

# St John's Church of England Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	114549
<b>Local Authority</b>	East Sussex
<b>Inspection number</b>	357570
<b>Inspection dates</b>	9–10 June 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Alex Baxter

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>	210
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Tim Tyler
<b>Headteacher</b>	Laura Cooper
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	7 May 2008
<b>School address</b>	School Lane Crowborough, East Sussex Crowborough TN6 1SD
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 21 lessons and observed seven teachers. They observed the school's work, and attended two assemblies, evaluated break times and before- and after-school activities, and held meetings with representatives of the governing body, staff, pupils, and parents and carers. They looked at plans and policies, records of assessments and the tracking of pupils' progress. The provision and planning for pupils who are potentially vulnerable or have special educational needs and/or disabilities were evaluated. In addition, questionnaires completed by 86 parents and carers, 104 pupils and 10 staff were analysed.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The consistency of teaching and learning in ensuring that in English, boys achieve as well as girls.
- The impact of the school's efforts to lift achievement in mathematics to match that in English.
- The degree to which the headteacher and other leaders track pupils' progress and use data to sustain continuous improvements in pupils' achievements.

## Information about the school

This is an above average-sized primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is low. The large majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in a Reception class.

**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 is a good school. It has strengthened the quality of provision and pupils' outcomes since the previous inspection and continues to improve. Significant strengths include high attendance and attainment in English, and through an outstanding range of extra-curricular experiences within a good curriculum, promoting the pupils' excellent adoption of healthy living. Not surprisingly, when interviewed, pupils say, 'We love school because we have lots of sports.' Similarly, within good overall care, guidance and support, the exemplary pastoral care provided by staff is a key element underpinning the pupils' confidence and great enjoyment of school.
- The headteacher has effectively developed an accurate system for tracking pupils' progress and has ensured that this is used rigorously to inform good self-evaluation and to raise expectations and pupils' attainments. The well-constructed senior leadership team works closely with a sharply focused governing body to fully meet all statutory regulations, including ensuring that good safeguarding procedures secure pupils' welfare.
- Systematic improvement is reflected in the good quality of the teaching and in the pupils' accelerated and now good progress. It is particularly impressive in the pupils' excellent achievement in English by the end of Year 6. Such continuously improving provision and learning, which subsequently leads to pupils' good overall achievement, including by those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, clearly show a good capacity for sustained improvement.
- Good partnerships with parents and carers, the local community and outside agencies support the pupils' developing self-confidence and warm relationships, and ensure that pupils feel safe and behave well at school.
- Children enjoy a good range of practical indoor and outdoor learning experiences when they start school in Reception. Here, they begin the good learning and progress that continues through the school for pupils across the range of ability and backgrounds, increasingly by more-able pupils. Pupils do particularly well in their reading, speaking, listening, and information and communication technology (ICT) skills. On occasion, learning in lessons is too adult-led and does not fully develop pupils' self-enquiry skills. As a result, progress in problem solving in mathematics and learning independently in lessons is slowed for some pupils.
- Pupils contribute well to the school and local community, for example, by performing and singing in a local hospital and in residential homes for the elderly. Pupils eagerly fulfil responsibilities and are keen to show initiative, but opportunities for them to do so independently out of lessons are not readily developed as they

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move through the school. This delays the ability of some pupils to show greater responsibility.

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

- Further increase the progress that pupils make, especially in mathematics and by those with more ability, by providing more real-life problem-solving activity and enabling pupils to set up and follow their own lines of enquiry.
- Provide more opportunities out of lessons for pupils to express their views and to develop greater independence by undertaking increasing levels of responsibility as they move through the school.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Although there is some variation from year to year, most children enter the Reception class with expected levels of knowledge and skills. The children's enjoyment of school and very positive attitudes to learning, promoted particularly well in all classes, underpins their good progress through the school. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make similar progress to their peers. This is a result of the well-planned teaching and additional support they receive. By the time pupils leave, their good achievement ensures that they are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Pupils get on very well with each other and with the staff. They sustain their concentration effectively and respond well when given the opportunity to share and develop their ideas with a 'talk partner'. Typically in this school, pupils are engaged well by the interesting activities teachers frequently provide, such as when, in an English lesson, pupils discussed a text from 'The Hobbit' to explore riddles. Most pupils show confidence and significant skill in talking about what they are learning, especially when asked to share their ideas with the rest of the class. Behaviour and concentration levels are noticeably at their best in lessons when pupils face specific challenges. For instance, when writing was developed by using computers to create 'radio scripts' advertising famous locations, such as the Eiffel Tower, in France. Here, pupils, mostly working in pairs, argued for and against the degree of persuasion of different features relating to the location before reaching agreement. As a result of such beneficial learning, pupils' attainment in English, particularly by boys, has risen and is now high. The quality of pupils' work in mathematics is also improving and is now above average. However, at times, learning simply involves pupils completing tasks set by the teachers, hence pupils' skills in solving problems independently, including by those with more ability, are not yet as consistently high as their writing skills.

