

# Mountfield Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	108474
<b>Local authority</b>	Newcastle Upon Tyne
<b>Inspection number</b>	377763
<b>Inspection dates</b>	28–29 November 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Clive Petts

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>	203
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Ronnie Rodgers
<b>Headteacher</b>	David Atkinson
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	4 July 2007
<b>School address</b>	Kirkwood Drive North Kenton Newcastle-upon-Tyne NE3 3AT
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 20 lessons, taught by eight class teachers and a nursery nurse. The inspectors held meetings with the headteacher and deputy headteacher, middle leaders, staff, the governing body and two local authority Early Years Foundation Stage consultants. They analysed 34 questionnaire responses from parents and carers and looked at questionnaires from staff and pupils. They observed the school's work, scrutinised pupils' books, pupil performance and assessment information, key documents such as safeguarding and child-protection policies and school improvement plans on the key areas of school self-evaluation.

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

- The quality of learning and its effectiveness in the Early Years Foundation Stage for all groups of children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those learning to speak English.
- The quality of teaching and learning across the school and its impact on current rates of progress in all lessons and pupils' attainment and achievement, particularly in their writing.
- The impact of leadership and management to build capacity to secure further improvement in the consistency and quality of pupils' outcomes, especially in Key Stage 1.

## Information about the school

Mountfield is a smaller than average size primary school situated on the outskirts of Newcastle-upon-Tyne. A large majority of pupils are of White British heritage. A few pupils are at the early stages of learning English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is twice the national average. An above average proportion of pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities, with an average number with a statement of special educational needs. The school has achieved the International School and Investing in Children awards.

The privately run Mountfield Playgroup and Mountfield Pre-school and Crèche, situated on the school site, are subject to separate inspections. Their inspection reports will be available on the Ofsted website.

**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

Mountfield is a good school. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding and is evident in pupils' exemplary behaviour, their great enjoyment of learning and their excellent relationships with staff and with one another. This ensures that the school has an extremely positive climate for learning. Most parents and carers are happy with their children's experience and all feel that their children really enjoy school.

Most children enter school with skills below those typical for their age. Although cohorts do vary, for a small minority their speech and language skills are underdeveloped. Children settle well in Nursery and Reception, although the teaching of letter and sound relationships (phonics) sometimes lacks rigour and consistency, hindering early reading and writing development. Also, outdoor learning provision is underdeveloped. Attainment by the end of Year 6 is average overall, although lower in English. This represents good progress from pupils' low starting points with pupils' good achievement and enjoyment evident in lessons. While a majority of teaching is good, the pattern of progress as pupils move through the school is sometimes uneven, as a result of variations in challenge and pace in lessons. In those lessons where approaches are thought-provoking and engaging, pupils make faster progress. Positive action taken by senior leaders has improved writing skills, especially when activities are pitched at the correct level to meet the needs of all pupils. However, there are occasions when progress information is not used consistently to inform planning and opportunities are missed to practise skills in fun and interesting ways. Marking is positive and constructive but does not consistently provide the next steps for improvement. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those learning English make the same good progress as their peers, because intervention and support are well-targeted and effective.

The school sets clear boundaries for pupils' conduct and fosters respect for the emotions and feelings of others. Attendance, though average, is improving as management strategies are increasingly successful. Pupils gain much benefit from the positive links with parents and carers, local schools and specialist support agencies. Pupils state that they feel safe and that bullying is rare. They take great pride in their decision-making responsibilities, for example contributing to decisions on how to improve school.

The school benefits from the headteacher's commitment to ensuring all pupils share the same happy experiences and can achieve success. All staff are totally committed to his ambition. The governing body meets its statutory requirements and supports the school soundly. Thorough checks on pupils' development are established and less effective teaching and learning are being systematically addressed. Experienced middle managers display a good grasp of school strengths, although their analysis of the quality and impact of activities in lessons lacks sharpness. The school is improving and together, these factors demonstrate that the school has a good capacity for further improvement.

