focused on speech and language. This provision is for 13 pupils.

The local authority runs a Year 5 language and literacy resource base at the school. Pupils attend from different schools in the area for a weekly session in small groups.

The school currently uses one unregistered alternative provision.

Headteacher: Matt Percy

Lead inspector:

Chris Parker, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Ian Elkington, Ofsted Inspector

Lorraine Greco, His Majesty's Inspector

Fiona Henderson, 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 10 February 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

445

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: 272

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)

16.59%

Below 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

6.29%

Above average

What does this mean?

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

National average: 3.5%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

14.16%

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

Close to 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)

Resourced provision

What does this mean?

Whether school has Resourced Provision or SEND unit (if applicable).

Type of specialist provision (if applicable)

SpLD - Specific Learning Difficulty, SLCN - Speech, language and Communication

What does this mean?

The type of Special Educational Needs provision provided at the school (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	55%	61%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	51%	62%	Below
2023/24 (final)	58%	61%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	55%	60%	Close to average

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	70%	74%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	72%	75%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	72%	74%	Close to average

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2022/23 (final)	67%	73%	Close to average

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	63%	72%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	56%	72%	Below
2023/24 (final)	67%	72%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	65%	71%	Close to average

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	72%	73%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	79%	74%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	77%	73%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	65%	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	21%	46%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	21%	47%	Below
2023/24 (final)	17%	46%	Below
2022/23 (final)	24%	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	49%	62%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	50%	63%	Below
2023/24 (final)	42%	62%	Below
2022/23 (final)	53%	60%	Close to average

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	30%	59%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	29%	59%	Below
2023/24 (final)	25%	58%	Below

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2022/23 (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	49%	60%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	64%	61%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	42%	59%	Below
2022/23 (final)	41%	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	21%	68%	-47 pp
2024/25 (revised)	21%	69%	-48 pp
2023/24 (final)	17%	67%	-51 pp
2022/23 (final)	24%	66%	-43 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	49%	80%	-31 pp
2024/25 (revised)	50%	81%	-31 pp
2023/24 (final)	42%	80%	-38 pp
2022/23 (final)	53%	78%	-25 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	30%	78%	-48 pp
2024/25 (revised)	29%	78%	-50 pp
2023/24 (final)	25%	78%	-53 pp
2022/23 (final)	35%	77%	-42 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	49%	80%	-31 pp
2024/25 (revised)	64%	81%	-16 pp
2023/24 (final)	42%	79%	-38 pp
2022/23 (final)	41%	79%	-38 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)	5.9%	5.2%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	6.3%	5.5%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	5.9%	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)	18.6%	13.3%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	18.9%	14.6%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	17.1%	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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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

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