

Redditch, Batchley First and Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116721
Local Authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	312380
Inspection dates	20–21 February 2008
Reporting inspector	Joyce Cox

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 on roll	
School	240
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Maureen Muckle
Headteacher	Matt Whiteley
Date of previous school inspection	4 May 2004
School address	Cherry Tree Walk Batchley Redditch B97 6PD
Telephone number	01527 62926
Fax number	01527 61621

Age group	3–9
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school serves an area of mixed housing where there is significant social and economic disadvantage. Virtually all the pupils come from the surrounding area, and parents and governors regard the school as being a key provision at the heart of the local community. The great majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds. A very small number of pupils are at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well above average, as is the proportion with a statement of special educational need. The school's provision includes a specialist nursery unit called Nursery Plus, which currently caters for 10 children with complex special educational needs.

In 2005 the school was designated as a Children's Centre and provides an increasing range of integrated services for families and children.

After the last inspection the leadership of the school was fragile because the school experienced considerable difficulty in recruiting a permanent headteacher. The current headteacher has been in post for just over a year.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school which provides a high level of personal care and support for its pupils and parents. Numerous positive comments from parents indicate their appreciation of the school's strong pastoral support. Parents write about 'the hardworking and dedicated staff who make our children feel safe, valued and happy'. When children join the Nursery their attainment is below the expected levels, especially in their communication and language skills and in their personal and social development. In the Foundation Stage, children make sound progress towards all their learning goals. Not all children attain the expected levels on entry to Year 1 and their overall performance is below average. Parents feel their children have 'lots of special care and attention' in the Nursery and Reception classes. The good Nursery Plus provision ensures that children with complex learning difficulties achieve well against the targets set for them. Pupils aged from five to nine in the mainstream school respond positively to the satisfactory teaching. There are inconsistencies in teaching, primarily in the way teachers use the improved assessment information to ensure pupils' work is matched to their learning capabilities. Classes are managed effectively and relationships are good. Pupils say they find lessons interesting and fun and, as a result, they clearly enjoy their work and are keen to learn. The school has recently successfully amassed a large amount of valuable assessment and tracking information so staff can track pupils' progress. However, not all pupils are clear as to how they can improve their work or which aspect of a task they need to focus on.

Standards at the end of Year 2 and Year 4 are variable and have been broadly average or slightly below the expected levels since the time of the last inspection. Pupils in Year 2 attain higher standards in reading and mathematics than in writing. Some boys do not achieve as well as they should. Learning activities are enhanced by the use of a wide variety of resources and good links with other agencies, nearby schools and the local community. Pupils enjoy their lessons and show this by being attentive and eager to participate. Their personal development is good and is a significant strength because of the high quality of pastoral care which lies at the heart of the school's work. The curriculum is satisfactory and meets the needs and interests of pupils. It is enriched by many opportunities for learning outside of the classroom. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Over the last year, senior leaders have put a range of strategies into place which have resulted in improved standards in reading and in writing in Years 3 and 4. However, they have yet to concentrate rigorously on raising all pupils' achievement, particularly in Key Stage 1, where girls do significantly better than boys, especially in writing. Weaknesses identified by the last inspection have been tackled satisfactorily. This shows that the school has a sound capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Children's achievement in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. More able children attain the expected levels by the time they enter Year 1, but other children do not reach these levels. The recently appointed Foundation Stage leader provides sound leadership and has put many good strategies in place to improve the provision and planning. Consequently, children's achievement is improving. The leader would now welcome the chance to monitor the Foundation Stage provision to check on its quality and children's achievement. Children's personal development is good. They become increasingly independent as they learn to choose activities that interest them and take care of themselves and their belongings. They behave well and enjoy learning.

Regular, focused sessions to help children learn their letters and sounds have been introduced recently and are improving their progress in early reading and writing skills. Staff make sure children are safe and well cared for. The outdoor area is not yet fully developed to enable all the required areas of learning to be taught. Children in the Nursery Plus unit achieve well because of high quality support and carefully planned activities to cater for their complex learning needs. Parents are overwhelmingly pleased with the Nursery Plus provision as they see their children, 'grow in confidence and ability thanks to the caring and sensitive staff'.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in writing at Key Stage 1, particularly for boys.
- Monitor the quality of teaching and learning more rigorously in order to identify areas for development which will help to raise the achievement of all pupils.
- Make sure pupils are clear about how they can improve their work and which aspects of a task they most need to focus on.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

