

Mount Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	104993
Local authority	Wirral
Inspection number	377155
Inspection dates	12–13 September 2011
Reporting inspector	Frank Carruthers

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	321
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Alison Hardy
Headteacher	Bernard Cassidy
Date of previous school inspection	03 June 2009
School address	Mount Pleasant Road Wirral CH45 5HU
Telephone number	0151 6303329
Fax number	0151 6301462
Email address	schooloffice@mount.wirral.sch.uk

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Thirteen lessons or parts of lessons were observed involving 11 teachers. Meetings were held with pupils, staff and the Chair of the Governing Body. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at pupils' books, school assessments, planning and school policies, including those concerning the safeguarding of pupils. One hundred and three questionnaires were returned by parents or carers and Key Stage 2 pupils completed pupil questionnaires. Staff also completed questionnaires. These questionnaires were read and analysed by the team.

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

- What the attainment of children is on entry to school and how well reception-aged children are doing.
- What achievement is like across Key Stages 1 and 2, especially in relation to reading in Key Stage 1 and mathematics in Key Stage 2.
- Whether there are any outstanding features in the curriculum.
- How robust all aspects of safeguarding are.
- How effective the contribution of leadership and management in raising pupils' achievement is.

Information about the school

This is a larger than average-sized primary school. The school population has increased slightly since the last inspection. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is just above average. The proportion with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average. Almost all pupils are White British. On the same site is a Children's Centre which is subject to a separate inspection. The school runs breakfast- and after-school clubs which are part of this inspection. The school has the Basic Skills, the Wirral Inclusion and the Bike It awards and is in the process of being assessed for the Respecting Rights School Award (RRSA) by UNICEF.

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

The school provides a good education for its pupils. They achieve well in their learning and thrive thanks to good teaching and outstanding care, guidance and support. Throughout the school pupils make good progress in English and mathematics. Most children join the Reception year with skills that are below expected levels in key aspects of communication, language, literacy and emotional development. By the end of Year 6, standards are slightly above the average of schools nationally. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress overall and at times individual pupils make outstanding progress. Pupils behave well and show good attitudes to learning. In two aspects of their personal development their achievement is outstanding. These are their understanding and adoption of a healthy lifestyle and the contribution they make to the school and the wider community.

The quality of teaching is good. A particular strength is teachers' planning, which links subjects of the curriculum together very well and caters for the needs of different pupils. Teaching assistants and specialist teachers make a very effective contribution to pupils' learning, especially those with additional needs. However, in a few lessons, teachers fail to make sure pupils are on task at all times. In addition, expectations for standards of handwriting and presentation in general are too variable. The curriculum is well-planned and has outstanding features, such as the focus given to supporting pupils' personal development and attitudes to learning. Staff go the extra mile to help more vulnerable pupils to overcome barriers to learning and some of their actions provide a model for best practice.

Under the outstanding leadership and direction of the headteacher, the school's senior leaders, middle managers and all staff share a common vision for how pupils are to thrive. They are backed by a supportive and challenging governing body. Of particular note is the excellent way that senior staff make partnerships with outside agencies to promote pupils' well-being. The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures is good. School self-evaluation is robust, based on a close analysis of pupils' progress and achievement. Staff use this analysis well to identify any trends in under-performance and take the steps needed to tackle it. Standards of attainment have been maintained since the last inspection and some aspects of the work of the school have improved from good to outstanding. A strong senior leadership team is supported by a newly-created middle management team. Taken together these

factors indicate the school has good capacity to sustain its quality and raise standards further.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the expectations of all staff to match the best found in school in relation to:
 - classroom management so that pupils make effective use of time in all lessons
 - the presentation of pupils’ work and in particular handwriting.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils’ achievement is good. They enjoy lessons and share ideas with one another well. This was evident when Year 6 pupils explored different types of letter writing and shared their understanding of unfamiliar words. They rise to a challenge well. Pupils in Year 3, for example, produced some interesting questions they wanted to have answered as they began a topic on the workings of the human brain. Pupils’ progress is good and when there have been variations, for example between boys and girls, staff have identified trends quickly and taken action to reduce them. A thorough programme of teaching letters and sounds is lifting standards of reading in Key Stage 1. In the mixed Reception/Year 1 class, staff make good provision for the Year 1 pupils so that they are challenged according to their attainment. The school is usually successful in achieving challenging targets for pupils to reach. For example, the proportion of pupils reaching Level 5 in mathematics rose this year and is now above average compared to schools nationally. A high proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities makes the expected level of progress from Years 3 to 6.

