



Barnt Green, St Andrew's CofE First School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 116865
LEA Worcestershire
Inspection number 279925
Inspection dates 2 November 2005 to 3 November 2005
Reporting inspector Ted Wheatley RISP

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

Type of school	First	School address	Hewell Road
School category	Voluntary aided		Barnt Green
Age range of pupils	4 to 9		Birmingham, West Midlands B45 8NG
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0121 4451410
Number on roll	195	Fax number	0121 446 1410
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs Hilary Farmiloe
Date of previous inspection	4 December 2000	Headteacher	Miss Kay Cholmondeley

Age group 4 to 9	Inspection dates 2 November 2005 - 3 November 2005	Inspection number 279925
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

St Andrew's C of E First School is a smaller than average voluntary aided school with 195 pupils aged four to nine. Numbers are increasing although there are large variations from year to year. All children attend nursery schools in the area and enter Reception with slightly above average standards in all skills. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is below average. There are very few pupils from minority ethnic groups and none at the early stages of learning English. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is very low and pupils come mostly from families with professional backgrounds.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school that provides a good standard of education. The school evaluates its own performance as good. Inspectors agree with this and with the areas the school says it needs to work on, although these are relatively minor in the context of the school. Children make a good start in Reception, achieve well and by the end of Year 2 reach above average standards. High standards are maintained through to the end of Year 4. Standards in spelling are not quite as good as they are in other subjects, and the standards of writing of a small number of higher attaining pupils are a little lower than they ought to be. Children's attendance is very good and there is a high level of care, support and guidance for pupils. Teaching, learning and the curriculum are good and provision for music and physical education particularly so. The school gives good value for money and is in a good position to improve further.

The headteacher and senior staff provide good leadership. Parents and pupils are consulted well and their opinions are taken into account. For example, pupils were involved in the appointment of the deputy headteacher. Governors support the school well. Pupils' personal development is good, the range of extra-curricular activities provided is outstanding, and the number of pupils involved in these is very high.

Improvement since the last inspection has been good and particularly so in the teaching and curriculum in Reception. Assessment information is now used well throughout the school to make sure work meets pupils' learning needs. Marking has improved. It mostly gives pupils a good idea of how to improve their work, although there are still some differences between teachers.

Grade: 2

What the school should do to improve further

- Continue to work to improve standards of spelling, and of writing for the highest-attaining pupils.
- Improve marking so that it consistently tells pupils how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children in the Reception class make good progress and reach above average standards in all areas. The improved provision is having a marked impact on how well children achieve.

Pupils in Years 1 and 2 make good progress and standards are well above average in reading, mathematics and science. Standards in writing are above average and the school is rightly working hard to raise standards here to the same level as in other subjects.

In Years 3 and 4, pupils make good progress and by Year 4, standards are still well above those expected for their age in most subjects and above expectations in writing.

Throughout the school, pupils' spelling is sometimes inaccurate and teachers do not consistently use ways to help pupils improve their skills in this area.

Results in the national tests at the end of Year 2 have been above average in recent years, and well above average in reading and mathematics. In writing, standards have been above average. In 2005 there were improvements in the Year 2 results, although performance in writing was still below that of other subjects, particularly by a small proportion of pupils with the potential for higher attainment. The school has analysed the results carefully over several years (an improvement since the last inspection) and identified relative underachievement by a small proportion of boys and higher attainers. It has successfully introduced methods to improve the standards reached by boys.

Pupils make very good progress in music and physical education owing to the exceptionally good provision in these subjects.

Grade: 2

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The school has a strong Christian ethos that is reflected in assemblies and displays around the school. Pupils are expected to behave well from the day they start school. They respond well and readily obey adults' requests. There is little bullying and any that occurs is tackled effectively. The pupils enjoy school; as the parent of a child in the reception class said, 'My daughter cried when she learnt that half-term meant not going to school'. Attendance is well above national averages. Pupils' social skills are effectively developed through friendship groups and team activities. Pupils' cultural development is good because the school provides a good range of activities, such as music and art. Pupils' preparation for life in a multi-ethnic society is improving, with a wide range of planned activities.