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

- Quicken the school's quest for outstanding teaching and learning to establish good or better pupils' progress by:
  - exploiting relentlessly the school's assessment information in order to match activities to the abilities and needs of pupils
  - using and building upon the existing thought-provoking practice within the school to inspire pupils to practise their writing skills
  - sharpen whole-school approaches to self-evaluation to make certain classroom practice is having the intended impact
  - making certain teachers' written feedback in books provides clearly defined steps for improvement.
- Improve children's skills and learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage by:
  - ensuring that effective self-checking systems are in place to inform priorities for improvement
  - enriching the quality and purpose of the outdoor provision
  - making certain that there is seamless progression for children from hearing to seeing, saying, reading and then writing.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2
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Pupils are really keen to learn. They achieve well and thoroughly enjoy the activities that are planned for them. Typically, attainment is average at the end of Year 6 in national tests. The positive action to improve writing skills is successfully closing the achievement gap, with a rising proportion of pupils exceeding the targets expected of them. Yet rates of progress can be variable, especially when teaching lacks that essential spark to inspire and excite pupils' thinking. In lessons when approaches capture and hold pupils' interest, pupils respond imaginatively, such as when writing text lines for characters in an audio-book which they then record using a hand-held microphone and digital recorder. When activities do not provoke pupils' imagination and thinking sufficiently, opportunities are missed for pupils to apply their skills and justify their thinking. This is often because activities are not always well enough matched up to abilities and teachers' questioning does not constantly challenge pupils' understanding and demand answers. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and those learning to speak English as an additional language, make good progress, because they receive well-targeted and personalised help from teachers and teaching assistants.

Pupils respond really positively to the help and encouragement that adults provide. Their excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is sharply focused on respect and sensitivity for difference in feelings and values. Consequently, the school has a harmonious, happy and friendly atmosphere. Most pupils attend regularly. The proportion of persistent absentees has fallen to average levels as a result of the strong action taken. Pupils willingly take on responsibilities around school, such as taking an active part in keeping the school tidy. They understand the benefits of a balanced diet and keeping fit. They demonstrate a good awareness of the diversity that exists in the world around them. This was seen in their intent listening in an assembly when a visitor described the Jewish festival of Hanukkah.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	3
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	2
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	
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>1</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>2</b>
Taking into account:	3
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>1</b>

## How effective is the provision?

The quality of teaching is good with some well-thought out approaches which engage and encourage pupils to think for themselves. In the best lessons, high expectations of what pupils can achieve are built into fun approaches which capture pupils' imagination, with questioning endlessly probing pupils' knowledge and understanding. The use of new technology is frequently used to enliven learning. As a result, progress is consistently good in these lessons. When progress slows, there is often less variety in activities, occasionally too much time is spent on the same task which can lead to pupils' concentration slipping and questioning does not continually probe thinking. At times, demands made of pupils are not always high enough, for example in their handwriting and their layout and presentation. Pupils are aware of their targets and although marking is helpful and constructive, it does not provide pupils with a clear sense of how to achieve them.

The good curriculum is being systematically enriched with a range of experiences to promote effective learning and add to pupils' personal development. This includes a residential experience for older pupils. Themes are increasingly used well to connect subjects together in interesting ways, adding to the level of enjoyment; for example, writing about the family life of pupils in their partner school in Wuhan, China. While opportunities for pupils to practise their skills in meaningful ways are increasing, not

<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

all are exploited enough to spur pupils to build on their own ideas, such as in their early descriptive writing.

Pupils are cared for, guided and supported well, enabling them to achieve well, gain confidence and feel valued. They are totally confident that adults are always on hand to share a worry or concern. The school can point to some striking examples in helping pupils overcome difficulties and barriers to their learning. Effective use of the parent support worker, coupled with productive partnerships with specialist support agencies, assists pupils and their families well, such as helping to reduce persistent absence.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</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>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>2</b>

## **How effective are leadership and management?**

A good team spirit and a passion to ensure that pupils are happy contribute well to pupils' good progress. The headteacher, ably supported by the deputy headteacher, is committed to continue to improve the quality and richness of learning and to eradicate inconsistencies in the rates of pupils' progress. The distinct signs of improving teaching can be seen, especially in Key Stage 1, where activities are increasingly more stimulating and engaging. Pupils of all backgrounds are provided with equal opportunities to achieve success. Systems to analyse pupils' progress information are robust, although the information is not exploited relentlessly to boost achievement further and close all achievement gaps. Discrimination in any form is not tolerated.

