

Batchley First and Nursery School

Address: Cherry Tree Walk, Batchley, Redditch, Worcestershire, B97 6PD

Unique reference number (URN): 116721

Inspection report: 3 February 2026

Exceptional	
Strong standard	
Expected standard	
Needs attention	
Urgent improvement	

Safeguarding standards met

The safeguarding standards are met. This means that leaders and/or those responsible for governance and oversight fulfil their specific responsibilities and have established an open culture in which safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and concerns are actively identified, acted upon and managed. As a result, pupils are made safer and feel safe.

How we evaluate safeguarding

When we inspect schools for safeguarding, they can have the following outcomes:

- **Met:** The school has an open and positive culture of safeguarding. All legal requirements are met.
- **Not met:** The school has not created an open and positive culture of safeguarding. Not all legal requirements are met.

Expected standard

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

Leaders' determined work has led to significant improvements in attendance. Pupils now attend well. This is because leaders work tirelessly to address challenges that families may experience. Leaders ensure pupils understand the importance of attending well. They do this through pupil attendance champions, rewards and ensuring pupils feel welcome and loved. As a result, pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, disadvantaged pupils and those known (or previously known) to social care, want to come to school. This means persistent absence is reducing over time.

Leaders have worked hard to establish a calm, orderly and courteous environment. Pupils work and play together well. In lessons, pupils generally listen well and work hard. They like their teachers and want to do their best for them.

Leaders do not tolerate any form of discrimination. Bullying is rare. This ensures that there is an inclusive, tolerant and respectful ethos across school. Staff care deeply for pupils. This is evident in every classroom. Staff understand the school's behaviour approach and apply it effectively. Where pupils need additional support, leaders make reasonable adjustments to help them to manage their emotions. These include safe spaces, work stations and movement breaks. This contributes to a calm and purposeful environment.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Leaders have an accurate understanding of the quality of the curriculum and teaching. They act quickly to bring about improvement, such as through individual coaching. This means that teaching is typically effective. The curriculum is well designed and ambitious in scope across subjects. This is enhanced through a programme of trips. As a result, there is a clear progression of intended learning over time. Teachers generally have the expertise to deliver the curriculum effectively. This is because leaders have a sharp focus on professional learning.

Pupils have benefited from improvements to the curriculum and teaching. Where pupils have not yet secured key reading, writing and mathematics knowledge, they access additional support. For younger children, leaders rapidly identify those that fall behind and intervene to help them to keep up. This means that they have fewer gaps in learning than their older peers. Pupils apply key knowledge across subjects. Leaders' focus on oracy is helping pupils across the school to develop language and vocabulary across the curriculum.

Staff know pupils well. They adapt the curriculum effectively so that pupils can access it. For example, word banks, sentence stems and sound mats help pupils who may face barriers to their learning to participate in the same learning as their peers.

Early years

Expected standard 

Children make a positive start in early years. They learn the rules and expectations set by staff right from the start. The school communicates effectively with parents and carers,

which helps children settle into school life successfully. Phonics is taught well, which means children learn to read quickly. Children learn to use a correct pencil grip and to form letters correctly. Staff develop children's mathematical knowledge through carefully chosen resources.

There is a sharp focus on developing children's language and vocabulary, including through stories and rhymes. Staff skilfully provide opportunities to practise new words. For example, children confidently used words such as 'float' and 'sink' when making a boat for a penguin to travel in. Interactions between staff and children are typically high quality. Many of these interactions are effective in extending children's language. However, there are some missed opportunities for developing language further.

The curriculum is organised so that children develop important knowledge over time. Staff plan activities to provide lots of opportunities for children to build knowledge across the 7 areas of learning. Staff check what children can do, then adjust activities carefully, including for those children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. This prepares them well for the move into Year 1.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

Leaders prioritise inclusion. From the moment children start in early years, leaders rapidly assess and identify their needs. There are effective systems for identifying needs as they change through school. Where pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), leaders act swiftly to support them. Leaders work with external professionals and agencies to tailor support for these pupils, so that support plans are typically well designed. This includes work with the virtual school to help pupils known to social care. Staff have the expertise to implement support effectively. This is because leaders provide effective training and coaching, so support can be adapted to pupils' changing needs. As a result, pupils benefit from the right support at the right time.

Leaders generally check the impact of interventions and adapt them as needed. Leaders evaluate academic interventions well. However, their approach with pastoral interventions is not as robust. This means that some pastoral support is not as responsive as it could be.

