

# Mount Pleasant Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	114166
<b>Local Authority</b>	Darlington
<b>Inspection number</b>	357491
<b>Inspection dates</b>	22–23 June 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Margaret Shepherd

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	272
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Lynne Henderson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Carol Coleman
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	3 March 2009
<b>School address</b>	Newton Lane Darlington County Durham DL3 9HE
<b>Telephone number</b>	01325 244950
<b>Fax number</b>	01325 247740
<b>Email address</b>	admin@mountpleasant.darlington.sch.uk

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## Introduction

When Mount Pleasant Primary School was inspected in March 2009 it was judged to require special measures. Subsequently, the school was inspected on five occasions. At the last monitoring inspection the school was judged to be making good progress. This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Sixteen lessons were observed, 10 teachers were seen and meetings were held with two different groups of pupils, members of the governing body, senior leaders and all members of staff. They observed the school's work, looking at samples of pupils' work as well as documents related to self-evaluation, safeguarding, tracking information, teachers' planning and assessment. In all, 41 parental questionnaires were analysed.

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

- If there are key differences in teaching, assessment and the curriculum leading to the different rates of progress through the school.
- What impact the changes in leadership and management have made on the school's capacity to succeed.
- Whether behaviour, keeping safe and healthy, and pupils' contributions to the community are the strongest aspects of personal development.
- Whether the progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage is satisfactory and if there are some key strengths in Nursery provision.
- How effectively the resource-based pupils learn in their own unit and in mainstream settings.

## Information about the school

The school serves the community surrounding the school. It is larger than most primary schools. At 48% the proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is much higher than usual. The very great majority of pupils are of White British heritage. There is a higher than average proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and a higher than average percentage with a statement of special educational needs. The school includes a specialist resource-based unit of 12 pupils with social and communication difficulties who come from across the local authority. The unit has its own purpose-built accommodation within the school and pupils from the unit work regularly in mainstream classes. The school has Healthy School status and has gained the Financial Management of Schools award. Since the previous inspection the whole senior leadership team has changed, including the headteacher.

**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?**

**3**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**2**

## Main findings

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

This is a satisfactory school that is steadily improving. The headteacher is extremely effective in embedding ambition and driving improvement. She works very closely with the senior leadership team and the governing body, both of whom have a very good balance of skills and expertise. These leaders have a very clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and provide a strong direction for implementing changes. The full staff team respond very positively to these challenges. Since the previous inspection there have been significant improvements leading to the school now having no inadequate features and several good features. This gives the school a good capacity to succeed in future.

Attainment has been significantly below the national average. After the introduction of improvements in provision last year some attainment began to rise but it was not consistent. This is no longer the case and this year attainment has risen consistently in reading, writing and mathematics and is much closer to average. Children's progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage is satisfactory rather than good because it slows when provision is inconsistent. The school has good quality half-termly assessment systems that leaders and teachers analyse carefully to track individual pupils' progress. Pupils have a very good understanding of their medium-term targets and are keen to reach them. They are not as clear about what they need to do to achieve progress in the short term within lessons or across a week. The school has greatly improved the consistency of teaching, which is now satisfactory with good features. It is in a good position to increase the proportion of good teaching. The focus in the curriculum has sensibly been on English and mathematics. Some of the other subjects lack challenge and opportunities are missed to develop basic skills across the full curriculum.

Improvements in personal development have been significant. Behaviour was inadequate and is now good. Pupils have a good understanding about keeping safe and healthy. They respond very well to the high-quality assemblies and spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. There is a strong school council who meet weekly and take their responsibilities very seriously. Care, guidance and support are good. The school values its partnership with parents and carers, as well as with other agencies. The resource-based unit is a strength of the school. The unit pupils' provision is considered very carefully. These pupils make good progress in relation to both their academic and personal goals. Teaching is excellent in the unit and staff support pupils very effectively when they work in the mainstream. The integration of these pupils across the school benefits other pupils in tackling discrimination and the school's promotion of equal opportunities is good.

