



St John's School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number 132416
Local Authority SCE
Inspection dates 23-25th January 2007
Reporting inspector Leszek Iwaskow HMI

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

Type of school	Comprehensive	School address	Episkopi
School category	Community		Cyprus
Age range of pupils	11 -19		BFPO 53
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	00 357 25963888
Number on roll (school)	390	Fax number	00 357 25963708
Number on roll (6th form)	46		
Appropriate authority	The local authority	Chair	Lt Col D R H James
		Headteacher	Mr M J Cawson
Date of previous school inspection	November 2002		

Age group 11 -19	Inspection date(s) 23-25 th January 2007	Inspection no.
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors.

Description of the school

St John's is a mixed 11- 19 comprehensive school for children of Service personnel. It is situated on the Western Sovereign Base Area (WSBA) at Episkopi, Cyprus. Many students enter the school in Year 7 from the primary schools at RAF Akrotiri or from Episkopi. The school also has a small number of fee paying students. In addition, significant numbers of students enter at other times of the year and from abroad, dependent on parental posting. There is high pupil mobility.

Attainment on entry is above average for English schools. There is a significant gender imbalance in some classes. The school has very few students from non-white ethnic backgrounds. Thirty one students have learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD), mainly linked to specific learning needs such as dyslexia, speech and communication issues and social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. An increasing number of students have a parent on detachment to 'risk zones' which leads to specific anxieties. There have been some significant changes in teaching personnel in the last few years and there have been problems recruiting in some subjects notably science and modern foreign languages.

The school follows a continental day and has achieved the Artsmark and Inclusion Quality Mark as well as the Investors in People award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Although the school's overall effectiveness is satisfactory, its performance in a few respects is inadequate. Before its next section 5 inspection, Ofsted inspectors may visit the school to monitor the progress it has made in remedying these weaknesses.

The school faces a period of change as it endeavours to meet the challenges and needs of students in a rapidly changing world. The school has enjoyed success and parents and teachers are rightly proud of this. Students are pleased with their achievements whether this involves trekking in the Troodos Mountains while participating in the Duke of Edinburgh scheme, expressing their artistic talents in drama and through music or celebrating their success in examinations. They are proud of the results they have achieved and have every right to be. Despite this they could do even better with the correct guidance, support and better teaching. Standards in many subjects are above the national average but could be better especially in English. Students perform best at Key Stage 3 but do not always realise their full potential in GCSE and A level examinations. The most able, in particular, could be challenged to do even better.

The school is a well ordered community. Most students feel safe and are, in the main, polite, responsive and responsible. They interact well with each other and their teachers and many relationships are good. However an increasing, but small, number of youngsters are at times disrupting the life of the school with unacceptable behaviour. This is not always managed in a consistent way. Students care about each other and their surroundings. Incidents of serious bullying are rare and the school environment is litter free and well cared for. Students show respect for one another but they lack a real understanding of what it means to live in a multi-ethnic society. The school is aware of this and is beginning to develop its curriculum to meet these challenges. There is a recognized need in areas such as personal, social and health education and citizenship to modernise teaching and resources to ensure that students have the skills and positive attitudes and values which will serve them well in their future lives. Some teaching programmes in other subjects are also dated and do not reflect current best practice. Equally, the timetabling and logistical difficulties presented by small numbers in exam classes have constrained choice and prevented some students from accessing courses which more suitably meet their needs. The school is aware of this and is keen to expand vocational provision in particular. In order to do so it needs to forge stronger links with the local community. This would also encourage better use of the rich and varied cultural opportunities offered by living in Cyprus.

Students enter the school with different experiences and learning requirements. Many have above average potential and the school needs to adapt to meet

these needs especially in the classroom. Provision here is only satisfactory with too many lessons failing to fully engage and challenge students. School management is very supportive of those teachers who wish to develop their classroom skills further and many staff benefit from courses and training both locally and elsewhere. However, they need to be made more accountable in ensuring that their new knowledge and skills gained during training are imparted in the classroom and in how they manage their subjects.

Management is keen to initiate change and the new members of the leadership team are energetic and full of ideas. There is a need to reflect on what is important and prioritise these ideas and communicate them clearly and effectively to the staff so that problems of implementation are minimised. Management has not always focused on the right issues and some, identified during the previous inspection have not been fully dealt with. What goes on in the classroom should be a priority and this has not been monitored or challenged with sufficient rigour to ensure that provision is of a consistently good standard. Parental concerns expressed in the previous inspection remain and communication remains an issue.

Whilst some teachers and subjects are providing a good quality experience for the students, provision and management remains less than good in some areas, notably English. If senior management can drive through the necessary improvements the school can have a bright future and will be able to provide all these students with a good quality education. The potential is there, it needs to be tapped and channelled effectively.

