

# St John's Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

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<b>Unique reference number</b>	123900
<b>Local authority</b>	Somerset
<b>Inspection number</b>	380762
<b>Inspection dates</b>	29 February–1 March 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	John Laver

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>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	156
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Hollie Cashmore
<b>Headteacher</b>	Duncan Gordon
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	7–8 July 2009
<b>School address</b>	Priory Wellington Somerset TA21 9EJ
<b>Telephone number</b>	01823 662541
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<b>Age group</b>	4–11
<b>Inspection date(s)</b>	29 February–1 March 2012
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## Introduction

Inspection team

John Laver

Additional inspector

Sarah Jones

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspectors spent approximately seven hours observing teaching, visiting 17 lessons. In all, seven teachers were observed. In addition, discussions were held with groups of pupils, the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Governing Body, the headteacher and other members of staff. The inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at information about pupils' performance and progress, the school improvement plan, minutes of governing body meetings, curriculum planning documents and school policies. In addition, questionnaires from 24 parents and carers, five members of staff and 89 pupils were analysed.

## Information about the school

The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school. A very large majority of pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is average and the proportion of pupils speaking English as an additional language is well below average. The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught for part of the time alongside Year 1 pupils. All pupils are taught for at least some of the time in mixed-age classes. The school is beginning to emerge from a period in which there have been several changes in staffing. On two mornings a week the school runs a combined activities and breakfast club. The school holds the Healthy Schools Plus award and the National Bronze Eco award and is a Development School for the National Professional Qualification for Headship.

**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

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Achievement of pupils</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety of pupils</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>3</b>

## Key findings

- This is a satisfactory school. The school strongly promotes pupils' well-being in a friendly and supportive environment, so that pupils enjoy school and get on very well together. It is an improving school but is not better than satisfactory because some weaknesses remain in teaching and specifically in the development of mathematical and writing skills in Years 1 to 6.
- Children achieve well in the Early Years Foundation Stage. By the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment and progress are broadly average. Progress overall, including that for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, is satisfactory but improving. However, it is not improving as fast as it could in mathematics and writing.
- Teaching in Years 1 to 6 is typically satisfactory. Inspectors observed some good teaching, characterised by an emphasis on promoting active and independent learning, but the impact of teaching in mathematics and English is uneven. Work set for more able pupils is not always sufficiently challenging to promote good progress; not all teachers are confident in the teaching of some mathematical skills and concepts; and assessment, including marking, is not used consistently to make clear to pupils the next steps for improvement. Opportunities are sometimes missed to develop core skills at a higher level in some subjects.
- Pupils behave well and have very positive attitudes towards learning. They say that they feel safe in school, and parents and carers agree. Attendance has improved and is now above average.
- Senior leaders have worked conscientiously to improve school performance, developing the monitoring role of subject leaders, managing performance of teaching and providing good professional development for staff as well as focusing on the key areas for improvement. There has been mixed success in involving more parents and carers in pupils' learning. All staff are committed to improvement, but some of the initiatives to improve progress are not embedded enough to produce good results.

Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

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

- Raise pupils' attainment in mathematics and writing and improve progress, so that more pupils in the next academic year leave school with higher levels in these subjects, by ensuring a consistently high degree of challenge for more able pupils in both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2.
- Ensure that teaching is at least consistently good in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, so that pupils learn at a faster rate, by:
  - improving teachers' subject knowledge and confidence in teaching all aspects of mathematics
  - using assessment more consistently, including better use of pupils' targets and marking, to make sure that pupils have a clearer idea of how to improve their work
  - ensuring teachers capitalise on opportunities to develop numeracy and writing skills in subjects other than mathematics and English.

## Main report

### Achievement of pupils

Pupils show a very positive attitude towards learning in lessons. Where the teaching is effective, pupils make good gains in knowledge and skills, seen for example in Reception and Key Stage 1 when pupils were learning letter sounds and combinations (phonics). Progress is slower when there is insufficient challenge in the work, as observed in some mathematics lessons in which teachers missed opportunities to move more able pupils on to higher-level tasks early enough.