Pupils take pride in their school community and their great enjoyment of school is clearly evident in the high level of attendance. Pupils report they feel safe in school and are confident that if any problems arose, they would be swiftly and effectively tackled by caring adults. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, as seen in their good behaviour and kindly way they interact with each other. Pupils have an excellent understanding of the importance of a healthy diet, and are very active in sports and take plenty of exercise, which is reflected in their high take-up of after-school clubs. Pupils contribute well to local events, especially to church festivals. They take their roles, for instance as house captains and library monitors, seriously and perform their duties conscientiously. Even so, while pupils also contribute well to various charities, sometimes

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independently, such as setting up a cake stall to raise money for local charities, further opportunities for pupils to express their views and show initiative are not always available.

*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>	2
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>2</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>	1
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

<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

## How effective is the provision?

Good monitoring and support of teachers and teaching assistants have brought systematic improvement in the quality of teaching since the previous inspection. Successful strategies include, for example, the way teachers use assessment to make sure that expectations are high enough, and the use of clear information about how to improve. Pupils are also increasingly encouraged to evaluate their own and each other's work, and pupils can improve their work as part of teachers' marking. These strategies build pupils' expectations and enrich their learning. Other developments include good questioning and the stimulating use of interactive whiteboards and computers to engage pupils and to clarify what is to be learnt in the lesson. Pupils' positive attitudes and confidence in speaking are other key features underpinning their improved learning and progress, shown in a good English lesson in Year 2 when pupils discussed the key features of story characters. Following the very effective focus on writing, especially for boys, teachers are now seeking to raise standards in mathematics. This was exemplified in a good lesson in Year 3, when the pupils investigated and constructed three-dimensional shapes. However, fully extending pupils' independent learning skills, especially for the more-able pupils, through, for example, real-life problems, is not yet a consistent feature in all classes.

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Currently, though, there are few opportunities for pupils to pursue their own lines of enquiry in lessons and pupils' progress still slows on occasion when teachers talk for too long and pupils lose interest.

There is good provision for developing pupils' skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT through other subjects, including environmental studies during out-of-school visits. There is a strong commitment to offering pupils memorable experiences and these include residential visits to France and the Isle of Wight, which in recent years have also been used very successfully to develop pupils' writing skills. The curriculum is enriched further by an excellent range of well-attended extra-curricular activities which significantly enhance the pupils' healthy living.

Within the school's good overall care, guidance and support, pastoral care, especially for pupils with complex needs, is exemplary. Together with good links with parents and carers and outside agencies, these features cater well for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, keep all pupils safe and underpin their self-confidence and very regular attendance at school.

*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>2</b>

## **How effective are leadership and management?**

Under the determined leadership of an experienced headteacher, senior leaders implement good systems for monitoring and evaluating the school's work and ensure a successful drive for continuing improvement. The development of staff leadership roles, skills in assessing pupils' progress and in raising expectations have also contributed well to the good improvements in provision and pupils' achievements. As a result, good self-evaluation accurately identifies the right areas for improvement. For example, the impact of leadership in lifting boys' achievements, especially in writing, is clearly working. Other initiatives, such as involving pupils in self-evaluation, have also raised expectations, but as yet initiatives to enhance independent learning have yet to be embedded as successfully in all classes.

