

# St John's School

## Inspection report

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Unique Reference Number	132416
Local Authority	Service Children's Education
Inspection number	345688
Inspection dates	26–27 January 2010
Reporting inspector	Margaret Dickinson HMI

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

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Type of school	Secondary
School category	Ministry of Defence
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	304
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	50
Appropriate authority	Service Children's Education
Chair	Lt-Col R Pickford
Principal	Martin Ainsworth
Date of previous school inspection	25 January 2007
School address	Episkopi Cyprus BFPO 53
Telephone number	00 357 25963888
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three of Her Majesty's Inspectors. The majority of time was spent looking at learning, with 20 lessons observed and 25 teachers seen. Meetings were held with groups of students, including some from the sixth form, senior and middle leaders, and representatives from the School Governance Committee. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation, including senior leaders' monitoring of teaching, notes of visit from Service Children's Education, the school's current plan for improvement, and data on students' standards and progress. Questionnaires completed by 126 parents were analysed, together with those from staff, and from around 20% of students chosen at random.

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

- the quality and consistency of students' learning in English across the school
- the success and impact of the new leadership team in tackling and remedying the weaknesses identified at the last inspection and the subsequent monitoring visit
- the extent to which leaders promote equal opportunities, and analyse and identify any variation in the learning and progress of different groups represented within the school
- the provision in the sixth form and the extent to which this meets students' needs and impacts upon their achievement and enjoyment.

## Information about the school

St John's serves two military bases situated in the Western Sovereign Base Area of Cyprus: RAF Akrotiri and Episkopi Garrison. While some military and civilian personnel remain in Cyprus for longer periods, most have shorter postings of between one and three years. This leads to a higher than usual number of students joining or leaving the school during the course of the academic year. The proportion of students from minority ethnic groups and those who speak English as an additional language is very low. Just over one in ten students have special educational needs and/or disabilities, which is below average.

One of Her Majesty's Inspectors carried out a monitoring visit in March 2008 and judged progress in addressing the issues from the previous inspection to be satisfactory. The headteacher has since retired and the school was led by the headteacher of King Richard's School (KRS), Cyprus from January 2009. A federation with King Richard's School (KRS), Cyprus was formally established in June 2009 when the headteacher of KRS was appointed Principal of both schools. Just under a half of the teaching staff have joined the school since the last inspection.

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 provides a good education for its students, including those in the sixth form. Students enjoy their learning at St John's and feel safe. They feel part of a cohesive, supportive community and appreciate the special nature of a small school where there are always friends to turn to. Teaching is good, students receive good care and guidance and they benefit from an effective and relevant curriculum. As a consequence, students achieve well and reach high standards, especially by Year 11. The school also helps students to develop essential personal skills of tolerance, diligence, politeness and, often, leadership. These skills, together with the very high level of academic performance reached by many, prepare students effectively for the world of work or further, more independent study.

There has been significant improvement in the school's effectiveness since its last inspection when some key weaknesses and inconsistencies were identified. The federation with KRS has strengthened leadership and provision. Central to the school's improvement is the vision and direction set by the principal. He has quickly got to the nub of what needed doing in the school and has steadied the ship. Above all, he has enabled senior leaders to use and develop their leadership skills and has raised staff morale. A culture has developed within which staff know that 'learning is at the heart of all we do'. This is manifested in good teaching in many cases, where lessons are lively, focused and benefit pupils' learning across the ability range. However, learning is not consistently at the forefront of all lessons, especially when teachers talk too much, leaving students largely passive and, on occasions, disengaged.

The federation with KRS and good partnerships with other agencies, the military community and local businesses is enabling the school to broaden its curriculum and provide a valuable taste of the world of work for students. Lessons in integrated studies are particularly popular and students enjoy the variety of projects that these entail. Timely and necessary interventions by senior leaders capitalised on the best English teaching in 2009 to close the gap between mathematics and science, and English at Year 11. This led to a steep rise in English results. Nevertheless, leadership in English remains a weakness and is inadequate. There is without doubt some highly effective teaching in the English department but this is contrasted by instances of inadequate teaching, which has a negative impact on students' learning and motivation.

The school is committed to promoting equal opportunities. However, leaders do not

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analyse pupils' progress in the amount of depth that allows them to check any variation in the progress between the groups represented within the school. Such groups include: the more able, those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, students from minority ethnic groups as well as those who remain in the school for longer periods due to their parents' postings and roles.

