

Akrotiri Primary School

BFPO 57, Cyprus

Inspection dates 7–9 October 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Early years provision		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Teaching across the school is not good enough to help pupils achieve well, particularly in writing.
- Expectations in some classes at each key stage are too low and work is not pitched at the right level, particularly for the most able.
- Teachers do not measure accurately how well pupils are learning.
- Adults who support children and pupils in classes are not always sure who they should be helping or how to do it effectively.
- Errors in pupils' punctuation, spelling and grammar are not corrected quickly.
- Some subject leaders do not have the skills to help improve teaching quickly.
- Weakness in subject leadership and a senior leader vacancy are limiting the school's capacity to improve more quickly.
- Staff are not held accountable well enough.
- Children's achievement in the early years classes (FS1 and FS2) is not good.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher knows precisely what needs to be better and is doing the right things to improve teaching.
- The quality of teaching in Year 6 is strong so pupils make good progress and reach above average standards.
- Pupils leave the school as capable readers.
- Pupils behave well and are eager to learn.
- Those who are new to the school are supported well.
- Arrangements to keep pupils safe are implemented consistently.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited all year groups in the school. They observed teaching and learning in 21 lessons and small groups. Over half of the lessons were observed jointly with the headteacher and a joint observation was conducted separately with each of the two assistant headteachers.
- Inspectors visited daily acts of collective worship and assemblies.
- Discussions were held with pupils, senior and middle leaders, parents, members of the School Governance Committee and the Senior Area Education Officer from Service Children's Education.
- Inspectors looked at pupils' workbooks and listened to them reading.
- Information about how pupils are safeguarded, records of checks on the quality of teaching, the school's own analysis of pupils' progress and a wide range of other information was looked at by inspectors.
- The views of 39 parents who responded to 'Parent View', Ofsted's online survey, and 21 staff, who responded to Ofsted's staff questionnaire, were considered.

Inspection team

Jackie Krafft, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Mark Lindfield

Her Majesty's Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Akrotiri is a larger-than-average-sized primary school with a nursery (FS1). Children attend the nursery classes for part of the day.
- It provides for the children of the British Forces and attached civilians based at RAF Akrotiri.
- Almost all of the pupils are of White British heritage and speak English as their first language.
- In common with other Service Children's Education schools, the number of pupils and staff who join and leave the school at different times is very high. Most of the movement in and out of the school is continuous rather than through whole unit movements.
- The proportion of pupils with special educational needs supported at school action is average, and below average for those supported at school action plus. No pupil has a statement of special educational needs.
- Since the last section 5 inspection, there have been a number of significant staff changes. The school has had five different headteachers in the last five years. The current headteacher joined in September 2013. The Chair of the School Governance Committee took up the role in the last year.
- Work is underway to rebuild the school hall.
- The school meets the government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, particularly of writing, across all key stages by ensuring that teachers:
 - have high expectations and know how to measure pupils' learning accurately
 - use information about pupils' learning to plan work that is pitched at the right level for all pupils
 - check that pupils are learning as well as they should and make adjustments in lessons when necessary
 - challenge more able pupils to help them deepen their understanding and achieve as well as they can
 - use other adults in lessons effectively, making sure they know which pupils to support and how to do it well
 - identify and correct errors in pupils' spelling, punctuation and grammar quickly.
- Strengthen the capacity of the school's leadership to improve teaching and learning by:
 - middle leaders taking responsibility for ensuring their own classroom practice is an example to others
 - middle leaders making a strong contribution across the school to improving teaching and pupils' progress in their subjects
 - recruiting a high-quality deputy headteacher as a matter of urgency
 - making sure performance is managed robustly so that teachers and middle leaders are held to account for pupils' achievement and they meet the expectations of their additional responsibilities
 - Service Children's Education advisers providing the headteacher with support to recruit high quality teachers and manage staff performance.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management requires improvement