Pupils report that they feel safe in school. Bullying is rare and if pupils have any concerns they know which member of staff to turn to. The focus in the curriculum on respecting rights helps pupils to understand their own role in making a good learning environment in school for all. In addition, they make an excellent contribution to the school and wider community, being involved in the planning and design of a number of neighbourhood facilities as well as supporting charities and events locally. Pupils have excellent opportunities to be fit and healthy, for example at playtimes in the exceptional outdoor areas the school has provided, and they speak with enthusiasm about activities such as fencing and jujitsu. Since the last inspection levels of attendance have improved and have been above average in the last two years. Pupils take good attitudes and skills with them when they move on to secondary school.

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

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

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	1
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?

Strengths of the teaching include good relationships among pupils and staff, and a brisk pace to learning. Even at this early stage in the school year, teachers are planning for the different needs of pupils and challenging the more-able pupils with the tasks they give them. In the best lessons, teachers give clear explanations and demonstrations, for example when Year 4 pupils were practising basic juggling skills in physical education. In a few lessons where teaching was only satisfactory, pupils' learning was adversely affected because staff did not keep pupils focused on the task in hand or gain their full attention. The marking of pupils' work helps them to make progress by indicating next steps. There are plenty of opportunities for pupils to comment on their own performance and consider the efforts of other pupils and this is carried out in a supportive manner. There is too much variation, however, in the expectations of staff about presentation and handwriting in pupils' workbooks.

The curriculum is good overall and has some excellent features. The school is working towards achieving Respecting Rights status and the five strands identified in a good learner, covering aspects such as responsibility and resilience, are well embedded in the topics taught. Links between subjects are forged to good effect, helping to make learning comprehensible for pupils. Some of these initiatives are in the process of development and their full impact is yet to be realised in raising standards. In addition there are excellent opportunities for enrichment, such as learning to play a musical instrument, out-of-school activities, trips and residential visits.

Parents and carers hold the school in high regard in the way the staff care for pupils and help them in difficult times. For example, through an initiative called The Tree of Life, all pupils have been encouraged to be reflective. Pupils and their families experiencing trauma have been supported particularly well through this approach. The school's breakfast- and after-school clubs are popular and provide a secure and welcoming experience for pupils. Arrangements for the transfer of pupils into school, between classes and on to secondary school help pupils to settle extremely well.

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?

The senior leadership team has a very good grasp of the school's performance and pupils' achievements thanks to robust systems to track pupil progress and monitor the quality of teaching and learning. These procedures are helping to lift standards and raise the quality of provision. The impact of recent measures, such as a refined policy for teaching and learning, an enhanced middle management group and curriculum enrichment, is yet to be fully felt.

The governing body has a very thorough understanding of issues facing the school and teamwork among members is a strength. They closely follow all aspects of safeguarding to ensure procedures are effective and challenge the school well by asking 'how can we make it better?' School development planning is very well-focused on raising pupils' attainment and improving provision. The school has a budget deficit but is on track to clear it by the end of the financial year.

The school promotes equal opportunity for all pupils well and is reducing the gap in performance between pupils not eligible for free school meals and those who are. There are excellent links with outside agencies to promote pupils' learning and welfare. It is, for instance, creating a strong partnership with a pilot school in the local authority for developing its own speech and language therapy provision. It makes full use of the expertise of outside professionals to train staff. The school promotes community cohesion well, including raising the awareness of pupils to wider issues through global links. Developments in the curriculum are intended to promote these aspects even further.

