School report

Bretforton First School

New Street, Bretforton, Evesham, Worcestershire WR11 7JS

Inspection dates	5–6 July 2016
Overall effectiveness	**Inadequate**
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Inadequate
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Require improvement
Early years provision	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- Ineffective leadership for at least the last two years has resulted in declining pupil outcomes, staff retention, parental confidence and pupil numbers.
- The high staff turnover and large number of resignations has led to highly disrupted learning. As a result of this, the development of pupils' skills has declined and many are not well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- The acting headteacher has successfully led initial improvements since her appointment in January 2016. However, she has secured a promotion elsewhere, which will leave no senior leadership capacity.
- Governors and the local authority have very recently put together an appropriate leadership plan for September 2016. However, it is not yet possible to know how effective this will be in stabilising the school.
- Teaching, learning and assessment require improvement. Prolonged teaching instability has led to inconsistent practice, low expectations and weak pupil progress over time.
- Pupil outcomes require improvement. Published results have fallen to below the national average for the past two years. Pupils' lack of basic skills prevents them from tackling harder work.
- Pupils' behaviour requires improvement. Staff expectations are not always high enough to establish a culture of consistently positive attitudes to learning.
- Leaders and managers have not ensured the school's curriculum has been keep fully up to date with national developments.
- Vulnerable pupils, such as those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are disadvantaged, are not catching up with their classmates. The gaps between these pupils and other pupils in the school remain the same.
- Everyone connected with the school is very frustrated with the time it has taken to resolve leadership and relationship issues. A culture of fear, tension and disharmony has hindered progress at this school for far too long.

The school has the following strengths

- The teamwork shown by the staff currently working in the school is strong and commendable. They have worked together well in challenging circumstances to start to improve provision, especially in Reception and Year 1.
- Governors have worked closely with the local authority to make important decisions and put the acting headteacher in place, support teaching and appoint permanent teaching staff for September.

Full report

In accordance with the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by ensuring that:
  - sustainable leadership and teaching is urgently put in place
  - previous relationship issues, disharmony and loss of parents' trust are not allowed to continue
  - the capacity of leadership and governance is developed, by increasing the focus on teaching and learning and distributing leadership roles
  - training and support is put in place to develop the leadership of the early years and special educational needs and disabilities
  - leaders and managers work closely with parents to improve trust, confidence and pupil numbers
  - improvement plans are more detailed and sharply focused on longer-term developments
  - the latest national curriculum and assessment changes are fully developed
  - an effective monitoring and evaluation system for leaders and governors is used to help rapidly improve teaching, learning and assessment
  - effective support is provided for vulnerable pupils, including those who have special educational needs and disabilities, less able and disadvantaged pupils
  - the statutory Department for Education requirements are kept up to date and available for parents on the school's website.

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning, assessment and pupil outcomes by:
  - providing consistent, high-quality teaching and pupil support
  - increasing the expectations of all pupils, especially the most able, to ensure they are consistently challenged to make the progress they are capable of
  - using assessment information to target teaching and ensure the needs of all groups, including vulnerable pupils, are fully met
  - ensuring the school's marking and feedback policy is consistently followed and effective in supporting pupil progress
  - improving pupils' attitudes to learning and producing quality work
  - sustaining and utilising the improvements started in Reception and Year 1.

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

The school may not appoint newly qualified teachers.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is inadequate

