

# St John's CE (VC) Infants School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	123759
<b>Local Authority</b>	Somerset
<b>Inspection number</b>	340418
<b>Inspection dates</b>	11–12 March 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Christine Huard

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 of pupils on the school roll</b>	188
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Ms Sheila Martin
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Wendy Turner
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	15 May 2007
<b>School address</b>	High Street Glastonbury Somerset BA6 9DR
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<b>Email address</b>	office@st-johns-inf.somerset.sch.uk

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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed 15 lessons or parts of lessons. Seven teachers were observed teaching. Meetings were held with staff, governors and pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at some of the documentation. This included the school improvement plan, monitoring and assessment information as well as planning and governors' minutes. The school's procedures for ensuring pupils' safety were closely scrutinised. In addition, 102 questionnaires returned by parents and carers were analysed as well as 12 that were returned by staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the success of strategies adopted to improve writing throughout the school
- how successfully the school is adapting its curriculum and adopting strategies to motivate boys and raise the standard of their performance
- the extent to which the school has implemented its plans to promote community cohesion and how this has affected pupils' awareness of cultural diversity in the United Kingdom
- the success of strategies to accelerate the progress of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage, particularly in communication, language and literacy.

## Information about the school

St John's Infants is an average-sized school. Nearly all the pupils are of White British heritage and only one is at an early stage of learning to speak English. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities or a statement of special educational needs is above average. The main areas of need are learning, speech and language problems and hearing difficulties. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in a Nursery class and two discrete Reception classes. The school has received several awards including Healthy Schools Plus, Artsmark and Activemark.

An after school club managed by the governing body is held on Monday to Wednesday each week. On the other two days, it is held at the junior school. The inspection was on Thursday and Friday and therefore the club did not feature as part of it.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**

**2**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**2**

## Main findings

St John's Infants is a good school. Parents and carers are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. 'We are exceptionally pleased with the education and all-round learning environment St John's provides,' wrote one, echoing the sentiments of many. Pupils really enjoy their learning. They work hard and achieve well.

The school has some outstanding features. It ensures that the procedures to ensure pupils' safety are extremely robust and pupils confirm that they feel very safe in school. Their Healthy Schools Plus and Activemark awards are testament to the exceptionally good understanding pupils show, for their ages, of the need to adopt a healthy lifestyle. They thoroughly enjoy 'wake n shake' first thing in the mornings, and can tell you exactly what living a healthy lifestyle entails. The care and support provided for pupils and their families is exceptional, in conjunction with outside agencies where appropriate. Many parents and carers are appreciative of the school's efforts in handling very sensitive issues this year.

The school is working successfully to improve pupils' writing and narrow the gap in attainment between this and reading. A range of strategies has been introduced and one, which encourages pupils to learn to tell stories and then write them down, really excites and interests pupils. They are beginning to write with greater confidence and more prolifically. There is a marked improvement in the quality of the content, but still some way to go with the basic skills of spelling, grammar and punctuation.

The performance of boys has significantly improved during this year. This is because the school has examined its curriculum carefully and adapted it well to reflect the interests of boys ' but without demotivating the girls. The space topic being undertaken in Year 2 holds all pupils transfixed and has engendered a good deal of activity across a range of subjects, including literacy, science and mathematics. Role play and drama play a significant part in motivating boys and girls alike, and all pupils enjoy carrying out research, competently using the internet as well as books.

The school has carefully examined its strategies for promoting community cohesion. An action plan has been drawn up and plans are well advanced for putting in place links to further strengthen the school's already good links with contrasting communities. The pupils gain a good awareness of other faiths and cultures locally, nationally and internationally. They gain some awareness of the multi-ethnic nature of the United Kingdom, but this is more limited. The school has good plans to set up a link with another school to develop this further but these have not yet been fully implemented.

There is a very strong sense of teamwork in the school. This is promoted very well by the headteacher and all staff are committed to making the best possible provision. This,

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together with careful analysis of the school's performance and sharply focused development planning, is a key factor in the school's success and its good capacity for further improvement. This is further demonstrated in the consistently good achievement of pupils over a number of years and their current average attainment from low starting points.

