

Akrotiri Primary School

BFPO 57, Cyprus

Inspection dates

21–23 March 2017

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The vision and drive of the headteacher, who is very well supported by her deputy headteacher, has been central to the school's recent significant improvement.
- Both have forged a strong sense of teamwork and re-established the school's reputation within the community.
- The senior leadership team and school governance committee are very well informed and provide high levels of support and challenge.
- All leaders are very ambitious for the school. However, they are realistic about the need to embed and consolidate the rapid improvement which has taken place during the past year.
- Teachers plan exciting and stimulating topics which motivate and engage pupils' interest. At times, teaching does not provide sufficient challenge for the most able pupils to extend their English and mathematics skills across the wider curriculum.
- Specialist help from external agencies is used well to support the needs of those pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- The well-being of every pupil is of paramount importance to staff. Pupils build a strong level of trust with adults and feel secure in school.
- Pupils have extremely positive attitudes to their work and are eager, inquisitive learners.
- Pupils behave exceptionally well in class and around school. They are kind and caring to each other and extremely respectful towards adults.
- The early years provision is good and teaching staff have a secure understanding of how young children learn. Most children are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Fully embed and consolidate all the initiatives which have been introduced over the past year so that they become firmly rooted in everyday practice.
- Strengthen the outcomes of the most able pupils, including those in the early years, by ensuring that teachers provide more opportunities and greater challenge for them to extend their English and mathematics skills throughout the wider curriculum.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher has been instrumental in steering the school through its journey of improvement. Her strong senior leadership team share her high expectations both of teachers and of pupils. Improvements have been very rapid and leaders understand that there is now a need to embed all the initiatives and consolidate all the positive changes.
- Leaders have successfully reshaped the culture of the school to ensure that all pupils have 'roots to grow and wings to fly'. One parent summed up the views of many by explaining that 'the headteacher has turned this school around in the last year with the help of dedicated staff and a team of enthusiastic school governors'. Another commented, 'The difference is amazing.'
- Leaders have an accurate understanding of the strengths and the areas of the school that need to improve. The headteacher effectively uses expertise from other Ministry of Defence (MOD) schools in Cyprus and external consultants to provide high-quality training for teaching staff. Training is sensitively tailored to meet the needs of individuals. The robust performance management systems for staff are linked closely with the actions identified for improvement.
- Through the rigorous analysis of information gained from regular pupil progress checks, senior leaders have a robust knowledge of how well each individual is doing. Any dips in progress are quickly identified and discussed with class teachers. Extra support is put into place where required, and its success carefully reviewed.
- Leaders responsible for improving outcomes in reading, writing and mathematics play a full role in making sure that the quality of teaching is good. They do this by creating clear improvement plans and sharing good practice. Moderating pupils' work with other local MOD schools also enables leaders to ensure that teachers at Akrotiri assess pupils' work as rigorously as others. Specialists responsible for subjects other than English and mathematics have clear priorities for improving the quality of teaching in their respective areas.
- The new rich and exciting curriculum fully engages and motivates the pupils. Stimulating topics, such as 'burps, bottoms and bile', make learning about the human body fun. A topic on 'tremors' enables pupils to develop their scientific, historical and geographical skills when they find out about rocks and the impact of volcanoes on human life, such as in Pompeii.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted very well through all aspects of the curriculum. The school's values of 'respect, aspiration, honesty, teamwork, creativity and responsibility' are skilfully woven into everyday school life. Older pupils relish their role as playground leaders when they help the younger children to play team games and work cooperatively with each other. Pupils show respect and tolerance for religions other than their own and enjoy celebrating a wide range of different festivals. They explore the local history of the island, play various musical instruments and show an impressive knowledge of different artistic styles. The way in which representatives of the school council are democratically voted for is a

strong example of how the school promotes British values and integrates its principles into school life.

- A very small minority of parents reported that communication between home and school was weak. Inspectors confirmed that the school has an 'open door' approach to parents and is always looking for further ways to ensure that parents feel able to approach the school with any worries or concerns.
- Most parents are happy with the leadership and management of the school and recognise the rapid improvements made to the school. As one parent explained, 'I have complete confidence my children are receiving a good standard of education... Mrs Robinson should feel proud of what her and her staff have done.'

