

Batchley First and Nursery School

Cherry Tree Walk, Batchley, Redditch B97 6PD

Inspection dates	19–20 May 2016
Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- This is a happy, caring and inclusive school, where children are nurtured and thrive as a result.
- The headteacher, senior leaders and governors have successfully improved the school since the last inspection.
- Teaching, learning and assessment are now good. Teachers provide interesting and motivating lessons and pupils learn well as a result.
- Pupils achieve well from their starting points. They make good progress, particularly in reading and writing. More pupils are now attaining national averages in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Learning gets off to a good start in the early years. A broad range of interesting activities enable children to explore, experiment and grow in confidence.
- Pupils' behaviour in lessons, in the playground and throughout the school is good. At times, it is outstanding. Pupils arrive in school eager to learn and have good attitudes to school.
- Pupils feel safe in school because their welfare is given high priority and all staff follow safeguarding procedures. Pastoral support for pupils is at the heart of the school's work.
- The school's work to support vulnerable pupils and their families is strength of the school.
- The governing body has improved significantly since the last inspection. Governors are now knowledgeable about their role and provide effective challenge and support to school leaders.
- The school has a strong partnership with its parents. The vast majority are positive about all aspects of the school's work.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- While attendance is rising, it is still below national levels. Too many pupils are regularly absent and this affects the rate of their progress.
- Pupils' progress in mathematics is not as good as in reading and writing.
- The most able pupils are sometimes given tasks that lack challenge; this does not allow them to develop their skills and deepen their understanding further.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen those strategies that the school currently uses to improve the attendance of all pupils so that attendance levels reach national levels and the proportion who are regularly absent reduces.
- Further improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment to secure consistently rapid rates of progress for all pupils and to raise achievement, particularly in mathematics, by ensuring that teachers:
 - use every opportunity to deepen pupils’ mathematical reasoning and problem-solving skills
 - ensure that pupils use a range of mathematical vocabulary and have access to a wider range of resources to aid their understanding
 - provide more opportunities for pupils to apply their mathematical skills in other subjects
 - consistently set high expectations for learning, particularly for the most able.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The headteacher, senior leaders and governors have effectively and determinedly tackled the issues identified at the last inspection. As a result, the school has made the improvements needed to be good. Senior leaders and governors now have much higher expectations of staff and pupils. Teachers are held to account for the progress of their pupils.
- Leaders have set the right priorities for development over the last two years. All staff share the vision that pupils will become 'the best that they can be'. Staff talk about having been on a 'journey of improvement together'. They are now working together as a strong team to provide the best learning and personal experiences for their pupils.
- An inclusive and very welcoming culture has been created and is at the heart of the school's ethos. The school's motto of pupils as 'VIPS', where everyone is 'valued, inspired, progressing and secure', ensures a nurturing environment where pupils thrive and develop as learners.
- Senior leaders and governors have a good understanding of the strengths of the school and the key priorities for further development, which inform the school development plan.
- Leaders have good systems in place to check the work of teachers. They regularly review the progress that different groups of pupils make and ensure that action is taken to ensure that all have an equal chance to succeed. Following the last inspection, senior leaders have put actions in place to improve the teaching of reading, writing and mathematics. Initiatives such as increased phonics time and the use of key texts have rapidly improved progress in reading and writing by the end of Year 4. The progress in improving mathematics has not been as rapid due to some changes in subject leadership.
- Subject leaders use their good knowledge and understanding to make an effective contribution to school improvement. Leadership is more widely distributed so that more people can check the quality of teaching and learning. A new school portal ensures that all staff have access to development plans and all school documents.
- Good-quality professional development has led to a confident, well-motivated staff. The school has recently set up a teaching assistant network for the Redditch area so that teaching assistants have opportunities to learn from each other and work with other providers.
- The new curriculum motivates learners and better meets their interests. Pupils say that 'learning is much more fun'. Leaders are correctly reviewing and developing the curriculum to ensure that the best learning opportunities are available across the school.
- Teachers use a chosen book as the basis to plan themes and topics which are effectively planned to link learning across subjects. For example, in Year 1, the book 'The curious garden' was used to spark pupils' enthusiasm as they grew grass, designed a garden and wrote about this, and measured the size of a garden. Literacy skills are now well promoted throughout the curriculum. There are not always enough opportunities to develop pupils' mathematical skills in a range of subjects. Some gaps in learning still remain for some pupils because of less effective teaching in the past.
- The curriculum has been designed to provide pupils with many opportunities that they may not otherwise have. The arts feature prominently. The school hired Redditch Theatre so that the whole school could perform music from the compact disk they made. The school choir has sung in Birmingham Symphony Hall. Pupils talked animatedly about how they will soon be singing in the Albert Hall. An artist worked with the children on two- and three-dimensional art in the corridors. This enabled them to learn new skills, such as sculpting.
- The primary physical education and sport funding is used effectively to enhance the skills of teachers and pupils and therefore improve outcomes for pupils. Funding includes the provision of specialist coaches, such as for dance and gymnastics, and a wide range of after-school sports clubs. This has enabled pupils to participate in a wide range of competitions and achieve considerable success. Pupils are current local champions in hockey, cricket and basketball.
- Actions to improve the effectiveness of additional funding for disadvantaged pupils, an issue at the last inspection, have been effective. Funding is well used to support the large numbers of disadvantaged pupils throughout the school through the use of additional adult support and to give pupils access to the full range of school activities. Funding is now spent, and checked, more effectively and gaps are closing rapidly. In the 2015 assessments, in Year 2, these pupils performed better than their peers and other similar pupils nationally.