The school's positive partnerships with parents and carers contribute well to pupils' development and well-being. Safeguarding requirements are well met and procedures to ensure that all pupils are properly protected are robust. The effectiveness of the governing body is satisfactory and improving, as its members increasingly use their skills and expertise to challenge as well as support school leaders. The expertise of middle leaders adds to the drive for improvement, although their scrutiny of the impact of teaching is insufficiently rigorous. Productive partnerships with the local network of schools, support agencies and local authority specialists are adding to the quality and richness of pupils' learning. Community cohesion is promoted well with a range of first-hand experiences making a good contribution to developing pupils' understanding and appreciation of diversity locally, nationally and globally.

*These are the grades for the 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>3</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>2</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Children settle quickly and confidently in the warm, welcoming atmosphere. A variety of fun activities fosters active learning and challenges children's thinking, whether in adult-led or child-initiated activities. For example, a small group of children were totally captivated in identifying soft toy animals in the Big Red Bath. Children are well-behaved and follow classroom routines well because adults are always close by to support and guide them as they develop good self-control. They are encouraged to work independently and think for themselves, although opportunities to explore and investigate outdoors are limited.

Regular practice in linking sounds and letters promotes early reading and writing satisfactorily, although the quality, frequency and effectiveness of sessions do vary. For example, a small group of children, some of whom were at the early stages of learning English as an additional language, were engrossed when listening to the story, 'We are going on a bear hunt'. They became very animated combining good listening and speaking as they walked, 'Swishy, swashy' through the grass in the hunt for the bear. On other occasions, letter-sound relationships are not reinforced sufficiently. Most children are able to move confidently from adult-led activities to learning they initiate themselves. However, there are times when not all activities are stimulating enough to promote speech and language continuously and not all opportunities for early reading and writing are exploited enough. Systems are established to frequently observe and assess children's development gains, but self-evaluation lacks rigour and does not always inform planning effectively. Despite unsettled leadership and management, staff have maintained a warm, caring atmosphere where welfare requirements are fully met and children's development matters. As a result, children are happy and make satisfactory progress with nearly all working towards the goals expected of them for their age.



*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:	3
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	
The effectiveness of leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

**Views of parents and carers**

A much lower than average proportion of parents and carers returned the questionnaire. Almost all parents and carers feel that the school keeps their children safe and a very large majority are happy with their children’s experiences. All appreciate their children’s enjoyment of school life. A few parents and carers expressed their concerns about the progress their children make. Inspectors found that rates of progress can be uneven, but these issues were being positively addressed and managed by the headteacher.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Mountfield 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 34 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 203 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	21	62	13	38	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	22	65	10	29	2	6	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	12	35	20	59	2	6	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	10	29	21	62	3	9	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	18	53	12	35	1	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	10	29	22	65	1	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	13	38	20	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)	15	44	15	44	1	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	12	35	18	53	2	6	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	14	41	18	53	0	0	2	6
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	11	32	21	62	1	3	1	3
The school is led and managed effectively	15	44	16	47	0	0	2	6
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	17	50	15	44	1	3	1	3

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 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.**



30 November 2011

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Mountfield Primary School, Newcastle-upon-Tyne NE3 3AT**

I want to thank you all for the extremely polite and friendly welcome that you gave the inspection team when we visited to see how well you were learning. We thoroughly enjoyed our time talking to you.

Mountfield is a good school, which has a number of clear strengths. We were impressed with the good links your school enjoys with your parents and carers and the way your staff encourage and support you. This is helping to improve your attendance. We were pleased by your exemplary behaviour, your very considerate and sensitive attitudes and the good care taken of you. You clearly feel safe and happy because of this. You understand well the benefits that an active and healthy lifestyle can bring. You certainly take much pride in helping your school to improve.

The headteacher and the governing body are taking positive action to ensure that your school improves. Improvements can be seen in your better writing. We have asked the school to improve the quality of teaching further. We would like staff to use the information they have on how well you are doing to arrange activities, which can excite and interest you and test your thinking more. We believe your thinking could be challenged more in fun ways and you could be given more interesting opportunities to practise your writing. We would also like staff when they mark your work to provide you with more detailed help in what to improve. We have also asked that younger children learn more when outside and are given extra practice in learning how to read and write. We have asked all staff to regularly check how well lessons are working to make certain you make even more progress.

You can all play your part by continuing to work as hard as you can and by telling your teachers if the work is too easy or too hard. I wish you all the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely,

Clive Petts  
Lead inspector

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