

The Mount Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	102582
Local Authority	Kingston Upon Thames
Inspection number	308057
Inspection dates	12–13 February 2008
Reporting inspector	Ann Sydney

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	418
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Chris Priest
Headteacher	Mrs Diane Campbell
Date of previous school inspection	23 June 2003
School address	Dickerage Lane New Malden KT3 3RZ
Telephone number	020 8942 5154
Fax number	020 8336 0853

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a very large primary school with nursery and extended day provision. Part of the local area is one of significant deprivation and most of the pupils come from there. The proportion in receipt of free school meals is above average. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities (LDD) is well above the national average. The majority of LDD pupils have moderate learning difficulties and there is a provision for pupils with autism from Nursery to Year 6. Throughout the school just over half the pupils come from White British backgrounds with significant minorities from Korea and Afghanistan. Almost half speak English as an additional language (EAL) and most of these pupils are in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. Large numbers of pupils join and leave during the school year. A Children's Centre is being built on site. The school has achieved several awards including Investors in People, Basic Skills Quality Mark, Healthy Schools Award and is working towards several others.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school with some strong features. Children enter the Nursery with exceptionally low standards and make uneven but satisfactory progress through the school. However, provision is not yet good enough to raise pupils' standards to the national average. Pupils' personal development is good, and this is enhanced through the many extra clubs and activities the school offers. Pupils delight in learning to cook healthy dishes from the school cook, and explaining it to their classmates, so they really take healthy living to heart. Pupils thoroughly enjoy coming to school and grow in confidence and self-esteem because of the shared commitment of the staff to their welfare.

Pupils make satisfactory progress with their learning because of the large number of skilled helpers in class and the specialist help in lessons. Teaching is satisfactory overall, with some of it good. Lessons are often fun but the pace in some is slow and assessment during lessons is not thorough enough, so that work does not always provide the right level of challenge. Consequently, standards are rising only slowly. Teaching is better in the Foundation Stage, where it is based on excellent assessments of children's needs and lively sessions that engage the children and motivate them to enquire and work co-operatively.

The school gives its pupils good care, guidance and support. This starts before Nursery. One parent said, 'The Integration to Nursery scheme is hugely enjoyable and eases children into starting school.' Many pupils are at an early stage of learning English and they thrive. A Korean parent said, 'The school is clearly very used to pupils whose first language is not English'. Parents of pupils on the autistic spectrum appreciate the provisions' flexible timetable where pupils join mainstream classes whenever appropriate. Academic guidance is satisfactory. Tracking of pupils' progress by the EAL co-ordinator is clear and useful. Target-setting and tracking, and its relationship with marking through the rest of the school is not understood well enough by all staff.

One parent said, 'My son is incredibly proud of his school. He is very interested in what he is learning'. Some aspects of the curriculum are outstanding. The 'arts and social curriculum' brings exciting and stimulating activities into pupils' lives, so that children's writing is improving. One pupil said 'The Arts and Social group is brilliant!' However everyday planning of the basic curriculum does not include these inspirational elements in enough lessons to ensure that all pupils make good progress.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. There is good leadership in the Foundation Stage, and the provision for pupils with EAL is well managed. Some governors and managers understand the school's strengths and weaknesses. However, this has not been translated into a strong school development plan that spreads best practice and focuses sharply on how to raise standards. While leadership is strongly committed to pupils' welfare and personal development, the same rigour is only beginning to be applied to improving academic performance. The school has satisfactory capacity to improve as demonstrated by its successful development of the Foundation Stage.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

There is good provision in the Foundation Stage. The class teachers plan enjoyable and challenging activities for the children. The large majority of children begin school with skills

and understanding that are very low for their age. The well-planned curriculum meets their needs well. Children thoroughly enjoy coming to school and this gives them a good start to their education. As one parent observed, 'My son is very happy at the Mount'. Children make good progress, particularly in their language skills, and staff know this because of their effective record-keeping of children's responses. This ensures that the least able and most vulnerable are helped to settle well and that all the children are challenged by their activities. While the rooms and outside areas are large and resources are stimulating and effective, there is still scope to develop all year round outside play even further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve school development and strategic planning so that it focuses sharply on raising standards.
- Ensure that assessment and teachers' marking have a greater impact on helping pupils to reach their targets.
- Increase the pace and demands of teaching and learning to reflect the needs and enthusiasms of all pupils and further improve their achievement.