- Failing leadership and consequent relationship difficulties with staff has led to a significant number of experienced and temporary teachers suddenly leaving the school, sometimes only two months after starting. The substantive headteacher has not been able to retain a stable staff team and is currently absent from the school. Prolonged disruptions have resulted in declining pupil confidence, progress and attainment for the last two years.
- Governors have worked closely with the local authority to try and manage the situation. The local authority has supported the substantive headteacher by providing staff training and support for teachers, for example. The acting deputy headteacher was put in place from January 2016 and became the acting headteacher in March 2016, as the substantive headteacher has been absent since then. While the long-term leadership of the school has not been resolved quickly, local authority support has been consistent and appropriate, making a difference to the current pupils and staff. Two new teachers have been appointed to start in September, meaning the school will have three permanent teachers for the first time in a year.
- The acting headteacher has been able to provide stable leadership this term, which has had a positive impact on pupils and staff. She has led the school well through a very challenging time and overseen changes such as initial improvements to teaching, early years, communication and lunchtime arrangements. Parents, staff and pupils are unhappy that she will not be returning to the school in the autumn term. At the time this report was written, the substantive headteacher's future at the school was not known. However, the local authority and governors were able to explain to the inspector the new leadership arrangements for the school starting in September, which had been confirmed during this inspection.
- The quality of teaching has declined over the last two years, as a result of ongoing staffing disruptions and a failure to improve the provision in the school, by fully implementing the national curriculum changes for example. Since the acting headteacher's appointment, initial improvements have been made to teaching, learning and assessment but there is still much work to do. For example, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment has been evaluated, but this evaluation is overgenerous at times and does not highlight the lack of challenge for the most able pupils.
- Due to the temporary nature of staffing, the acting headteacher has taken on most leadership roles. The only other senior leader is responsible for managing the early years, special educational needs and disabilities. She has made a very positive start and will need further support to develop her experience and the effectiveness of the roles. Other staff enthusiastically lead areas such as the 'forest school' provision and the eco-committee.
- Parents have well-founded concerns about leadership failures over time in the school and their children's education. Nearly all parents who spoke to inspectors were frustrated about the number of staffing changes. Some parents have decided to take their children to different schools due to their child 'having eight teachers in three years' and unfulfilled promises from the substantive headteacher about staffing. Where stronger, stable teaching exists, such as in Reception and Year 1, parents are much happier with the education their children are receiving, although they also have concerns about the long-term leadership of the school.
- Parents' concerns regarding leadership and management are supported by Parent View (Ofsted's online questionnaire). Over half of the parents who have recently completed the questionnaire disagree that the school is well led and managed. Some parents also disagree that the homework their child receives is appropriate. Other aspects of the questionnaire are more positive. For example, all parents agree that their child feels safe at school.
- Use of pupil premium funding is not effective enough. This has mainly been used to provide additional staff to support disadvantaged pupils. Due to the very small numbers of pupils eligible for the pupil premium, meaningful comparisons with national information are unreliable. Current assessment information shows that the progress gap between disadvantaged and other pupils in the school has typically stayed the same. Consequently, further work needs to be done to ensure this gap closes rapidly.
- The school's curriculum does not meet the needs of all pupils. Some pupils are lacking basic reading, writing and mathematical skills. Disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs or disabilities are not catching up quickly enough. The changes to the national curriculum introduced nationally in 2014 have not been fully introduced. Other aspects of the curriculum are stronger, such as the development of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. The school has worked hard and achieved three 'green flags' as part of the national 'eco-schools' scheme. All pupils have been

involved in the development of the school's 'Peace Garden', designed to remember those that died in the first world war. Year 4 and 5 pupils enjoy an annual residential trip to an outdoor activities centre in Wales. Pupils learn about democracy and equality of opportunity through the election of the school council and house captains. Fundamental British values are taught through multicultural events, visiting speakers and charities adopted by each class. The opportunities provided by the school have improved pupils' preparation for life in modern Britain.

- Additional money to improve pupils' participation and ability in sport has been used effectively. The school has used this funding to improve playground equipment and train some of the pupils as 'playground leaders' and the 'school games organising crew'. The funding has also been used to pay for a sports coach to deliver some of the physical education, such as dance, gymnastics, athletics and games for all pupils, and provide a range of after-school clubs. As a result, pupils now take part in competitive sports with other schools and staff skills in teaching sports have been improved.
- **The governance of the school**
  - Governors have taken difficult decisions to manage the leadership of the school and mostly kept staff and parents informed of the changes. Governors have made good use of local authority advice to put other leadership arrangements in place and provide training and support for teaching.
  - Due to the continued emphasis on staffing and leadership, minutes of meetings show that governors do not always focus sufficiently on holding staff to account for improving teaching and pupil outcomes.
  - Governors report that the school's budget is currently manageable, although predictions for the current year are difficult due to the number of staffing changes. Pay decisions are linked to staff performance. Governors use information provided by the leaders to make annual decisions on pay awards for staff and have taken robust decisions when necessary.
  - Governors agree that the school's website does not currently contain all of the statutory information requested by the Department of Education and that this will need to be acted upon.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective and meet the minimum statutory requirements. Staff training is up to date and any concerns that arise are reported. Staff and governors have been trained in child protection and the prevention of extremism. Pupils say they feel safe because they are cared for and staff resolve issues they have. Leaders ensure that any pupil concerns are followed up thoroughly. Leaders and governors are aware that there are some aspects of safeguarding that can be strengthened to ensure all records are kept fully up to date, especially with the high number of staffing changes.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment — requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is too variable across the school. This is a result of inadequate leadership of teaching, a lack of staff training and high staff instability. Consequently, most pupils are not progressing at the speed of which they are capable and some of the current Year 5 pupils are not as well prepared for the next stage of their education in their new middle school as they should be.
- Teaching is often not challenging enough and does not meet the needs of pupils. The quality of teaching, learning and assessment has been checked but high staff turnover has hampered efforts to improve the effectiveness of teaching.
- Progress in lessons is limited by pupils' lack of skills in reading, writing and mathematics. This is a result of poor leadership and staff instability over several years. The current teachers and teaching assistants are making adjustments and providing some additional support to help pupils catch up, but there is a lot of ground to cover. The school's marking and feedback policy is not effective in helping pupils to make gains in their learning and is not being followed consistently across the school.
- Disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities are typically making the same progress as other pupils in the school, but not all of their needs are being met. Leaders have not fully assessed the difference the support is making over time and the changes that need to be made to improve the progress of these groups.
- Where teaching is weaker, pupils do not make sufficient progress. Such teaching does not consistently meet the learning needs of all pupils or challenge pupils enough to develop their knowledge. As a result, some pupils' misunderstandings are sometimes left unchecked and their progress is not as good as it could be. In these lessons, some pupils lose focus and their attention wanders, meaning attitudes to learning are not as strong as they should be.