Children join the school with levels of skill and knowledge below those expected for their age. Good teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage results in these children making good progress. This was observed, for example, when children in Reception searched for minibeasts in the school grounds and were encouraged to record the results and report back their findings to the rest of the class. As a result, attainment by the end of Reception is in line with age-related expectations, and above in speaking and listening.

Overall attainment is average by the end of Year 6, and progress in Key Stages 1 and 2 is satisfactory. Pupils' skills in reading are broadly average by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils have benefited from the school's provision of a good range of reading materials and support for those pupils who have encountered difficulties with reading. Achievement in mathematics is the weaker aspect of pupils' performance. It has improved as a result of the considerable professional development for teachers in this area and additional support for underachieving pupils, but the school recognises there is more work to be done.

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Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, and those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, make similarly satisfactory progress as their peers overall. At times, the progress of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs accelerates and they achieve well in particular lessons or withdrawal sessions, because they are well supported by other staff. There are sometimes differences in attainment and progress between boys and girls in some year groups; but due to small cohorts of pupils from year to year, there is no consistent pattern. Teachers work conscientiously to ensure that any differences are minimised, and gaps between the achievement of boys and girls narrowed. Most of the parents and carers who responded to the Ofsted questionnaire or other surveys believe that their children make good progress. However, inspection evidence, along with school data and the school's own analysis, shows that progress, while improving, is satisfactory overall rather than good. This is also confirmed by some pupils, who say that they sometimes find the work too easy.

### **Quality of teaching**

Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is typically good. Children there enjoy a good balance of planned activities and opportunities to develop their independence. They get on well with each other and teachers ensure they make good progress in developing the full range of skills and knowledge. Teachers make particularly good use of the outdoor facilities to develop young children's curiosity and communication skills. In lessons higher up the school, teaching provides satisfactory opportunities to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For example, pupils engage in research or collaborative topics such as 'Ourselves' and 'Worship Through Play'.

Although teachers in Key Stages 1 and 2 plan conscientiously for pupils of various ages and abilities, often within large classes, the work in practice is not always suitably matched to the needs of more able pupils. This was seen in some mathematics and writing lessons when pupils spent too long on quite basic tasks. There are also occasions where teachers' subject knowledge in mathematics is not sufficiently strong to really stretch the most able pupils and to capitalise on pupils' evident desire to learn and to contribute to discussion. Teachers typically use teaching assistants well to support individuals and groups of pupils. Some well-paced and imaginative teaching of phonics was observed for some of the pupils in Key Stage 1. Teachers' use of assessment to promote learning is at times good because of the insightful feedback and comments that are made. However, there are occasions where targets are too generalised and marking of work praises achievement but does not always give consistently clear guidance on how pupils can improve their work. Teachers frequently encourage pupils to assess their own and each other's work and these activities are most successful when pupils are helped to understand the success criteria. The curriculum is satisfactorily planned and pupils enjoy aspects such as the 'enrichment fortnights'. However, opportunities are sometimes missed by teachers to develop pupils' writing and numeracy skills across different subjects, especially in the at times overuse of worksheets.

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Most parents and carers believe that their children are well taught. While there is some current good teaching and learning, the evidence of the inspection, supported by the school's own observations, is that this has not been typical enough to ensure good progress for all pupils over time.

