

# St John's Church of England Voluntary Controlled Infants School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	123759
<b>Local Authority</b>	Somerset
<b>Inspection number</b>	292776
<b>Inspection dates</b>	14–15 May 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Tom Simpson

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Infant
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–7
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	180
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Sheila Martin
<b>Headteacher</b>	W Turner
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	26 November 2001
<b>School address</b>	High Street Glastonbury BA6 9DR
<b>Telephone number</b>	01458 832085
<b>Fax number</b>	01458 834584

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This is an average-sized infant school serving a socially diverse community. Most of the pupils are from a White British background but there is a small number from other White backgrounds who are at an early stage of learning English. There is also a small number from a Gypsy/Roma and Travellers of Irish heritage background. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is below average. Attainment on entry varies from year to year but is broadly average overall. There is part-time nursery provision. The school has received a number of recent awards, including an 'Activemark' for exceptional delivery of the National School Sport Strategy and 'Investor in People' status.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

St John's is a good school. This is because staff are committed to raising the academic standards achieved by the pupils whilst still maintaining an enriched curriculum and a high level of personal care. The effective care, guidance and support for the pupils ensure that the level of personal care is a particular strength. The pupils are well known to staff, who go out of their way to encourage the development of the pupils' self-esteem, enabling pupils to make good progress in their personal development. Pupils have a good understanding of what constitutes healthy living and are working hard to gain 'Healthy School' status. They feel safe and know what to do if they have any concerns. Year 2 pupils told inspectors, 'we know that someone is always there to care for us'. Although pupils say they enjoy coming to school, attendance is below average. This is mainly because of the persistent absence of a small number of pupils. Strategies are in place to improve the situation and these are beginning to impact well. Several parents commented positively on the provision the school makes for their children. One parent wrote, for example, 'I honestly feel the introduction to schooling that my child has experienced since joining St John's is second to none'.

Teaching is good throughout the school and pupils' learning is well supported by the good curriculum. Provision for pupils in the Nursery and Reception classes is good, which means that they get off to a good start. This good progress is maintained as pupils proceed through the school. By the time they leave, overall standards are above the national average. However, standards in writing are lower than those in reading and mathematics, mainly because in the recent past the school has been focusing on raising standards in the other two areas. Pupils who have learning difficulties and disabilities and the small number who are at an early stage of learning English as an additional language are well supported.

Leadership and management are good. The school has successfully addressed the key issues raised by the last inspection. The governing body is now much more effective. Governors are supportive and well informed and contribute well to the life of the school. Standards have risen over the past two years and the school has put a good range of strategies in place to raise them even further. This, along with the enthusiasm and commitment of staff at all levels, means that the school has a good capacity to improve further. There are particular strengths in the way that the school evaluates what it is doing well, and how it implements appropriate intervention strategies to improve its relative weaknesses. A good example of this is the introduction of a scheme where parents can join their children in literacy and numeracy lessons to help them support their children's learning at home.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the way that writing is taught throughout the curriculum in order to raise standards to the same level as those in reading.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

Current standards at the school are above average. Children get off to a good start when they enter the Nursery and Reception classes, particularly in their personal, social and emotional development. By the time they leave the Foundation Stage they are well prepared for the rest of their education, although there are still some relative weaknesses in writing and children's ability to link sounds to letters. As they move through the school, pupils, including those with

learning difficulties and disabilities and those with English as an additional language, continue to achieve well and make good progress against their starting points.

In 2006, Year 2 Standards Assessment Test (SATs) results improved over those of the previous year and were above average. There were particular strengths in reading at the higher levels and relative weaknesses in the writing of average-ability pupils. There is good evidence to indicate that standards for 2007 are continuing to rise and that no specific group is now achieving less well than another. Developing pupils' performance in writing remains the school's main focus for improvement.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is good overall. There is a strong Christian ethos within the school which has resulted in a very good focus on pupils' spiritual development. Pupils enjoy their lessons and like school. Although attendance has been below average for some time and remains so, it is now improving. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is good and pupils clearly enjoy taking on responsibility. They feel that they have a voice in decision making, through the school council, for example, and appreciate the opportunities they have to help others by supporting a large number of charities such as World Vision. Year 2 pupils have carried out a survey of local opinion and sent their collated findings to the Town Council. Although the pupils have various opportunities to explore aspects of non-European culture, their understanding of the multicultural nature of this country is less secure than of British and local culture. Pupils gain a range of good basic skills which prepare them well for the adult world.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Good teaching and learning are having a positive impact on pupils' achievement throughout the school. A particularly strong aspect of the teaching is the effective way in which the pupils are managed. As a result, the pupils are keen to learn and are well behaved in lessons. A good variety of teaching methods are employed successfully to stimulate the pupils and maintain the pace of their learning. Good use is usually made of initial discussion to ensure that the pupils are clear about what is expected of them, while the tasks they are set are regularly well matched to pupils' specific needs. Occasionally, however, the pace of a discussion is too slow, which means that a few pupils lose interest in what is going on. There are good systems in place for assessing and tracking pupils' progress as they move through the school. However, writing needs to be more thoroughly taught across the curriculum.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