The governing body fulfils its duties well. High priority is given to safeguarding pupils, with effective policies and good practice in child protection procedures, which keep pupils safe. Staff are well trained in all aspects of safeguarding and the site is safe and secure. Good strategic planning, such as in extending the school's accommodation and providing stimulating outdoor learning opportunities, alongside raising academic standards, ensures good value for money. The school has good partnerships with parents and carers and a range of external organisations, which enhance the learning activities provided for the pupils. In particular, partnerships contribute strongly to pupils' excellent adoption of

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healthy lifestyles and attendance. The school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination well, leading to improved and now good progress made by boys. The school makes a good contribution to community cohesion. It is a cohesive, caring community with good links with the local area. Several contributions to charities, such as Children in Need, ensure that national and international aspects of community are covered effectively. The school also has plans to use video-conferencing to extend links with culturally more diverse communities to enhance its focus on community cohesion.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<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>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</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

Children make a successful start because of the excellent care and good teaching they receive in Reception. Induction procedures, which include very reassuring links with parents and carers, excellent relationships and well-directed leadership and management, ensure that children behave well and settle in quickly. All staff have a good understanding of how young children learn and are very effective in developing the children's social, communication and numeracy skills. Much-improved facilities, both indoors and outside, now support a good range of adult-led activities and those children choose for themselves. At times, though, the emphasis placed on developing new learning through adult-directed activity reduces the opportunity for children to initiate their own learning. As a consequence, on these occasions, the enhancement of children's independence is less successful. Even so, the staff's efficient use of assessment ensures that children build on previous learning and make good progress across the varied and exciting experiences that are provided for them. For example, indoors, they explore and greatly enjoy learning in the 'Under Water World' and outdoors they role play in the 'Seaside Caf'. By the time children leave for Year 1, they show confidence and above average skills, especially as emerging readers and writers.



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*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:	2
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

There was a broadly average response rate to the questionnaire. Most parents and carers, including those who spoke to inspectors, expressed agreement with all the statements and are positive about the school's provision. All parents and carers agreed that the school keeps pupils safe and helps pupils to have a healthy lifestyle. Additional written comments were also mostly very positive and are endorsed by inspection findings, typically, 'The teachers are very approachable and my son is very happy at school.' The few disagreements, mainly about dealing with unacceptable behaviour and taking account of suggestions, were considered by the inspectors. Evidence gathered during this inspection showed that the school takes appropriate account of parents' and carers' views and manages pupils' behaviour well.

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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St John's Cof E Primary 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 86 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 210 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	46	53	37	43	2	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	46	53	40	47	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	36	42	46	53	2	2	2	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	39	45	39	45	6	7	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	39	45	41	48	5	6	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	41	48	40	47	2	2	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	42	49	42	49	0	0	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)	36	42	39	45	2	2	2	2
The school meets my child's particular needs	36	42	45	52	1	1	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	31	36	35	41	12	14	2	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	33	38	38	44	11	13	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	36	42	41	48	7	8	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	48	56	34	40	4	5	0	0

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 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	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

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 are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 December 2010 and 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.

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

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

## 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.**



10 June 2011

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of St John's CofE Primary School, Crowborough TN6 1SD**

Thank you all for your warm welcome and for helping us during our inspection of your school. Additional thanks to the house captains and the group of pupils from Years 5 and 6 who talked to us so willingly about the school. You told us that you like coming to school and enjoy learning because of the stimulating range of clubs and outdoor activities, and because of the very friendly relationships between pupils and with staff. We found that St John's is a good school that continues to improve. These very positive views were also evident in our discussions with you and in your questionnaire responses.

These are the other main things we found.

- You attend very regularly and make good progress as you move through the school, but do particularly well in English.
- You show an excellent commitment to healthy living and do well in, and greatly enjoy, sporting activities.
- You behave well, especially in lessons, and make good contributions to your interesting learning activities both in and out of lessons.
- Teaching and learning are good and show particular improvement in extending your writing skills. This is because adults have set high expectations and appreciate your efforts.
- You feel safe at school because of the good support provided for you by caring staff.
- Your headteacher, staff and members of the governing body work well together as a team and are committed to bringing further improvement.

To help you to make even better progress, we have asked the teachers to give you more opportunities to set up and follow your own learning activities, especially in mathematics, through solving real-life problems, particularly by those of you who find learning easy. We have also asked the teachers to give you more opportunities out of lessons to express your views and to take on responsibilities.

All of you can help by holding on to your very positive attitudes to learning.

Yours sincerely

Alex Baxter

Lead inspector

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