

Barnt Green, St Andrew's CofE First School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116865
Local Authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	326468
Inspection date	21 October 2008
Reporting inspector	Derek Watts

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	First
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	1742
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Hilary Farmiloe
Headteacher	Kay Cholmondeley
Date of previous school inspection	2 November 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Hewell Road Barnt Green Birmingham B45 8NG
Telephone number	01214 451410

Age group	4–9
Inspection date	21 October 2008
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

The inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following aspects:

How well the school was improving provision in writing and pupils' performance in this area.

The effectiveness of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and how well children are progressing.

Evidence was gathered from lesson observations and a scrutiny of pupils' work and school documentation. Parents' questionnaires and discussions with pupils, governors and staff also contributed to the judgements. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

The vast majority of pupils in this first school come from a White British background. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. These pupils' needs include moderate learning, speech, language and communication and behaviour. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is much lower than is normally found. There is EYFS provision for children in Reception. The school attracts a significant number of pupils from outside its normal catchment area.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Barnt Green, St Andrew's C of E First is a good school. There are outstanding aspects to its work. Children get off to a good start in Reception and make good progress. Pupils achieve well in the rest of the school because of good teaching and an exciting curriculum. By the end of Year 4, standards are well above average overall. Across the school, excellent pastoral care and a positive school climate lead to outstanding personal development and well-being for pupils.

Parents hold positive views about the school and most are very pleased with both the care and education provided for their children. Pupils' progress, the quality of teaching, the care provided and the range of additional activities offered come in for particular praise. Typical comments from the parents' questionnaires included, 'delighted with my child's progress', 'very pleased with the school' and 'good choice of extra-curricular activities'. However, a significant minority of parents do not feel that the school takes sufficient account of their concerns and suggestions. Senior staff and governors are very keen to address this issue and have already taken positive steps.

Good leadership and management are key factors contributing to the school's success and the good improvements made since the last inspection. An experienced headteacher is well focused on raising achievement and providing good quality provision. She receives good support from other senior leaders. With her staff, the headteacher has created a positive atmosphere in which pupils learn and staff work. Performance is systematically reviewed and the findings are used effectively to bring about improvements. The staff are enthusiastic and dedicated to doing their best for the pupils. Governors possess a good understanding of the school's performance. This enables them to offer constructive challenge as well as providing strong support.

Pupils make good progress from their above average starting point on entry to the school. Standards by the end of Year 2 are significantly above average in reading and mathematics. Since the last inspection, the school has improved provision for writing. Pupils write for a variety of purpose and apply their writing skills well in other subject areas. Their writing is accurate and imaginative. Standards in writing are now close to those in reading and mathematics. By the end of Year 4 standards are very high in English and mathematics.

The good quality teaching contributes significantly to pupils' good progress. There are some outstanding elements to practice. Across the school, teachers have very good relationships with their pupils. Pupils are enthusiastic and respond exceptionally well to the high expectations of behaviour and learning. The purpose of the lessons is made clear so pupils know what they are expected to learn. Teachers' clear instructions and demonstrations promote learning well. Questioning is used skilfully to challenge the pupils' thinking and check their understanding. Many pupils are articulate and confident speakers. For example, groups of pupils in Years 3 and 4 held high quality discussions about the points for and against zoos. After some initial gathering of facts and information, they expressed their opinions well and presented convincing arguments. In most classes, teachers use assessment information well to match activities and tasks to pupils' abilities and needs. Occasionally, the pace of learning slows when introductions are too long and the pupils are eager to tackle the main task. In one Year 1 and 2 class, there are examples of an over reliance on work sheets which are not always sufficiently challenging for pupils. Teaching assistants are well deployed. They make a valuable contribution to learning, particularly for those pupils who need additional support with literacy and numeracy. The

marking of pupils' work has improved since the last inspection. However, comments to help pupils to improve are not consistent enough as some teachers do this better than others.

