

Batchley First and Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116721
Local Authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	358014
Inspection dates	28–29 March 2011
Reporting inspector	David Shears

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

Type of school	First
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	260
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Maureen Muckle
Headteacher	Matthew Whiteley
Date of previous school inspection	20 February 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 19 lessons taught by 12 different teachers, and held meetings with representative members of the governing body, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at policies, planning documentation, assessment data and pupils' work. They analysed the questionnaires returned by 151 parents and carers, 28 members of staff and 68 pupils.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- How consistently do teaching and learning help all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, to make good progress, particularly in mathematics at Key Stage 1 and writing at Key Stage 2?
- How effective is the curriculum in supporting the development of core skills?
- How effectively do leaders and managers identify, monitor and evaluate specific areas of development to ensure better progress?
- How effectively are children learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage, particularly in the outdoor provision?

Information about the school

Batchley is an average sized primary school. The very large majority of pupils are of White British origin, with a few who are of Asian origin. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is higher than the national average; their needs are varied, including those with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties, those who have speech, language and communication needs as well as those with moderate learning difficulties. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is higher than the national average. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below average. The school has its own nursery, which includes 'Nursery Plus', a unit for children with global delay and autism that caters for up to eight children. A separate nursery and child centre shares the site, along with a special school, although these are externally managed and are, therefore, subject to separate inspection. The school has a breakfast club for pupils at the school, which is not run by the governing body and is inspected separately. The school has achieved Healthy Schools status, Activemark, Eco-school bronze and the Leading Parent Partnership award.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Batchley First and Nursery is a good school. It has made rapid progress since the last inspection when its overall effectiveness was satisfactory. In particular, the quality of teaching and learning has improved so that it is now good overall. As a result, pupils make good progress from their low starting points, leaving Year 4 with attainment that is broadly in line with the national average.

Leaders and managers have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development and these are clearly identified in the school improvement plan. Action plans are written to show how improvements are to be achieved. Key stage leaders have weekly meetings with staff to review the previous week's learning. Plans are annotated by individual staff so that planning for the next week can take these into account. Progress meetings track the progress of all pupils and where any are identified as being in danger of underachieving, a range of strategies are used to give extra support. Through effective self-evaluation the school demonstrates a good capacity to improve further.

Teachers choose activities that will engage pupils and enhance their learning. They have good relationships with pupils, who behave well in lessons and have a positive attitude towards their learning. Although activities are planned to meet the needs of all pupils, they are not always fully effective because they are not consistently based on developing pupils' skills. This makes it more difficult for pupils to know what they need to do to be successful in their learning, particularly in Key Stage 1. There are good examples of marking that clearly show pupils where they need to improve, although this is not consistent across the school.

The care of pupils is a particular strength of the school. As a result, pupils feel safe and secure and enjoy coming to school. The 'Nursery Plus' unit equally cares well for its pupils who are making good progress towards their learning goals as a result of the good provision and leadership and management.

Leaders ensure that the school's work is monitored. However this monitoring is not consistently focused well enough on the identified priorities, making it difficult for the school to demonstrate how effectively it is making improvements in these areas. Middle leaders are keen to promote their subjects, although their role is not sufficiently developed, particularly in monitoring their areas. While the governing body is supportive of the school, it is over-reliant on the headteacher to provide information and this limits its ability to challenge the school effectively.

The attendance of pupils remains a challenge for the school. Staff work well with the Educational Welfare Officer to tackle the problem. Much focus has been on pupils who are persistently absent and this has resulted in a dramatic fall in the number of pupils who are absent for too long. The school has started texting parents and carers and is considering

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first day calling for pupils with unexplained absence. As a result, although attendance is currently low it is rapidly improving.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise levels of attendance so that they are at least in line with the national average by May 2012, through developing closer links with parents and carers of pupils whose attendance is below average.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning so that it is consistently good or better, particularly in Key Stage 1, and thereby raising attainment at the end of Year 4, by ensuring that:
 - work for all groups of pupils is consistently planned with a focus on the development of skills
 - all pupils know and understand what they need to do to be successful in their learning
 - marking consistently tells pupils what they need to do to improve.
- Improve the effectiveness of leaders and managers by ensuring that:
 - monitoring is consistently focused on the main priorities of the school and demonstrates improvements in pupils' learning and progress.
 - middle leaders have opportunities to develop their leadership roles
 - the governing body has a better understanding of data so that it is able to challenge the school with regard to the learning and progress of pupils.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