### **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

A minority of parents, carers and pupils do not believe that behaviour is good or well managed by the school. The inspection supported the leadership's own perception that behaviour is typically good and there is ample evidence that behaviour has improved in recent years. According to pupils, behaviour is good and the few untoward incidences of misbehaviour around the school at lunchtime or break times are dealt with appropriately. Disruption in lessons is relatively rare. Pupils work hard, take pride in their work, collaborate well and display eagerness to respond to teachers' questioning and opportunities for discussion. They respond well to teachers' high expectations of behaviour. Pupils themselves are supportive of vulnerable pupils and those who, as one pupil told inspectors, 'find it difficult to manage themselves well all of the time'. The school gives prominence to its 'golden values', which are displayed around the school and reinforced in classes and assemblies. Pupils enjoy taking on responsibility, for example in the active school council, acting as playground buddies or helping younger pupils. The school has worked hard to reduce persistent absenteeism. It impresses upon parents and carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance, which has improved considerably and is now above average. Pupils clearly enjoy coming to school for the lessons, but also for other activities such as the breakfast and activities club. Pupils state that they feel very safe in school, that bullying is not an issue and understand why it is important that the school helps them avoid potential dangers such as cyber-bullying. School records in recent years demonstrate a very low incidence of all types of bullying and also show how these have been dealt with effectively. Most parents and carers also feel that their children are safe in school.

### **Leadership and management**

The headteacher, other senior and middle leaders, governors and staff all show a clear commitment to school improvement. Significant changes in staffing in recent times have not made sustained improvement easy, but the leadership shows the capacity for further improvement through the accurate evaluation of its strengths and weaknesses, its identification of the priorities for improvement and the initiatives which have begun to show a positive impact on teaching and achievement. One such example is where the leadership has made good use of expertise from other local schools to effect improvement, and has established a well-planned system for identifying underachievement. The resulting interventions, such as booster classes, have improved the progress of some individuals experiencing difficulties with mathematics, reading and writing, although there is more to be done. There is not the same well-developed programme for meeting the needs of more able pupils on a

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day-to-day basis. The curriculum successfully harnesses pupils' enthusiasm through enrichment topics, and gifted and talented pupils do have opportunities such as visits to other schools in order to gain additional experiences in subjects like science.

Senior leaders monitor teaching competently, and subject leaders are becoming more effectively involved in this process. Although monitoring is having a positive impact in some areas, improvements are needed to improve teacher expertise in mathematics through the sharing of good practice and additional professional development. The governing body has a core of committed and knowledgeable members, some of whom are confident and effective at holding the school to account. School leaders and governors fulfil their statutory duties in ensuring that child protection, safeguarding and welfare requirements all meet requirements. The school provides satisfactory opportunities for promoting pupils' spiritual, moral and social development and the school plans to widen pupils' multicultural understanding, for example through links with schools outside the immediate locality. Good links with local schools have a positive impact on pupils' learning, for example through opportunities for joint projects such as an Indian dance workshop. Governors and leaders ensure that St John's is an inclusive school which does not tolerate discrimination, teaches pupils to respect each other and promotes equal opportunities in a satisfactory manner.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all 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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance:	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour:	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and 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 governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety:	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

**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.**



2 March 2012

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of St John's Church of England Primary School, Wellington  
TA21 9EJ**

Thank you for welcoming us when we visited your school recently. We really enjoyed talking to you and seeing you at work in lessons and around the school. You attend a satisfactory school. This is what we found.

- You feel safe in school, enjoy lessons and other activities such as clubs, and like helping others through the school council. You attend school more regularly than pupils do in many other schools.
- You make satisfactory progress, although some of you, especially the cleverest among you, could do even better in mathematics and writing. Teaching is satisfactory.
- You behave well both in lessons and around the school.
- Your headteacher and all staff work hard to help you do well and enjoy school, for example by providing the 'enrichment fortnights'. They also ensure that you are well looked after.

We have asked the school to do the following to improve how well you achieve.

- Make sure that you always get the right level of work in mathematics and writing so that it challenges you and enables more of you to do better in these subjects by the time you leave school.
- Make sure that teachers give you more information about how you can improve your work, and give you more opportunities to improve your writing and mathematics in all the subjects you learn at school.

You will help your teachers succeed in this by continuing to work as hard as we saw you doing during the inspection.

Yours sincerely

John Laver  
Lead inspector

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