

Mount Pellon Primary Academy

Battinson Road, Halifax, West Yorkshire HX1 4RG

Inspection dates

29–30 November 2016

Overall effectiveness	Inadequate
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Inadequate
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Inadequate
Early years provision	Inadequate
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- The quality of teaching over time has been inconsistent. This has meant too few pupils make appropriate progress from their starting points.
- Although there were improvements in pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics in 2015, these were not sustained in 2016. There are many gaps in pupils' knowledge as they move through the school, preventing them from making the rapid progress they should.
- Leaders have struggled to recruit and retain staff, making it difficult to develop and sustain the quality of teaching.
- Some teachers lack the subject knowledge needed to ensure pupils receive appropriate challenge. Teachers do not effectively question pupils to establish how well they have understood new learning.
- Teachers do not use the information about how well pupils are doing precisely enough to plan learning that helps them to make rapid progress.
- Disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are not making the rapid progress they need to in order to catch up with other pupils nationally.
- The impact of additional adults on learning is too variable so that opportunities to accelerate pupils' learning and develop their confidence are being missed.
- Leadership in the early years has not been strong enough. Children are not making the swift progress needed to develop their basic skills, particularly in speaking. Leaders have not ensured the statutory welfare requirements are met.

The school has the following strengths

- The trust has put into place robust plans to tackle current weaknesses. It has provided effective support for the acting principal. The governing body has the skills needed to challenge leaders and help improve the school.
- Improvement in the teaching of phonics is beginning to have an impact on pupils' learning.
- The actions of senior and middle leaders are beginning to have an impact on pupils' progress so that work in books is much improved this term.
- Leaders are successfully promoting pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural understanding, thus supporting pupils' secure personal development.

Full report

In accordance with section 44(2) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than it might in all the circumstances reasonably be expected to perform.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Urgently improve teaching in all key stages so that it is consistently good over time by ensuring that:
 - teachers are equipped with strong subject knowledge that will support them in delivering high-quality learning
 - questioning is used well to check on learning so that tasks can be reshaped when pupils have not fully understood the concepts being taught
 - all staff have high expectations of what pupils can achieve
 - work set is appropriately challenging for all pupils, but particularly for the most and least able
 - additional adults are well directed to have the maximum impact on pupils' learning.
- Rapidly improve outcomes for all groups of pupils to make sure they are at least good by:
 - accelerating pupil progress and diminishing differences in attainment between all pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, and other pupils nationally
 - using assessment information to match learning appropriately to meet the needs of pupils from their different starting points
 - ensuring that pupils have frequent opportunities to develop and deepen their writing skills in a range of subjects and genres
 - ensuring that pupils have sufficient opportunities to revisit learning and to use and apply their mathematics knowledge so they can achieve greater depth in learning.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership at all levels by ensuring that:
 - senior and middle leaders rigorously monitor provision in their areas of responsibility and secure further improvements in teaching
 - the learning and progress of all pupils are carefully tracked so that those who are at risk of falling behind are identified quickly and given the help they need to achieve well
 - with the support of the trust, leaders establish a stable and committed workforce who understand the vision for the school.
- Improve the provision and outcomes in the early years for all children by making sure that:
 - leaders have the knowledge and skills to identify what improvements can be made to improve the amount of progress children make

- adults do not miss opportunities to question and prompt children to rapidly develop their use of language
- activities, both indoors and outdoors, fully develop children’s learning and independence in all of the early learning goals
- risks to children are regularly assessed and statutory welfare requirements are met.

An external review of the school’s use of pupil premium funding should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Leaders have taken effective action to address inadequate teaching but have found it difficult to recruit suitable new teachers. They were effective in raising standards in 2015 but improvements were not sustained in 2016, partly due to staffing difficulties.
- In the past, targets for teachers have not been clear enough so that teachers did not know precisely how to improve their performance. However, teachers are now more effectively supported to improve their practice, through regular coaching and mentoring.
- Over time, leaders have not been robust in tracking the learning and progress of all pupils. As a result, those pupils at risk of falling behind have not been identified quickly enough and given the help they need to achieve well. However, through recent work with the trust, subject leaders are clear about their roles and responsibilities and are equipped with the skills needed to support rapid improvements in the quality of teaching.
- Leaders have spent pupil premium funding on a range of measures, including providing training to staff on the delivery of mathematics. Leaders track the progress of disadvantaged pupils but, as yet, are unable to measure the impact of provision on these pupils, so they do not achieve as well as other pupils nationally.
- Despite detailed plans put into place by the leader for special educational needs, pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are not making the rapid progress they need to catch up with pupils who have similar starting points. Leaders have not measured the impact of funding for this group of pupils.
- Leaders have developed the curriculum so that pupils have the opportunity to learn across a range of subjects. However, the teaching of science is not preparing pupils successfully to reach expected standards, resulting in pupils achieving levels well below others nationally. Regular opportunities to work alongside an arts company support pupils effectively to develop their skills in dance, drama and music.
- Pupils really value the opportunities they have to take part in visits out of school, for example to the York 'Chocolate Story' or Chester zoo. These practical experiences help them to better understand the topics they are learning. Pupils really enjoy taking part in school clubs, such as film club or Bollywood dancing.
- The physical education (PE) and sports funding for primary schools is being well used to employ a full-time sports coach. He has instigated a fitness initiative to increase children's understanding of a healthy lifestyle. Part-time sports leaders are helping pupils to try new sports and activities at lunchtimes.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. This is done through regular religious education lessons and through visitors to school. Pupils spoke in detail about how their studies of Islam, Judaism, Sikhism and Christianity are helping prepare them for life in modern Britain successfully.
- The Northern Education Trust had not anticipated the decline in outcomes in 2016 but has since responded quickly, working effectively with leaders to begin to turn things