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

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Standards are low by the end of Year 2 and below average by the end of Year 6. Despite this, standards are improving and the pupils make satisfactory progress in relation to their starting points. Pupils enter the school in the Nursery with exceptionally low standards, particularly in communication and language. They make good progress in the Foundation Stage, although they enter Year 1 with skills and abilities that are well below those expected of five-year-olds. In Years 1 and 2 their progress slows because some lessons lack pace. Standards are slowly improving but are still very low in reading and writing. They are, however, approaching the expected levels in mathematics. In Years 3 to 6, the gap between the school's results and the national average is narrowing especially for pupils who have been in the school since Nursery. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities, especially those who need extra support with reading and writing, make satisfactory progress. Good support and excellent tracking of pupils with English as an additional language ensure they make good progress in acquiring a new language and by the end of Year 6 they achieve at least as well as other pupils.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The pupils' good personal development makes a significant contribution to their all-round development. Parents and pupils acknowledge the secure and supportive environment and enjoy all that it offers. From the earliest days in Reception, relationships are positive and, across the school, good moral and social development means that pupils' behaviour in and out of lessons is good. Pupils of different backgrounds play and work together well and report that staff deal effectively with the rare instances of challenging behaviour. As a result of the school's efforts, attendance has improved and is now in-line with the national average. Pupils make a good contribution to their school and the wider community, for example, by raising funds for charities through the school council and by carrying out extra responsibilities, such as being a

Playground Buddy. Pupils have a good understanding of how to lead safe and healthy lives. Satisfactory progress in basic skills and good personal development means that pupils are soundly prepared for the next stage of their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Classes often have several adults in them and this makes a real difference to pupils' progress. Teaching assistants, specialist teachers and volunteers help pupils with English as an additional language and those with autism, learning difficulties and disabilities to understand lessons and to motivate them. Teachers include many opportunities for pupils to share ideas and discuss their work and this is improving pupils' language skills. Lessons are often fun but the pace of learning is sometimes slow. Sometimes work is not very well matched to the range of ability in the class and too much time is spent teaching the whole group. In some lessons questioning and other assessment strategies are not used often enough to check that pupils are all learning. Marking does not always point to the next steps for improvement and older pupils are not aware of how well they are doing or what they need to do to improve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory overall with many good enrichment opportunities. All subjects are covered adequately. However, sometimes opportunities are being missed to link subjects, to make lessons more appropriate to individual pupils' needs and to ensure their skills develop systematically. They have begun to review planning in Years 3 to 6 in order to improve pupils' enjoyment and creativity. The Art and Social Development Programme is a significant strength of the school and provides exciting opportunities through visits and visitors for learning to come to life. The rewards of published poetry and stories raise individuals' self-esteem and give others examples of the high standards to which they can aspire. The programme is managed by an enthusiastic and effective co-ordinator with high expectations, who aims to extend these opportunities through the school. After school clubs including art, chess, dance, sports and pottery are the pupils' favourite aspect of school, and extend the curriculum well.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pupils are well cared for and supported. One parent summed up the views of many by saying 'the school really cares for each child as individuals'. A few parents suggest that bullying is an issue, but the school is quick to respond and deals effectively with any incidents. The school ensures pupils' safety by making the required checks on adults who work in the school. Staff work well with outside agencies to raise attendance. The school pioneered the 'Intergenerational Project' where Age Concern volunteers act successfully as Learning Mentors to motivate pupils to higher achievement. Teaching assistants and those who support pupils learning English as an additional language provide highly effective support. Pupils are given targets to work towards and know in general terms what they need to do to improve. However, they are not yet sufficiently involved in setting and monitoring their own targets, and consequently do not always make sufficient progress in improving their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The day-to-day management of the school is good because adults are deployed well to support the most vulnerable pupils. The headteacher is adept at linking the school with a wide range of outside agencies to provide excellent support for pupils and their families which they appreciate. With improving tracking and better use of data, governors and managers are beginning to have an accurate picture of the school's strengths and what remains to be done. Governors have started to hold the school to account. The school development plan identifies the priorities for improvement accurately but is not specific enough in showing how this will be achieved or monitored. Though some curriculum areas are very well managed, lines of responsibility are unclear and too much is left to the initiative of individuals. Overall the school provides good value for money because of its excellent partnerships with other organisations, pupils' thorough enjoyment of school, and their good personal development.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

The quality of provision

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

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

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

29 February 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of The Mount Primary School, New Malden, KT3 3RZ

Thank you all for your help when we inspected your school recently. We all enjoyed looking at your books, watching your lessons and talking to you. We think you go to a satisfactory school with some things that are good and some that are outstanding.

These are the things we particularly liked:

- your enthusiasm for learning
- the way that all the staff, including the volunteers, look after you very well
- the Nursery and Reception classes give you a good start to your education
- the lively Arts and Social curriculum
- the way the school helps many pupils to learn English.

Here are some things we have suggested to help the school become even better:

- the headteacher, staff and governors should write a clear plan to show how they will spread the really good things that are already happening across the whole school
- teachers should see where each pupil needs to improve, set targets with you that are specially for you, and mark your work so that you know if you are reaching your targets
- teachers should speed up your learning by making sure every lesson sets each of you the right challenges.

You can help by aiming to be the best you possibly can. Keep up your enthusiasm for learning!

On behalf of the inspection team, please accept our very best wishes for the future.

Ann Sydney

Lead Inspector