

# Ayios Nikolaos Primary School

## Inspection report

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Unique Reference Number	132414
Local Authority	Service Children's Education
Inspection number	343503
Inspection dates	13–14 October 2009
Reporting inspector	Bradley Simmons HMI

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

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Type of school	Primary
School category	Ministry of Defence
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	140
Appropriate authority	Service Children's Education
Chair	Lt Col Mike Dooley
Headteacher	Mrs Samantha Daniels
Date of previous school inspection	20 -21 March 2007
School address	JSSU (Cyp) BFPO 59
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Age group	3–11Error! Reference source not found.
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Inspection date(s)	13–14 October 2009Error! Reference source not found.
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# Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors. The inspectors visited 16 lessons, and held meetings with members of the school governance committee (SGC), staff, and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at pupils' folders and exercise books, the school's data about pupils' achievement and progress, monitoring records, the school improvement plan and 65 parental questionnaires.

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

- how effectively teaching, especially in Key Stage 1, challenges higher ability pupils
- the speed and accuracy with which staff build on the prior learning of new entrants to Key Stage 2, bearing in mind school's comparatively weaker performance at securing two levels progress in English during this key stage
- the quality of the school's work, and its work with partners, to support its most vulnerable pupils (for example those at risk of exclusion) and ensure these pupils receive the best possible opportunities to achieve good outcomes
- the rigour of safeguarding procedures.

## Information about the school

Ayios Nikolaos serves the British military community on the eastern side of Cyprus. Most pupils are the sons or daughters of serving military personnel, but a few pupils come from families where a parent is a civilian working with the Ministry of Defence. A higher than usual number of pupils joins or leaves the school during the course of the school year. The number of pupils from minority ethnic groups and pupils who speak English as an additional language is very low. Around one in four pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities. The school has Early Years Foundation Stage provision for children who are three and four years of age.

At the time of the inspection, the headteacher, who was previously deputy headteacher at the school, had been in post for just over two terms. The deputy headteacher had been in post for just over a term.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

## Main findings

Ayios Nikolas is a satisfactory school. It is also a vibrant and happy place to be educated and has many strengths. Over the past three years, the attainment of Year 6 pupils has been higher than the national average. Many parents rightly drew inspectors' attention to the headteacher's drive and ambition for their children. When an inspector asked members of the school council what they would change about the school, one pupil replied, 'Nothing. Mrs. Daniels sorts out everything for us'.

The majority of key outcomes for children are good. Pupils' academic achievement is satisfactory overall, although this statement belies the good progress made by pupils in many areas of the school. Pupils make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage. A new staff team is raising the performance of pupils of all abilities in Key Stage 1. In lower Key Stage 2, school data and direct observation of teaching and learning shows that pupils' progress slows before picking up again in Years 5 and 6. Teaching, although sometimes good, is not consistently so because teachers do not always explain with sufficient clarity the steps they want pupils to take to improve their work. For example, teachers seldom take a piece of good work and use this to exemplify and discuss the features which pupils must emulate to improve their own efforts. In a number of lessons, teaching assistants are not briefed in the depth necessary for them to make a good impact on pupils' learning. Progress for pupils in writing, although satisfactory in most classes, is not yet as strong as it could be. This is because teachers do not consistently make the best use of assessment information to build quickly on pupils' existing skills and knowledge in writing.

The school's care, guidance and support for pupils is effective and has a number of considerable strengths. Not least of these is the very focused work undertaken in partnership with other military and SCE agencies to keep pupils whose circumstances have made them vulnerable on track. This enables them to play a full part in school life.

The headteacher and deputy headteacher keep the work of the school clearly under review. They know its strengths and weaknesses well. They are able to point to clear examples of accurate analysis, followed by specific action to address weaknesses. The school's sound and growing capacity for sustained improvement is demonstrated by the fact that, despite the short period since their appointments, many of their actions are beginning to bear fruit. An improving profile of teaching in Key Stage 1 is one such example.

