

Inspection of Alanbrooke School

Alanbrooke Barracks, Topcliffe, Thirsk, North Yorkshire YO7 3SF

Inspection dates: 21–22 January 2020

Overall effectiveness

Inadequate

The quality of education

Inadequate

Behaviour and attitudes

Inadequate

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Inadequate

Early years provision

Inadequate

Previous inspection grade

Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils feel safe in school. They are not worried about bullying. The staff are committed to the school and they want the pupils to do well.

However, the school is not providing an acceptable standard of education.

This is because the school's curriculum is not as organised as it needs to be. The school does not do enough to check what newly arrived pupils know and can do. This means that pupils often struggle to understand what they have been asked to do. It is often confusing for pupils because teachers do not explain new things very well or they assume that pupils have more understanding than they do. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) do not get the in-class support they should.

Pupils' reading is not as well supported as it needs to be. The pupils who find reading more of a challenge do not get the precise support they need. Older pupils can read what they like, with no-one keeping an eye on the suitability of book choices.

In class, there is too much off-task disruption. Pupils think it is all right to keep talking when the teacher is talking. This gets in the way of pupils' learning.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Not enough thought has gone into how to meet the needs of pupils who have attended previous schools. As a result, pupils do not learn the subject knowledge and skills they need in a coordinated way. Pupils often struggle to understand what they have been asked to do. This is also the case in the early years foundation stage.

Across subjects, pupils are assumed to have grasped important knowledge and skills. However, their understanding is weak. Partly, this is because the school's system for checking what pupils know and can do when they join the school is weak. Teachers make assumptions about what the pupils already know and can remember. This leads to explanations of subject information, ideas and skills which are often unclear and confusing to pupils.

The teaching of reading is not focused on making sure that younger children who have fallen behind quickly catch up. The books which children in the early years and pupils in key stage 1 and lower key stage 2 are expected to read are not well matched to their reading ability. Often, they cannot explain what they have just read. In the early years, the books available for the children to 'free-choose' are too hard for them. There is no plan or support in place to help them make use of these books. Staff do not use the strategies of the school's chosen phonics scheme when supporting the weakest readers. Higher up the school, no-one makes any checks on

what pupils are reading, how often or how successfully. Pupils told inspectors that they had rarely, if ever, been in the school library.

Across all years, pupils engage in low-level disruption of lessons. They talk while the teacher is talking. They talk when classmates are asking or answering questions. Some pupils refuse to work. In the early years, children shout out inappropriately and require repeated requests to be quiet and listen. To a large degree, such behaviour and attitudes are a result of a curriculum which is not meeting pupils' needs. It is also because the school's behaviour policy, and staff's application of it, are not effective.

The school provides pupils with a range of opportunities for their personal development. These include teaching about keeping safe when online and when on roads. Pupils describe a school which is tolerant and respectful of others. At present, the plan for pupils' personal development is not as organised as it needs to be to ensure that pupils get a rich experience of a wider curriculum.

The school does not effectively meet the needs of pupils with SEND. The leader for SEND knows the pupils' needs and has strong records and support plans in place. However, in classrooms, inspectors did not see any of the required support strategies in use by staff, including in the early years.

Over time, the school has not been well led. The headteacher is committed to the school but has been left isolated by weak governance. Some staff have not followed the headteacher's requirements and expectations, including for the teaching of reading and the plans for subject curriculums. This also includes support for pupils with SEND and the personal development curriculum. The recently formed interim executive board (IEB) has a crystal-clear understanding of the school's weaknesses. Members understand the action needed to bring about rapid improvement.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders' checks on the staff who work at or visit the school meet requirements. The headteacher has ensured that staff have received the necessary training about important safeguarding information. As a result, staff know the signs to look out for in checking that pupils are safe. Staff know what to do should they be worried.

Pupils feel safe in school. They do not think that bullying is a problem. They are confident that they would get the help they need from school if it happened.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders across the school have not thought through how to plan and implement a curriculum, in the school's context, which meets the needs of all pupils.

Consequently, pupils experience a curriculum which is disjointed and where knowledge and skills are not built up over time. Leaders should act quickly to establish a coherent, sequentially planned curriculum.

- The needs of pupils with SEND are identified accurately by the special educational needs coordinator. However, staff pay scant regard to such plans at classroom level, including in the early years. As a result, pupils with SEND do not receive the support to which they are entitled. All staff must implement the support strategies for pupils with SEND.
- Support for the weakest readers is weak. Staff do not apply the principles and strategies of the school's chosen phonics scheme with fidelity, with the result that the weakest readers struggle to segment, blend and comprehend the words they are expected to read. Leaders across the school should take action to ensure that early reading teaching meets the needs of the weakest readers.
- The school's behaviour policy is not effective in securing attitudes in pupils which are positive towards learning. The disjointed curriculum contributes to this. The combined effect of this is that pupils are frequently disengaged from their learning. Pupils have limited resilience in their learning and limited pride in their work as a result. Leaders should ensure that the behaviour policy is fit for purpose and that all staff apply it consistently.
- The provision for pupils' personal development is well established to some extent, but it has gaps and is not as coordinated as it needs to be so that pupils consistently experience a rich, broad, wider curriculum. Leaders should take steps to fully plan the curriculum for personal development so that it is coherent and thorough.
- Leaders have failed to secure an effective curriculum, effective teaching and effective attitudes in pupils. Some staff have not been compliant – in a number of areas – with the headteacher's requirements or expectations. There is a lack of clarity from senior leaders about what the school's priorities are and how to achieve them. The lack of effective governance over time has meant that the headteacher has not been supported in setting strategic priorities, holding others to account or being held to account herself. The establishment of the new IEB looks set to bring much-needed strategic leadership, challenge and support. The IEB has only just started this work but it has a strong understanding of what needs to be done. It should proceed with alacrity.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	121326
Local authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	10121697
Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	62
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Phil Bates
Headteacher	Pippa Todd
Website	www.alanbrooke.n-yorks.sch.uk/
Date of previous inspection	12–13 October 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Information about this school

- Since the previous inspection, the local authority issued a warning notice about the quality of governance at the school. The governing body was dissolved and an IEB of governance set up. The first meeting of the IEB was held in the week before this inspection.
- The school is located at Alanbrooke Barracks. Almost all pupils come from service families. As a result of military deployments, there is a high level of pupil movement to and from the school.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

In accordance with section 44(2) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than it might in all the circumstances reasonably be expected to perform.

- We met with the headteacher. We met with the leader with responsibility for pupils with SEND. An inspector met the chair and a member of the IEB. We met a representative of the local authority.
- As part of this inspection, we carried out in-depth considerations of four subjects, known as 'deep dives' – in reading, mathematics, science and geography. A deep dive consists of: a meeting with the subject leader to get an overview of the curriculum planning and how it works in practice; a visit to lessons in that subject in different year groups, accompanied by a leader; a meeting with some of the teachers whose lessons were visited; a discussion with some of the pupils who were in the lessons visited; and a scrutiny of pupils' workbooks.
- To inspect the safeguarding arrangements in school, we looked at the records of staff and volunteers at the school and the checks made on them. We met with the staff with particular responsibility for safeguarding. We sampled case files to look at how the school identifies, helps and manages vulnerable pupils. We spoke with numerous pupils, staff and governors about safeguarding.
- We considered a range of school documents, including leaders' self-evaluation of the school's effectiveness and their improvement plan. We considered all of the responses to Ofsted's online questionnaires for staff, parents and carers, and pupils, including free-text responses. We spoke with several parents as they brought their children into school.

Inspection team

Steve Shaw, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Heather Fearn

Her Majesty's Inspector

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