

# Belong School Gloucestershire

**Address:** Wild Goose Lodge, Shepherds Patch, Slimbridge, Gloucestershire, GL2 7BP

**Unique reference number (URN):** 146671

## Inspection report: 12 May 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.
- **Insufficient evidence:** Inspectors were unable to gather sufficient evidence to judge whether safeguarding standards are met.

## Strong standard ●

### Attendance and behaviour

Strong standard ●

Many pupils have previously not attended school well. At Belong School, pupils make rapid improvements to their attendance. Leaders and staff build positive, purposeful relationships with pupils and their families. This enables them to identify reasons for absence and put in place effective strategies to reduce barriers to regular attendance. Leaders' analysis of attendance is forensic, meaning that they can quickly identify patterns and trends. They skilfully adapt approaches to improve pupils' attendance when necessary. This results in notable improvements for individuals and groups, including those who face multiple barriers to their wellbeing.

Leaders have established a caring culture, with high expectations of pupils' learning, participation and interactions with each other. Pupils thrive as a result. Leaders ensure that staff make precise adaptations and reasonable adjustments to meet each pupil's behaviour needs. Consequently, pupils feel safe and have positive relationships with staff and each other. Unkindness between pupils is rare and leaders ensure that any incidents are dealt with swiftly and effectively. This means that incidents do not escalate into bullying. Pupils learn to understand their own emotions and they are considerate of other people's feelings. As a result, they are respectful of each other.

### Inclusion

Strong standard ●

Leaders consistently enhance pupils' opportunities and experiences. They are systematic and thorough in their identification and assessment of pupils' needs, including the needs of pupils who face disadvantage. Leaders work closely and effectively with families and the local area special educational needs and/or disabilities partnership. Consequently, staff have a strong understanding of pupils' barriers to learning and/or wellbeing and how to reduce them.

The support provided to pupils consistently reduces their barriers to learning and promotes their sense of belonging. Work to raise pupils' attendance and adaptations to support their behaviour are very effective. As a result, pupils consistently benefit from the school's curriculum, teaching and wider opportunities.

Leaders rigorously monitor the progress that pupils make. For example, they evaluate the effectiveness of pastoral interventions and make skilful changes to the support they provide. This ensures that the school makes a sustained difference to pupils' wellbeing.

Pupils known (or previously known) to children's social care receive tailored support and adaptations. This includes children in care. Leaders work effectively with the virtual school and with alternative provision when appropriate. Consequently, these pupils thrive.

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## Expected standard

### Achievement

Expected standard 

Pupils generally achieve well. They gain the foundations that they need in basic skills, such as reading and use of number. Pupils improve their communication skills, such as expressing their needs and feelings.

Pupils typically acquire knowledge and understanding in the different subjects that they study. For example, they learn about the Earth's structure in science and about different techniques in art. However, where the curriculum and teaching are not as effective, pupils sometimes do not achieve as well as they could.

Pupils develop their wider knowledge and skills to prepare them for the future. For instance, they learn cooking techniques and about healthy lifestyles. Through the academic and wider curriculum, pupils develop their language and vocabulary, both spoken and written.

Pupils are generally well prepared for post-16 education, employment or training. They typically gain the qualifications that they need for these next steps.

### Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Leaders and staff are particularly aware of pupils who have gaps in their basic skills and knowledge. There is an effective curriculum to remedy gaps in pupils' phonics knowledge. Staff have the necessary expertise to help pupils improve their reading ability. The curriculum equally prioritises pupils' understanding of number. This provides pupils with the foundations for learning mathematics later.

Leaders have an accurate understanding of the quality of the curriculum and of teaching. They routinely identify where improvements are needed. For example, leaders have successfully strengthened how they check pupils' progress in English and mathematics.

Staff generally have the subject knowledge that they need to teach the wider curriculum effectively. However, in a few subjects, leaders are still identifying the most important knowledge and skills that pupils should learn. In these subjects, staff are not as clear about how to deepen pupils' understanding over time.

Teaching typically uses assessment to establish what pupils already know and can do. However, these checks are not strongly embedded in all subjects. Consequently, teaching sometimes does not support pupils well enough to close gaps in their knowledge.

Staff remove pupils' barriers to learning effectively through well-considered reasonable adjustments and adaptations.

### Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders and the proprietor have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas where further work is needed. They prioritise the right actions for development. This is

reflected, for example, in leaders' proven work to embed inclusive practices and their demonstrable impact on pupils' attendance and behaviour. Leaders and the proprietor are ambitious for pupils' achievement and personal development. They identify accurately their next steps for improvement.

The proprietor fulfils its governance function effectively. It ensures that the school's statutory duties are fulfilled and that the Independent School Standards (ISS) are met consistently. Leaders and the proprietor have the capacity to sustain compliance with the ISS and to bring about continuous improvement. They act with integrity, with pupils' best interests at the heart of their work.

Leaders are role models of high expectations and professionalism. They build staff teaching expertise and the capacity of leaders at all levels. This is realised through an effective professional learning programme. Leaders are also mindful of staff workload and take effective steps to support staff wellbeing.

Leaders and the proprietor engage well with parents and wider professionals. These constructive relationships bring tangible benefits to pupils.