An outstanding curriculum promotes good progress for pupils and makes an excellent contribution to their personal development. While there is a very good emphasis on literacy and numeracy skills, areas such as music and sport are also strengths of the curriculum. There are good links between subjects which add relevance and enjoyment to pupils' learning. For example, history, design and technology and writing were successfully incorporated into the Years 3 and 4 topic on the Vikings. The recent Viking Day was a huge success with parents helping their children to create impressive costumes for the event. A parent remarked, 'History is fun and my child enjoyed the Viking battle'. Pupils have good opportunities to learn a musical instrument such as the clarinet, flute, violin and recorder. Additional activities such as clubs and visits are much appreciated by the parents and enjoyed by the pupils. Popular clubs include football, netball, science and tag rugby. A residential visit to the Malvern Hills for Year 3 provides exciting outdoor activities which build pupils' physical and teambuilding skills. The Year 4 residential visit to Iron Bridge enhances pupils' geography and history skills and makes a valuable contribution to their creative and personal development.

There are highly effective systems to safeguard pupils. Pupils are safe and extremely well looked after at school. Systems for assessment and pupils' academic guidance are good. Pupils have specific learning targets in English and mathematics so most, particularly in Years 3 and 4, know what they are working on to improve. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils thoroughly enjoy school and this is reflected by their above average attendance and their keen participation in activities. Behaviour is often exemplary because of the high expectations of all staff and the strong relationships between adults and pupils. Pupils adopt healthy lifestyles and show a good understanding of the importance of healthy eating, exercising regularly and keeping safe. They thrive on the additional responsibilities. Those on the school council and play leaders take their responsibilities seriously. Pupils raise funds for a variety of national and global charities. Pupils are extremely well prepared for the next stage of their education. By the time they leave, they have very good literacy and numeracy skills. In addition to these, their personal and social skills are exceptionally well developed.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children enter Reception with the knowledge and skills above those expected for their age. They settle quickly into routines and enjoy their learning because of the school's successful induction arrangements. Parents particularly like the effective communication through the home/school link book. Good leadership, effective teaching, outstanding welfare and an interesting range of activities enable all children to make good progress. Their personal and social skills develop very well. Learning resources and outdoor areas are used well to motivate and stimulate children. Occasionally, the learning opportunities are too adult led and this can limit children's opportunities to explore and pursue their own areas of interest. By the end of Reception, children possess knowledge and skills that are above typical age-related expectations in all areas, which prepare them very well for the next steps of their education.

What the school should do to improve further

- Increase opportunities for children in the EYFS to explore their own areas of interest and develop even greater independence.

- Ensure that all lessons are suitably challenging and that learning consistently proceeds at a quick pace.

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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?	2
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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

Achievement and standards

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

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
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	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

22 October 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Barnt Green, St Andrew's C of E First School, Birmingham, B45 8NG

Thank you so much for welcoming us into your school and showing us your work. We enjoyed our visit and would like to tell you what we found. Yours is a good school. It has some outstanding features. You can be very proud of your school.

These are the main strengths of the school.

- Children in Reception get off to a great start.
- You thoroughly enjoy school and your attendance is good.
- Teaching is good, which is why you are learning so well.
- Standards by the end of Year 4 are very high.
- An outstanding range of learning activities, clubs and visits are provided.
- Behaviour is outstanding in lessons and around the school.
- You have a good understanding of how to keep healthy and safe.
- All staff take excellent care of you and give you very good support.
- You make good contributions to the school and the wider community.
- The school is well led by your headteacher and she receives good support from other senior staff.

These are two areas that the school has been asked to look at to make it even better.

- At times, more opportunities could be given for children in Reception to explore and work independently.
- In a few lessons, activities could be more challenging and the teacher should make sure that learning moves on at a quick pace.

Finally, thank you once again for all your help. Keep up the good work. We wish you all the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely,

Derek Watts Lead Inspector