**What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Narrow the gap between reading and writing by focusing on the basic skills of spelling, punctuation and grammar as well as the imaginative content of pupils' writing.
- Improve the promotion of community cohesion by fully implementing the planned link with an inner city school.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils****2**

Pupils behave well and are keen to learn. They tackle their tasks and challenges well in class and really enjoy their learning. They make good progress in their lessons. This is because tasks are interesting and encourage them to think and reflect on wider issues. Pupils in Year 2 were finding similes to describe what Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin might have said when they first landed on the moon. 'It's as dusty as an old fossil,' said one, 'I can see millions of stars twinkling like shiny snowflakes,' exclaimed another. They are all familiar with 'one small step for man, one giant leap for mankind' and are reflective about how tiny the earth is when seen from space but how blue and alive it is. They show a good understanding of their part in caring for the planet and their own environment. They reflect thoughtfully on their work and activities and really take care of each other. They gain a good awareness of other faiths and cultures by celebrating the customs and different cultures of pupils attending the school.

Although children's starting points vary from year to year, they are generally well below those expected for their age. They make consistently good progress in acquiring language, literacy and mathematical skills. Attainment in reading is particularly high, and has consistently been at above average levels for the last few years. In order to narrow the gap between this and writing, more attention has been given to developing pupils' speaking skills and their understanding of sounds and letters. This has helped to accelerate many pupils' progress in writing. Higher attaining pupils are challenged very effectively and this enables them to achieve well. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities benefit significantly from individual and small group support which contributes well to their good progress. Pupils are developing very good interpersonal skills. They are participating in the 'Learning to Lead' programme and are already play leaders. They learn to organise events and handle money in real situations. They investigated the cost of a school pet, found out how to care for it and finally helped in the purchase of two much-loved guinea pigs. These skills, together with their improving academic progress and personal qualities, prepare them well for later learning.

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*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	2
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

## How effective is the provision?

Topics appeal to the pupils and teachers are sure to make meaningful links between subjects. The current topic on space involved pupils measuring distances on spaceships, researching the planets on the internet and using Kandinsky's art to inspire their own artwork. Pupils make good progress in lessons because teachers are very thoughtful and reflective, and carefully assess pupils' learning from day-to-day. Teaching often contains outstanding features. Teachers carefully and succinctly review previous learning at the start of lessons and always tell pupils what the current learning will lead on to so pupils always understand the reasons for their tasks. Planning is meticulous and ensures that the needs of all groups of pupils are met by carefully matching activities and tasks to their individual needs. A wide range of visits and visitors as well as theme weeks, such as the recent 'Arts week', do a great deal to enrich the curriculum and pupils' learning. Staff and pupils make good use of interactive whiteboards to enhance learning and maximise enjoyment. Teachers have high expectations of both behaviour and academic achievement. Firm boundaries and consistent systems for dealing with inappropriate behaviour help all staff to maintain an atmosphere in lessons which promotes

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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exploration and enjoyment and which is still conducive to good learning. Occasionally, teachers talk for a little bit too long which then restricts the time pupils have to complete their own tasks. Teachers are very well supported by a team of skilled teaching assistants who make an important contribution to pupils' learning.

The school cares for and supports all its pupils highly effectively. Induction arrangements into the school for children just joining are comprehensive and ensure they settle quickly and happily. Transition between key stages and on to junior school is excellent and very well handled to ensure that it is accomplished smoothly. The care for more vulnerable pupils is exceptional. The involvement of outside agencies to ensure that the school provides just the right kind of support is sensitively handled. Teaching assistants are very well trained to help pupils who have complex needs or are in danger of underperforming. They support pupils in lessons highly effectively and ensure that they make similar progress to their peers.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>1</b>

**How effective are leadership and management?**

The headteacher is a key strength and has a very clear vision for the school. She works closely with the whole staff and has created a climate where all feel responsible and committed to their part in school improvement. The quality of self-evaluation is good. It is well focused on improving standards and accelerating pupils' progress based on the results of rigorous monitoring. Governors are very well informed about the school. They know what it needs to do to improve. They work very hard to ensure parents and carers are fully involved in their children's education. Regular newsletters and an attractive website provide parents and carers with good information. At the time of the inspection, governors have ensured that all safeguarding procedures are robust. The school ensures that pupils, whatever their ethnic or cultural background, or their ability, are valued and free from discrimination. Equality of opportunity for all pupils is promoted highly effectively. The school has a very good understanding of, and participation in, the local community. A comprehensive audit has been carried out to evaluate the effectiveness of the school's community cohesion policy. The school has links with other establishments nationally and internationally but has not yet fully completed its plans to link with an inner city school in order to ensure that pupils understand the full range of cultural, ethnic and cultural diversity in the United Kingdom today.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

