

Mount Pleasant Primary

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	135776
Local Authority	Shropshire
Inspection number	360747
Inspection dates	31 January 2011–1 February 2011
Reporting inspector	Doris Bell

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	249
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Malcolm Price
Headteacher	Alan Brannen
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Whitemere Road Mount Pleasant, Shrewsbury SY1 3BY
Telephone number	01743 357808
Fax number	01743 357808
Email address	head.mountpleasant@shropshirelg.net

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M2 7LA

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They undertook a total of 17 observations, and saw nine teachers teach. They also met with parents and carers, groups of pupils, members of the governing body and staff. They observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documentation including teachers' planning, the school development plan, assessment, monitoring and evaluation records, records for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and safeguarding policies. Inspectors also analysed the responses to the 124 questionnaires returned by parents and carers.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The progress of pupils currently in the school and the impact of what the school is doing to improve writing, especially for boys.
- Whether teaching is sufficiently challenging to accelerate progress in writing and, in Key Stage 1, to build on Early Years Foundation Stage outcomes.
- They also investigated the clarity and focus of leadership and management in establishing effective teamwork amongst the staff and the impact this has on teaching and learning across the school.

Information about the school

This is the first inspection of this larger than average size primary school, which opened in 2009 following the amalgamation of adjacent infant and junior schools. Most pupils are White British, and the proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is broadly average. A small number of these pupils have English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average, as is the proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals. The school has gold Healthy Schools status.

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

This is a good school. Those responsible for leading and managing it have, within a relatively short time, built a strong team with a shared vision of improvement. Leadership and management are good, and staff have a well-developed understanding of their individual and collective responsibility for the outcomes in Year 6. Teaching is good. The school's self-evaluation is robust, accurate and well-founded, and the information is used well to set challenging targets for staff and pupils. Data held by the school, and confirmed by pupils' work, show that all pupils, from the least to the most able, are achieving well. Attainment is average in Year 6. Pupils have made better than expected progress given their starting points when they were in Year 3, in the then junior school. Taken together, all of the above demonstrates the school has good capacity for further improvement.

The strategies introduced to improve boys' writing, which include a well planned curriculum with several boy-friendly themes, have all but eliminated the gap between boys and girls. Both groups contribute equally well in lessons, and prepare equally well for longer pieces of writing. This was noted as Year 2 pupils learned to write an explanation of how an electrical circuit works and Year 6 pupils learned to distinguish between discussion and persuasion. There are a few good examples of writing skills being used well in different subjects but, generally, opportunities are missed to do this. Opportunities are also missed to develop early writing skills in Nursery and Reception, particularly in the outdoor area. Nevertheless, having started with attainment below expectation for their age, children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The good use of assessment information ensures that this good progress continues in Year 1.

Attendance is high and pupils enjoy school. They have an excellent understanding of why it is important to follow a healthy lifestyle. They say they feel safe and they know how to keep themselves safe. They make a good contribution to the school and local community, and they behave well in and out of class. All of this is the outcome of the excellent care, guidance and support provided for all pupils, including those whose circumstances are likely to make them vulnerable. It means that pupils leave the school well prepared for their future. Some parents and carers have concerns about behaviour, and others feel they do not get enough information about their children's progress or that the school does not listen to them. Inspectors found no evidence to support these views, including in their discussions with parents and carers during the inspection. Nevertheless, they endorse the school's priority to try to engage better with those parents and carers who do not often come into school and take advantage of its invitation to talk to staff at the beginning and end of the school day.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- In all age groups and all subjects, take every opportunity to improve pupils' ability to write at length.
- Make every effort to ensure that all parents and carers understand:
 - the school's good approaches to managing behaviour
 - the many opportunities available to them to gain additional information about their children's progress
 - how the school responds to their suggestions and concerns.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils enjoy school and all groups, from the least to the most able, make equally good progress. This includes pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds, those for whom English is an additional language, and pupils known to be eligible for free school meals. Pupils use their literacy skills well in different subjects to label or annotate drawings and diagrams but they do not often have enough opportunities to write at length. On those occasions when they write at length in literacy, they prepare their writing well and use their developing vocabulary to engage the reader. Grammar and punctuation are mostly accurate but spelling remains an issue for some older pupils. It is improving in the younger age groups as a result of the focus on linking sounds and letters. Pupils use their numeracy skills well to solve real-life problems and to assist their work, for example, in geography. They use information and communication technology skills well to research information in history, to word process their writing and, as observed in Year 6, to sharpen their mental mathematical skills and extend their understanding of equivalent fractions.