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

- Accelerate progress in lower Key Stage 2 by:
  - raising teachers' expectations of what children of this age can achieve
  - focusing planning sharply on what pupils of differing abilities need to learn
  - ensuring that teaching assistants are fully briefed in all lessons so that they have the best possible impact on learning.
- Improve pupils' attainment in writing by:
  - ensuring that all pupils have regular, focused opportunities to practise and develop their writing skills
  - using information from pupils' assessments to ensure that planning and teaching build securely and speedily on pupils' prior learning.
- Improve the proportion of good teaching across the school by:
  - giving pupils clearer oral guidance as to the steps they need to take to improve their work and exemplifying clearly the features of a successful piece of work.

About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Pupils' progress is satisfactory overall. This pertains for all groups of pupils including those small numbers of pupils from minority ethnic groups and those who speak English as an additional language. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make sound progress.

Pupils across the school are keen to do well. They are interested learners who are, in most classes, enthusiastic about their learning. Generally pupils show good levels of self motivation, and listen carefully to their teachers. This is the case even when teaching is not particularly inspiring, but when teachers use a variety of imaginative approaches and tasks, pupils clearly love learning. During lessons observed in Year 3 and Year 4, pupils tended to be more passive because teaching did not consistently demand enough of them.

Pupils feel safe in school. They act in a safe manner and show good awareness of road safety issues and of the dangers of drugs. Pupils say that there is always an adult who will listen to them if they have worries or concerns. The area of the school's performance which raises most concern for parents is behaviour. During the inspection, behaviour was good, and on the odd occasion when it slipped, adults' strategies for dealing with individuals ensured that little learning time was wasted for the remainder of the class. Pupils' social development is good and is exemplified by the high priority they give to welcoming new arrivals to the school.

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Pupils have a good sense of the essential elements of a balanced diet. They are physically active and emotionally resilient. There are good examples of the way in which pupils' contribute to the school and wider community. The pupils' curriculum task group, for example, take their role in feeding back comments about school life very seriously. One Cypriot pupil leads a club to teach younger children Greek.

Higher than average levels of attainment, combined with good rates of attendance underpin the good extent to which pupils have already developed skills which will contribute to their future economic well-being.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
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?

Teaching is satisfactory overall, although it has several strong elements. Relationships, for example, between adults and pupils, and between pupils themselves, are warm. During good lessons, teachers often used targeted questions to test and build on the understanding of pupils of varying abilities. In some classrooms, the role of the teaching assistant had been carefully planned to maximise the impact of these extra adults on pupils' learning. Noticeably, some lessons lacked a clear dialogue between teachers and pupils to help pupils understand the steps they had to take to achieve the success criteria of the lesson.

The assessment profiles of each child form a potentially useful tool to help teachers gear their teaching at the right level. Generally though, teachers make insufficient use of these and thus the profiles do not have a clear impact on teachers' planning

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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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and pupils' learning. Some teachers wait too long to complete assessment profiles on new arrivals to the school.

The curriculum is fresh and interesting. It is well planned and meets statutory requirements. Pupils spoke with obvious enthusiasm to an inspector about some animation work they had recently undertaken during a themed week. Such weeks take place at different points in the year and clearly provide pupils with exciting and memorable learning opportunities. The core school day is enhanced by clubs, visits to places of interest and competitive sports against other SCE schools. In essence, the curriculum is good because it is the foundation for the good outcomes seen in many areas of the school's work.

Intervention groups provided for those pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are satisfactory overall. Some are well focused, and taught expertly by teaching assistants. In one case seen by inspectors, however, weak subject knowledge meant that pupils were not making the progress of which they were capable.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account:	
The use of assessment to support learning	3
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?

The headteacher and her deputy demonstrate high expectations for their pupils and staff. They have introduced a target-setting culture which encourages staff to strive for more than expected progress for all groups of pupils. The school improvement plan is a well prioritised document. Targets within it, however, are sometimes not easily measurable.

The SGC is highly committed to the school and its members are visible in and known throughout the school community. Under the headteacher's guidance, their role is becoming more influential. SGC members engage effectively with parents and are demonstrating increasing confidence in questioning the school's performance.

