

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk



13 June 2016

Mr Stephen Morris
Headteacher
Mount Pleasant Primary School
Whitemere Road
Mount Pleasant
Shrewsbury
SY1 3BY

Dear Mr Morris

Short inspection of Mount Pleasant Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 10 May 2016, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. The visit was the first short inspection carried out since the school was judged to be good in February 2011.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You, your colleagues and governors are ambitious for pupils to succeed. There has been good progress since the school's previous inspection. As a result of effective teaching, standards in reading, writing and mathematics continue to improve. Last year's national assessments showed that pupils attained high standards in reading. Pupils across the school achieve well.

The large majority of parents I spoke to, and those responding to school surveys or Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, are positive about the school. Many parents pay tribute to you and your colleagues for all that the school offers their children. There has been good progress too in the way your colleagues and governors engage with parents, including more parent information evenings, as the previous inspection identified this as an area for improvement at that time.

In addition to your effective leadership and that of your senior leaders, the school is managed well by a skilled and competent governing body. Governors and staff share your vision to promote the school's core values which focus on promoting pupils' welfare and well-being as well as their achievement. The staff value and praise pupils for their efforts and achievements, and make an excellent contribution to fostering pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

You and your leaders are adapting to new ways of tracking pupils' attainment and progress using the revised national curriculum assessments without levels. Although assessments of pupils' learning provide accurate information for staff and governors, leaders' analysis of pupils' progress does not always identify why some groups perform less well than others. For example, last year's national test results in key stage 2 showed that the standards reached in mathematics by some of the most able pupils should have been higher. You and your leadership team are addressing this by focusing on the monitoring of teaching and on the progress made by the most able pupils. Teachers usually provide challenging and stimulating lessons, but some of the work I saw in pupils' mathematics books did not provide enough challenge for the most able pupils.

Senior leaders work closely with governors to monitor the work of the school. The school's action plans provide leaders and governors with clear priorities, targets and objectives to aim for. However, some of the actions and targets do not set clear measures of success, making it difficult for governors and leaders to gauge the impact of their actions on school improvement.

In response to a recommendation at the previous inspection, you and your colleagues have focused successfully on improving pupils' literacy skills. Pupils make outstanding progress in reading across the school. Although writing standards are improving well overall, some pupils in key stage 2 who have highly competent reading skills ought to be reaching higher standards in writing. Nonetheless, evidence in pupils' books and work displayed show that your actions and those of your staff are having a positive impact on improving writing standards.

You and your staff plan a varied and stimulating curriculum that energises and interests pupils. The school has maintained its strong reputation for enabling pupils to achieve well in music, the creative arts and in sport. The school provides a wide range of topics and special projects that stimulate and interest pupils. The recent 'Shrewsbury book-fest', for example, enabled pupils to combine their enthusiasm for reading and literature to produce high-quality reviews and accounts about authors and genres as part of your 'hooked on books' project. Very good use is made of the extensive grounds as the school provides many outdoor experiences for pupils.

Early years provision is strong with very good transition arrangements between the Nursery and Reception classes. This continuous provision enables the youngest children in the school to thrive, and is reflected in the sustained improvement to the percentage of children achieving a good level of development by the end of the Reception Year.

Safeguarding is effective.

Safeguarding and staff vetting procedures are robust and are kept up to date for all staff, visitors, volunteers and governors. There are effective systems in place to keep pupils safe. Teaching, support and administrative staff are well trained and vigilant. Governors and staff keep up to date with training, including first aid and risk assessments. Leaders and governors undertake systematic reviews of the school's procedures. Risk assessments are carried out to make sure that pupils are safe when engaged in the many and varied outdoor visits, including more adventurous pursuits: for example, when older pupils are taken to Wales for their annual residential visit. The parents I spoke with and the results of parent surveys show that parents trust the staff and believe that their children are safe in school. Pupils say that the staff and other pupils make them feel safe and secure in school.

Inspection findings

- Teachers usually make sure that pupils are offered the right level of challenge, although workbooks show that there are occasions when the most able go through tasks that are too easy before moving on to harder work. This is more evident in mathematics books in key stage 2. However, leaders are aware of this and have adapted the way they organise pupils into ability groups for mathematics lessons. As seen from observations of lessons, current work in books and assessments, the teaching is now focusing more on the specific needs and abilities of individuals and groups in mathematics lessons. You and your senior staff have started to carry out more regular reviews of progress to make sure that the most able pupils do not fall short of their expected attainment targets.
- Governors and leaders monitor the school's work diligently and there are now sharper assessment systems in place to review how much progress pupils make. Nonetheless, leaders do not yet provide a clear analysis of achievement gaps between different groups to help identify how to make sure that all the most able pupils reach higher levels in mathematics.
- The school's action plans – for example, the English and mathematics plans – identify the most important and correct priorities for improvement. You and your colleagues have been successful, for instance, in making sure that disadvantaged pupils do as well as other pupils. Gaps between their achievement and that of others, noticeable in previous years, are now closing rapidly.
- Governors are well informed and undertake regular visits with school leaders to gather first-hand evidence of the progress made towards achieving the targets in the action plans. Nonetheless, some of the targets are difficult to measure so as to assess how much progress is being made. For example, some of the measures, set out as 'success criteria', do not identify how many pupils are expected to reach higher levels, making it difficult for leaders and governors to gauge the success of the school's actions.