## **Personal development and wellbeing**

**Expected standard** 

Pupils have a suitable range of wider opportunities and experiences. There is an appropriate programme to build their knowledge and understanding of fundamental British values. For instance, pupils learn the importance of respecting each other and the rule of law. Through visits to places of worship, pupils learn about different faiths and religions.

The school's relationship and sex education curriculum prepares pupils well for the future. Pupils learn about healthy and unhealthy communication and relationships. Pupils explore how to keep themselves safe off and online. Leaders successfully keep abreast of local and national trends in risks that pupils may face. This enables leaders to make appropriate adaptations to the curriculum to help pupils learn how to protect themselves.

Pupils receive helpful careers education and advice. Through meeting local employers, pupils develop their understanding of the world of work. Leaders prepare pupils well for their transition into future education, employment or training. They liaise well with post-16 providers to share information about pupils' needs and strategies to support them.

Pupils receive highly effective, tailored pastoral support. Leaders have a deep understanding of pupils and consistently anticipate their needs. As a result, pupils develop their resilience and confidence to explore different opportunities, both in school and off site.

Leaders provide pupils with opportunities to develop their talents and interests. For example, they have recently introduced personalised musical experiences for some pupils. Pupils have cultural experiences through the curriculum and visits to local arts venues.

On the whole, leaders track pupils' participation in the wider personal development programme well. However, leaders do not use this information robustly enough to extend pupils' opportunities and experiences further.

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

Pupils are safe and happy at Belong School. All pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Leaders and staff work determinedly to understand and remove barriers to pupils' attendance, learning and achievement. This work consistently enhances pupils' opportunities and experiences. For example, many pupils have not attended school well previously. As a result of caring relationships and effective work with families, the school helps pupils to attend school more regularly.

Pupils enjoy their learning and generally progress well through the curriculum. Leaders and staff understand pupils' needs very well. They provide effective pastoral support. This supports pupils' personal development and wellbeing and provides a firm foundation for them to learn successfully. Pupils enjoy learning the different subjects that they study. For instance, they are keen to improve their cooking skills. The school helps remedy gaps in pupils' important basic skills, such as reading and number. Consequently, pupils are typically able to go on to gain suitable qualifications. Overall, they are prepared well for their next steps in education, employment or training.

Pupils behave well. They learn about emotions and how to be respectful of others. Leaders and staff teach pupils the importance of compassion and celebrating differences. Bullying is rare and staff always make sure that they deal with unkindness quickly and effectively. Parents are highly positive about the care and support for their children.

Pupils benefit from activities to learn together and to pursue their interests. For example, there are opportunities to develop their skills in sports, computing or traditional crafts. Trips in the local area, and further afield, build pupils' wider knowledge, such as about democracy. Pupils benefit from visits to local post-16 education providers and employers. This helps them, and their families, find out about their different options when they leave the school.

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## Next steps

- Leaders and the proprietor should ensure that the curriculum is of a consistently high quality across all subjects.
  - Leaders and the proprietor should ensure that teaching uses assessment effectively to check, and build, on what pupils know, so that they achieve more highly.
  - Leaders and the proprietor should ensure that they make continued improvements to achieve and sustain exceptional standards of attendance and behaviour.
  - Leaders and the proprietor should strengthen the tracking of pupils' personal development experiences, to ensure that they provide extensive opportunities to all pupils.
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## About this inspection

Inspectors carried out this standard inspection under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, and checked the school's compliance with the independent school standards. These are the requirements set out in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

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

Inspectors spoke with pupils, staff, leaders and the proprietor during the inspection.

Inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school caters for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, predominantly autism and social, emotional and mental health needs. All pupils who attend this school have an education, health and care plan.

The school is an independent special school. The school has two sites: Wild Goose Lodge, Shepherds Patch, Slimbridge, Gloucestershire GL2 7BP and Park House, Montpellier Road, Gloucester GL1 1LF.

Since the previous standard inspection in June 2023, the school received a material change inspection in December 2024. This was to extend the age range and change the registration of the site. Since this additional inspection, the school has opened the second site listed above.

The school uses one unregistered alternative provider.

The name of the proprietor is Belong Learning CIC. The chair of the proprietor body is James Evans.

The fee that the school charges is £61,958.

The email address of the school is [reception.gloucestershire@belonglearning.co.uk](mailto:reception.gloucestershire@belonglearning.co.uk)

Headteacher: Saar Yaniv

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## Independent school standards

Independent school standards are either met or not met for each category.

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### 1. Quality of education provided

Standards met

All standards have been met.

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**2. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils**

Standards met

All standards have been met.

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**3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils**

Standards met

All standards have been met.

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**4. Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors**

Standards met

All standards have been met.

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**5. Premises of and accommodation at schools**

Standards met

All standards have been met.

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**6. Provision of information**

Standards met

All standards have been met.

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**7. Manner in which complaints are handled**

Standards met

All standards have been met.

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**8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools**

Standards met

All standards have been met.

**Lead inspector:**


James Oldham, His Majesty's Inspector

**Team inspector:**

Sarah Favager-Dalton, His Majesty's Inspector

## Facts and figures used on inspection

This data was available to the inspector at the time of the inspection.

 This data is from 12 May 2026

**Total pupils**

48

**School capacity**

50

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

48

**Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support**

48

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## 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.

### **Insufficient evidence**

Inspectors were unable to gather reliable enough evidence to grade an evaluation area. This is rare and normally only happens if there are no pupils on roll at the school.

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