

Akrotiri Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	132415
Local authority	Service Children's Education
Inspection number	320764
Inspection dates	21 – 22 October 2008
Reporting inspector	John Rutherford HMI

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Ministry of Defence
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	395
Appropriate authority	Service Children's Education
Chair of School Governance Committee	Group Captain John Bessell
Headteacher	Stephen Jorgensen OBE
Date of previous school inspection	May 2005
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Introduction

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

Description of the school

This larger than average school serves families on the secure military base of RAF Akrotiri. A very high proportion of pupils start and leave the school outside the usual times for admission and transfer. On average, pupils stay at the school for between two and three years. A very small number of pupils are from a minority ethnic background or have English as an additional language. The percentage of pupils with a learning difficulty and/or disability is broadly similar to most schools. Care and education is provided for children aged three to five years in a newly built Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) unit

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school provides a satisfactory quality of education. The senior leadership team has recently introduced a number of initiatives to raise pupils' achievement, including improvements to teaching and learning, use of assessment, marking and the role of middle leaders. As these measures were recommended in the previous inspection, leaders have not been moving the school forward with sufficient urgency. Improvements are now beginning to make a positive difference to pupils' achievement in some classes, but this is not consistent across the school. The early impact demonstrates that the school has a satisfactory capacity to bring about further improvements. The school has made effective use of good support from Service Children's Education (SCE).

In the EYFS, the quality of provision for children's learning and development is inadequate. This is because senior and middle leaders have not introduced methods for providing equally effective provision in all classes within the new EYFS building. Consequently there are unacceptable inconsistencies in the quality of children's experiences, especially between the F1 and F2 classes. Provision for children's welfare is satisfactory

Pupils' attainment when they start the school is in line with or above expectations for their age. For the most part they make satisfactory progress and standards in English and mathematics are broadly average to above average at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2. In some classes there are groups of pupils who are not achieving as much as they can, especially the higher attainers.

The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. In a minority of classes it is good, and occasionally outstanding, because teaching is stimulating and well matched to the needs of the pupils. In most classes, however, this is not the case and too many pupils are not actively involved in interesting, challenging activities. Teachers' marking often does not provide pupils with clear guidance on how they can improve their achievement. The recently re-organised curriculum is good and the exciting first hand experience it provides for pupils is a strength of the school.

The care, guidance and support for pupils are good, especially for those newly arriving in the school or about to leave. This is valued highly by pupils and also by many of their parents who completed the inspection questionnaire. Pupils settle well in the school, make friends quickly and mostly enjoy themselves. They learn to be healthy and stay safe, and their attendance and behaviour are good.

While the senior leadership team are committed to raising standards, their impact has been limited. This is largely because they have an over-generous view of the quality of teaching in some classes and there is not a sufficiently concerted effort to ensure that new initiatives are being implemented effectively in them. Middle leaders are developing their role well and some are demonstrating the capacity to have a much stronger influence on school improvement. Leading members of the school governance committee demonstrate the skills and commitment to provide the school with appropriate support and challenge. The school enjoys the full support of the overwhelming majority of parents, with many commenting favourably about the quality of care provided by the staff.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 4

The EYFS is inadequate. When children start school, in Foundation 1, (F1) most have skills which are typical for their age and some can do more than would usually be expected. They do not make enough progress in the first year because they are not given enough well targeted guidance to help them to build on their existing skills and develop at a brisk enough pace. They make better progress in F2 and by the end of the year their attainment is mostly in line with what is expected for their age in national Foundation Stage Profile outcomes. Given their starting points this represents satisfactory progress overall. However, a significant proportion of children do not make good enough gains in their learning because there are inequalities in the effectiveness of provision between year groups and between different classes in the same year group.

In some classrooms, teaching does not always engage or challenge children sufficiently well and some staff do not have a secure enough understanding of the needs of children of this age. Although some classrooms are bright and filled with helpful and exciting displays, others are dull and uninspiring and do not stimulate children's imagination or help them to make progress in all areas of learning. The EYFS building is very well resourced. Each classroom has an individual outdoor area and access to a much larger shared area. These very good resources are not used effectively enough to engage the interest and promote the development of all children. Children do not develop independent skills at a good enough rate because too many activities are directed by adults. The school's senior leadership team and the EYFS co-ordinator are aware of the weaknesses in the EYFS but they have not tackled these weaknesses promptly enough or with sufficient rigour to ensure that the provision made for every child is equally effective.