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

- Improve further students' learning in English and their enjoyment of the subject by:
  - strengthening leadership of English and its impact on students' learning and achievement
  - monitor rigorously the effectiveness within the department to reduce inconsistencies
  - eradicating any inadequate teaching.
- Continue the school's drive to ensure all lessons motivate and inspire students and promote the learning of all groups by:
  - providing more varied approaches to learning in lessons to involve students more actively and avoid situations where they listen for prolonged periods
  - improving the consistency and quality of marking
  - finding out from students what they enjoy and do not enjoy in lessons and the features of teaching that motivate and interest them most.
- Develop greater finesse in monitoring the ongoing progress and outcomes of the different groups represented within the school.

### Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Most students are self-motivated, keen to do well and are very perceptive about defining those elements in lessons which maximise their learning and progress. They point to the need for a balance of stimulating, well-considered tasks and interestingly delivered input. During the inspection, where such features were present, students made good and sometimes rapid gains intellectually and personally. Test results and data about students' progress confirm this positive picture, although progress for students in mathematics and science remains stronger than that in English at Key Stage 3. Across the school, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress. Students' attainment at GCSE is very high. The good progress made by higher ability pupils in 2009 is highlighted by the standards they attained; over one in five such students secured five or more A\* or A grade passes at GCSE in 2009.

The behaviour of students is mostly good during lessons and when moving around the site. This represents significant improvement since the previous inspection. Students report that incidents of bullying are not common. However, students are

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clear as to what action to take if the need arises; furthermore they are confident that the matter would be taken seriously and addressed promptly. Students demonstrate good commitment to following a healthy lifestyle and their participation in health and sport related activities is testament to this. However, this commitment also leads them to be critical of the quality of food available through the tuck shop as well as the cost of the healthier options.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

## How effective is the provision?

Many of the lessons observed during the inspection were good and on occasions outstanding. Lessons such as these are characterised by:

- good subject knowledge, evident in clear explanations and detailed responses to students' questions
- targeted questioning that help students to reflect and expand upon their answers
- tasks that are varied and well matched to students' learning needs.

In the best lessons, expectations are high, teaching is imaginative and students are actively engaged in their learning. Students make less progress when they do not have sufficient opportunities to engage in discussion, for example, or when they spend prolonged periods of time on a task that they find unstimulating. There are examples of good quality marking that is evaluative, clearly related to the specific subject rather than being too generic, and that indicates clearly to the student how they can improve. However, this practice is not yet consistently good across the

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<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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school.

The school ensures good emphasis is placed on students' emotional, social and academic development. Music and drama are particular strengths in the curriculum and many students participate in the associated extra-curricular activities, such as the popular school shows. The needs of vulnerable students are met well as a result of early identification and prompt action by the school, combined with good links with a range of external agencies. Provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities has improved and their individual learning plans map out small manageable steps that help this group to learn and make good progress. Senior leaders know that the provision for gifted and talented students is currently not as well established and have suitable plans to develop this aspect.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

## How effective are leadership and management?

Many staff reported how much the culture of the school has improved. They feel supported and valued while at the same time being equally clear of the direction the school has needed to take and their role in this. The many improvements seen by staff, and confirmed by inspectors, have resulted from strong ambition and drive by senior leaders, which is shared by many middle leaders. Leadership has had a clear impact upon pupils' standards and the many improvements since the school's last inspection. Questionnaires from both staff and students give a strong endorsement of the direction set by the new senior leadership team. However, in promoting equal opportunities, systems are not yet sufficiently in place to check that all groups of students learn and make progress equally well so that the school is in a position to intervene and take action should it be necessary.

Leaders place clear priority on establishing a cohesive community, maximising the opportunities presented through the context of the military base and through living in Cyprus. They also provide a good range of opportunities to bring students into contact with people and communities very different to their own. Good safeguarding and child protection systems are in place and designated staff are suitably trained. Members of the School Governance Committee receive regular training on safeguarding, in particular child protection, although arrangements to monitor and evaluate safeguarding would benefit from being more formalised. Members are knowledgeable about the school's work and provide a good balance of support and challenge for the school's leaders.

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### These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	N/A

### Sixth form

This is a good sixth form. In 2009, standards attained by Year 13 students in their final year at school were below national average. However, standards attained by these students in their GCSE year were lower than average, so their progress across the sixth form is satisfactory overall. This is not the whole story, however. During the inspection, learning and progress for students in the majority of sixth form lessons were good or better. On occasions, students received expert tuition which met their needs very precisely and enabled them to perform at a very high level; students were highly motivated, keen to evaluate their own performance and that of others, and understood clearly what they had to do to sustain or improve their performance.

