

Mount Pleasant Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	103780
Local Authority	Dudley
Inspection number	336155
Inspection dates	29–30 September 2009
Reporting inspector	Patricia Potheary

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 of pupils on the school roll	308
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Stuart Jarvis
Headteacher	Jo Hartill
Date of previous school inspection	28 February–1 March 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 20 lessons, before and after school care, breaks and lunchtime. They held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils and took account of pupil and staff survey views. They observed the school's work, and looked at pupils' work, data on progress, monitoring reports, policies, planning and 79 parent questionnaires.

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

- progress in mathematics, especially for more able pupils
- reasons for inconsistencies in the quality of teaching
- the effectiveness of leaders, in securing consistent improvement to progress
- the extent of promotion of community cohesion.

Information about the school

Mount Pleasant is a large primary school. A very large majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds with very few from a range of other ethnic groups. The number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is lower than average. Pupils come from a broad range of different backgrounds. The school has been awarded the Artsmark Gold three years running and has the Healthy Schools and Eco Schools Silver Awards. The Early Years Foundation Stage consists of a Nursery where children attend either in the morning or the afternoon and a Reception class. The facilities and staff in the Early Years Foundation Stage are shared between these two groups.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Mount Pleasant is a good school with a delightful and harmonious atmosphere throughout. An exciting curriculum and good teaching ensures that pupils of all abilities achieve well and make good progress. For these reasons pupils thoroughly enjoy school and have excellent attitudes to work, where they are keen to succeed. Outstanding care, guidance and support mean that pupils feel very safe and behave exceedingly well, showing great responsibility and consideration towards others. It also ensures that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities do well, often making more progress than their peers. There is a very strong spiritual element to the work of the school.

The good progress begins in the Nursery and Reception and builds well, until pupils leave Year 6 with standards which are broadly average to above from a low starting point. Senior leaders have a strong commitment and vision for continuous improvement. There are robust systems for tracking and monitoring the outcomes for pupils which support good self evaluation. There is therefore an accurate view of the school's strengths and areas for development. The result has been effective, for example, in raising attainment in writing and in sustaining the increased the rate of progress made throughout the school. This demonstrates a good capacity to improve.

Although pupils do particularly well in science and writing the progress made in mathematics is satisfactory rather than good in several year groups, especially for the more able pupils. Senior staff are aware that a few pupils are not moved on fast enough. There is also a slow start in giving pupils individual targets in Year 1 and some pupils have difficulty in understanding mathematical language. In one or two lessons, for example, pupils did not fully understand the processes involved in the problems they were working on.

Learning in most lessons is thoroughly enjoyable, pupils particularly like the way 'teachers speak to us as friends', they 'work with us'. Teachers specialise in different subjects and their resulting strong subject knowledge is encouraging a passion for learning among the pupils. The quality of teaching within subjects does vary though. For example, not all lesson planning uses the good assessment and target setting system to best effect in reading and mathematics. The school recognises that, individual targets do not always show small enough steps to give pupils a clear view of how to succeed. They have also identified that, occasionally, expectations of what can be achieved are not high enough or laid out clearly. A great deal of good analysis

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has ensured that the systems for improving progress and teaching are continually being developed.

Good opportunities within the curriculum enable pupils to take on responsibility and contribute to the community which they welcome. The 'bullyline' counsellors, for example, are highly valued in the way they help pupils resolve any conflict they experience. The range of clubs, performance art and sporting opportunities is exceptional and is a key factor in pupils' enjoyment of school and their keen awareness of how to keep healthy. Pupils are aware, through good promotion of community cohesion, of people who are different from themselves and show respect and tolerance within their own community. The high quality care includes a thriving breakfast club and after school care, which provide a warm and very safe environment, where children can relax, eat healthy food and choose from a series of interesting activities with plenty of adult support.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the progress made in mathematics, especially for more able pupils by:
 - ensuring all pupils are enabled to move to the next level as soon as they are ready
 - setting individual targets for pupils earlier in Year 1
 - increasing the focus on developing mathematical language, so that pupils fully understand the processes involved in the problems they are working on.
- Secure greater consistency in the quality of teaching by:
 - showing targets in small enough steps in all English and mathematics lessons so that every pupil has a clear view of how to succeed
 - clarifying and raising expectations of what pupils can achieve in every lesson.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils' exceptional enjoyment of lessons is evident, for example, as they search for information on the internet and excitedly share their findings with others. They really value learning, in part because it is so active. This means that they achieve well and make good progress and so standards by the time they leave Year 6 are at least average and often above, particularly in science. This shows good progress compared to their starting points which are often below those expected for the age in reading, writing and numeracy. It is encouraging to watch all pupils, regardless of their backgrounds or abilities, confidently answer questions and play a full part in lessons because they are supported and guided so well. Progress in mathematics is inconsistent and several pupils make satisfactory rather than good progress over time, especially the more able. In a few mathematics lessons, pupils struggle to understand the language and processes involved. There is good improvement in writing and progress in this subject is good throughout the school. A remarkable