Safeguarding arrangements are secure. The single central record is in place, and in addition, the Ministry of Defence check all members of staff for their suitability, where necessary in conjunction with the Cypriot police. Partnership work with SCE central services and with the military services is good, enabling vulnerable pupils to receive the support they need to make progress in line with their peers. The school has sound information on the performance of different groups of pupils and has

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started to analyse their participation across each key outcome. The school's ongoing efforts to target support where it is most need demonstrates its will to tackle barriers to achievement for each group, but it does not yet measure the impact of each intervention.

Parents receive a good level of information about their child's performance. They appreciate the parents' forum which enables them to find out more about the curriculum, and acts as a consultation mechanism. One parent noted how refreshing she finds the school's positive attitude to parental input.

Within its context, the school has worked hard to promote community cohesion. It takes every opportunity to deepen relationships between the school, military and local communities. It uses opportunities such as assemblies to help children understand how children live their lives in other parts of the world, but acknowledges that pupils do not as yet have a well founded understanding of lives and cultures beyond their own.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
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	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	NA

## Early Years Foundation Stage

The Early Years Foundation Stage is a strength of the school. It provides a good start to the school careers of the children it serves. At the time of the inspection, children were making good progress in all six areas of learning, but their personal and social development was particularly strong. Provision is well considered, and leads to a judicious balance of self-directed play and adult-led activities, both indoors and out. Outdoor provision for the youngest children reflects the full range of the six areas of learning. The provision pays good attention to the development of early reading and writing skills, including systematic phonics. The range of non-fiction books currently

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available for children to browse is, however, limited. Children's physical needs are well considered. Children are protected by a range of canopies from direct sunlight so they can enjoy full access to equipment outdoors. Adults are very active in ensuring that children derive good benefits from planned activities. They lose no opportunity to pose questions which consolidate and stretch children's thinking. The Early Years Foundation Stage is well led by the deputy headteacher, whose clear-sighted, though modest, evaluation of provision provides a good basis for further improvement.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

## Views of parents and carers

The vast majority of parents are very satisfied with the school. Parents regard this school as caring and supportive, and the staff as approachable. The very few parental criticisms were offered constructively, and where inspectors agree that these concerns are indeed issues, such issues appear as judgements in the body of the report. Parents may wish to know that there were no particular trends in the small number of criticisms received.



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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Ayios Nikolaos 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 65 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 140 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	38	58	26	40	1	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	25	38	38	58	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	27	42	33	51	3	5	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	25	39	33	51	4	6	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	28	43	35	54	1	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	27	42	35	54	2	3	1	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	28	43	33	51	3	5	0	0
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)	22	34	35	54	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	28	43	34	52	2	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	16	25	35	54	6	9	1	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	17	26	42	65	2	3	1	2
The school is led and managed effectively	29	45	35	54	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	31	48	32	49	2	3	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

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.



19 October 2009

Dear Children

Inspection of Ayios Nikolaos Primary School, Cyprus, BFPO 59

Thank you so much for the very friendly welcome you gave to us when we inspected your school last week. We were really impressed by the way in which you were so eager to help us find out more about your school.

I am writing to tell you what we found. It was very clear to us that many of you and your parents think your headteacher is really committed to your school. You are right. Mrs Daniels is working hard to improve your school and in many areas we can see that her work is successful. You know how to keep safe, how to follow a healthy lifestyle and many of you help to make your school work well. Some of you are prefects, some are members of the school council, and others are part of the curriculum task group. All of you welcome new people to your class and school.

At the moment, you make good progress in some classes in the school, but teaching in some year groups does not help you to make progress quite as smoothly and quickly as we think you should. We have asked Mrs Daniels to check carefully that all teachers expect you to work hard, and give you enough opportunities each week to practise and develop your writing. We have asked your teachers to make sure that they use information from your *Rainbow Profiles* when they plan work for you, so that they don't repeat things you already know, or set you targets that you can already achieve.

When we saw some lessons, we saw that you really wanted to learn, and your teachers have, with the help of the curriculum task group, thought about some very exciting activities which you enjoy very much. Sometimes we thought that teachers could spend a little more time talking with you during lessons about how you could achieve your success criteria and targets. We think that, sometimes, teachers could show you a really good piece of work, and point out why it is good, so that you are very clear about what you need to do to improve your work.

Thank you again for your help. Good luck in the future!

Best wishes

Bradley Simmons  
Her Majesty's Inspector

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