- The headteacher is the driving force behind the school's work to improve teaching and learning. However, the legacy of frequent changes of headteacher in the last few years, leadership that is not developed well enough at different levels and a vacancy on the senior leadership team are limiting the school's capacity for more rapid and sustained improvement.
- The headteacher knows exactly what must improve and is doing what is right to bring about the changes needed. She has invested heavily in developing and training staff, including sending them to see effective teaching at other schools on the island and in England. Teachers are being guided and supported well to improve their teaching and assessments so feel valued.
- The high expectations and tenacity of the headteacher are promoting equality of opportunity and raising the expectations of staff. Not all staff are equally skilled at putting what they learn into practice which is holding some pupils back from making better progress.
- Radical steps have been taken by the headteacher to improve teaching. A skilled teacher has been given dedicated time to work alongside others and show them effective practice. This approach is too new to know if it is making a difference to all those who need it.
- Some support from Service Children's Education advisers and other local schools has helped some teachers to make more accurate checks on pupils' learning and progress. More support is still needed to help others.
- Changes have been made to the leadership of subjects and key parts of the school's work. Not all of these leaders have the skills and knowledge needed to improve teaching and learning in their areas of responsibility across the school. This weakness was identified as an area for improvement at the last inspection and has not been resolved.
- A relevant, interesting curriculum, enriched by regular visits and residential trips, contributes to pupils' enjoyment of school, their social development and keen awareness of others. They are taught respect and tolerance of other faiths and cultures appropriately, including through increasing links with schools in Cyprus and other parts of the world. A broad range of subjects, regular assemblies and the school's values contribute to pupils' spiritual, moral and social development well. Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Procedures to keep pupils safe are thorough. Staff have up-to-date training, and good induction arrangements make sure they are well aware of the procedures that must be followed. Timely steps are taken, with other agencies when necessary, if there are any concerns about a pupil's welfare or safety.
- Teachers are set targets and given support when needed but they are not held to account robustly enough for the quality of their teaching and pupils' learning and progress. Regular discussions with the headteacher and observations of teaching help them know what needs to improve but not all act on advice quickly or with equal success. Consequently, the quality of some teaching and leadership does not reflect the higher levels of remuneration some staff receive or the Teachers' Standards sufficiently.
- The governance of the school:
 - Members of the school governance committee have defined their roles and understand their responsibilities. They have a range of relevant skills and undertake appropriate training. Areas of work are shared by more than one governor; this provides continuity of support and challenge when there are inevitable changes in military personnel.
 - Governors understand the information that the school gives them about the quality of teaching and pupils' performance. Through regular, focused visits they see the work of the school for themselves and have an awareness of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They fully support the changes that the headteacher is making.
 - They ask challenging questions but do not probe deeply enough about the performance of different groups of pupils, classes or subjects to hold the school to account more robustly.

■ The behaviour and safety of pupils ■ are good

■ Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are highly respectful of others and courteous. They are confident, happy and play an important role in the school's welcoming and friendly ethos. They are eager and good ambassadors for the school, writing letters of application to the headteacher, for example, to take up new responsibilities.

- Pupils take pride in the school's appearance and its place in the local community. They move around the school confidently and calmly. They are prompt to lessons and ready to learn at the start of the day and after break times. Their positive attitudes mean that no learning time is lost to any unacceptable behaviour. However, they do not always work as hard as they could.
- The 'buddy' system for those who are new is extremely effective in helping pupils to settle and build friendships quickly. Parents value the strong support that they and their children receive when they arrive.
- Attendance is above average. Pupils want to be in the school, they value opportunities to learn cooperatively and from an early age, work well with each other and their teachers. They enjoy many aspects of school life, especially the additional activities on offer, as shown by the high numbers that attend an increasing range of after-school clubs.
- Safety
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils feel safe and say that any falling out with each other or bullying occurs only rarely. The vast majority of parents support that viewpoint. Good, mutually respectful relationships between staff and pupils are a strong feature. Pupils' views are listened to and they are confident that if they have any concerns they are acted on promptly.
- Pupils have a clear understanding of how to stay safe and act responsibly. They know how to keep safe when using the internet and social media and are alert to the dangers of cyber bullying. From an early age pupils develop an understanding of road safety; children in the early years drive around on trikes and stop carefully at crossings. Older pupils spoke of the dangers of riding scooters to school without safety helmets.

■ The quality of teaching

■ requires improvement

- The quality of teaching is too variable and not good enough across the whole school to help pupils achieve well. Too often work is not pitched at the right level for pupils of different abilities so is sometimes too hard or too easy. Work is not sufficiently challenging for the more able pupils to deepen their understanding and achieve well.
- In-class support is provided for pupils who need extra help but teachers do not always make it clear to the additional adults precisely who they should be supporting and how to do this well. Consequently, the pupils do not benefit as much as they should.
- Teachers' expectations of what pupils are capable of are not consistently high. Some pupils complete too little work in the time they have available. Others are reluctant to try to solve a problem without the teacher supporting them continuously, which slows their progress.
- In the teaching of mathematics, pupils do not fully develop their understanding of place value and more able pupils are not encouraged to use more efficient methods, including mental calculations. Time was not used well in some lessons to develop mathematical thinking because pupils spent too much time cutting out questions and sticking them in their books rather than solving the problems.
- Pupils are not encouraged sufficiently to use newly acquired writing skills in other subjects. Errors in punctuation, spelling and grammar are not spotted and corrected quickly because adults do not check closely enough.
- Pupils make good learning gains in Year 6 because teaching is based on a precise understanding of what pupils already know and what they need to learn next. Pupils are constantly being asked to explain the strategies they are using and why they have chosen one over another. Teaching is vigilant, errors or misconceptions are explored so pupils are confident that they can learn from mistakes.
- Year 3 pupils successfully wrote a computer programme to include animation and sound because expectations were high. The teacher checked how well all pupils were learning and asked skilful questions to develop their thinking. The skills that pupils needed were built step-by-step. In a similar lesson, a more able pupil also included written captions but the example was not shared and used to raise the quality of work of the rest of the class.
- The quality of feedback in lessons and marking in pupils' books is variable. A new approach to marking is encouraging pupils to respond to the comments that teachers make to improve their writing and mathematics. Pupils are given less guidance on how to improve their work in other subjects.