Governance of the school

- The well-trained school governance committee (SGC) offer a range of good skills and participate fully in all aspects of school life.
- Members of the SGC are aware of the challenges that senior leaders and teachers face, given the ever-changing make-up of the school, and share the headteacher's drive for continuing improvement.
- The regular reports that the SGC receive from the headteacher and senior leaders provide useful information on how well both teachers and pupils are performing. Coupled with their routine visits into school, members of the SGC are very clear about the areas of priority and how these are been systematically tackled by senior leaders.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Rigorous recruitment and vetting procedures are very robust and records systematically maintained. Policies and procedures are kept up to date and all staff and governors are fully trained in all aspects of safeguarding, including child sexual exploitation, female genital mutilation and the risks of extremism.
- The school provides an environment where pupils feel safe and secure. Staff take great care of their pupils and their safety is never compromised. Risk assessments ensure that pupils are kept safe both when they are in school and when out on educational visits.
- Staff know their pupils very well and are quick to spot and notify the designated safeguarding lead of any problems, including unusual patterns of behaviour or attendance. Any concerns are swiftly recorded, investigated and specialist agencies involved when required.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teaching and learning are good across all key stages. Teachers have high expectations and, as one pupil explained, 'They push us to the limits.'
- Relationships between adults and pupils are warm and positive. Teachers and teaching

assistants work seamlessly together to create vibrant and exciting classrooms which fully engage the pupils in their learning.

- Teachers have good subject knowledge and make it clear to the pupils what skills they are learning. Pupils are helped to have a secure understanding of the concepts they learn because they are encouraged to use accurate and precise terminology.
- Teaching assistants effectively reinforce key skills with individuals or in small groups where activities are tailored to meet specific needs.
- Teachers monitor pupils' learning and progress and provide good-quality feedback using the school's agreed marking policy.
- Phonics is taught well. The consistent approach ensures that all pupils make good progress. Those who find learning sounds a challenge are given extra help to support them.
- Reading is taught well and comprehension skills are developed systematically. Teachers ensure that pupils study a wide range of literature that interests and engages them in their learning. Pupils grasp new concepts and apply their thinking to different mathematical problems because they are taught well. However, pupils, including those who are most able, are not, as yet, being fully supported to develop and extend their writing and mathematical skills across other subjects, such as history and geography.
- Teachers and teaching assistants are skilled in providing precise support for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Staff are proficient in helping pupils to manage their feelings so that they make good progress and integrate successfully with their classmates.
- Pupils very much enjoy the regular homework projects which extend their learning. Making volcanoes and creating models of the Statue of Liberty and the Empire State Building are a few examples of how their learning is enhanced at home.
- Most parents who responded to the online inspection questionnaire felt that their children were well taught and that teachers provide them with accurate information about the progress they are making.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils explain that 'everyone makes an effort to be supportive to each other'. They all know how it feels to arrive at a new school, often midway through an academic year, and show great sensitivity and warmth to any newcomers. Pupils also talk very empathetically about how they support each other when their friends move on to another MOD school.
- Pupils very confidently take on a variety of responsibilities, such as members of the school council and playground leaders. They carry out their roles extremely sensibly, and with great pride, and learn to be responsible citizens.
- Pupils have a very clear understanding of internet safety and know how to keep safe

when using any form of electronic communication. Older pupils have a secure understanding of drugs and alcohol misuse. High levels of engagement in sporting and outdoor activities reflect the pupils' secure knowledge of keeping healthy and fit.

- Pupils understand about the different types of bullying, including racist name-calling and aggressive language. Pupils say there is no bullying and school records support this. They say that staff would be quick to sort out any problems if they did occur.
- Staff are extremely skilled in tackling pupils' personal and emotional needs. They know all the pupils exceptionally well and respond quickly to any specific needs or concerns.
- The vast majority of parents who responded to the online inspection questionnaire reported that they felt that their children were well looked after.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils' attitudes to their learning are extremely impressive. They show deep levels of concentration and are always eager to do their best. Pupils respond exceptionally well to the teachers' high expectations of learning and behaviour. They work very well together, take turns to speak and are extremely respectful of each other's views.
- Incidents of low-level disruption in lessons are extremely rare and this enables pupils to focus on their learning without any interruptions.
- Pupils are extremely polite and courteous and move around the school calmly and sensibly. Their behaviour at breaktimes is exemplary.
- Pupils confidently talk to visitors about their work and report that 'it is a very exciting school' which they enjoy coming to. This is reflected in the good attendance rates and the daily punctuality of the pupils.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Some children start the foundation stage with well-developed personal, social and emotional skills, the ability to speak clearly and listen carefully. Other children are at an earlier stage of development and have limited social and communication skills. Effective teaching, very stimulating provision and the strong bonds that children form with the teaching staff ensure that children make good progress during their time in foundation stage 1 and 2. Over the past three years, an above average proportion of children have left foundation stage 2 having achieved a good level of development. However, there is no complacency, and leaders continually strive to increase this proportion and ensure that all foundation stage children, including the most able, are fully extended in their learning.
- In 2016, the proportion of Year 1 pupils who met the expected level in the phonics screening check was below the national average. At the start of the new academic year, senior leaders introduced a new, consistent way of teaching the sounds that letters make. This has ensured that current pupils use their phonics skills with greater confidence and the vast majority are working at the expected level.
- The Year 2 pupils who did not meet the expected level in the Year 1 phonics check last

year have received extra individual and group support to accelerate their progress. As a consequence, they now confidently work out words they do not know and read with fluency.