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Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of good quality teaching by:
  - extending the features of the best-quality planning of lessons throughout the school
  - providing consistently effective whole class sessions that are stimulating and of the appropriate length
  - ensuring that lessons proceed at a brisk pace that challenges pupils' learning
  - using the analysis of the good-quality half-termly assessment as a basis for identifying shorter-term targets for pupils in lessons, feeding back their progress more regularly both orally and in marking.
- Extend the quality of the curriculum by:
  - providing more imaginative, challenging and relevant experiences across the full range of curriculum subjects
  - extending opportunities for the development of literacy, numeracy, information and communication technology (ICT) and skills of independence across the curriculum.
- Increase the consistency of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage by:
  - ensuring that all adults use good-quality questions when interacting with children
  - providing consistently stimulating learning opportunities and resources for children in whole-class sessions
  - matching the length of activities more appropriately to children's needs.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

<b>3</b>
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Pupils have positive attitudes towards their learning and are keen to succeed. They cooperate well in lessons and are sensitive to each other's contributions in whole-class sessions. When they are supported by adults in group work they listen carefully and respond well to questions. When whole-class sessions are too long some pupils lose concentration and learning slows. In the best lessons pupils produce good-quality answers, with sophisticated vocabulary, and are confident to offer carefully considered personal views. All pupils are very confident in using their individual files that identify their half-termly targets and are proud to show them to their parents at progress meetings. They are not as clear about what they should be learning in individual lessons or to evaluate what they have achieved in the short term.

Achievement is satisfactory through the school. Attainment on entry to the school is well below the expected level. Children make a good start in the Nursery and progress well but by the end of Reception many children have yet to reach the early learning goals. The great majority of pupils through the school are now making satisfactory progress and a much higher proportion of pupils this year are making good progress. One of the outcomes of this is that more pupils are reaching level 5 in both English and mathematics

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in Year 6. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make similar progress to their peers. They are confident to complete tasks in lessons and, with support from teaching assistants, they express their views well in whole-class sessions. Pupils from the resource-based unit systematically develop skills in tackling challenges related to their disabilities. Their communication skills progress well and they learn to express their frustrations in acceptable ways. Their academic progress is good, with some Year 6 pupils attaining higher levels than expected for their age.

Pupils show maturity in their personal development. The school is a calm and well-ordered place where pupils settle down quickly to lessons. They move around the school very sensibly, are considerate of each other's needs and are courteous to adults. Pupils have a good understanding of the importance of keeping healthy and make positive decisions about food and exercise. They are aware of the dangers of issues such as taking drugs or smoking. Pupils say that they feel safe, that the school provides a secure environment and that they will be listened to if they have worries. They have a good understanding of internet safety. Pupils value their school community and are proud to take on roles of responsibility. This was a major weakness in the previous inspection. They are keen to become buddies at playtimes and have the confidence to apply to the school council for these roles. Pupils show great confidence in contributing to the wider community; for example, pupils represent the school on a local community council and have the confidence to speak amongst this group of adults. Attendance matches the national average but is higher than schools where pupils have similar attainment.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	3
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

<sup>1</sup> 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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## How effective is the provision?

Teachers manage behaviour well. They work closely with teaching assistants, who are valuable members of the teaching teams. In the best lessons there is a good variety of different tasks, learning proceeds at a brisk pace, good-quality resources enrich the learning and whole-class sessions are interesting and timed to match pupils' concentration levels. In the satisfactory teaching these features are not as evident. Planning of lessons is at least satisfactory. Where it is good there is careful attention to the key learning expected in varying parts of the lesson, a clear identification of expectations of different groups of pupils and an indication of how learning will be extended at the end of the session. Feedback to pupils about their progress during the lesson and the quality of marking is inconsistent. In some classes the curriculum includes challenging and relevant experiences for pupils, such as producing personal responses to a fiction book and then publishing it on a national website. In other classes the curriculum content is unimaginative. There are some good examples of staff systematically planning for the development of basic skills across all subjects of the curriculum but this is not consistent through the school. The curriculum for personal development is good and there is a wide range of activities outside of lessons. The teaching and curriculum for pupils in the resource-based provision is planned extremely thoroughly to ensure that pupils are integrated successfully back into the mainstream classes. The teaching team provides individuals with high-quality support, closely addressing their particular needs, both in their own unit and in the mainstream classes.