Children's personal development and well-being are satisfactory. Children look after their own personal needs but have too few opportunities to take responsibility or to use their initiative in choosing activities. Children are kept safe and secure and their emotional needs are met. Staff communicate effectively with parents and encourage them to come into school so they can share in their children's learning. This is a strength of the EYFS. As a result most parents are very pleased with the care and support that their children receive.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve achievement and standards in English and mathematics across the school, especially for the higher attaining pupils.
- Improve the quality of provision and children's achievement in the EYFS.
- Improve the impact of leadership at all levels on teaching and learning across the school.
- Improve the guidance that pupils receive on how to improve their achievement.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Standards in English and mathematics at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 have been fluctuating in recent years and, overall, they are broadly average to above average. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Most pupils enter school with attainment levels that are in line with expectations for their age or above, and they make satisfactory progress. In Year 6, the majority of pupils make good progress because teachers use assessment information effectively to provide work at an appropriate level of challenge for all pupils. However, such effective use of assessment is not consistent across the school and higher attaining pupils are not achieving as much as they can in some classes. Pupils achieve particularly well in design and technology because of very effective teaching and good methods for giving pupils guidance on how they can improve their work.

Pupils with a learning difficulty and/or disability make good progress because there are effective systems for identifying them and planning additional support that meets their individual needs. Pupils who are identified as gifted and talented make good progress because they are given access to programmes, both in school and in other venues, that extend their particular skills.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils' personal development and well-being, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are satisfactory overall. Pupils enjoy school. They are friendly and helpful and have good relationships with teachers, other adults and with each other. Behaviour is usually good although some pupils can become mildly disruptive when lessons are not sufficiently well matched to their needs and interests. Pupils move around the school safely and are courteous and considerate to others. They take care of the school and its resources very well. The school council is effective and pupils say that their contributions are valued and taken into account when decisions are made. Despite the generally positive ethos, many children are reluctant to answer questions in lessons or to offer their ideas and opinions.

Pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development is satisfactory. They are developing a sound understanding of life in a diverse society. They are learning effectively how to live as part of a community, both their own and those where there is a wide range of differences amongst people. They support charities and consider the needs of people less fortunate than themselves. Pupils' social development is good. They support each other well and welcome new arrivals very positively. Children speak enthusiastically about how quickly they settle in and make new friends because of the good support they receive when they join the school. They also feel confident about the support they will receive when they leave. Children say that there is never

any bullying and that when minor disagreements do occur these are sorted out promptly. Pupils know how to make sensible choices for living a healthy lifestyle and they have a sound understanding of how to stay safe in the range of environments they might encounter. They have an increasingly effective understanding of the world of work and are adequately prepared for the next stage in their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. There is inconsistency across the school with a range from unsatisfactory to outstanding. Where teaching is most effective, pupils make good progress. This is because teachers use assessment well to plan lessons that provide all pupils with a good level challenge. These lessons have sharp, focused objectives for improving achievement and carefully organised tasks that keep pupils fully immersed in interesting practical activities. Teachers' lively and encouraging approach motivates the pupils and maintains a good pace of learning.

In the majority of lessons, where teaching is less effective, pupils' progress is no better than satisfactory and some higher attainers do not achieve enough. This is because teachers do not adapt tasks to meet the needs of all pupils. Pupils often spend too much time sitting and listening and too little time working independently on challenging tasks. As a result, some stop concentrating and make little attempt to take part in class discussions.

Marking acknowledges what pupils have done well and is often encouraging, however it does not inform most pupils about how they can improve their work. Overall, the school has made insufficient progress in improving the use of assessment and marking since these areas were identified as weaknesses in the previous inspection.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. The structure and methods of planning have recently been re-organised to provide more links between subjects and more opportunities to extend literacy and numeracy skills. Although this work is at an early stage, it is already beginning to have a positive impact on pupils' enjoyment and achievement. The contribution to improving pupils' writing skills in some classes is a particular strength.