Children begin school with levels of attainment that are well below those that are expected nationally. They make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage so that by the time they enter Year 1, their attainment is below average. In Years 1 to 4, pupils from all backgrounds make good progress and leave with average attainment, although progress is inconsistent, particularly in Key Stage 1. Both girls and boys make similar progress and there is no disparity between pupils who are known to be entitled to free school meals and their peers. Pupils make good progress in writing at Key Stage 2 because work is carefully matched to their needs. For example, in one lesson, pupils were very clear about the skills they needed to be able to use to succeed. However, at Key Stage 1, progress in mathematics is slower because the work is not consistently at the right level, occasionally being too difficult or too easy. The progress of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those with speech and language and communication difficulties, is good. This is because they are given good support. For example, in one lesson these pupils were given a word bank and key words to help them scaffold their writing. Pupils with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties also make good progress because they are supported well by teaching assistants who help them manage their behaviour and focus on their learning.

Pupils have a good understanding of what it means to be healthy. They know which foods are healthy and take part in a wide range of physical activities both in school and as an extra-curricular activity. The school has achieved both the Healthy Schools status and

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Activemark. Pupils know how to keep safe in school, including the importance of e-safety. They behave well both in lessons and on the playground. They make a good contribution to the school community in a variety of ways, such as children in the Early Years Foundation Stage having a 'special day' person who takes the register to the office, through to older pupils who are play leaders, being responsible for play equipment. Pupils care well for each other and this extends beyond the school, such as singing for people in local sheltered accommodation. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. They have a good understanding of right and wrong and behave well. There are opportunities for their cultural development, such as having a visit from an American jazz singer who subsequently accompanied the pupils to a music festival. However, there are not enough opportunities for pupils to explore their spiritual development. Pupils' development of workplace and other skills is satisfactory because they leave with core skills that are average, and attendance is still low though improving.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	4
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is good because lessons enable pupils to make good progress. Teachers use questions well to check understanding, and have a good subject knowledge. There is often a good pace to lessons so that they become exciting and engaging. Learning objectives are often made clear, although these are occasionally not referred to enough during lessons. Targets are used well in most lessons to help focus pupils on their learning.

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Teaching assistants are deployed effectively to meet the learning needs of pupils, particularly those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Good use is made of information and communication technology (ICT), such as interactive whiteboards, to engage pupils and maintain their attention. The assessment of previous learning, along with pupils' own self-evaluation, helps teachers to plan well for future lessons, though they sometimes do not build well enough on pupils' developing skills.

The school has rightly focused on the need to promote pupils' speaking and listening skills, leading to improved writing. The curriculum gives pupils good opportunities to practise these skills through different subjects. However, the practising of mathematical skills is still under-developed. Pupils are using their ICT skills to record their work, for example, pupils in one class used the computer to record a description of an insect. There is a good range of opportunities for pupils to learn through experience, by taking them on trips and having special visitors to the school, including musicians, actors, a tree surgeon and a vet. Pupils learn how to plant trees and pick fruit. There are many extra-curricular activities for them to engage with, including guitar club, cookery, sewing, ICT and sporting activities such as basketball, football and rugby. There are particular opportunities for more-able pupils to excel, for example, in gymnastics and art. Physical educational and sport are strengths of the curriculum.

Pupils are well cared for at all stages in the school. Good arrangements are in place for transition into starting school through to those for pupils leaving to go to their middle schools. The care of pupils for whom circumstances make them vulnerable is particularly strong. The school runs different groups such as the nurture group and a feelings group to help meet the social and emotional needs of these pupils, and there are clear examples of those who have made significant improvement in their behaviour and attitudes as a result. Parents and carers speak highly of this provision. Good work has been done in working with parents and carers of pupils who are persistently absent, although this has not been beneficial with all parents and carers of pupils for whom attendance is below average.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Senior leaders and managers, led by the headteacher, have a strong sense of purpose and direction, and lead by example. Assessment is embedded and used well to track the progress of groups of pupils. Using this data, the school identifies areas for improvement. Alongside this is the use of assessment data to check that individual pupils are making enough progress. A separate team has been established to look specifically at the quality of teaching and this is already having a good effect in Key Stage 2, where new initiatives

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are being tested. While good work is being done to improve teaching and learning, this is not tracked carefully enough so that it demonstrates the effectiveness of initiatives. The governing body is very supportive of the school, and are particularly effective in promoting links between the school and the local community. However, governance is only satisfactory because its role in offering challenge is limited.

