

Alanbrooke School

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

Inspection dates

12–13 October 2017

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Leaders and governors' actions have not secured good-quality teaching and learning across key stages. Systems of monitoring and assessment are not yet fully embedded.
- Leaders' improvement planning lacks detail and strategic vision. Leaders are not sufficiently focused on the correct priorities.
- Not all middle leaders drive improvement or monitor their areas of responsibility effectively. Pupils' progress across the wider curriculum, or in science for example, is not analysed closely.
- The quality of teaching and learning across key stages 1 and 2 varies. As a result, too few pupils make good progress from their starting points in mathematics, and English grammar, punctuation and spelling in particular.
- Teaching in early years is not consistently good. Adults' expectations are too low and challenge is lacking. Reading is too infrequent. The most able children, especially, do not make the progress that adults should expect of them.
- Not all teachers plan work that matches pupils' needs and interests. At times, tasks are too easy, too hard or fail to enthuse pupils and, therefore, too little is accomplished.
- Some pupils' learning behaviours and attitudes vary across key stages, particularly when transitions are poorly organised or work fails to inspire. Pupils grow restless. They switch off or avoid learning and their progress slows.
- Pupils do not take enough pride in their work. Too often presentation is of poor quality.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher has established a cheerful, inviting ethos. Alanbrooke is full of happy, lively pupils. Staff are proud of their school.
- Teaching and learning in phonics are good. Teachers are skilled in ensuring that they articulate sounds and letters correctly.
- Adults are highly skilled at supporting pupils new to school. Pupils are valued and quickly feel part of the community. In this very mobile setting, such strengths are beneficial for pupils.
- Leaders make good use of the primary sport funding. Pupils enjoy a wide range of competitive and sporting challenges. They understand the benefits of an active lifestyle.
- Pupils are bubbly, good-natured and unfailingly inquisitive. They are keen to take on additional responsibilities and tackle duties diligently.
- Staff take safeguarding and the protection of pupils seriously. Pupils feel safe. Parents are confident that their children are well cared for.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen the effectiveness of leadership and management at all levels by:
 - securing consistency in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment across key stages, particularly in mathematics, and English grammar, punctuation and spelling
 - ensuring that leaders' strategic direction, including long- and short-term aims, is communicated precisely
 - creating detailed improvement plans that are firmly focused on the right priorities
 - equipping all middle leaders with the skills needed to monitor their areas of responsibility effectively
 - embedding the recently improved systems of assessment and monitoring of teaching and learning.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning in key stages 1 and 2 by:
 - supporting and challenging teachers to plan work that matches pupils' needs and interests precisely, particularly in mathematics, and English grammar, punctuation and spelling
 - smoothing transitions and making better use of all available teaching time
 - instilling positive attitudes and learning behaviours among all pupils
 - encouraging pupils to take pride in the presentation of their work across subjects.
- Develop the quality of teaching and rates of progress for children in early years by:
 - raising teachers' expectations of what children, particularly the most able, can do and achieve from their starting points
 - providing sufficient challenge in all areas of provision so that children are suitably stimulated and enabled to make rapid progress
 - making sure that all children read frequently with adults.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because leaders' actions have not yet secured teaching, learning and assessment that are consistently good. Teaching has not been good enough over time to ensure that pupils make good progress from their starting points particularly in mathematics, and English grammar, punctuation and spelling.
- Leaders' improvement planning is too short-sighted and lacks the detail needed to bring about rapid improvement in teaching, learning and assessment. Planning is not focused sharply enough on improving pupils' outcomes across key stages.
- Senior leaders have worked well with external partners recently to increase the quality and rigour of monitoring practices. For example, some leaders observe teaching and learning, scrutinise teachers' planning and look at the work in pupils' books regularly and in a more focused manner. Though well organised, this work has not yet led to significant or sufficient improvements in the overall quality of teaching and learning.
- Leaders have recently put a new assessment system in place. This is beginning to help leaders capture pupils' achievement in reading, writing and mathematics across each year group more precisely. It is also supporting teachers to plan work that is matched more closely to pupils' needs. Leaders intend to use the system across the wider curriculum too, capturing pupils' progress in subjects such as science, and English grammar, punctuation and spelling. Systems, however, are not yet embedded. It is too soon to tell whether the assessment tool will have a positive impact on pupils' outcomes.
- The work of middle leaders is of variable quality. Some leaders make effective use of professional development opportunities and management time. These leaders develop their skills and strive to improve their understanding of the quality of teaching and learning in their areas of responsibility. However, not all subjects and areas of responsibility are led or managed effectively. For example, leaders cannot confidently explain the extent or rate of pupils' progress across the wider curriculum or in science.
- Leaders use the very small pot of additional funding for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities judiciously. The experienced special educational needs coordinator ensures that parents and pupils are central to the process of designing individual 'flight paths' with targets matching individuals' particular needs.
- The headteacher has created a warm, family-feel ethos in this caring environment. In this sociable climate, new friends are easily made. Leaders ensure that the curriculum affords pupils regular opportunities to reflect upon current, topical issues in the wider world. Pupils discuss and think about issues such as conservation and sustainability as well as the impact of their and society's choices on others. Consequently, pupils are thoughtful and considerate. They are well prepared for life beyond the school gates.
- Leaders use the primary physical education and sport funding effectively. Leaders make sure that pupils access a wide range of competitive and sporting opportunities. Skills of determination, cooperation and good sportsmanship are fostered. Pupils thereby develop a good understanding of the benefits of physical fitness and healthy