The overall curriculum is carefully planned to ensure that pupils can continuously make progress in developing their skills in all subjects, including when they are in mixed age classes. There is good provision for pupils to learn about their local community and, additionally, about life in Britain and other countries to which their families might be posted in the future. The curriculum makes systematic provision for enriching activities, especially through the planning of "days to remember". A recent residential trip linked to a topic on war and peace gave older pupils very good first hand experience of the life of an evacuee. The school has received considerable

support from the base in providing some very exciting activities such as an "alien invasion". This gave pupils the stimulus to produce some high quality writing. The school provides a suitable range of extra-curricular sports, music, dance and craft clubs to complement the wide range of activities provided for the children on the base.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The care, guidance and support provided for pupils are good. The mobility co-ordinator ensures that all pupils have a smooth transition both into and out of school. This helps children settle easily and make the best use of their time in school. Parents are very pleased with the way their children are cared for and supported. Pupils are given effective guidance about the dangers of drugs and alcohol and are taught how to cope with peer pressure. The school's values help pupils to prepare for the responsibilities of adult life.

Vulnerable pupils and those needing additional support are cared for tactfully and well. The school has very effective partnerships with a number of agencies and it co-ordinates these carefully to ensure prompt and well-matched support for each individual who needs it as soon as concerns are identified. Required safeguarding procedures have been implemented and staff have received appropriate training. Health and safety procedures are good and the school undertakes regular risk assessments. Effective action is taken when potential risks are identified, for example cycle training is provided for pupils who ride bikes and scooters to school, often near traffic.

Teachers give pupils clear academic objectives to aim for, both within lessons and through longer term targets. A small number of teachers give good guidance to individuals on how well they are working towards their objectives and what more they need to do, but this is not yet consistent across the school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. In recent months the senior leadership team, with the support of SCE, has taken steps to improve pupils' standards and achievement. While there is some early evidence that their actions are having the desired effect, the gains are not embedded across the school and it is too soon to judge whether they are sustainable over the longer term. Middle leaders have responded very positively to training and development and are now beginning to have a stronger influence beyond their own classrooms, especially those responsible for literacy and design and technology. The role of middle leaders was identified as a weakness in the previous inspection and, as their positive impact is so recent, this does not represent satisfactory progress in the last three years.

The leadership team has introduced very effective methods for the smooth transition of pupils into and out of the school, and other schools have learned from this good practice. Plans made to improve pupils' standards are not so effective. They identify the actions that will be taken and the people responsible for completing them, but

not how their success will be evaluated in terms of raising the achievement of all groups of pupils. Because school self-evaluation does not sufficiently consider the impact of teachers' work on pupils' achievement it is often too generous, therefore weaknesses are not identified and tackled with sufficient rigour. The school governance committee has a secure understanding of its role and members have the skills needed to ensure that the school continues to improve.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate.	School Overall
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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
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	No
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	4
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	4
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in EYFS?	3
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	4
How effectively is the welfare of the children in the EYFS promoted?	3
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	4

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	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	3

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
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	4
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	4
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No



24 October 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Akrotiri Primary School, BFPO 57

Thank you very much for your help when Christine Graham HMI and I came to inspect your school. When we talked to you in classrooms and in our meetings, you gave us some very valuable information which helped us to make our judgements. I would now like to tell you what our judgements are.

Your school gives you a satisfactory education. Your teachers help you to make steady progress in your lessons. You work hard and behave very well, although I would like to see more of you speaking up and trying to answer the questions that your teachers ask you. Your teachers take good care of you and they have some really good arrangements for helping you to settle in when you first arrive at school. You told us how much you value this and how it helps you to make friends quickly. I could see how happy you are in school. Your teachers, often helped by the base, plan some very exciting activities for you, such as the "alien invasion". I thought your writing about the invasion was good.

While there are good points in your school, I have agreed with the headteacher and other leaders some areas that they need to work on in order to make it even better. These are:

- To help you to achieve more in your English and mathematics, especially those of you who are capable of reaching high standards.
- To ensure that the teaching in every class is as good as the best in the school. This includes the Nursery and Reception classes as well.
- To ensure that when teachers mark your work, they give you more guidance on how you can do better.

You have an important part to play in this as well, by continuing to work hard to achieve your targets and by carefully following the guidance given to you by teachers. Good luck for the future.

Best wishes

John Rutherford, Her Majesty's Inspector.