These are the grades for the 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	1
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 learn and develop well in relation to their starting points. At this early part of the school year, children were observed to be settling in well, having come from

many different pre-school settings. They showed lively interest in the activities they could choose from, which were based on the theme of the world of work. These included construction activities, small world and role play, where children became teachers and chefs and outdoors, builders and gardeners. They showed they could take responsibility for carrying out small tasks and pay good attention. A well-planned curriculum both indoors and outside gives the children a wide range of quality experiences that help them to achieve the early learning goals. Detailed assessments made at the end of the year indicate that most children make good progress in the Reception year and reach expected levels of attainment in all areas of learning. Year 1 pupils in the mixed-aged class are assessed effectively by staff against National Curriculum levels and given challenging work appropriate to their levels of attainment. Provision is good. Adults have warm relationships with the children and engage the children well through good questioning strategies. The welfare of the children is fully supported so that they are happy and secure. The leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage has just changed after the appointment of a new leader. Previously, the deputy headteacher had oversight of provision and the handover is going ahead smoothly at the time of the inspection. Self-evaluation is very effective and leads to an ambitious action plan with clear priorities for improvement. Staff engage well with parents and carers. Policies and procedures are implemented consistently to promote equality among all the children and give all the best start possible.

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 in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

Most parents and carers who responded to the inspectors’ questionnaire expressed highly positive views of the school. They greatly value its welcoming atmosphere. Almost all report that their children enjoy school. They judge that the school is well led and managed and that teaching is good. They consider their children are well looked after and taught how to be safe. Some parents and carers wrote highly-supportive comments on the questionnaire. Inspectors endorse these positive opinions and consider they are a reflection of the good partnerships the school has with parents and carers, for instance through the Parents’ Forum. A few parents and carers expressed concern about communication with them over the selection of pupils to be in the mixed-aged classes and whether their children would make sufficient progress. Inspectors explored this and find that in recent years the performance of pupils in the mixed-aged classes when compared to those in the discrete year group classes has not been significantly different. Senior staff have agreed to keep communication with parents and carers under review in this aspect.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Mount 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 **103** completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 321 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	51	50	49	48	2	2	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	64	62	38	37	1	1	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	42	41	56	54	4	4	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	40	39	47	46	10	10	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	44	43	52	50	2	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	44	43	54	52	3	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	50	49	47	46	3	3	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)	48	47	48	47	2	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	42	41	49	48	9	9	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	29	28	57	55	9	9	2	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	35	34	58	56	7	7	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	53	51	47	46	1	1	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	60	58	40	39	2	2	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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 is for the period 1 September 2010 to 08 April 2011 and is consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see 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 up 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.



Wednesday 14 September 2011

Dear Pupils,

Inspection of Mount Primary School, Wirral, CH45 5HU

It was a great pleasure to inspect your school. You were all extremely friendly and helpful and we enjoyed finding out from you how you are getting on. On behalf of the inspection team I would like to share with you what we found.

Your school is providing you with a good education. Your behaviour is good and this means you learn well. You told us how you are made to feel welcome in school and people are very friendly. You told us bullying is very rare and if it happens, the staff deal with it promptly. Your awareness of how to keep safe is good. You take on responsibilities extremely well and we were very impressed with the links you have and the work you have done in the local community. You know a very great deal about how to be fit and healthy. You make good progress in lessons and, by the time you leave at the end of Year 6, most of you reach the standards expected in English and mathematics. This is because the teaching you receive is good and you work hard. School leaders and governors do a good job. They have put together a very interesting curriculum for you to follow and you are becoming high-quality learners. The staff take excellent care of you all so that you feel safe. They make sure you are not put at risk. They have built up valuable links with your parents and carers and with the local secondary schools, and especially with other agencies.

Part of my job is to identify how the school can be even better. There are two improvements for staff to make:

- ensure you all listen well to your teachers and stay on task in lessons
- expect high standards of handwriting and presentation from you.

So you can help by doing your best. Please continue to work hard and enjoy school. I send you all my best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely,

Frank Carruthers
Lead Inspector

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