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aspect is the clarity and depth with which many pupils express their opinions and provide information when asked. Their skills with regard to speaking and listening are very well developed.

Pupils feel exceptionally safe and any unkind or difficult behaviour is very rare. They show excellent awareness of how to behave in a variety of settings, not only in lessons but when conducting themselves around the school. Pupils' good attitude to healthy living is exemplified by the way they relish the healthy, high quality breakfasts, snacks and lunches provided. In addition to the school council and eco committee work, older pupils all have duties to perform. However, opportunities to contribute to school and community life are not so readily available to younger pupils. They show considerable respect for those who are different to themselves and typically say, 'we get on well'. Pupils also have a strong awareness of culture in art, theatre, poetry and music, but less so for the multi-cultural aspects of our society. Pupils are well prepared for their next school and futures, not only through their strong basic skills and understanding of modern technology, but in their good attendance, the excellent way they work with others as well as in their confident and independent approach to all aspects of their school life.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
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 ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Good relationships and lively activities in lessons and in the wider curriculum enthuse and motivate pupils, who want to work hard and do their best. Teachers excel in

¹ 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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creating 'magical' environments for pupils where they hold their breath with excitement. Good assessment means that teachers have an accurate knowledge of pupils' attainment. They use this well to plan, so that learning is moved forward in a way that is well matched to pupils' different interests and abilities. As one pupil commented, 'they explain everything'. Teaching assistants are skilled in encouraging learning, especially pupils' ability to question and predict. The system for setting pupils' individual targets though, is used differently in some classes. In a few cases, the steps are not small enough or clear enough for pupils to understand what they should personally focus on to be sure of making progress. In a very few lessons teachers' expectations lack sufficient challenge. This contributes to the inconsistency in the quality of teaching. Nevertheless, successful encouragement of team work lends many lessons an air of industrious harmony.

The good curriculum is imaginative, particularly in the wide range of activities on offer. Pupils are able to influence what is taught in parts of the curriculum, such as cross curricular topics, which allows them to practise their basic skills well in a highly motivating way. For example, in many lessons computers and other technology are used skilfully to present information, research topics and practise skills. Although pupils learn about other countries and religions, the school is aware that not enough attention is paid to the wide range of cultures within wider British society, which they are beginning to address.

Excellent care for pupils ensures that they are not only kept very safe, but that everyone, including those with particular difficulties, is supported very well in doing their best. It is difficult to overstate the impact this has on the very positive atmosphere within the school. Links with parents and other agencies to support those in need are extensive. Pupils are carefully guided at each stage of their education and the guidance given to help them attend regularly and behave well is very effective.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

Senior leaders, including governors, have worked effectively since the last inspection to improve the school. Much has been put into place in the last two years to develop good practice in teaching, assessment and monitoring. The environment has been transformed with some excellent outdoor spaces for learning and relaxation. The

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tracking of pupils' progress is regular and shared with teachers so that any areas of weakness can be tackled. This has resulted in progress, and teaching being improved from satisfactory to good. In the last two years pupils in all year groups have made two and half years progress overall which is beginning to raise standards, especially for younger pupils. Senior staff have an accurate view of what needs to be improved. They understand for example that supporting teachers in increasing the consistency of teaching, particularly in mathematics, is a key area for school improvement. The school sets challenging targets which were exceeded in 2009.