All those spoken to say they feel safe, and the school keeps them safe. They also say that the school 'puts a lot into your life', that they 'learn new things' every day, and that this school prepares them well for the next one. Pupils state confidently that although problems with behaviour and incidents of bullying occur, they are 'very rare' and behaviour has improved since the amalgamation. Older pupils take very seriously the fact that they should be good role models for 'the little ones'.

The pupils' excellent understanding of healthy lifestyles is evident in their healthy food choices and their well-developed understanding of the importance of taking regular exercise. Large numbers participate in the many sporting and exercise activities available to them. They are also proud that they came third in the local authority in the push to promote cycling. This all contributed to the school's award of gold Healthy Schools status.

Pupils are reflective and caring, and they have a good sense of equality for all. This is gained through visits, including residential visits, in which they participate alongside schools with a different cultural mix. Pupils make a good contribution to the school and wider community. School councillors, representing their classmates, contribute to developments within school, and pupils willingly raise money for different charities at home and abroad. Through this, they learn about local, national and global issues.

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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	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
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	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

Good planning is based on high expectations of pupils' work rate and behaviour. Teachers assess and track pupils' learning well and use the information effectively in their planning. They involve pupils well in this and therefore pupils understand their targets and what they need to do to improve. Staff are mostly very alert to any lack of understanding and they adjust lessons accordingly. This was observed in a good literacy lesson where teaching and support staff engaged in role play to demonstrate the difference between discussion and persuasion, correcting their own mostly deliberate errors as they did so. It is also evident in the annotations teachers make on their planning as they evaluate its impact on pupils' learning. Marking is good in literacy and in writing that occurs in other subjects. It focuses pupils on their targets, and shows them the steps they need to take to reach them. Pupils respond well to this. Marking is not as well developed in other subjects.

The school has successfully designed a curriculum that meets pupils' needs and interests. It includes themes and topics that motivate both boys and girls. The school's good links with other schools enable it to share ideas, facilities, and good practice, all of which also contribute to pupils' progress. The curriculum, enriched by a good range of visits, visitors and extra-curricular activities, promotes pupils' learning and personal development well. Nevertheless, opportunities for pupils to use and improve their extended writing skills are not fully embedded within it. Additionally, in some literacy lessons, introductions and explanations are too long, limiting the time pupils have to write.

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The caring ethos and warm, welcoming learning environment is immediately evident on entering the school. All staff know pupils well as individuals, and pupils have every confidence that any adult will help them should they have any concerns. High levels of support are provided for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and for pupils whose circumstances might make them vulnerable. The steps taken to improve behaviour are conspicuously successful. They include, for example, using support staff to supervise pupils at lunchtimes to ensure consistency in behaviour management. Pupils understand and appreciate this, as do most of their parents and carers.

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?

As they brought the staff from the two former schools together, leaders and managers have established a shared vision for high standards in all aspects of school life. The ambition thus embedded is driving improvement at all levels. Challenging targets are set for all year groups, and key subject and aspect leaders are involved in the rigorous checks made on progress towards them. Staff morale is high, and staff respond well to advice and guidance they receive to improve the quality of their work. All of this contributes effectively to pupils' good personal and academic progress.

The governing body knows the school well. It is growing with it, and uses its expertise to provide a good balance of support and challenge. Members help with reading, and support pupils with English as an additional language, therefore contributing to pupils' good progress at first hand. Despite the reservations of a small number of parents and carers, the school's partnership with them is good. It welcomes them into school and helps them to support their children's learning. Questionnaires and the parent council give parents and carers a voice in the school. Wherever possible, the school responds to suggestions and concerns arising from them. Good partnerships with other schools and external agencies support pupils' learning and personal development, and contribute to the good progress made by different groups of pupils. This includes support staff attending sessions with, for example, speech therapists and outreach services, so they can assist pupils properly on a daily basis.