In Key Stage 1, pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall and they attain slightly- below-average standards at the end of Year 2. Boys attained exceptionally low results in writing in 2007 and did not do as well as girls in reading and mathematics. Current Year 2 pupils are on course to attain higher results. The school's data and pupils' work show that standards at the end of Year 4 are slightly below the expected levels. Effective extra help for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities enables them to achieve satisfactorily. The small number of pupils who are at an early stage of learning English also achieve satisfactorily.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' good behaviour contributes significantly to their improving achievement. Pupils say they feel very safe in school and show a good awareness of healthy lifestyles by joining in enthusiastically with all the many sporting activities. They clearly enjoy school and are very involved in school and local community activities. They raise large amounts of money for local and national charities and conscientiously assist with recycling waste and paper. Thanks to the school's good efforts, pupils' attendance remains broadly average. However, attendance figures are adversely affected by a small number of parents who do not ensure their children attend school regularly. Pupils feel that they have a real say in school life through the school council and have been instrumental in organising a rota for playtime basketball and in setting up a 'friendship stop' for lonely pupils. Broadly average standards in the basic skills and satisfactory opportunities to improve their information and communication technology (ICT) skills provide sound preparation for their future lives. Nursery Plus children behave well, enjoy their lessons and gain in confidence and self-esteem, which is reflected in some children being able to spend increasing amounts of time in mainstream Foundation Stage lessons.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The good relationships between pupils and staff result in happy, purposeful classrooms. Recently improved assessment information provides teachers with useful guidance on pupils' capabilities. Teachers work very hard to make pupils' learning relevant so they can capture and retain pupils' attention. Teaching assistants are deployed effectively to support pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. While there is some good teaching, the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall because of inconsistencies in the way some teachers match work to pupils' needs. Some pupils are given work which is too easy, others work which is too hard. Some teachers are more successful than others at involving pupils in their learning and in explaining what they want pupils to learn by the end of a lesson. Staff are very skilled at managing pupils with challenging behaviour so that the learning of other pupils is not disrupted. The warm, welcoming staff in the nurture room provide effective support for a small number of pupils who find working in a large class group very difficult. Lessons are planned effectively in the Nursery Plus unit and staff use a good variety of signs, symbols and pictures to facilitate communication with the pupils.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The programme to support pupils' personal development is effective. Meaningful and interesting links between subjects stimulate interest and enjoyment for all pupils. Provision for ICT has improved since the last inspection, although limited opportunities exist for pupils to use their skills in all subjects. Pupils benefit from a good range of enrichment opportunities including French lessons. The good curriculum in the Nursery Plus unit focuses appropriately on developing children's language and personal skills. Close links with outside agencies, such as speech and language therapists and the nearby special school, successfully enhance the school's provision. Pupils are well prepared for transfer to middle schools.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Pastoral care is very good and pupils and parents feel secure and well supported. Parents appreciate this, saying, 'All the staff are very kind, welcoming and helpful and always ready to listen to any concerns'. Secure child protection procedures are in place and staff awareness is good. An effective behaviour management system creates a calm, orderly atmosphere. The needs of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are quickly identified, allowing them to receive effective support. Academic guidance is satisfactory. Pupils' progress is now being tracked rigorously but this tracking information is not used consistently in classes to raise pupils' achievement and to match work to pupils' various capabilities. Some pupils know what their learning targets are but, in some classes, pupils are not always given sufficient advice and support to enable them to improve their work to reach these targets. Teachers' marking is good and tells pupils how they can improve their work

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Over the last year, senior leaders have successfully improved the school's assessment procedures to provide an accurate picture of pupils' achievement and progress in all year groups. They have succeeded in involving all staff much more in school improvement and in the realisation of the important part everyone plays in bringing this about. However, there is still more to be done to improve boys' achievement in writing and aspects of teaching and learning. Nevertheless, the indications are positive and the school has a secure basis for further improvement. A programme of effective monitoring which is focused on raising pupils' achievement is the next step. Governors are supportive and are increasingly involved in school self-evaluation. Many parents comment on the improvements they have noticed since the headteacher arrived, saying, 'He has a clear vision for the school and children are clearly valued as individuals and their needs respected'.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Dear Pupils

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

We enjoyed our visit to your school. You were polite and friendly and you made us feel welcome. We decided Batchley is a satisfactory school. We also think it is getting better. Here are some of our findings.

- Your achievement is satisfactory and you reach average standards in English, mathematics and science.
- You enjoy school, feel safe and your behaviour is good.
- You like helping the staff to look after the school.
- Adults provide satisfactory teaching for you so that you make satisfactory progress.
- Children in Nursery Plus and Bumblebees have a good time and learn lots of new things.
- You have good relationships with your teachers and you work hard for them.
- You go to a very caring school. Everyone has your best interests at heart and wants you to be safe and happy and to do as well as you can.
- Anyone who needs extra help is always given it.
- The school is led and managed satisfactorily and the headteacher and the staff are working hard to make sure the school gets even better.

- We have asked the school to do three main things to help it improve further.
- Make sure boys in Year 1 and Year 2 do as well as the girls in their writing.
- Improve teaching so that it is good in all lessons and you all achieve well and do even better in your work.
- Make sure that teachers help you to understand how you can improve your work so that you are really clear about what you need to think about in lessons.

You can help by continuing to work hard and behave well.

We wish you all the very best for the future.

Joyce Cox Lead inspector



22 February 2008

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