The school is continually looking at ways of ensuring that the curriculum is creative and relevant to the diverse needs of the pupils. As one parent commented, 'My son is extremely happy at school. He enjoys a varied and exciting curriculum.' Most subjects, for example, are taught through topics which are designed to stimulate the interest of both boys and girls. Information and communication technology is used well in all classes to support and extend pupils' learning across the curriculum. The good range of out-of-lesson activities such as clubs, visitors and

visits is used effectively to enhance pupils' love of learning. The school recognises, however, that there is still scope for the provision of enrichment activities to be developed even further. Provision for children in the Nursery and Reception classes is good and impacts well on the progress they are making. The school has developed positive links with other schools which further enhance the curriculum. For example, the partnership with a local community secondary school has helped to develop opportunities in art and drama. Provision for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities and for the few who are at an early stage of learning English is good.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils throughout the school are well cared for. They are very well known to staff as individuals and receive good pastoral guidance. Good procedures are in place for health and safety, child protection and safe staff recruitment and there are good links with outside agencies to support vulnerable pupils. Parents are well informed and encouraged to be involved in their children's learning. For example, some families are provided with distance learning packs when their children are unable to attend school. The work of the recently appointed Parent Support Adviser is already having a positive effect on improving attendance and reducing incidences of late arrivals. The school has established an extensive range of strategies to support pupils' academic development and these are supporting improved standards well. However, some pupils are still not sufficiently clear about what they themselves need to do next to improve their work as they are not involved enough in the setting of individual academic targets.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The headteacher is highly committed to improving the quality of the school's provision and raising standards further. She is well supported by a proactive senior management team, whose members also have a strong corporate and individual role in promoting the school's development. There are effective strategies in place to monitor all aspects of the school's work, including teaching and the achievement of different groups of pupils. As a result the school is very clear about both its strengths and what it needs to do next. Information gained from these processes is used well to identify areas of relative weakness and address these. For example, the school recognised the teaching of phonics as a developmental area and made it a priority, although the impact of this on the quality of pupils' writing has still to be fully felt. Subject leaders are effectively involved in assessing progress in their areas of responsibility and identifying targets for future development. However, because of recent staff changes, some co-ordinators of non-core subjects do not yet have a well-enough developed role in monitoring the outcomes of their strategies for improvement. Because of this they do not have a full view of the effectiveness of provision in their subjects.

The well-trained and active governing body is effectively involved in the school's work at various appropriate levels. It fulfils its statutory responsibilities well and is prepared to challenge the school's management when it considers this to be appropriate. Individual governors visit the school regularly to, for example, monitor lessons in relation to areas of focus in the school development plan. Good steps have been taken that ensure the recently implemented structure of committees is closely linked to the school's provision for the 'Every Child Matters' initiative. The work of the governing body is well focused on promoting pupils' personal as well as academic development.

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## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	<b>School Overall</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

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

### Achievement and standards

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

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	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	2

### The quality of provision

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

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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 performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	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

## **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

15 May 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St John's Infants School, Glastonbury, Somerset BA6 9DR

Thank you for making us so welcome at your school. We enjoyed meeting you and hearing about your work. We found that your school provides you with a good education.

Here are some of the things we found to be particularly good:

- You are well behaved and your personal development is good. For example, you are keen to learn and know how to lead healthy lifestyles.
- You are well cared for by the adults at the school.
- You are well taught and you are given interesting work to do.
- The headteacher and staff are working hard to make the school even better.

Here are some of the things we have suggested to help the school improve:

- Make sure that you all do as well in writing as you do in reading.

Thank you again for your help.

With best wishes

Tom Simpson Lead Inspector