- Outcomes in the 2016 national tests for Year 2 pupils were disappointing, with far fewer than average working at or exceeding the expected levels in reading, writing and mathematics. Focused staff training, including subject leaders modelling effective teaching, coupled with a greater emphasis on providing a stimulating and engaging learning environment, have accelerated the progress made in Years 1 and 2. Current pupils' work indicates that they are working at the expected level for their age, with some examples of the most able being challenged towards a greater than expected level.
- The Year 6 outcomes in the 2016 national tests were broadly average overall. However, pupil outcomes in reading were below the national average, particularly for boys and the most able. Following the introduction of a progressive spelling programme in key stage 2, gaps in the pupils' knowledge are being successfully tackled. Pupils are also extending their reading skills well through the effective use of high-quality text to engage them in their topic work. For example, by reading 'Goodnight Mr Tom', Year 6 successfully used the text as a stimulus for their writing about life as an evacuee when they were learning about the Second World War.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are making good progress from their starting points in reading, writing and mathematics. This is because of the high-quality provision they receive which is carefully tailored to meet their specific needs.

Early years provision

Good

- The leadership and management of the foundation stage is good. Teaching staff are well trained, effectively deployed and have a good understanding of how young children learn.
- Relationships are very strong. Staff take time to get to really know each child and this enables them to cater for individual needs. Planned activities ensure that there is an appropriate balance between working alongside children to model learning and ask challenging questions. For example, children who were happily playing with water were encouraged to refocus their learning when they were asked to count out six cups of water.
- Plenty of opportunities are available for children to explore their stimulating and vibrant indoor and outdoor learning environments. This ensures that they leave the foundation stage well prepared for the next stage of their education. The vast array of exciting opportunities develops the children's curiosity and effectively promotes their ability to solve problems. Their creative skills are particularly well developed through the rich and varied role play activities, such as the doctor's surgery, the café, animal trails or digging for dinosaurs. Nevertheless, the foundation stage leader is not complacent about the progress that the children make, recognising that the most able could be further challenged.
- Staff regularly observe and assess the children's performance in different areas of

learning. Although an electronic system for recording children's progress has been very recently introduced to capture their learning and share with parents, the foundation stage leader is fully aware that its use still needs further development.

- Regular opportunities to share their children's achievements help parents to keep up to date with their progress. Workshops for parents to learn about the school's approach to teaching phonics and reading have led to an increase in support from home.
- Behaviour in the foundation stage is good. Staff act as sensible role models and constantly demonstrate high expectations of behaviour. Children happily take turns with each other and cooperate well. Their levels of sustained concentration are impressive.
- Staff are very well trained in all aspects of keeping children safe. Risk assessments are in place for all outside activities, including trips and visits. Children play safely at all times and handle equipment carefully.

School details

Unique reference number	132415
Local authority	Ministry of Defence Schools
Inspection number	10026900

This inspection 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 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	464
Appropriate authority	Ministry of Defence Schools
Chair	Group Captain Michael Blackburn
Headteacher	Rebecca Robinson
Telephone number	00357 252 76167
Website	www.akrotiri.school
Email address	AkrotiriSchool@modschools.org
Date of previous inspection	October 2014

Information about this school

- Akrotiri is a large primary school with 23 classes. It serves the children of the British Forces and civilian families based at Akrotiri station.
- Approximately half of the school are in foundation stage 1 and 2 which cater for children aged 3 to 5. Nursery children attend foundation stage 1 on a part-time basis.
- The proportion of pupils for whom English is an additional language and the proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds are both below average.
- In common with many other Ministry of Defence schools, the number of children and staff who join or leave other than at normal times is very high. Since September 2016 the school has had 162 arrivals and 70 leavers.
- The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is slightly below the national average.

- A below average proportion of pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Since the last section 5 inspection, there have been a number of significant changes to the senior leadership team, teaching staff and members of the SGC. The current headteacher was appointed in March 2016 and the deputy headteacher in September 2015. Since the start of this academic year, just under half of the teachers were newly appointed to the school. The current Chair of the SGC has been in post since September 2016 and there are also a number of new governors.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection took place over three days. Inspectors observed teaching and learning across the school, which were jointly observed with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and other members of the senior leadership team. In addition, they made visits to assemblies and spent time out in the playground during breaktimes.
- Meetings were held with school leaders, members of the SGC and pupils. The lead inspector also had a telephone call with the school's adviser from the MOD.
- Inspectors took account of the 89 responses to Parent View, the online questionnaire, and the written comments that were submitted. They also considered 48 responses to the Ofsted staff questionnaire and 10 responses by pupils.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of documents, including the school's improvement plans. They examined information on pupils' current progress and safeguarding procedures.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read, talked to them in classrooms and evaluated samples of their work.

Inspection team

Lorna Brackstone, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Jane Wotherspoon

Ofsted Inspector

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