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<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

A large majority of pupils join the Nursery with skills that are below those typical of other children the same age. From the time they join the class, they are presented with an excellent range of activities and teaching which promote language and increase their speaking and listening skills significantly. They receive considerable support for their individual needs across all areas of learning which means that all children make very good progress. Children continue to make good progress throughout the Reception classes and tasks are planned which promote literacy, language, communication and numeracy skills well through a range of activities often linked to the topic in progress and which hold children's attention and motivates them well.

In both the Nursery and Reception classes, children enjoy learning because teaching is lively and exciting. There is a good balance between those activities led by the teacher and those that children choose for themselves. There are many opportunities for children to pursue their early literacy and numeracy skills, and writing and number areas are used successfully in all classrooms. The outdoor environment is used well. It presents children with a wide range of learning opportunities reflecting the quality of the indoor learning area. Children eagerly use the interactive whiteboards and computer games to effectively reinforce their learning. They learn to share and take turns. They develop independence and the ability to make choices. Interesting themes make the curriculum and learning relevant and exciting. The care and attention given to children's welfare are excellent. Children's individual needs are known and acted upon, and children feel very safe and secure. Leadership and management are good. Ongoing monitoring of the progress children are making ensures that activities are well matched to their needs on a day-to-day basis. Learning diaries are comprehensive and children's



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activities are recorded conscientiously. However, next steps in learning are not always identified and the way in which the diaries are presented and put together does not match the high quality of the children's learning environment.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

### Views of parents and carers

Over half the parents and carers returned questionnaires to the inspection team. They are extremely happy with the school. Very few parents and carers expressed any concerns. A small minority had a concern about the management of unacceptable behaviour. Some pupils do have challenging problems but the actions taken by the school to manage these are excellent and no disruption to lessons was observed at any time during the inspection, and the playground is a happy and harmonious place. Almost all those parents and carers who returned questionnaires consider the school to be run effectively and are happy with their children's experience at the school. Many positive comments were made, some emphasising the school's positive efforts to unite a very diverse school community. As one parent aptly wrote, 'The school has extremely strong links with both parents and the wider community. It links people from diverse backgrounds and religions into the school's rhythm.'

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St John's CE Infant School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 102 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 188 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	64	63	37	36	0	0	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	67	66	33	32	2	2	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	54	53	45	44	1	1	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	56	55	45	44	1	1	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	60	59	40	39	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	54	53	44	43	1	1	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	53	52	45	44	2	2	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	48	47	47	46	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	50	49	45	44	2	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	42	41	50	49	6	6	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	42	41	50	49	4	4	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	47	46	48	47	1	1	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	63	62	37	36	1	1	1	1

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

### Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li> <li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li> <li>■ The quality of teaching.</li> <li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li> <li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li> </ul>
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



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15 March 2010

Dear Children

Inspection of St John's CE (VC) Infant School, Glastonbury BA6 9DR

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school. We really enjoyed seeing you work so hard in lessons and play so happily outside. You showed us how much you enjoy your school and are pleased with how well you are doing. You are right to be pleased, because it is a good school!

What we found out about your school:

- You really enjoy school and make very good progress in reading, and good progress in writing and mathematics.
- You behave well in class, which helps you to do well in your learning, and out in the playground, which makes it a happy place to be.
- Your headteacher and governors are good at running the school and understand well how they could make it even better.
- You understand very well how to stay safe and live healthy lives.
- Your teachers work hard to plan interesting lessons and mark your work carefully.
- All staff take very good care of you and keep you safe.
- All the children in the Nursery and Reception get a good start to their school life.

What we would like the school to do now:

- Help you plan, spell and punctuate your really exciting writing a little better.
- Complete the planned link with a school in a city so that you learn even more about the different cultures in the United Kingdom.

Good luck for the future. We hope you continue to enjoy school as much as you do now.

Yours sincerely

Christine Huard

Lead Inspector

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