■ The achievement of pupils

■ requires improvement

- Pupils join the school at many different times, usually with the skills and knowledge that are typical for their age. They make the progress expected as they move through the school so are ready for the next stage of their education.
- In Key Stage 1 pupils make expected progress and reach average standards in reading, writing and mathematics. Standards in reading have improved over the last three years by the end of Year 2. Similar

improvements have not been made in writing or mathematics.

- Writing is weaker than reading across the whole school. Too few pupils achieve as well as they should and attain the higher levels at the end of Years 2 and 6. Standards in writing fell to average in the Year 6 tests in 2014. Reading and mathematics results remained above average.
- Too few of the more able pupils achieve well enough. Their progress in lessons and in their books is variable because they are not always given work that is sufficiently challenging or requires them to build on their previous learning and think more deeply.
- Expectations of what pupils can achieve are too low which limits their learning. Pupils make faster progress in Year 6 because expectations are higher and the quality of teaching is stronger.
- Since her arrival, the headteacher has rightly taken steps to make sure that checks on pupils' progress are accurate. However, in all key stages some teachers still do not assess how well pupils are learning correctly. Information on pupils' current and previous attainment and progress is not always reliable so the school does not have an accurate picture of how well pupils are achieving, year on year, from their starting points.
- Continuous staff and pupil changes are a challenge for the school but weaknesses in assessment and pockets of weak teaching mean that learning and progress of pupils currently at the school is too variable. The positive view of pupils' progress recorded by the school is not reflected in observations of learning or in pupils' books.
- Pupils with special educational needs and those with weaker reading, writing or mathematical skills are given effective additional help in small groups, or one-to-one, so that they make similar progress to other pupils. Their progress slows when the work they are given in lessons with the rest of their class is not pitched at the right level.
- Early reading skills are taught regularly and systematically. Although pupils arrive at the school with experiences of different approaches, which sometimes initially slows their progress, they catch up and leave the school at the end of Year 6 as confident, competent readers.
- In April 2014 the school received additional funding for physical education and sport for the first time. An appropriate plan is being implemented to use the funding.

■ **The early years provision**

■ requires improvement

- Children typically join the early years with the skills expected for their age, although the development of some is more advanced on entry. They settle into school well and develop skills in line with their age. Children are not moved on as quickly as they could be, especially more able children, so that more start Year 1 at higher levels. A small proportion of children join with behaviour and communication difficulties which are identified and supported quickly so they make similar progress to other children.
- The quality of teaching across the different classes is not consistently good. It was seen to be most effective when children working in groups in a FS1 class were supported by well-prepared adults who knew what the children were capable of and what they needed to learn next. Children made good progress as a result.
- Staff observations and records of children's learning and development are not fully developed. Information about children's progress is not routinely used to develop their learning and provide more challenge.
- Children play co-operatively, share and take turns well. Friendly and caring adults help children to play safely, grow in confidence and make good gains in their personal and social skills.
- The indoor and outdoor areas are well resourced and attractively set out and allow children to choose from a range of options at any one time. The freedom to choose and the range of options encourage children to develop their independence and think for themselves.
- Outdoor activities are enjoyable but do not regularly stimulate children to develop their early reading and number work, especially their writing.
- Closer communication with parents and carers are developing. Parents are encouraged to record information about children's learning and development outside of school. Parents are given guidance on how they can help their child to learn at home.
- The early years leader knows the strengths and weaknesses in the setting and has accurately identified areas to improve. Previously, assessments of children's starting points underestimated their ability. The leader has a more accurate picture of children's starting points this year and is now better placed to measure children's progress more accurately.

What inspection judgements mean

School	Grade	Judgement	Description
	Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
	Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	132415
Local authority	Service Children's Education
Inspection number	446695

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Service Children
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	365
Appropriate authority	Service Children's Education
Chair	Group Captain Kennett
Headteacher	Mrs Victoria Evans
Date of previous school inspection	27-29 September 2011
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