Pupils with SEND benefit from adaptations and reasonable adjustments such as safe spaces, work stations and writing frames. This helps them to access learning and supports their wellbeing.

Leaders ensure that funding for disadvantaged pupils is spent effectively.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders understand the school's strengths and have taken effective action to address most priorities for improvement. Since the last inspection, leaders have worked hard to make improvements to the school's provision. There has been significant progress in the areas that have been prioritised. However, pupils' achievement is still recovering and remains below where it should be.

Staff implement school priorities effectively. This is because of an effective professional learning programme that is tailored to individual and group needs. It includes peer support, supportive coaching tools and external qualifications. Staff value this investment in developing their expertise. Teachers at all stages of their career benefit from effective mentoring.

Governors know the school well. They understand their statutory duties and use data and external reports to check the impact of leaders' work. Leaders at all levels are passionate about supporting the community. They are highly dedicated to their pupils and always act in pupils' best interests. Leaders implement effective systems to ensure that disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are effectively supported in all areas of the school's work.

Leaders work well with parents and carers. There are frequent opportunities to attend activities at school. Leaders provide parents with family support and engage with them to co-construct support for pupils with SEND. As a result, pupils benefit from effective partnerships.

Staff appreciate leaders' efforts to support their workload and wellbeing. Governors take an active role in this and monitor it well.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

Leaders understand the school's context well. They have designed a personal development programme tailored to the needs of their pupils. Pupils learn and generally remember important knowledge, which includes healthy relationships, healthy eating and preventing bullying. Staff teach pupils how to navigate online risks effectively. This means that pupils know how to look after themselves and stay safe online and offline.

Leaders have thought carefully about key experiences that they want all pupils to have during their time at school. These include visiting London, staying away from home and a wide range of trips and workshops. Leaders are determined that no pupil should miss out on these experiences. They help pupils overcome barriers and ensure all pupils can attend the exciting and interesting experiences on offer. As a result, disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities fully benefit from this offer. In addition, leaders commission speakers from the community to teach pupils about possible careers. These speakers include local authors, firefighters and the local Member of Parliament. This raises aspirations.

The school offers a wide range of clubs catered to pupils' needs, such as sports, cookery and music clubs. This provides pupils with opportunities that they may not otherwise have access to. As a result, pupils develop talents and new interests. Leadership opportunities such as house captains, attendance champions and health and safety ministers enable pupils to positively contribute to the school.

Pastoral support is effective. There are systems in place to support pupils when they are experiencing adverse wellbeing. For example, nurture sessions support pupils to feel safe and ready to learn.

Pupils cooperate and interact well together. They understand fundamental British Values and are taught to treat one another well. This helps them to know right from wrong, show respect to all and engage thoughtfully with issues affecting the local community.

Needs attention

Achievement

Needs attention 

Although the curriculum and teaching are now effective following recent improvements, pupils' achievement is below where it should be for their age. Pupils' outcomes in the Year 4 multiplication tables check and Year 1 phonics check are below national averages over time. Too many pupils do not secure the most important knowledge in reading, writing and mathematics by the time they finish school. However, the most recent Year 1 phonics check was in line with national averages last year.

While the curriculum is well sequenced, some pupils still find it hard to remember what they have learned. This is because of existing gaps in their knowledge. This makes it harder for them to remember new learning, as they do not have the previous knowledge to build on.

Despite low achievement overall, leaders are taking appropriate action to address inconsistencies in knowledge, but this is at an early stage. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, disadvantaged pupils and those known to social care generally make similar progress from their starting points to their peers across the school.

What it's like to be a pupil at this school

Pupils benefit from a warm, welcoming and caring start to the school day. Staff enthusiastically greet pupils as they enter the classroom and show genuine happiness to see them. The school's values of 'everyone is Valued, Inspired, Prepared and Safe' are lived out in everyday school life. Leaders have ensured that the environment is bright, attractive and well-looked after so that the school feels as inviting as possible.

Pupils enjoy learning and access a broad, balanced and carefully designed curriculum. Reading is highly visible. The curriculum includes trips and workshops, which provide experiences to help pupils make sense of their learning. Leaders ensure that all pupils benefit from these opportunities by working with families to remove barriers to access. Although recent improvements mean that the curriculum is now taught effectively, pupils' achievement is still below age-related expectations. This means that some pupils are not as well prepared for the next stage as they need to be. For pupils that experience barriers to their learning, teachers adapt the curriculum well. This means they can access the learning.