- Leaders and staff provide effective support for vulnerable pupils, those with additional needs and their families. Ready access to the multi-agency team based in the school means that families can quickly be signposted to the help and support they need. One parent said: 'They support the family here as much as the child'. The school has many examples of effective support given to pupils experiencing difficulties. Pupils make good progress from their starting points whether in class, working in groups or in the nurture group. The leadership of the provision for these pupils is good.
- There is a strong and effective focus on supporting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The school's own rules of tolerance and democracy ensure that pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. Pupils are able to talk about how the school elections mirror those of the 2015 General Election, and how this has helped them understand about a democratic system. Activities within the curriculum, such as tasting Indian food, drawing mehndi patterns and African drumming, enable pupils to develop respect for people from other backgrounds and to treat everyone equally. Celebrating the Queen's 90th birthday by having a Royal Crown parade also helps reinforce British values.
- Parents are supportive of the school, its leadership and staff. One parent summed up the views of many with the comment: 'The nurturing, well-being and happiness of my children is paramount. There is an abundance of this. My children have come on in leaps and bounds!'
- The school works effectively with other schools in the area. Staff benefit from activities undertaken, such as looking at books to check pupils' progress with Year 5 teachers.
- The local authority has worked productively with the school since the previous inspection and supports it effectively. Senior leaders have welcomed the support given. The local authority supports the school's own evaluation of its performance.
- **The governance of the school**
 - The governing body responded decisively and speedily to address the issues found at the previous inspection. It has embraced the recommendations from the external review. The governing body has made significant changes to the way it works and holds leaders to account. By their own admission, governors have 'come a long, long way'. They now provide very effective support and challenge to the school and are much more involved in monitoring the school.
 - The governing body shares the ambition and aspirations of the headteacher to ensure the school continues to improve.
 - Governors are kept well informed by senior leaders but have established thorough systems to check things for themselves. They are knowledgeable about what the school does well and what still needs to be improved. They carry out a wide range of monitoring visits, each with a clear focus linked to the school improvement plan priorities.
 - Governors expect to see evidence of targets being met to agree with any recommendations for pay rises or promotion to sustain the improved picture of teaching and learning.
 - The governing body is aware of the impact of additional funding for disadvantaged pupils and for primary school PE and sport. They ensure it is spent effectively and carefully check how it is making a difference to pupils.
 - The governing body meets all its statutory duties.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Safeguarding leaders and governors ensure that the relevant training is undertaken by staff. Policies are up to date and procedures are robust. Effective relationships with other agencies ensure that pupils are kept safe and their welfare needs met.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- Teaching is good and much improved since the last inspection when it was found to require improvement. Senior leaders have taken effective action to address any weak teaching. The work in pupils' books and the school's own information show that teaching is now good over time.
- Relationships between pupils and staff are trusting and positive so that pupils want to do their best and are not afraid to 'have a go'. Pupils are developing good resilience in attempting to do this. This is helped by teachers using the strategy of '3 B4 Me'. Pupils are encouraged to try three different strategies before they ask for help. Pupils say this helps them to 'keep going if something is difficult'.
- Teachers often provide pupils with helpful information to extend their learning. Working walls help pupils identify what it is they already know and what they still need to find out. Resources are often well used to

help develop pupils' understanding of a concept. For example, in a Year 1 mathematics lesson, presents and teddies were used to help pupils practically work out how many presents Teddy had received for each of his seven birthdays. Correct mathematical vocabulary was used by both the teacher and the pupils. Occasionally in mathematics lessons, teachers do not use a wide enough range of resources effectively to help pupils' understanding of concepts or reinforce mathematical vocabulary sufficiently.

- Teaching assistants and additional staff provide effective support for learning. Prompt questions are carried about by teaching assistants and this often helps them use skilful questioning to check pupils' understanding, clarify misconceptions and make pupils think for themselves.
- Teachers generally provide lessons that capture the interest of pupils and motivate them. Teachers use a variety of activities to 'hook' pupils into learning. This is often done through visits and visitors. For example, Year 4 visited the Ancient Egypt exhibit at Birmingham Museum before writing about Tutankhamun. In the few lessons where activities are not as exciting, a few pupils can become disengaged.
- Well-planned lessons build carefully on what pupils already know to extend their learning. Sometimes pupils, particularly the most able, are not given enough opportunities to deepen their learning.
- Pupils fully understand the school's new marking system. They know what they have to do to improve their work. Personalised target ladders help pupils understand what they need to do next.
- The school's new assessment system checks pupils' progress against the expectations of what they should be able to do at different ages in all subjects. This links to the school's digital assessment system and enables teachers to quickly find any gaps in learning.
- The teaching of basic skills is good. It is stronger in literacy than in mathematics. This is because until recently much professional development has centred on developing literacy. There were many examples seen of teachers setting challenging tasks in literacy, enabling pupils to explore different texts and writing styles and to develop their literacy skills across different subjects. In a Year 4 lesson, for example, pupils were writing their own chapter book in the style of Jeremy Strong. They showed evident enjoyment of the task and were well challenged to improve their sentences and use a wide range of vocabulary and punctuation. Activities such as asking pupils to photograph themselves reading in the most unusual place have raised the profile of reading within the school.
- Teachers provide pupils with lots of opportunities to share their ideas and opinions. The use of strategies such as learning partners help pupils to work and learn together well. Most teachers give pupils good opportunities to give explanations and explain their reasoning. In some mathematics lessons, pupils are not given sufficient opportunities to develop these skills or to develop their problem-solving skills.
- Teachers regularly set homework in order to extend pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding. A recent project has centred on joint homework projects to help parents become fully involved in learning. Year 1 pupils spoke proudly of how they had designed and built houses for 'The Three Pigs' with their parents.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. The vast majority of parents who responded to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, confirmed that they feel their children are happy and safe in school.
- Pupils thrive in a happy, caring environment where their welfare and safety is paramount. They enjoy their time in school and most have good attitudes to learning. They are friendly, well mannered and respectful to visitors, staff and other pupils.
- Pupils say they feel safe in school and show good knowledge of how to stay safe. They show an age-appropriate understanding of how to use the internet safely.
- Pupils are well supported to keep healthy through a wide range of sporting activities and clubs.
- Pupils say that very occasionally there is 'a little bit of bullying'. They say this is quickly dealt with and school records confirm this. Pupils say they always have adults in school that they can talk to and that they 'will always sort everything out'.
- Pupils enjoy their responsibilities in school and take them seriously, such as council members or class ambassadors.

- The school's strong focus on pastoral support and the pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development equips pupils to be considerate and thoughtful towards others. Close liaison with a range of agencies helps promote pupils' emotional well-being, particularly for those pupils with additional needs.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. This is the case both in lessons and around the school and contributes to the orderly and harmonious community within the school.
- Pupils, staff and parents agree that behaviour is good in school. School records confirm that behaviour has improved and is now typically good over time.
- Pupils have a good understanding of the school's behaviour system. They know what they need to win merits and move through the different zones on the behaviour boards. Consistent implementation of this system by staff, and their high expectations for behaviour, help contribute to pupils' good behaviour.
- Occasionally in lessons when activities do not fully engage pupils' interests or the pace of learning is too slow, a small number of pupils become distracted and do not make as much progress as they should.
- The small number of pupils who find it more difficult to manage their own behaviour receive good support from staff to enable them to modify their behaviour and generally settle quickly to their work.
- Attendance is below average but is improving and moving closer to the national level. Since the last inspection, a range of strategies have been put in place to ensure that parents understand the impact that attendance has on the progress that pupils make. However, the proportion of pupils who are regularly absent, while reducing, remains above the national level.

Outcomes for pupils

are good

- Outcomes for pupils have improved since the last inspection. All groups of pupils are now making good progress from their starting points. Standards of attainment have risen and are becoming close to age-related expectations.
- There has been an improved trend over time in national assessments since 2013. In Year 2, in 2015, standards attained rose in reading and writing, being broadly in line with national averages. This reflects at least good progress from pupils' previous low starting points. The standards in mathematics, however, did not rise as rapidly and were below the national average.
- Current progress is good. Work in pupils' books and school information show that all groups are making good progress from their different starting points. Progress in mathematics is beginning to accelerate but does not yet match that in reading or writing.
- The proportion of pupils who achieved the expected level in the Year 1 phonics screening check has risen since 2013 and for the last two years has been at the national average. This is as a result of the consistent and accurate teaching of phonics and additional interventions for any pupil at risk of falling behind.
- Pupils who have special educational needs or disability receive close support from adults to ensure that all are secure in their learning. Pupils with particularly complex needs benefit from working within the nurture group or small support groups.
- Disadvantaged pupils are now making much better progress. In the 2015 national assessments at the end of Year 2, the previous gaps in attainment with other pupils in the school and pupils nationally closed. This is due to the close targeted support they receive. The majority of disadvantaged pupils currently at the school are making similar progress to other pupils.
- The most able pupils generally make similar progress to other pupils in school. However, occasionally work provided does not challenge the most able or help deepen their understanding, particularly in mathematics, and so they do not always reach their full potential.

Early years provision

is good

- Children start in the Nursery or Reception classes with skills and knowledge that are generally well below those typical for their ages, particularly in their communication and language skills and their personal, social and emotional development.
- Children get a good start to school. They make good progress throughout the early years. Previously, the

proportion of children who achieve a good level of development has been well below national levels. In 2015 there was a significant rise so that a much greater proportion of children reached the levels expected nationally, albeit still below average. Current school performance information indicates that this will increase further this year. This shows good progress from children's low starting points. Children are increasingly well prepared for learning in Year 1.

- These improved outcomes are due to the effective actions taken by the early years leader in improving the provision. Extended Nursery hours ensure that staff have more time to model language and social skills. A redevelopment of the outdoor area has successfully extended children's learning. Leadership of the early years is good.
- Staff now spend more time observing and assessing children so they can clearly identify next steps in learning and plan activities which are appropriate to their needs and interests. Parents say that they enjoy sharing their child's online 'Learning Journey' so that they are more closely involved in their learning.
- Classrooms and the outdoor area are lively and stimulating places. Activities stimulate children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning. Nursery children were observed developing their early writing skills by making marks and patterns in custard 'gloop' and excitedly hammering golf tees into fruit to develop their fine motor skills. In a Reception class, children worked enthusiastically on a range of activities centred on the book 'Farmer Duck'. They planted seeds, made labels for the Farm Shop, and re-told the story with actions.
- Children's problem-solving skills are well developed. For example, during an adult-led mathematics activity children had to estimate how many marbles it would take to balance the elephant on the giant scales. Children were eager to give reasons for their answers. At times, adults miss opportunities to develop children's mathematical vocabulary.
- Teaching of phonics is mostly accurate and helps children make good progress in reading and writing.
- Well-established, familiar routines in place secure good behaviour from all children. At times, behaviour is exemplary. Expectations are high and children respond well to them.
- The Nursery Plus specialist unit is very well led. Many of the children here live out of the immediate area so staff visit parents at home to talk about their child's needs. An excellent caring and nurturing environment is provided where robust tracking of children's progress enables staff to provide well-tailored activities. Children here have very complex needs and from their starting points often make outstanding progress.
- Throughout the early years children's welfare and safety are given the highest priority. As a result, children are happy, safe and confident. Relationships are strong. Parents are pleased with the start their children receive. One wrote: 'My child is in the Nursery and is excited about attending daily and thrives in a positive and nurturing learning environment.'

School details

Unique reference number	116721
Local authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	10009254

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

Type of school	First
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	290
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jane Sutherland
Headteacher	Matt Whiteley
Telephone number	01527 62926
Website	www.batchleyfirstschool.co.uk
Email address	office@batchley.worcs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	5–6 March 2014

Information about this school

- The school is an average-sized first school.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils for whom the school receives pupil premium funding is above average. Pupil premium funding is additional government funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or disability is above average.
- Children in the two Reception classes attend full time. Children in the main Nursery class attend for four hours a day.
- The school has two specialist provision bases funded by the local authority. A 'Nursery Plus' unit is for children who have special educational needs or disability from across the Redditch area. Children attend for either morning or afternoon sessions. The nurture unit is for pupils from Year 1 and Year 2 who have significant emotional and behavioural needs.
- Since the last inspection the school has grown and moved to two-form entry throughout. There have been a significant number of teaching staff changes.
- The local authority has provided support to the school since the last inspection and work has been carried out with a local network of schools.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 19 lessons across all year groups. Four of these were observed jointly with senior leaders.
- Inspectors looked at a range of pupils' work, either in lessons or as a separate activity.
- Meetings took place with staff, pupils, governors and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspectors took account of the 36 parents who responded to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and 30 written comments. Parents were also spoken to at the start of the school day.
- Inspectors heard pupils read, attended an assembly and observed break and lunchtime. Inspectors reviewed a wide range of documents including the school's own check on its performance, the school's information about pupils' learning and progress, planning and monitoring documents and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.

Inspection team

Mary Hughes, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Dawn White	Ofsted Inspector
Sarah Mallam	Ofsted Inspector

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