Pupils know right from wrong. They know how to keep themselves safe and healthy, for example, through physical education and sport (the school has the Activemark Gold Award), and through healthy eating. The lack of school meals provision limits what can be done in this area. The school is a central part of its community and pupils take part in local events, for example, choral singing at charity events. The school prepares pupils very well for their future employment by developing their basic skills and by teaching techniques such as making presentations and preparing business reports.

Grade: 2

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Inspectors agree with the school that teaching is good. Improvements in the reception classes since the last inspection mean that most pupils achieve their goals through

interesting activities such as sorting natural objects into groups and using the right language to describe their texture. Older pupils are taught well through the use of themes such as rescuing a failing leisure park from bankruptcy. The use of specialist teachers in music, physical education and drama means pupils achieve especially well in these subjects. Teachers know pupils well and support their individual needs. Assessment has improved and information about individuals is used well to plan lessons. Teaching assistants are deployed effectively to support pupils and to assess their progress. Marking is variable in quality but at best is good. Some comments help pupils to improve their work but important mistakes are sometimes overlooked.

Pupils work unaided, but effectively, for long periods because they understand what is expected of them and find the work challenging. They carry out research using books and computers. Teachers set demanding homework which effectively supports what is taught in school.

Grade: 2

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Pupils experience a wide range of interesting and challenging activities. The curriculum for reception classes has been improved since the last inspection to enable pupils to develop the full range of skills they need for Year 1. Parents are very pleased with these changes. Older pupils are taught through interesting themes, such as 'ancient Egypt', through which the basic skills of literacy and numeracy are taught explicitly. All parts of the National Curriculum are taught and are effectively extended through personal, social and health education, religious education and drama. Provision for ICT is improving through the purchase of interactive whiteboards.

There is an outstanding range of out of school activities for pupils of age 4 - 9. These include music, sports and residential experiences.

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school has good links with the considerable number of nurseries that the pupils attend before starting school. There are good arrangements for transfer which are much appreciated by parents.

Staff care for pupils well and effectively encourage them to develop their independence, for example, through taking care of their belongings and by taking responsibility for younger children. Teachers know what pupils need to learn next and set simple targets such as 'using a dictionary to find correct spellings'. Parents are kept informed about their children's progress, although some parents would like more detailed information about the standards pupils reach in the National Curriculum by the end of Year 4. The school has good links with middle schools and is striving to improve them further.

There are suitable arrangements to protect children and staff are very sensitive to the needs of the small number who are in vulnerable situations.

Grade: 2

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher, with the effective support of the deputy head, provides a clear direction for the school's continued improvement. They work well together and are well supported by other staff. There are effective methods to find out how good teaching is, to provide support for teachers and to share teaching methods that work well. For example, weaknesses in teaching writing have been identified, teachers have been given advice and support on how to improve and this is having a positive effect on raising standards. Weaknesses in how boys learned were also recognised, the reasons were identified and significant improvements have been made.

The school's plans for improvement are good and the way staff have approached implementing them is thorough. Governors support the school well and are enthusiastic, frequent visitors to the school. The school consults with pupils and parents and their contributions are taken into account when planning improvements. The school is in a good position to further improve.

Grade: 2

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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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?	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	NA

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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Barnt Green, St Andrew's C of E First School Hewell Road Barnt Green Birmingham West Midlands
B45 8NG

12 ??? November 2005

Dear Pupils,

Thank you for making us so welcome in your school. We really enjoyed being here and listening to so many of you.

The best things about your school are:

You enjoy learning, often work very hard and make good progress.

You behave well, you are friendly and treat other pupils and adults with respect.

You always come to school unless you have a good reason not to.

The school looks after you well and is a safe place to be.

You are taught well and have lots of extra activities to do.

Miss Cholmondeley is a good headteacher and all the other staff work hard with her to help you.

We think the school could improve even more if it:

Continues to work to improve your spelling, and writing for those of you who find schoolwork quite easy.

Made sure that marking always tells you how well you are doing and how to improve your work.

With best wishes,

Mr T Wheatley (Lead inspector)