The school promotes equality of opportunity well. Different groups are well catered for, all pupils have equal access to all activities, and the school deals effectively with any incident involving harassment or discrimination. It has a good understanding of its own context, and that of the community it serves, and it gives due attention to raising pupils' awareness of the range and diversity of culture in the United Kingdom and abroad. This includes contact with visitors and with pupils from different backgrounds and cultures, and topics

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such as 'kick racism out of football'. All of these contribute to pupils' developing awareness of the wider world.

The school adopts recommended good practice on all matters of safeguarding. All training, including that for child protection and safer recruitment, is up to date. The school environment is a safe and secure place for pupils. All risk assessments are in place and the school has been especially successful in ensuring pupils' health, safety and well-being during the current building works.

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

Children very much enjoy their learning. Good induction procedures ensure they settle quickly into school routines. This was noted with Nursery children who had joined the school after Christmas. The confidence with which Reception children explained features of the solar system to the 'alien' who visited their class during the inspection exemplifies the particularly good progress they make in personal, social and emotional development. Children form good relationships with adults and with each other. They behave well, and they play and learn in a safe, calm and relaxed environment where good planning ensures their different needs are met well. Even at this early age, children are developing a good understanding of healthy eating.

The good balance of exciting adult-led and child-initiated activities successfully fosters early reading and number skills. Writing skills are mostly fostered well but opportunities are missed to do this, particularly in the outdoor area. Nevertheless, most Reception children form letters and numbers correctly, write their own names, and make good attempts at spelling simple words, for example, as they made name cards for their 'alien' visitor. High quality assessment procedures and record-keeping ensure children's learning is kept under close scrutiny. This is aided by effective teamwork across all staff, and good

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relationships with parents and carers, all of which are facilitated by good leadership and management. Despite all of this, opportunities are missed to promote writing at every opportunity, and especially outdoors, which is not used to full effect as an extension of the indoor classroom. Nevertheless, in 2010, children left Reception with at least average attainment, appropriately prepared for their work in Year 1.

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

The return from the parents' and carers' questionnaires was higher than in most primary schools. Parents and carers are mostly positive about the school and what it does for them and their children. Several parents praised the school for its handling of the amalgamation, and commented favourably on the improvements since that time. There were also several positive comments about the approachability of all staff, including the headteacher, and the school's readiness to discuss children's progress with parents and carers at any time. Inspection findings endorse all of these views. Nevertheless, some parents and carers felt they did not get enough information about their children's progress, while others voiced concerns about behaviour, or felt the school did not listen to their suggestions and concerns. There were few comments and little evidence in school to support these views. Further information on behaviour can be found elsewhere in the report.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Mount Pleasant Primary 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 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 124 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 249 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	56	45	57	46	9	7	2	2
The school keeps my child safe	59	48	59	48	3	2	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	52	42	51	41	16	13	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	47	38	63	51	9	7	2	2
The teaching is good at this school	46	37	71	57	6	5	1	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	49	40	62	50	8	6	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	52	42	62	50	8	6	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)	36	29	65	52	8	6	3	2
The school meets my child's particular needs	35	28	70	56	11	9	3	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	48	39	49	40	21	17	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	40	32	60	48	15	12	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	48	39	63	51	8	6	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	52	42	61	49	9	7	0	0

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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



2 February 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Mount Pleasant Primary, Shrewsbury, SY1 3BY

Thank you for the lovely warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school and for talking to us about all the exciting things you do there. As you know, we came to see how well the school is doing and how you are all getting on with your learning. We found it is a good school. It values each and every one of you, and helps you to make good progress in your learning, right from the time you start in Nursery and Reception. The good understanding you have of your targets and how to reach them contributes to this, as does the excellent care, guidance and support the school provides for you. Your high levels of attendance show how much you enjoy school and do not want to miss anything.

You are right when you say that the school 'puts a lot into your life' and that you are constantly learning new things. This is because you are taught well. You have an excellent understanding of why it is important to follow a healthy lifestyle, you behave well, and you have a good understanding of how to keep yourselves safe. You work hard in lessons and really try to give of your best. Keep this up and you will continue to do well.

Those who lead and manage your school are very clear about what they need to do to help you make the best possible progress at all times. We are asking them to concentrate particularly on two of the things they have identified, namely:

- in all age groups and all subjects, take every opportunity to improve your ability to write at length
- ensure your parents and carers fully understand how well you are doing, and how the school deals with any concerns they might have, including about behaviour.

Yours sincerely

Doris Bell

Lead inspector

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