Pupils feel a powerful sense of belonging. This is reflected in the positive behaviour and attitudes that pupils display. They want to make their teachers proud. Leaders have ensured that pupils access experiences to help support their emotional development. For example,

every child participates in forest school every week. Pupils show respect to all, regardless of difference. This ensures a highly inclusive environment.

Leaders work with families to tackle challenges to attendance. This helps pupils to attend well. Pupils say bullying is rare and always dealt with. They engage in regular learning to help them understand how to stay safe. As a result, they feel safe. Pupils have plentiful opportunities to positively contribute to the community. For example, attendance champions and bullying ambassadors support pupils that may be struggling. Pupils show tolerance, respect and kindness to all, regardless of differences. They are well prepared for life in modern Britain.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that pupils develop knowledge across the curriculum so that they know more and remember more over time, and a greater proportion of pupils attain key reading, writing and mathematical knowledge so that they are ready for the next stage of their education.
 - Leaders should ensure that the impact of pastoral interventions is evaluated effectively so that provision can be precisely targeted to pupils' changing needs.
 - Leaders should ensure that all staff maximise opportunities for high-quality interactions with children across the early years provision so that all children develop a broad range of vocabulary and language structures.
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About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors in this school is Mrs Stephanie Heighway.

Inspectors carried out this full inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Following our renewed inspection framework, all inspections are now led by His Majesty's Inspectors (HMIs) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMIs.

Inspectors spoke with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and other leaders, including governors, during the inspection.

Information about this school:

The school has undergone significant changes since the last inspection.

The school no longer has a speech and language resourced provision.

The school has an additional Nursery that pupils attend while they complete assessments for education, health and care plans. Pupils attend this Nursery for a short time before returning to their school or specialist setting.

The school currently uses no alternative provision.

Headteacher: Mrs Sarah Downes

Lead inspector:

Matthew Seex, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Lynda Townsend, Ofsted Inspector

Laura Hopley, His Majesty's Inspector

Facts and figures used on inspection

The data was used by the inspector(s) during the inspection. More recent data may have been published since the inspection took place.

 This data is from 3 February 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

260

Close to average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils currently at this school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 272

School capacity

300

Close to average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils who can attend the school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 300

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

45.61%

Well above average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years.

National average: 26.3%

Pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan

4.23%

Close to average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan. This covers pupils with more support than is available through special educational needs support.

National average: 3.5%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

27.69%

Well above average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with reported special educational support needs at the school.

National average: 15%

Location deprivation

Well above average

What does this mean?

Based on the English Indices of Deprivation (2019) and the school's location, we have calculated whether the school is located in a more or less deprived area.

Resourced Provision or SEND Unit (if applicable)

Resourced provision and SEN unit

What does this mean?

Whether school has Resourced Provision or SEND unit (if applicable).

Type of specialist provision (if applicable)

SpLD - Specific Learning Difficulty, OTH - Other Difficulty/Disability, SLCN - Speech, language and Communication, ASD - Autistic Spectrum Disorder, SEMH - Social, Emotional and Mental Health, PD - Physical Disability

What does this mean?

The type of Special Educational Needs provision provided at the school (if applicable).

Absence

Overall absence

The percentage of all possible mornings and afternoons missed due to absence from school (for whatever reason, whether authorised or unauthorised) across all pupils.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (2 term)	6.5%	5.2%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	7.3%	5.5%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	7.9%	5.9%	Above

Persistent absence

The percentage of pupils missing 10% or more of their possible mornings and afternoons.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (2 term)	20.1%	13.3%	Above

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (3 term)	23.5%	14.6%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	29.7%	16.2%	Above

Our grades explained

Exceptional

Practice is exceptional: of the highest standard nationally. Other schools can learn from it.

Strong standard

The school reaches a strong standard. Leaders are working above the standard expected of them.

Expected standard

The school is fulfilling the expected standard of education and/or care. This means they are following the standard set out in statutory and non-statutory legislation and the professional standards expected of them.

Needs attention

The expected standards are not met but leaders are likely able to make the necessary improvements.

Urgent improvement

The school needs to make urgent improvements to provide the expected standard of education and/or care.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) inspects services providing education and skills for children and learners of all ages, and inspects and regulates services that care for children and young people.

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