- Teaching in some year groups is stronger. Children in Reception and pupils in Year 1 are developing better independent skills and improving their reading ability in particular. This is a result of stable teaching, effective staff teamwork and tasks set which challenge most groups of pupils. For example, in an English lesson seen, pupils developed their phonics, reading and writing skills well, as a result of effective organisation of groups and good adult subject knowledge.
- The teaching of writing requires improvement as expectations are typically too low and therefore pupils are not making the progress of which they are capable. Some older pupils have not developed sufficient independent learning skills in order to help them progress in writing without constant adult support.
- Pupils' progress and attainment in mathematics has been weak for some time. This is a result of fragmented leadership of the subject and a lack of staff development to bring teachers and teaching assistants up to date with 'mathematics mastery' for example. The school's current progress information suggests a slightly improved picture, but pupil outcomes are likely to remain below this year's national average when the results are confirmed.
- Strong relationships exist between staff and pupils. This includes having good respect for each other and showing resilience during a long period of upheaval at the school. Despite the changes at the school, most pupils are keen to learn and their needs are generally met because staff are dedicated and know the pupils well.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare — requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school and experiencing the curriculum on offer. Pupils were keen to tell the inspector about their learning and how well the staff treat them as individuals.
- Leaders promote pupils' confidence, physical and emotional well-being and give pupils time to discuss sensitive topics. Consequently, most pupils confidently try out new learning opportunities.
- Parents say their children are well cared for and are supportive of the school's actions to support pupils' personal development and welfare. However, some parents say that the large number of different teachers has adversely affected their child's confidence and progress.
- Pupils are aware of how to keep themselves and others safe. For example, they are knowledgeable about the dangers associated with the internet and road safety.
- Pupils are taught that bullying is unacceptable and they say they feel safe in school because adults are there to help them if needed.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Some pupils do not achieve well enough because the learning expectations set by teachers are not high enough. A small number of pupils do not show good attitudes to learning and cause some low-level disruption in lessons.
- Pupils have positive attitudes towards each other and show good respect to adults. Pupils say that all adults help resolve any problems that do occur and usually disagreements do not recur.
- Nearly all parents think that the school makes sure pupils are well behaved. Evidence collected during the inspection supports this, as pupils nearly always conduct themselves well around the school and in lessons.
- Pupils' attendance has been improving in the past and has been above the national average. However, attendance has fallen this year, mainly due to some medical needs, and is currently just below the national average. No pupils are persistently absent. Governors are aware that leaders will need to work with parents to improve attendance once again.

Outcomes for pupils — require improvement

- The school's current assessment information indicates a slightly better picture of pupils' progress this year. However, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard at the end of Year 2 is likely to remain below the national average this year. This is a result of the gaps in their skills following poor leadership and a high turnover of teachers. There is no national comparative achievement information for pupils in Years 3 to 5.
- Small pupil numbers in each year group mean that the proportion of pupils which achieve the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics varies from year to year. Over time, pupil outcomes at the

end of Year 2 have been above the national average, but started declining in 2014. There was further decline in 2015, with the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics falling below the national average.

- In the Year 1 phonics check, the proportion of disadvantaged and other pupils who reached the required standard improved in 2015 to be in line with the national average. Training, stable staffing and improved teaching meant this proportion has risen slightly again this year. Nearly all pupils who do not reach the required standard in Year 1 catch up well in Year 2 because early reading skills are taught well.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities in this school is slightly higher than the national average. Published information shows that the achievement of this group has increased slightly over time by the end of Year 2. Half of the current pupils in this group have speech and language difficulties and the school has taken proactive steps to train a teacher assistant to support these pupils in particular. The school's current assessment information shows that most of the pupils in this group are making expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Published information shows that the achievement of the most able pupils at the end of Year 2 has declined since 2013. This is because teachers' expectations are not high enough and this group are not challenged enough to make the progress they should.

Early years provision — requires improvement

- The early years part of the school has started to improve faster than the rest of the school. This is a result of stable staffing, effective teamwork and a leader who is enthusiastic and acts quickly on advice to increasingly meet the needs of the children. Currently, the Reception children and Year 1 pupils are in the same class.
- Leadership and management of the early years is improving rapidly. The Reception leader has a detailed knowledge of current assessment information and a vision to improve children's outcomes. Staff are trained and work together well to provide a stimulating learning environment that captures most children's imagination. However, the expectations are not yet high enough to enable children to make the progress of which they are capable.
- In the early years classes, children enter the school with skills that are generally typical for their age. A small number of children start with skills that are lower than typical, especially in speech and language. Improved leadership and stable teaching has enabled better progress, so that at the end of Reception most children are well prepared for Year 1.
- The proportion of children achieving a good level of development at the end of Reception has been steadily increasing for the last three years. However, some of these children did not make the progress they should. The proportion has increased again this year and is likely to be above the national average when this is confirmed. Outcomes for disadvantaged children and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities are inconsistent and therefore the gap between them and other children is not closing quickly enough.
- Children confidently move through the school day because of the very well-established routines that are reinforced by the adults working in the Reception classroom. Adults know the children well and ensure they learn in a safe and caring environment.
- Early years staff are skilled at working with young children and set learning expectations that the children understand. Consequently, children listen very well, are enthusiastic to learn and behave very well. They share well and are keen to join in the wide range of exciting learning activities.
- Teaching and progress are improving. A range of carefully planned and well-resourced learning activities ensure that children have daily opportunities to achieve. For example, adults focus well to improve key skills such as speaking, listening and attention. In lessons seen, adults provide good opportunities for children to develop these skills through activities such as role play in the 'ice-cream parlour' and understanding the safety rules during 'forest school' sessions.
- Reception parents who spoke to the inspector were positive and appreciative of the good start their children were making with their education. Inspection evidence showed that parents are able to contribute 'wow' moments which happen outside school to their children's 'learning journey'. Parents are kept informed of their children's learning and progress through regular discussions with the teacher.

School details

Unique reference number	116655
Local authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	10003236

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.

Type of school	First
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4–10
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	55
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Eleanor Wood
Headteacher	Ayse Moseley
Telephone number	01386 830 418
Website	www.bretfortonfirst.co.uk
Email address	office@bretforton.worcs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	17 January 2012

Information about this school

- Bretforton First School is much smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils speaking English as an additional language is much lower than at other schools nationally.
- Approximately one in seven pupils are known to be eligible for the pupil premium funding, which is about half of the national average. This is additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible to receive free school meals, children looked after by the local authority or those who have a parent serving in the armed forces.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is well above the national average.
- Children in the Reception class attend full-time.
- There is before- and after-school care on-site, managed by the governing body of the school.
- The school does not meet all of the requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed eight lessons or part lessons, including examples of teaching in every year group. Three of these teaching observations were carried out jointly with the acting headteacher.
- Meetings were held with the acting headteacher, early years leader, governors and two representatives of the local authority.
- The inspector talked with groups of pupils as well as individual pupils during their lessons and at playtimes to find out their views about the school. Not enough responses were received to Ofsted's voluntary online pupil questionnaire to be considered.
- Pupils' workbooks in a range of subjects were looked at to establish the progress and quality of their work over time.
- The inspector heard pupils read and observed their behaviour in lessons and around the school.
- Informal discussions were held with parents to gauge their views of the school. The inspection team also took account of 12 recent responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire (Parent View) and any comments made.
- The inspector took account of the responses to the online staff inspection questionnaire and spoke to a number of staff during the inspection.
- A wide range of documents were looked at, including the school's plans for improvement, records of checks and information on pupils' progress and outcomes. Records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding were also checked.

Inspection team

Stuart Bellworthy, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector

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