lifestyles.

- Leaders are intent on broadening pupils' horizons. A myriad of visits, visitors and trips colour and enrich pupils' experiences.
- Leaders use the service premium funding very effectively to foster pupils' personal, social and emotional needs. Leaders understand the benefits and potential issues that service pupils and their families may experience. For example, leaders make sure that transition arrangements for pupils who experience frequent house moves and changes of school are seamless. Owing to leaders' actions, pupils settle quickly and soon feel part of the school community. Leaders' use of this additional funding to ensure that pupils make rapid academic progress from their starting points in subjects such as mathematics and English grammar, punctuation and spelling is less well evaluated and established.
- Local authority advisers have identified the issues facing the school correctly. Their evaluation of the school's effectiveness is accurate. The link adviser has been instrumental in ensuring that the right support is in place to bring about improvements in teaching and learning. Having brokered effective support from a local national leader of education, school leadership is improving apace.

Governance of the school

- Governors are proud of their school and take their responsibilities seriously. They play an integral part in its day-to-day business, visiting frequently, to gain first-hand experiences of the school's work and ethos. Governors also make themselves available and known to parents and pupils, listening to their views and opinions. Consequently, governors have a good understanding of stakeholders' views and what it feels like to be a pupil here.
- Governors are committed to self-improvement. They access a range of online training and opportunities available within the local authority's governors' services department to hone their skills of governance. Governors understand, for example, the links between staff performance and pay.
- Governors meet regularly to discuss the school's performance and the effectiveness of leaders' work. They visit classrooms to see teaching and learning, look at pupils' work and meet with leaders to discuss their approaches and successes. Governors are very supportive of leaders. They are beginning to offer more challenge to leaders, but do not yet probe the information they receive with sufficient rigour. This means that governors do not have a comprehensive, accurate knowledge of pupils' progress across subjects and key stages.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders' recruitment processes, for example, are well informed and safe; leaders' checks to make sure that adults are suitable to work with pupils are robust. Records are thorough and documentation is well organised and maintained.
- Leaders work diligently to care for pupils and protect them from harm. Leaders ensure that governors and staff have up-to-date safeguarding and child protection training. As

a result, adults are sensitive to the needs of pupils and understand how to report any concerns they may have. All staff are fully committed to pupils' protection.

- Leaders support pupils and families new to school effectively. Systems to manage frequent changes in the pupil population are efficient and well organised. This means that leaders quickly gain a comprehensive knowledge of any potential vulnerabilities or particular needs. They work effectively with other agencies and respond promptly to put the correct package of care in place where needed.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching and learning is not consistently good across key stages or subjects. Pupils' progress in mathematics and English grammar, punctuation and spelling, in particular, is too variable.
- Teachers do not use assessment effectively to plan tasks that successfully meet the needs and interests of pupils. Some pupils find work too challenging, while others tackle work that they already know and can do. As a result, pupils do not make consistently good progress in their learning across year groups and subjects.
- Some pupils' attitudes towards learning vary. Where transitions are poorly organised by adults, as pupils move from one piece of work or one area of learning to another, low-level disruption ensues. In addition, where work is ill matched to their needs or interests, these pupils can become distracted and switch off from learning. On these occasions, progress stalls and valuable learning time is lost for some pupils.
- Not all adults demand consistency from pupils in terms of the quality and volume of work produced in a given time. Pupils do not, therefore, take sufficient pride in the presentation of their work across subjects. Furthermore, too often pupils complete little work within a learning session or sessions.
- Some teachers make learning explicit for pupils. These adults explain new concepts, subject-specific terminology and learning intentions clearly. Pupils' misconceptions are addressed swiftly and pupils are encouraged to think deeply about their learning. However, because this good practice is not yet embedded, too few pupils make the progress that adults should expect of them.
- The teaching and learning of phonics are strengths of the school. Adults articulate the sounds that letters represent precisely, and encourage pupils do so too. Teachers and pupils discuss letters of the alphabet and sounds regularly within and across subjects. Most pupils make good progress in their acquisition of this early reading skill because of teachers' systematic and well-thought-out approach.
- Teachers across key stages have begun to use the new assessment system to plan learning tasks with better accuracy in reading, writing and mathematics. Teachers are presenting work to pupils that is more closely linked to age-related expectations, as defined by the primary national curriculum. There is evidence in pupils' books and other work to suggest that this is beginning to have a positive effect on pupils' outcomes and rates of progress. It is too soon to tell whether teachers can sustain this emerging strength over time to raise pupils' achievement.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils benefit from warm, positive relationships with staff. Throughout this inspection, pupils made consistently positive remarks about the care and attention they receive from adults. Pupils say that adults listen to them and help if they have any worries or hurt themselves in the playground. 'We're all here for each other', and, 'we can ask teachers anything, they keep us very happy', were some pupils' comments that encapsulated the views of many.
- Staff are skilled in supporting and caring for pupils in this often transient environment. Many pupils come and go at times other than the beginning of the school year or when starting Reception. Few pupils stay for a whole key stage of learning and very few stay from Reception Year until the end of Year 6. Adults are successful in making sure that no matter how long or short their time at Alanbrooke is, pupils feel valued and welcome.
- Adults plan regular opportunities for pupils to discuss moral, spiritual and social issues. Older pupils displayed empathy and maturity as they discussed the current ideologies and issues facing Catalonians and Spaniards in their debate about matters of independence. Others offered philosophical responses to matters of conservation and sustainability. In this way, pupils develop informed opinions and learn to consider the views of others. Such opportunities effectively prepare pupils for life in modern Britain and beyond.
- Pupils appreciate the regular opportunities that they have to practise keeping themselves safe. Regular fire drills ensure that the frequently changing pupil population is well drilled in exiting the building sensibly and quickly. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe online and talk confidently about safe internet practices. Consequently, pupils become aware of dangers and skilled at seeking safe solutions.
- Parents who responded to Ofsted's survey and the school's own questionnaires are united in their opinion that children are safe, happy and well looked after.
- Pupils' understanding about how to be successful in learning varies. Owing to inconsistencies in the quality of teaching, pupils do not reliably show tenacity, determination and application in relation to their work.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Older pupils display very caring attitudes to their younger friends and make sure that they have someone to play with. Pupils promptly invite those who take themselves to the friendship bench to join in their games. No one is left out or lonely.
- Pupils say that bullying rarely happens and as a rule, 'we get along well'. On those rare occasions where conflict does arise, pupils have complete confidence that 'pupil playground officers', 'safety helpers' or adults will 'sort it out'. Any 'little upsets or fallings out' are resolved quickly. Parents agree that the behaviour of pupils in school is good.

- Pupils' good attendance is a strength of the school. Staff work closely with parents and pupils to ensure that all parties understand the importance of good attendance. Overall attendance has been sustained in line with national averages over time.
- Pupils' conduct as they move through the school and outdoors is, for the most part, good. Indoors and outside, pupils respond promptly to adults' requests and listen politely when others are talking. Even when learning tasks fail to meet pupils' needs and interests, or when transitions are disorganised, pupils maintain respect and courtesy towards adults and each other.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Pupils' progress across key stages is too variable. Owing to inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and learning, pupils' outcomes, in mathematics and English grammar, punctuation and spelling in particular, require improvement.
- Current pupils' progress in mathematics and English grammar, punctuation and spelling is not consistently good. Key stage 1 and key stage 2 pupils' work in books and on display shows that too few pupils from their different starting points are making the progress that adults should expect of them. The school's own assessment information confirms this inconsistency.
- The proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics in key stage 2 over time, and more recently in 2016 and 2017, has remained well below national averages. From pupils' typical starting points, this represents rates of progress over time that require improvement. Not all pupils, including the most able pupils, are well prepared for the secondary mathematics curriculum.
- The proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in English grammar, punctuation and spelling in 2017 fell sharply to below national averages. Given pupils' typical or better starting points, this represents less than good progress over time.
- Pupils' work in books across key stages 1 and 2 demonstrates variable rates of progress in terms of pupils' use of accurate grammar, punctuation and spelling. Pupils' errors are too often repeated over time. Too few pupils tackle increasingly complex spellings and grammatical structures accurately. Furthermore, not all pupils sustain the quality of their written work across subjects.
- Pupils in each key stage have not reached expected standards in science over time. For some pupils, given their typical starting points, this represents weak progress.
- The proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in reading in key stage 2 in 2017 improved to match national averages. Teachers' focus on raising the profile of reading and extending pupils' vocabulary is enabling a higher proportion of current pupils to make expected or better progress in this area of their learning.
- Pupils' outcomes in phonics in Year 1 are consistently in line with or above national averages over time. In this early reading skill, pupils make good progress because of strengths in the teaching and learning of phonics.
- There are no disadvantaged pupils in the school and too few over time to comment upon the progress or attainment of this group.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- Teaching and learning in the early years are not consistently good. Teaching does not challenge children sufficiently because adults' expectations of what children can do and achieve are at times too low. Early years provision requires improving.
- The early years leader plans tasks and creates areas of interest that aim to immerse children in exploration and learning. Challenge, however, is lacking. Children too often practise things they already know and can do. Adults do not stretch the most able children, in particular, in reading, writing or mathematics.
- Some adults hold high expectations of children in terms of their capabilities and skills. These adults ensure that children's existing strengths are capitalised upon and any barriers to learning are addressed promptly. This good practice is not yet consistent among all adults or across all areas of learning.
- Not all children read frequently enough with adults to make good or better progress from their starting points. Staff do not consistently match books and reading tasks well to children's needs and interests. Children's rates of progress in reading, therefore, vary.
- Most adults manage children's behaviour effectively. Children respond well to positive praise and words of encouragement. They usually behave sensibly, listen respectfully to adults and interact happily with each other. However, adults do not always ensure that transitions are smooth and well timed to minimise disruption to teaching and learning. At times, therefore, children's learning behaviours and attitudes diminish.
- Most children arrive with skills and abilities that are in line with those expected for their age. Although too few make rapid progress, most make typical progress. The proportion of girls reaching a good level of development over time has exceeded national averages. Outcomes for boys, however, have been more variable.
- Adults take good care of children and are vigilant regarding children's welfare and safety. Children's well-being, health and protection are central to adults' thinking and planning. Good hygiene and physical fitness, for example, are actively promoted. Children are happy, feeling safe and confident under adults' caring supervision.
- Staff communicate well with parents. As one parent commented, staff 'share information', and, 'ensure that a positive parent-teacher relationship is maintained'. Parents and staff work in partnership to make sure that children feel secure.

School details

Unique reference number	121326
Local authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	10036434

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

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	61
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Andrew Jackson and Donna Fleming
Headteacher	Pippa Todd
Telephone number	01845577474
Website	www.alanbrooke.n-yorks.sch.uk
Email address	admin@alanbrooke.n-yorks.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	29 November 2012

Information about this school

- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information about the pupil premium grant.
- This school is much smaller than the average-sized primary school. This precludes the application of government floor standards, which set out the government's minimum expectations for pupils' progress and attainment in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The local authority has brokered support from a national leader of education for leaders and staff.
- The school is located within Alanbrooke army barracks and the vast majority of pupils come from service families. This entitles almost all pupils to the government's additional premium funding for service pupils. There are, however, too few disadvantaged pupils over time to report upon.
- The proportion of pupils who start or leave the school other than in Reception or Year

6, which are the normal points of entry and exit for a primary school, is much higher than usual. This is predominantly due to military postings.

- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is well below national averages. There are no pupils who have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is well below national averages.
- The proportion of pupils who are from minority ethnic groups is below national averages.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching and learning in all classes across key stages. The inspector and the headteacher conducted several lesson observations jointly.
- The inspector held meetings with the headteacher, middle leaders, governors (including the co-chairs of the governing body) and a representative from the local authority. The inspector also held a telephone conversation with a local national leader of education who is supporting leaders and staff.
- The inspector listened to pupils read, scrutinised their work and talked formally and informally with groups of pupils and individuals. The 20 responses made by pupils to Ofsted's pupil questionnaire were taken into account.
- A wide range of the school's own information was examined, including policy documentation, the school's self-evaluation, improvement plans and records of the checks made on teaching and learning. Information about performance management and safeguarding arrangements and practice was also studied.
- The opinions of staff were taken into account via their responses to Ofsted's questionnaire, on paper and online, and through discussion during meetings.
- The views of five parents were considered via their responses to Ofsted's questionnaire. The inspector also spoke with parents face to face.

Inspection team

Fiona Manuel, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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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. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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