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form Grade: 3

Achievement and standards in the sixth form are satisfactory. Pass rates are high in some subjects but overall pass rates are around the national average. Most students make satisfactory progress when compared to their attainment on entry. A small number achieve well, especially in design and technology, but in other subjects, including chemistry and physics, students underachieve. Students speak highly of many of their tutors, and feel that they are taught well in some, though not all, subjects. Personal development in the sixth form is satisfactory. Students generally feel safe and well supported, but the current system of group tutorials does not adequately cover topics such as health promotion, drug and alcohol abuse and it does not prepare them sufficiently well for life in a multi-ethnic society. Leadership and management of the sixth form are satisfactory.

What the school should do to improve further

- The quality of teaching and learning needs to be improved so that the proportion of good or better lessons is increased and inadequate teaching removed.
- Leadership and management at all levels need to share a common vision and become more accountable in order to ensure provision is good in all areas.
- Senior managers and individual departments need to use self evaluation more critically, not just to analyse performance but to improve it.
- The behaviour policy needs to be implemented with greater consistency.
- Students need to be better prepared for life in a multi-ethnic society.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Achievement and standards are satisfactory overall. Students enter the school with higher than average attainment at both Key Stage 3 and 4 but only make satisfactory progress in relation to their abilities, especially in English. The school recognises that there are weaknesses in this key subject but has failed to bring about sufficient improvements. Over the last two years there has been noticeable underachievement especially by some girls at Key Stage 4 which has also impacted negatively on overall standards.

At Key Stage 3, standards are generally above the national average with students making good progress, especially in maths but only satisfactory progress in English. At GCSE standards are generally above the National average, despite the significant dip in 2006. There is however inconsistent performance across subjects. Pass rates in the sixth form are around the national average although this varies between subjects and most students achieve as well as can be expected when compared to their GCSE results. Fewer students attain the highest grades although most make satisfactory progress.

There are clear links between students' performance and the overall satisfactory teaching which most are exposed to in classes. In lessons, the majority only make satisfactory progress and their work reveals they are not stretched sufficiently, especially the most able. The school has recognised the need to provide more challenge to students' learning and an embryonic programme for gifted and talented students is being developed.

Personal development and well-being Grade: 3

Personal development and well-being

Students' personal development is satisfactory. Most students' enjoy going to school, are polite and courteous and have satisfactory attitudes to learning. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is mostly good. However there is some unacceptable behaviour amongst a minority of students and this is reflected in a rising level of exclusions. A new behaviour management policy has been introduced, but this is not yet fully embedded into the life of the school. Students comment that there are inconsistencies in how staff manage inappropriate behaviour.

Students' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development is satisfactory. There is no daily act of worship, which was an issue in the previous inspection. Cultural development is only satisfactory because students are not sufficiently well prepared for life in a multi-ethnic society. Students respond well to the encouragement they are given to adopt healthy lifestyles. A high proportion of them participate in a good range of sporting activities and facilities are good. They know about healthy food choices and readily enjoy the healthy options available at break times. Sixth formers and teachers do not always set a good example in supporting this initiative.

Most students say they feel safe and where major incidents of bullying occur they are usually dealt with successfully. Attendance is good despite the absences linked to the active deployment of parents.

Good progress is being made in developing students' numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills, which prepares them well for the next stage of their education. The school is working hard to improve the opportunities for work experience.

There is a school council but students say that they are frustrated because it takes too long for issues to be actioned, such as improvements to the toilets. Students do not always understand that delays are often caused by bureaucratic requirements and regulations rather than a lack of will on the part of teachers.

Personal development in the sixth form is satisfactory. Students value highly the support from many of their personal tutors. However, there is insufficient provision within tutorial time to develop their awareness of important issues including health, racial awareness, drugs and alcohol abuse.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory in the school and in the sixth form. Although there is some good practice, especially in design and technology, history, geography and modern foreign languages, this is not sufficiently widespread and inspectors found too much teaching to be satisfactory and some that was inadequate. Where teaching is good, teachers are well prepared and engage students in a range of activities so that effective learning takes place. The pace is brisk and there is a good level of challenge for more able learners. However, in too many lessons, levels of challenge fail to stretch students fully or provide opportunities for them to be active learners rather than passive listeners. This sometimes results in a slow pace of learning and students' losing interest.

Inconsistencies in marking across subject departments have been recognised by the school. In many subjects students know their learning targets and these are reviewed regularly. Detailed assessment data is available to all teachers, and it is used well in many subject areas including mathematics, science and ICT. However, it is not yet used consistently across the whole school to inform planning and to identify underachievement. Secure plans are in place to address this issue.

Students in the sixth form know where they are in relation to their targets and many of their teachers give them good advice on how to improve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Curriculum provision is satisfactory throughout the school. There is a balanced curriculum at Key Stage 3 which meets students' needs well. However it follows a more traditional structure post fourteen where choices are more restrictive, particularly in the sixth form. This is partly due to the logistical problems caused by very small numbers of students opting for some choices which makes it difficult for the school to run and manage effectively. Timetable restrictions, particularly in the upper school, complicate issues and have made it difficult for the school to accommodate a greater choice of options. The school has recognised the need to introduce a more flexible and personal curriculum and increase the number of vocational options to meet the needs of all students. There is a clear vision on how to improve provision in this area and students should benefit from the proposals which will better meet their needs.