There is clear guidance for pupils to improve behaviour through their individual half-termly files as well as effective reward systems. Child protection systems are thorough and there is very good support for vulnerable pupils. There are particularly effective arrangements for pupils to begin the school day positively, with plenty of opportunities for parents and carers to talk to members of staff. The school provides a good range of strategies to promote attendance, which has a positive impact on improving attendance rates.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>2</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher provides a strong focus on improving teaching and learning and sets challenging targets. Together with the senior leadership team she carries out rigorous programmes of monitoring of teaching and learning, which has a considerable impact on improving provision. There are efficient data collection systems and a thorough analysis of individual pupils' progress. Governance is good. The governing body is fully involved in evaluating the school's performance and is determined to challenge and support the

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school. There is a clear commitment to community cohesion, with a thorough analysis of different groups within school and the implications for pupils' roles within the school and in the wider community. The school works well to promote equal opportunities, particularly in developing respect for different ethnic groups and for pupils with disabilities. There are thorough and effective systems to tackle discrimination. The governing body ensures that all child protection procedures are robust. There are thorough safeguarding systems with good-quality training for staff.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>3</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall, children make satisfactory progress through this key stage with faster progress in the Nursery. Learning is good in the outdoor area where older and younger children play confidently with each other. There is a very well-balanced range of stimulating activities that extend children's concentration levels very effectively in this area. For example, children thoroughly enjoyed booking in vehicles to the 'car wash' and then using a very bubbly shampoo to clean them. Children make good progress in the Nursery class because staff use questioning skilfully to extend children's thinking and ensure that the length of group sessions matches children's concentration levels closely. They also provide interesting tasks and carefully selected resources that are very well matched to their particular needs. These features are not as effective in Reception. Progress in personal development is good throughout the key stage. Children behave very sensibly and they move confidently between the different areas of the unit. Teaching assistants support individual children skilfully, both in the indoor and outdoor areas. All staff work hard to ensure that great care is taken for children's welfare. There have been some key weaknesses in this key stage since the previous inspection, with inadequate progress and provision. The current leadership and management have worked very effectively to remove these inadequacies and the provision is now satisfactory with some good features.



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*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

## Views of parents and carers

Parents are very positive about the school's provision. Key strengths they identify are that they feel that the school keeps their children safe, that their children enjoy school, make enough progress and that the school meets their particular needs. They feel that the quality of teaching is good and that the school is well led and managed. Overall, they are happy with their children's experience at the school. A very small minority feel that the school does not deal properly with unacceptable behaviour. Inspectors considered this aspect carefully and have reported that pupil behaviour is good and that systems for dealing with any unacceptable behaviour are effective. The great majority of written comments were positive and amplified the overall parental judgements. They included appreciation of the accessibility of teachers and the headteacher, the opportunities for communicating with them and noted a great improvement in the school.

## 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 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 41 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 272 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	22	54	18	44	1	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	24	59	15	37	1	2	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	18	44	20	49	2	5	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	22	54	17	41	1	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	22	54	17	41	0	0	1	2
The school helps me to support my child's learning	21	51	19	46	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	18	44	22	54	1	2	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)	16	39	21	51	1	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	22	54	18	44	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	17	41	18	44	4	10	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	18	44	18	44	2	5	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	22	54	18	44	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	24	59	16	39	0	0	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	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

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 2010 to 31 December 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 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"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
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.**



24 June 2010

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Mount Pleasant Primary School, Darlington, DL3 9HE**

My colleagues and I would like to thank you very much for giving us such a warm welcome when we came to inspect your school. We really enjoyed talking with you and listening to your views. You helped us to understand what you think about your school. We would like to tell you what we found out.

At your last inspection your school was put in special measures and you got used to having visits from inspectors each term to check on improvement. We are pleased to tell you that your school is no longer in special measures because it has improved so much. It is now satisfactory. Your headteacher, the senior leaders and the governors have all been working well together to make your school a better place for learning. You now make steady progress as you move through the school and your attainment is closer to average. Your personal development has improved considerably. You told us that you thought that behaviour was much better and we agree. We were impressed with how much you know about keeping safe and healthy. Your school council is very effective. We can see how proud your councillors and your buddies are to take on responsibilities.

The teaching and curriculum are satisfactory. We have asked your staff to make sure that all your whole-class sessions are the appropriate length, that they are interesting and that you keep learning well throughout the lesson. We agree with you that your special files are very useful in lessons and that they help you to know your targets. We have asked your teachers to help you to understand better what you will be learning in every lesson and help you to see what progress you make in lessons. We have also asked them to make all of your curriculum more interesting and help you to develop literacy, numeracy, ICT and independence skills in other subjects. You can help by listening carefully and working hard through the whole day. You make a good start to your education in the Nursery and we have asked staff to make sure that children learn at a good rate all the time in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

We wish you all the best for your future learning.

Yours sincerely

Margaret Shepherd

Lead inspector

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