- In the early years, children benefit enormously from the stimulating range of indoor and outdoor activities and resources prepared for them by teachers and support staff. The children soon settle to activities and both boys and girls play and learn together happily and effectively, making consistently good progress in all areas of learning. The percentage of children reaching a good level of development is above average.
- In key stage 1, pupils achieve well and build on the very good start made in the early years. This is reflected in the most recent national assessments showing that pupils reached standards above those expected for their age in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2.
- A scrutiny of pupils' work in books shows that teachers are making accurate assessments of pupils' progress. Improvements to pupils' writing are now evident in key stage 2 because teachers expect pupils to write more and with accurate form and structure. The work seen on displays and in books show that the teaching is improving pupils' confidence and skills when writing.
- The provision and support provided for pupils who have special educational needs and disabilities are effective, including those pupils with education, health and care plans. Support staff are well trained and skilled at providing the right level of support and they manage intervention programmes for pupils with additional learning needs very well. There is good oversight and management of special educational needs provision.
- Pupils' interest and enthusiasm are fully engaged by the rich experiences offered to them both during lessons and from the range of extra-curricular activities and after-school clubs. The innovation and variety of the curriculum stimulate pupils' curiosity and engage their interest and enthusiasm for learning and for school. For example, the school's 'speak up club' provides interesting opportunities for pupils to debate and develop their speaking and listening skills as they aspire towards the nationally acclaimed 'English speaking award'.
- Pupils' enthusiasm for school is reflected in their good behaviour and attitudes, as well as above-average attendance rates and very low persistent absenteeism. Pupils are very proud of their school and their achievements. Their work is attractively displayed in all areas and classrooms demonstrating that pupils are proud of their efforts and their school.
- Pupils throughout the school are effectively taught British values of respect for democracy and core values of tolerance and respect for the world's major faiths, cultures and customs. This enables pupils to mature and thrive in a modern multicultural and diverse Britain. You and your colleagues prepare pupils very well for the next stage of their education and for their future lives. The school's recent 'Enterprise day', for example, enabled pupils across the school to demonstrate their business and marketing skills, including raising funds for national charities.

- You and your staff have created an excellent library which is situated at the heart of the school. It is no wonder that pupils are stimulated and excited about reading for pleasure. Some of the guided and shared reading sessions we observed together during the inspection were of the highest quality, enabling pupils to read with enthusiasm and skill. I can see why pupils reach high standards in reading.
- The monitoring of teaching and learning is effective. Senior leaders, such as the deputy headteacher and mathematics leader, provide clear and effective feedback to teachers about their teaching. As a result, teaching improves in all classes because teachers are provided with good-quality feedback that links how well their teaching affects pupils' learning. Leaders have a good track record in improving and supporting teachers, and offer good advice and guidance to support newly qualified teachers.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- there is a continued focus on raising standards further in mathematics and making sure that the most able pupils are offered the right level of challenge in lessons so they can all reach their full potential
- the school's action plans set out clear measures of success so that leaders and governors can gauge the impact of actions taken to sustain the current improvements to pupils' achievement in writing and mathematics
- build on the start made in implementing revised assessment systems without levels. Provide a clear and regular analysis of assessment information, particularly for governors, to identify achievement gaps between different groups as well as evaluating the progress made by pupils.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Shropshire Council. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Charalambos Loizou
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with you, the acting deputy headteacher and senior teacher in charge of mathematics. During this meeting, you and your senior leaders set out the school's self-evaluations. We visited every class together to observe teaching and learning and spoke to pupils during lessons. I also spoke to pupils during breaktime and at lunchtime. I spoke to some parents at the start of the school day and considered

the school's most recent survey of parents' views as well as the 27 responses to the Parent View. I met four members of the governing body, including the chair, as well as the local authority's school improvement adviser to discuss the school's progress and performance. I scrutinised the school's action plans and pupils' work in books, focusing particularly on mathematics and writing books. We also discussed and analysed your revised assessment systems together with the deputy headteacher.