The sixth form curriculum is now good and improving. The principal has forged good partnership arrangements across the federation and with Vocational Training Qualifications (VTQ) and the Army Education Core. This work has successfully broadened what was until recently a largely academic range of courses to include National Vocational Qualifications and a diploma line in engineering. Sixth formers say that the curriculum meets their needs effectively even if, for one or two of them, their first-choice combination of subjects is not available.

Behaviour in the sixth form is outstanding; students are personable and welcoming. They speak with pride of the school and believe, rightly, that this small sixth form experience enhances their overall education. Sixth formers play a leading role across the school, with large numbers supporting events such as the recent school production of 'Oliver', driving fundraising events for charities such as 'Help for

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Heroes', and mentoring reluctant readers lower down the school.

Leadership and management across the sixth form are well distributed. Teaching is evaluated regularly by the principal and senior leaders. The head of sixth form and head of school track standards across various courses and ensure that students get clear information, advice and guidance to improve their work. Work experience, often in London, and short courses such as 'Cooking on a Budget' prepare students effectively for the next stage in their lives.

These are the grades for the sixth form

Overall effectiveness of the sixth form	2
Taking into account:	2
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	2
The quality of provision in the sixth form	2
Leadership and management of the sixth form	2

## Views of parents and carers

Parents' comments were mostly positive about the school's work and many pointed to improvements since the new leadership team took over. Alongside the positive comments, there were some that indicate the school still has further to go. Some parents believe inappropriate behaviour is not always handled well and that detentions are given unfairly at times. This was explored and inspectors found detentions had reduced significantly, due to the change in culture. However, senior leaders know that there is still room for greater consistency. A number of parents feel, rightly, that they do not receive the level of contact with subject teachers that they would like in order to have a regular and helpful picture of their child's current progress and to enable them to support and encourage their learning at home. The school has already identified this and plans are in place to increase the level and frequency of communication.

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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of students registered at St John's 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 126 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 304 students registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	35	28	76	60	10	8	2	2
The school keeps my child safe	48	38	68	54	3	2	2	2
The school informs me about my child's progress	38	30	68	54	15	12	3	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	39	31	62	49	15	12	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	31	25	71	56	9	7	2	2
The school helps me to support my child's learning	24	19	67	53	21	17	3	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	18	14	81	64	20	16	2	2
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)	27	21	74	59	8	6	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	28	22	73	58	19	15	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	28	22	64	51	18	14	3	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	18	14	75	60	13	10	3	2
The school is led and managed effectively	31	25	73	58	9	7	2	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	40	32	66	52	14	11	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 inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	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.



29 January 2010

Dear Students

Inspection of St John's School, Episkopi, BFPO 53

Thank you for helping us in our work when we inspected your school. We enjoyed meeting many of you and would particularly like to thank the groups of students, including those from the school council, who met with an inspector to share their views and thoughts about your school. I am writing to give you a feel for our main findings. If you would like to know further detail, this is available in the full report.

We found that your school has improved markedly since its last inspection and you now go to a good school. You make good progress in your work, including those of you in the sixth form, and reach high standards. The teaching is good overall and is at the heart of your good progress. The school is also good at giving you the additional opportunities to develop your personal skills and attributes. Put alongside your positive and mature attitudes to learning and school life, this means you are set up well for the next step in your lives, whether this is to be further education or employment.

The federation with KRS has worked well. Above all, it has strengthened the quality of leadership in the school, especially at senior level. Your education is in very capable hands and the quality of teaching is improving. We have asked the school to focus on improving leadership and to ensure that teaching in English is of consistently high quality. We have also asked the senior and middle leaders to refine and develop further the way they analyse your progress to determine how well the school is providing for all the different groups represented within the school's population. Many of your teachers put the school's mission statement, 'learning is at the heart of all we do' into practice and you also value this. Much of the teaching is good and some is very vibrant and highly effective. Our discussions with some of you showed us that you have a perceptive view of teaching and know the features that particularly inspire or motivate you. You are equally observant about those which have the opposite effect. We have asked the school to continue its drive to develop teaching, particularly in English where there is too much variability. We hope that you will be able to play your part in improving teaching further by sharing your thoughts on what works well and helping senior leaders to bring all teaching in the school up to the standard of the best.

Yours sincerely

Margaret Dickinson  
Her Majesty's Inspector

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