

# Belford First School

West Street, Belford, Northumberland NE70 7QD

## Inspection dates

22–23 March 2016

## Overall effectiveness

**Requires improvement**

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Require improvement
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- Teaching has not been consistently good enough over time to ensure that pupils are achieving well in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils supported through the pupil premium do not make the accelerated progress required to move closer to the levels other pupils attain nationally.
- Attendance is too low and this has a negative impact on some pupils' opportunities to learn.
- Leaders have not taken robust actions to improve pupils' achievement promptly in reading, writing and mathematics across key stage 1 and key stage 2.
- Subject leaders do not have a clear enough overview of the strengths and weaknesses in pupils' learning across the school.
- Governors are committed and supportive of the school. However, they do not provide sufficient challenge to have a discernible impact upon pupils' achievement and attendance.

### The school has the following strengths

- The quality of teaching and provision in the early years is good. As a result, children make good progress from their starting points and increasing proportions are well prepared to start Year 1.
- Provision for pupils who have special educational needs or disability is well planned. These pupils are well supported in school and generally make at least expected progress.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength of the school. Pupils behave well in lessons and at social times; they are polite and courteous.
- Effective systems, practice and staff training are in place to keep pupils safe.

## Full report

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the consistency of teaching and learning by:
  - setting high expectations for what pupils can achieve
  - securing the recently introduced approaches to assessing and recording pupils' progress and using this to match work effectively to pupils' needs
  - sharing effective teaching practice both within school and using the expertise in local outstanding schools
  - deploying teaching assistants more effectively.
  
- Develop leadership across the school by:
  - ensuring the school's self-evaluation takes full account of pupils' outcomes and that this is specifically linked to the school's improvement plans
  - making more effective use of the pupil premium so that disadvantaged pupils make accelerated progress to close gaps in attainment with other pupils
  - developing the leadership skills of subject leaders who are new to their roles so that they have a greater understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in pupils' learning across the school
  - ensuring that governors provide greater levels of challenge to all leaders.
  
- Improving pupils' attendance by:
  - ensuring that all pupils and parents are clear about the importance of good attendance
  - continuing with the recently introduced approaches to tackling attendance levels where these are too low.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### requires improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement. Over time, senior leaders, including governors, have not been effective enough to ensure good teaching and pupil achievement. They have not acted promptly enough to address low levels of attendance.
- Leaders and governors have been overly positive in their overall judgements of the quality of teaching and pupils' outcomes. While they have an analysis of the school's pupil progress information and systems for checking the quality of teaching, they do not use this information to arrive at accurate conclusions.
- Subject leaders for English and mathematics are very new to their roles. Relevant training has been established to enhance their skills. At present their skills for evaluating the quality of provision in English and mathematics are at an early stage of development.
- There is effective leadership of the provision for pupils with special educational needs. Links with parents and other agencies ensure that pupils receive the right support. The leader for special educational needs provision checks the effectiveness of the provision. This has a positive impact upon the personal development and learning of these pupils.
- Pupils enjoy a wide range of subjects through the curriculum. The school has an effectively planned curriculum based around the national curriculum subjects through topics, which motivate pupils' learning. Careful consideration is given to ensure that mixed-aged classes develop their learning without repeating work. Pupils do not have enough opportunities to apply their skills in writing and mathematics in subjects such as science. Pupils have access to a wide range of after-school clubs which enrich the curriculum.
- The school's spending of the pupil premium funding has not had the necessary effect. In 2015 the gaps in attainment between Year 2 disadvantaged pupils and other pupils nationally were too large, particularly in reading. The attendance of some disadvantaged pupils is too low and this sets back their learning.
- The additional funding for sport and physical education in primary schools is used effectively to increase the opportunities pupils have to enjoy physical activities and to develop key resources such as the school's cycle track. Pupils take part in a wide range of competitive sports and after-school clubs. This has increased pupils' participation and is helping them to develop healthy lifestyles.
- Pupils have a good understanding of personal responsibility and have opportunities to develop their understanding of democracy. For example, the school council has made recommendations on improvements to school dinners which have resulted in a higher uptake by pupils.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong. Pupils learn about a wide range of cultures and world faiths. Such opportunities and the school's 'golden rules' promote the pupils' understanding of British values and prepare them well for life in modern Britain.
- The headteacher researches effective practice beyond the school to improve the quality of teaching and school leadership. For example, she has established links with an outstanding school outside of the local authority to share good practice and ways to improve pupils' learning. It is too early to determine the impact of this work.
- **The governance of the school**
  - Governors are very supportive of the school. However, they do not provide rigorous challenge in relation to pupils' outcomes or in improving pupils' attendance levels. Consequently, actions to improve outcomes for the most-able pupils and disadvantaged pupils and improving attendance levels have not been introduced swiftly enough.
  - Governors ensure that relevant systems are in place to manage staff performance and that pay progression for teachers is linked to their performance.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders have put strong, robust systems and practice in place. Staff and governors receive regular and appropriate training such as to increase their confidence of how to recognise the signs of radicalisation and extremism.

### Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

### requires improvement

- The quality of teaching over time is inconsistent across key stage 1 and key stage 2. As a result, too few pupils are achieving the higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Where teaching is less effective, teachers' expectations are too low in relation to what pupils can achieve and sometimes pupils spend too much time completing work which they have already mastered. This

limits the depth and breadth of their learning.

- In some classes, teaching assistants are not deployed to have a positive enough effect on pupils' learning. Where teaching assistants have clear guidance about what their role is in lessons, they have a greater impact on pupils' engagement and learning.
- Sometimes the work is pitched at too high a level for less-able pupils and they struggle to make progress. Equally, the most-able pupils are sometimes not provided with enough guidance to enable them to succeed with their work.
- On occasions, teachers do not make their expectations clear enough. When this happens, pupils are not clear about how much work is expected in the time available and this can reduce how much work they get through.
- The presentation of pupils' work varies. Sometimes pupils will produce very high standards of joined-up writing in their books and then revert to printing in other books.
- The teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds that they make) is well structured for the early years classes through to the key stage 1 pupils. As a result, the proportions of pupils reaching the required standard in phonics have increased. Pupils make effective use of their skills when encountering unknown words in their reading.
- In some instances, the teaching of reading does not provide pupils with sufficient time to attempt the more challenging comprehension questions. As a result, pupils do not get the opportunity to develop their skills beyond the more straightforward questions.
- The recently introduced assessment system linked to the new national curriculum is starting to provide staff and leaders with a measure of the progress made by pupils in reading, writing and mathematics. The system is not yet fully secure in providing detailed analyses of pupils' progress.
- Where teaching is stronger teachers plan effectively for the complexities of mixed-aged classes; they match work closely to pupils' learning needs and make effective use of practical resources. This has a positive impact on pupils' learning and attitudes to work.
- Pupils benefit from a range of homework that is linked to reading, mathematics and spelling. Reading records show that pupils are heard to read regularly and that they receive support with reading at home.

## **Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good**

### **Personal development and welfare**

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are self-confident and prepared to put forward their ideas in a thoughtful way. This is because teachers provide opportunities for pupils to share ideas and collaborate in paired work and small groups. Pupils speak to a wider audience when they take part in activities such as presenting readings in assembly.
- The development of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength of the school. The school's curriculum, along with a wide range of visits and visitors, develops the whole child. The school promotes pupils' aspirations well through events such as presentations by an Olympic athlete.
- Leaders work determinedly to secure the necessary additional support for more vulnerable pupils. Consequently these pupils develop well socially and emotionally and are successful in school.
- Pupils have a good understanding of the types of bullying and report that they could not remember any instances of bullying taking place. The school has supportive systems, such as the 'worry box', if pupils want to share any concerns that they have with staff. Pupils are clear that if they should report any incidents of bullying to staff they are confident that they would be dealt with.
- Pupils feel safe and valued as members of the school community. They know how to keep themselves safe, including when online. Pupils and parents all agree that the school is a safe place to learn.

### **Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils work and cooperate well together in lessons and are keen to help each other learn. Parents and pupils are very positive about behaviour at the school.
- The school's 'golden rules' promote positive behaviour. Pupils are actively encouraged both to follow these rules and spot when others are following the rules well.
- During playtimes and lunchtimes pupils are well behaved and engage in lively games or in quieter sociable activities. An extensive range of resources are available for pupils to develop their physical and creative skills. Equally, more quiet activities, such as giant dominoes, are available for pupils to choose.

Pupils are more closely supervised when they select activities such as the climbing frame or cycle track.

- Levels of attendance are below those found nationally and are particularly low for those pupils supported through pupil premium funding and pupils who have special educational needs or disability. The school has recently taken a stronger approach to addressing this aspect of its work. The impact of these actions so far has been variable.

## Outcomes for pupils

## require improvement

- Outcomes for pupils require improvement because attainment varies too much across key stage 1 and key stage 2. This is because the quality of teaching has not been consistently good enough over time.
- By the end of Year 2 too few pupils achieve the higher levels of attainment expected for the most able in reading, writing and mathematics. There is some early evidence that the school is beginning to address this issue.
- In the last two years, the gap in attainment between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils nationally has been too large. This is because disadvantaged pupils do not reach the higher levels in all subjects. Disadvantaged pupils currently underperform at the higher expectations for their age when compared to other pupils within school.
- Pupils who have special educational needs or disability generally make expected progress and some make more than expected progress. This is because the school works well with parents and other agencies to plan appropriate provision for them.
- Pupils' achievement in the Year 1 phonics check is improving. In 2015, the proportion of pupils who achieved the expected standard in phonics matched the levels found nationally.
- In 2015, the proportion of children in Reception achieving a good level of development increased, although it remained below the figures achieved nationally.
- At the end of Year 4, the proportions of pupils who have been well prepared to start middle school have varied over time. Current pupil attainment information indicates that more pupils are on track to achieve the expectations for Year 4.

## Early years provision

## is good

- Since the previous inspection, the school has included both two-year-olds and Nursery children as part of the early years. Provision for two-year-olds is in a separate room which is appropriately resourced and staffed. Nursery children join the Reception children and they work together in the same area of the school. These changes have been well managed by the headteacher to deliver effective early years provision.
- The number of children starting in Reception varies from year to year. While most children start Reception with skills and abilities typical for their age, some start below what is typical in reading, writing and mathematics. The proportion of pupils reaching a good level of development increased substantially in 2015 and the school's progress information indicates that this is due to increase further by the end of the year. As a result, more children are generally well prepared for learning in Year 1.
- The quality of teaching is good. The early years teacher works well with other staff to create an effective team which provides teaching well planned to match the range of children's needs.
- Adult-led teaching provides effective development of early skills in reading, writing and mathematics. Where appropriate, Nursery and Reception children work alongside one another during these sessions. As a result, the work is well matched to children's needs and they make good progress.
- A wide range of stimulating activities effectively motivate children to develop their communication and reading, writing and number skills. For example, indoors, a group of children worked in the garage both 'servicing the car' and 'taking phone calls' from customers. Outdoors, a pair of lambs provided a superb stimulus to develop children's powers of observation and discussion.
- Staff intervene effectively when children are choosing from the available learning activities both indoors and outside. They question, motivate and encourage children to engage with learning. Consequently children develop their reading, writing and number skills. At the same time they increase their levels of independence and cooperation.
- Staff have high expectations for behaviour and children respond positively. During the tidying away of resources at the end of a learning session outdoors, well-established routines resulted in all children

promptly helping. This encouraged children's personal responsibility and ensured effective use of time.

- Staff work well with parents and there are strong systems for communication between the school and parents. As a result, parents are well aware of assessments of their children's progress. There are good partnerships with other professionals, for example the speech and language service, to ensure that the school meets all children's needs effectively.
- Safety is paramount to staff; children are well supervised in a safe, secure classroom and outside learning area. Safeguarding is effective and all welfare requirements are met.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	122244
<b>Local authority</b>	Northumberland
<b>Inspection number</b>	10003793

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

<b>Type of school</b>	First
<b>School category</b>	Maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	2–9
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	69
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr P Green
<b>Headteacher</b>	Miss J Robinson
<b>Telephone number</b>	01668 213 372
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.belfordfirst.northumberland.sch.uk">www.belfordfirst.northumberland.sch.uk</a>
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:admin@belfordfirst.northumberland.sch.uk">admin@belfordfirst.northumberland.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	7–8 October 2010

## Information about this school

- The school is much smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- There is a part-time Nursery class and one full-time Reception class. The school also has provision for two-year-olds one afternoon per week.
- The vast majority of pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is similar to the average found nationally. (Pupil premium is the funding the school receives for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those looked after by the local authority.)
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or disability support and with an education, health and care plan (EHCP) is well above that found nationally.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed a range of lessons and part lessons in all four classes. The headteacher joined the inspector for the observations in lessons.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour around school and reviewed the school's promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The inspector observed pupils in the playground and during lunchtime.
- The inspector scrutinised pupils' work in their books and in the learning journals of children in the early years. The headteacher joined the inspector for the scrutiny of a sample of English and mathematics books.
- The inspector held meetings with the headteacher and teachers responsible for leading English and mathematics, and the special educational needs coordinator. The inspector met with a group of governors, including the chair of the governing body, and with a representative from the local authority.
- A group of pupils discussed their opinions about the school, their attitudes and their learning with the inspector. The inspector listened to four key stage 1 and key stage 2 pupils read.
- The inspector took account of the 16 responses on Ofsted's online parent survey, Parent View. The inspector held discussions with parents at the start of the school day on day two.
- The inspector observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including: minutes from meetings of the governing body; pupils' achievement information; the school's evaluation of its own performance and the development plan. Behaviour and attendance records and information relating to safeguarding were also scrutinised.

## Inspection team

Michael Reeves, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector



Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making a complaint about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted). If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit [www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk), or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: [www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted)

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence), write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk).

This publication is available at [www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted).

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

© Crown copyright 2016