Good procedures to safeguard pupils are carefully monitored by senior staff and governors to ensure all requirements are met and that pupils are kept very safe. There is a deep commitment to ensuring good equal opportunities for every pupil, regardless of gender, ethnicity or ability and so there is no evidence of discrimination. The school works well to promote community cohesion despite difficulties in retaining national links. Regular activities with a local school, which has pupils from different backgrounds, is proving beneficial to children from both establishments.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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

Early Years Foundation Stage

When children join the Nursery their skills are usually below those expected for the age. Good links with parents ensure a smooth start and they quickly make friends and socialise well. By the time children leave Reception they are reaching average standards, except in reading and writing and some aspects of numeracy which show good progress, but remain below average. Leadership is good in securing a safe,

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happy and productive environment where children make good progress in all areas of learning, but particularly in personal and social development. Levels of attainment reached are rising each year. The use of assessment to help plan sessions is still developing. Leaders have recognised that the next steps in learning are not identified clearly enough. Teaching however is good, and staff are skilled at encouraging children to listen carefully and discuss what they are doing. The curriculum is well organised, there is plenty of opportunity for children to explore for themselves. Inside and outdoors has plenty of equipment for children to use, increasing their understanding of the world. For example, they were using building tools to 'mend' the climbing frame, some had great fun digging and planting pansies. Others were transfixed when a giant African land snail was taken out of a box. Great attention is paid to caring for the children and they quickly learn how to become more independent in looking after themselves. This results in excellent behaviour, co-operation and sharing.

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

Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school, finding it a safe and happy environment where their children make good progress. A small minority of several different concerns were expressed and where supported by inspection, these are reflected in the inspection findings. Parents particularly like the way their children are, 'always eager to attend school' and speak highly of the dedication of staff.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Mount Pleasant Primary 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 12 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 79 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 382 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	45	57	31	39	2	3	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	49	62	29	37	0	0	1	1
The school informs me about my child's progress	38	48	35	44	5	6	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	36	46	37	47	4	5	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	43	54	30	38	4	5	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	39	49	34	43	3	4	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	32	41	47	59	0	0	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)	45	57	32	41	2	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	33	42	38	48	3	4	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	32	41	42	53	4	5	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	20	25	51	65	5	6	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	44	56	31	39	2	3	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	49	62	25	32	3	4	1	1

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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	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

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

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">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.



1 October 2009

Dear Pupils,

Inspection of Mount Pleasant Primary School, Brierley Hill, DY5 2YN

Thank you for being so welcoming when we visited your school. We very much enjoyed meeting you, joining you for break and seeing your lessons. Your school is a good school with many interesting things going on, just as you described. Staff work hard to keep developing the school and, for this reason, your work is getting better each year.

Skilful teaching helps you to make good and increasing progress in your lessons. As a result, you are doing particularly well in writing. We like the way you really enjoy your lessons and always try to do your best. You told us that your teachers make lessons fun and interesting and we can see that they help you to do well. However, we have asked them to help more of you make good progress in mathematics, especially those of you who learn quickly. Therefore, we would like them to make sure you are moved to the next level as soon as you are ready. We think it would help if individual targets are set earlier in Year 1 and more help is given to you in understanding mathematical words. We would also like to make sure that all lessons lead to good progress. We think that giving some of you a clearer view of how you can succeed, and by having high expectations of what you can do, will help this happen. We are sure that you will discuss this with your teachers and help them by working hard and sharing your ideas.

The good curriculum provides many opportunities for you to take part in lots of different activities which you clearly welcome. We like the way you eagerly take on responsibility. For example, the way you look after each other, and act as 'bullyline' counsellors in the playground is heartening. Your behaviour is excellent especially in the way you value learning. You show good respect for others, including those who have different beliefs and ways of living. You were keen to tell us that the school keeps you very safe and looks after you very well. It is therefore very pleasing to see that you are helping yourselves by taking plenty of exercise and eating a healthy diet.

We think that this, alongside your mature attitudes to working with others, helps you to be well prepared for your next school and future lives.

Yours faithfully

Patricia Potheary
Lead inspector

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