The school works hard in supporting parents and carers, including workshops on parenting, helping their children with their literacy and numeracy skills, and ICT. Other partners are used well to support the school, such as the nearby special school, occupational health and speech and language therapy. These are having a good effect on the personal and academic progress of pupils. Equal opportunities are good because the school rigorously identifies any discrimination or disparity in progress and addresses it. For example, a group of lower achieving girls have been given extra support so that they have the opportunity to catch up with their peers. Procedures for safeguarding are robust. In particular, the risk assessments are of good quality both for activities in school and trips out. The school promotes its own community cohesion well and pupils noticeably get on well together as a result. They are having a good impact on the local community such as designing a mosaic for the local pond and engaging with local people about their experiences in World War Two. The school has international links such as a school in Venezuela, where pupils communicated with each other through an internet link. Although there are some links within the county, there are plans to extend these further afield.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children settle quickly into the welcoming environment in the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are looked after well and quickly begin to make good progress. Relationships between pupils and adults are positive, which helps children to feel safe and secure.

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Parents and carers are warmly welcomed too, and encouraged to participate in their children's learning, such as for 'stay and play' sessions. Planning includes all areas of learning and has a good mixture of child-initiated and adult-led activities. The indoor environment is used well to support learning and the school has identified that the outdoor learning still needs further development, particularly in providing more opportunities for writing. Observations of how children are learning are noted carefully using a combination of notes and photographs. These assessments are used to identify areas for improvement. For example, creative development was identified as being weaker and, as a result of initiatives, the percentage of children making good progress improved from 39% to 73% last year. This demonstrates the good leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage. However, assessments are not consistently used well enough to identify the next steps in children's learning.

Staff in the 'Nursery Plus' unit have a very positive impact on the children that attend. Their care is exemplary. The curriculum is carefully chosen to engage children. They make good progress towards their targets in numeracy and communication skills through exploring music, ICT, toys and creative play. The highly effective leadership identifies the needs of children and puts in place effective provision to meets those needs. Statutory assessments are completed and parents and carers are well supported in understanding how their children's future needs can be best met.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

An above average proportion of parents and carers responded to the questionnaire. Of these, the overwhelming majority were positive in their views about the school. All agreed that the teaching was good. The vast majority agreed with most of the statements in the questionnaire. A few parents and carers were concerned about the management of behaviour. While inspectors noted that a few pupils found good behaviour a challenge, it was managed well. A few parents and carers felt that they could be better informed about their children's progress. Inspectors found that there are a number of opportunities for parents and carers to find out about their children's progress such as through parents' and carers' evenings, annual reports and comments in the reading diaries. The headteacher is accessible to speak with parents and carers both before and after school.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Batchley First and Nursery School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 151 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 260 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	102	68	46	30	2	1	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	112	74	38	25	1	1	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	97	64	48	32	5	3	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	94	62	53	35	2	1	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	103	68	48	32	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	92	61	56	37	3	2	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	86	57	64	42	1	1	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	81	54	63	42	1	1	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	79	52	71	47	1	1	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	80	53	62	41	6	4	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	84	56	62	41	2	1	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	96	64	51	34	1	1	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	116	77	32	21	2	1	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



30 March 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Batchley First and Nursery School, Redditch, B97 6PD

Thank you for the welcome that we received when we visited your school recently. It was lovely to meet you all and find out about your school. We agree with you that you go to a good school.

You told us that you enjoy school and that you learn many new things. You particularly enjoy participating in sport and reading books. You also said that you enjoyed making new friends.

We enjoyed watching you work and play together, which you all do very well. We were impressed with your behaviour and your positive attitude towards your learning. You have a good relationship with your teachers and they plan interesting lessons for you to enjoy. All this helps you to make good progress.

We have asked your teachers to make sure that you make good progress in every class by concentrating on developing your skills as much as possible and by letting you know how to be successful in your learning in each lesson. We have asked that when your teachers mark your work, they always tell you how to improve.

We have asked your senior leaders to check carefully how successfully it is making changes in the school, and to measure the impact it is having on your learning. We want the middle managers to have more opportunities to lead their subjects. We have asked the governing body to gain a better understanding of your progress so that they can help more effectively.

Finally, we have asked the school to make sure that you all come to school regularly. All of you can help by telling your parents and carers how important it is to come to school every day, when you are not too ill.

Thank you again for a lovely two days. We wish you all the very best in your future lives.

Yours sincerely

David Shears

Lead inspector

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