Curriculum provision in some areas such as citizenship is only developing and teaching programmes in other areas are not always meeting the needs of all students. Programmes for personal and social development are dated and others such as in English need to address teaching and learning rather than mere coverage of content. Students benefit from the good range of sporting opportunities on offer. They are particularly enthused by outdoor learning opportunities linked to schemes such as the Duke of Edinburgh programme. They enjoy geography fieldwork and benefit from opportunities to visit the heritage sites on the island to enhance learning in history. However, there is no structured or organised programme to imbue students into the rich cultural traditions linked to living on a Mediterranean island many of which contrast to their experiences on the base and in the United Kingdom.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Care guidance and support are satisfactory. Structures and policies to safeguard and promote students' health, safety and well being are in place. Systems in the school are further supported by effective links with a number of external agencies including medical and social care. Recent revisions to students' services include a confidential counselling service which is valued highly. A rolling programme of staff training for child protection is in place. Serious incidents of poor behaviour are dealt with, but the recently introduced behaviour policy is yet to be fully effective.

The overall academic progress of students is monitored regularly, but students are not always given good advice on how to meet their learning targets. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are generally well supported individually and by learning support assistants. Careers advice and guidance are satisfactory. Many students receive good information to help them to make choices at key points in their school life. However, some students and sixth formers have received insufficient information to inform their future career choices and in some instances this has resulted in inappropriate subject options being taken. Provision for careers advice and guidance has been revised recently but it is too early to comment upon its impact.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Given the issues which need to be addressed including the variations in performance and provision across subjects and lessons, leadership and management can only be judged to be satisfactory. This school is a complex community which is undergoing a period of change. Currently there is no shared vision across the school about the directions which need to be taken to

meet the many needs of all students. The new management team is keen to initiate change but has not had sufficient time to show impact.

There is a wealth of performance data and intricate systems are in place but these are not being used constructively or rigorously enough to challenge weaker practice particularly in teaching and learning. Management has not heeded all the messages to improve from the previous inspection. Library provision and ICT facilities have been much improved. However, there is still no consistency in the management of faculties and departments to bring them up to the level of the best. Links with parents and their involvement in the school remains an issue and the curriculum in the sixth form still needs further development. There is insufficient rigour in monitoring of teaching and learning with the clear intention of improving provision in the classroom and raising the achievement of all students.

The quality of subject leadership varies. Some heads of department are committed and intent on raising standards. Others lack the vision or the inclination to recognise weaknesses or challenge poor practice and adapt to meet the needs of the modern classroom. The School Governance Committee is currently being restructured. The new Committee is determined to be more involved in the future and act as a critical friend. Communications within the school and with parents could be improved.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate.</i>	School Overall	16–19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3	3
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	N/A	
The effectiveness and efficiency of boarding provision	N/A	
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	4	4
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	No	No

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3	
The behaviour of learners	3	
The attendance of learners	2	
How well learners enjoy their education	3	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3	
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	

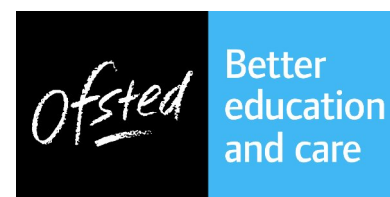
¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	3	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3	3

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	4	
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	4	
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No	
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No	



28th January 2007

St John's School
Episkopi
Cyprus
BFPO 53

Dear Students

We enjoyed visiting your school recently and would like to thank you for all your help. You are very proud of your school. Most of you are very supportive and appreciative of the way your teachers and all the school staff are working hard to make your time at the school an enjoyable and successful experience. When you talked to us we were impressed with your maturity, politeness and your ability to articulate views and opinions. You provided us with a great deal of information about the strengths of the school and also the areas about which you had real concerns. You will no doubt have heard that as a result of our visit we have decided that your school has much to be proud of but in some important areas there are weaknesses which we believe need to be addressed.

The teachers and especially your parents are very proud of your achievements whether these are in the exam room, on the sports field or learning teamwork and survival skills as part of your Duke of Edinburgh programme.

You enjoy some lessons, particularly those which are challenging and allow you to develop and use a range of skills. However, you drew our attention to some lessons which were uninteresting and failed to capture your imagination. We have drawn these concerns to the attention of the teachers and over the coming months they will be working hard to bring about improvements which should make many more lessons more interesting and enjoyable. You also need to try a little harder, especially in English – it is a subject which is very important. Without it, how can you communicate, and succeed in other lessons?

You must also play your part and ensure that you support your teachers by not disrupting some lessons. A small minority of you have been particularly difficult at times and this needs to change. Your teachers will also ensure that your behaviour is managed fairly and consistently.

We were very pleased that you are very aware of the need to lead healthy lives. Most of you try to eat sensibly. To encourage you to maintain these high standards we have asked the sixth formers and teachers to provide better role models, for example by not drinking fizzy drinks on site.

You will not be surprised that we have asked the school to improve the quality of your lessons as quickly as possible. You and your teachers will need to work together to ensure this happens.

We wish you every success in the future.

Leszek Iwaskow and Josephine Nowacki
Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools