



# Mount Charles School

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 111907  
**LEA** Cornwall  
**Inspection number** 278808  
**Inspection dates** 4 July 2006 to 5 July 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Julia Coop AI

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Morven Road
<b>School category</b>	Community		St Austell
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	5 to 11		Cornwall PL25 4PP
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01726 73911
<b>Number on roll</b>	416	<b>Fax number</b>	01726 77433
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mrs Joan Gallagher
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	10 July 2000	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr John Dickinson

<b>Age group</b> 5 to 11	<b>Inspection dates</b> 4 July 2006 - 5 July 2006	<b>Inspection number</b> 278808
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This is a larger-than-average primary school situated close to the centre of St Austell, which is a socially diverse area. There is an Additional Resource Base (ARB) for pupils with significant and complex learning difficulties. Most pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils with significant learning difficulties and disabilities, not registered in the resource base, is above the national average. Attainment on entry is below the national average. The school has gained a Healthy School award.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

Mount Charles recognises correctly that it is a satisfactory and rapidly improving school, with many strengths. It provides satisfactory value for money. It is a warm, caring community that values each individual pupil, regardless of their difficulties. The school provides an interesting curriculum and in the friendly, supportive atmosphere, pupils grow in confidence, enjoy learning and behave well. The Additional Resource Base (ARB) meets pupils' complex learning needs extremely well and helps them to make good progress.

Children do well in Reception, because teaching is good and the curriculum is exciting. In Years 1 to 6, pupils make steady progress where teaching is satisfactory with some good features. Until recently some groups of pupils were not making enough progress but better systems to assess and track pupils' progress have helped target support where it is most needed. As a result, underachievement has been tackled. More-able and less-able pupils make good progress. However, boys do better than girls in mathematics and there is still work to do to ensure that the middle-ability pupils in Years 3 to 6 make as much progress as other pupils. Despite recent improvements, there are not yet enough opportunities for pupils to practice their basic skills, particularly mathematics, in other subjects. This influences overall standards attained.

The headteacher, well supported by the deputy headteacher, provides a very clear lead to the school. They have been the driving force behind recent improvements. Governors are very supportive, links with other schools and agencies are harnessed well and middle managers are quickly getting to grip with their new roles. Although they have not yet had time to impact on improving the quality of education, they have made a good start. As a result, there is a positive atmosphere around the school, a shared commitment and capacity to make further improvements.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Build on the successful initiatives to improve achievement, particularly for middle-ability pupils and girls in mathematics.
- Further develop opportunities for pupils to use their basic skills, particularly mathematics, in other subjects to help raise standards further.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 3

Pupils' achievements are satisfactory and their standards are at the national average. Children make a good start in Reception. They become happy, independent learners who make good progress from a low starting point.

Pupils in Years 1 to 6 make satisfactory progress overall. Until recently, boys in Years 1 and 2 lagged well behind the girls. The school has worked hard to address this. The gap has narrowed significantly and differences in progress are now marginal. The school has also been successful in addressing underachievement in Years 3 to 6. The

most able pupils reached the challenging targets set for them and make good progress. Middle-ability pupils make satisfactory progress but the school knows that there is still work to do to ensure that they make as much progress as others.

Parents are happy with the progress their children are making and one parent appreciated the extra work provided when her daughter was 'having difficulties with maths problems.' Nevertheless, girls do less well than boys in mathematics. This is partly because there are fewer opportunities for them to use these skills in meaningful ways in other subjects. In addition, many girls find mathematics less enjoyable than other subjects, saying they 'haven't really got a grip of maths,' which many find 'harder than writing.'

Throughout the school, pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities, those with significant and complex learning needs and vulnerable pupils make good progress because of the high quality individual support they receive. As one parent commented, 'school is his favourite place next to home.'

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. Pupils are happy and value the calm and friendly school atmosphere. As a result, attendance, which is average, is rapidly improving, reflecting pupils' increasing enjoyment of learning. Comments such as 'We love this school' reflect pupils' enthusiasm for school life.

The vast majority of pupils behave well. Pupils do not think that bullying is an issue. They know how to keep safe and are confident to ask for help if they feel unhappy because they have very good relationships with adults and other pupils. There is a good community spirit, with lots of participation in local festivals. Pupils show mature concern for global issues and are keen to organise fundraising events, gaining knowledge of other cultures and beliefs through a wide range of curriculum activities.

Pupils are well aware of how to keep healthy and know why they need to wear sun hats. The infants thoroughly enjoyed the sports day, especially the 'egg and spoon race.' All know that 'exercise keeps you healthy' and join enthusiastically in the early morning 'Wake and Shake' club. Pupils value the many opportunities to take responsibility, such as being 'playground and ARB buddies' and running a healthy tuck shop. Pupils know that their views are valued. They are proud of their success in influencing decision making, such as providing more playground equipment and the choice of charities to support. Older pupils value the friendships they have made. They will 'really miss Mount Charles,' but are looking forward to future challenges knowing that they have been well prepared for future life.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 3

Teaching is satisfactory and there are common strengths that are exemplified by very good relationships, good use of interactive whiteboards and clear expectations about behaviour. As a result, pupils like their teachers and try hard in lessons. Coupled with lots of praise and very good support for vulnerable pupils, this means there is a positive climate for learning. The recent improvements to assessment arrangements mean that teachers now have a powerful tool with which to identify gaps in previous learning and understand why progress has been too slow for some pupils in the past. Most teachers are making good use of this information to plan activities carefully matched to pupils' different learning needs. Less effective teaching occurs when activities are too hard for middle-ability pupils to complete unaided. Many of these pupils lack confidence and require more support and a wider variety of teaching approaches to enable them to fully achieve the aims of the lesson. For example, in an English lesson, some middle-ability pupils struggled to use adjectives to extend their writing without the aid of partner discussions and without the support of some key words. Learning support assistants work well with small groups of pupils, which helps pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make good progress. However, they are not always used effectively to support learning in all parts of lessons.

Children get off to a positive start in Reception, where teachers plan a wealth of interesting learning activities that capture the children's imagination. Very good specialist teaching based on a very good understanding of the way pupils with complex needs learn, coupled with very good support from specialist teaching assistants, helps pupils who attend the ARB to make good progress.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 2

A good curriculum contributes well to pupils' increasing enjoyment of learning. In Reception, an exciting curriculum provides children with lots of opportunities to make choices in their learning and prepares them well for Year 1. Teachers have begun to plan interesting links between subjects, and 'exciting writing' projects such as in history and science have helped improve standards in writing. However, there is scope to ensure that pupils are provided with even more opportunities to use their basic skills, particularly mathematics, in other subjects so as to spur on learning.

Many clubs, visits and visitors make learning more interesting. French and Spanish coupled with a strong focus on sport and personal, social and health education not only successfully enhance pupils' awareness of other cultures and lifestyles but also helps develop a good team spirit and keen sense of healthy, safe living.

## Care, guidance and support

### Grade: 2

The school is right to be proud of the good care, guidance and support it provides. Health, safety and child protection arrangements are secure. The pupils with significant and complex needs receive excellent care and support. The appointment of a pastoral supervisor has had a positive effect on improving pupils' behaviour and personal skills, particularly for more vulnerable pupils. Attendance and punctuality have improved as a result. Parents express very few concerns about behaviour and have very positive views about how the school cares for their children, saying the school 'fosters an atmosphere of care and respect' and that 'our son has totally changed, it is a credit to his teachers.'

Pupils know their targets for learning and are generally given good guidance about how to improve their work. However, whilst marking of pupils' work is often good and supports learning well, the quality is inconsistent. Pupils often evaluate their own work and identify their own targets for improvement. This is contributing well to improved learning.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory, with significant strengths in the leadership of the headteacher. His determined and very effective leadership with good support from the deputy and external consultants has led to major improvements. Well-targeted support and good monitoring have greatly improved behaviour and attitudes. Consequently, pupils really want to learn. Most are making much better progress because a positive climate has been established where all pupils regardless of their background or difficulties are valued and supported. As one parent commented, 'the discipline in the school has greatly improved and the whole image of the school has risen.' The school knows itself well. It is realistic and recognises that there is more to do to improve the progress and achievement of all pupils.

In his drive to strengthen leadership and management of the school the headteacher has recently appointed a new team of middle managers. They are fully supportive and are totally committed to developing their skills. They have made a good start, for example, by analysing data and providing teachers with useful targets to work on, but recognise that they have not yet had time to influence overall school improvement. Governors are also very supportive. They are rightly proud of their school and recent improvements. They are rapidly developing their skills and ability to hold the school to account when necessary. Parents' and pupils' views are sought and used well. Coupled with good financial management and a purposeful sense of direction, the school is well placed to build on its recent improvements.

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## Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	<b>School Overall</b>	<b>16-19</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	3	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

### Achievement and standards

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

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	3	NA
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	2	NA
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	2	NA

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy</b>	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
<b>The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe</b>	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
<b>The extent to which learners make a positive contribution</b>	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being</b>	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

## **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Thank you so much for the friendly way you chatted to us when we visited. We really enjoyed seeing your smiling faces when you were hard at work and play. We loved your 'Wake and Shake' club. We particularly liked the way that you look after and care for each other. We liked these things most:

- You are confident and sensible and you behave well.
- We think Reception and the resource base are lovely and staff there make learning really interesting.
- We were impressed with the way you run the healthy tuck shop and make sensible decisions.
- We think that you must have a really good time in all the clubs and special events.
- Everyone takes great care of you. We know you like keeping fit and active and try to eat lots of fruit and vegetables.

Everyone works hard to make Mount Charles a special place to learn. There are two things that the staff and governors want to do to make it an even better school and we think they are good ideas:

- They are going to work even harder to make sure all of you learn as well as you can and especially find ways of helping the girls get better in mathematics.
- They are going to plan even more interesting ways for you to practice your reading and writing and especially your mathematics in other subjects.

We hope you go on enjoying all of the interesting activities which help you learn and play. We wish the Year 6 pupils well in their new school.