around. Support provided by the trust, particularly by the achievement partner, has helped leaders and governors to assess the quality of teaching and learning accurately. Plans and actions put into place since September 2016 are focused precisely on improving pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics. The impact of this work is beginning to be seen in pupils' books.

Governance of the school

- Governors have a good understanding of the needs of the local community. They are experienced and well-equipped to offer challenge and support to school leaders.
- Governors are aided in their role by the recently set up management support group, instigated by the trust. This group meets each fortnight to consider the performance of the school and to evaluate progress.
- Governors have a well-developed understanding of their responsibilities regarding safeguarding and spending to improve outcomes for disadvantaged pupils.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. All staff have received appropriate training in safeguarding and designated safeguarding staff are trained to a higher level. All staff are effectively trained to recognise the signs of radicalisation of pupils.
- All safeguarding policies meet the statutory requirements and procedures ensure pupils are safe. Risk assessments are currently under review for all aspects of the daily life of the school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Inadequate

- Some teachers have under-developed subject knowledge, leading to weak teaching over time. Although pupils make better progress in Year 5 and Year 6, by this point many pupils have developed gaps in their learning that prevent them from making enough progress in reading, writing and mathematics across the school.
- Teachers are not consistently developing pupils' understanding through precise questioning and pupils' misconceptions are often not identified or corrected. Work in pupils' books shows the most able pupils are not making enough progress and the least able are struggling to keep up.
- Teachers are not using assessment information consistently to accurately match learning to pupils' needs. Consequently the teaching of the least able pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is not having sufficient impact on the learning of these pupils.
- The impact of additional adults on pupils' learning varies considerably from class to class. Where adults understand how to move pupils' learning on through well-chosen questions, pupils make appropriate progress. However, too many opportunities are being missed because adults and pupils are focused on completing a task rather than deepening learning.
- Although the teaching of writing is now improving, pupils cannot write as well as they

should because not enough emphasis has been given to developing pupils' writing in the past. Meaningful opportunities to practise writing in different subjects have not been fully exploited. Teachers have now begun to encourage pupils to use their writing skills to record learning in history and geography lessons.

- Recent improvements in the teaching of mathematics are helping pupils develop more secure skills, but too many pupils have gaps in their knowledge hindering them from making appropriate progress. The most able pupils from upper key stage 2 have successfully taken on the role of 'maths ambassadors' to play number games with, and promote mathematical understanding in, younger pupils.
- In some classes, teachers' expectations are high and consequently pupils are productive, their handwriting is accurate and books are neat. However, expectations of what pupils will do are not consistently high in all classes.
- Improvements to the teaching of phonics are helping pupils to make better progress in reading. Pupils who read to inspectors demonstrated secure phonics skills. The most able readers read fluently and with expression. Reading lessons are successfully helping the most able to develop their skills further. However, less-able pupils, although able to read words, struggle to decipher the meaning of texts without the support of an adult.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Pupils' understanding of what it means to live in modern Britain is well developed through participation in assemblies and lessons designed to deepen their understanding.
- Leaders ensure that pupils have regular opportunities to meet with pupils from other schools. Pupils have visited local schools and schools in nearby counties. Pupils spoke excitedly about these visits, through which they had learned about 'treating everyone the same'.
- Breakfast club, free-of-charge to all pupils, effectively prepares pupils for the day at school.
- Pupils talked about the opportunities they have been given to learn about keeping safe, including dealing with bullying online. As a consequence of the school's work in this area, pupils said they feel safe in school.
- Leaders have encouraged pupils to consider what they will do in the future, supporting this with accounts of inspirational people. Key stage 2 pupils have been encouraged by accounts about Gandhi, Mother Theresa and Mandela.
- Pupils report that they enjoy school and that there is little bullying. Incidents of racist or homophobic language are rare.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. While the majority of pupils have

positive attitudes to learning, some less-able pupils show less commitment when the pitch of learning is too difficult; they lose concentration and start to distract others.

- Pupils respond well to teachers' consistent application of the behaviour policy. Pupils feel behaviour has improved since the last inspection. Pupils spoke animatedly about the rewards systems and the chance to go bowling if the whole class receives enough rewards.
- Leaders' efforts to improve attendance are having a positive impact so that attendance overall is broadly in line with national averages.

Outcomes for pupils

Inadequate

- Pupils make slow progress through key stage 1. Consequently they are underachieving considerably in reading, writing and mathematics by the time they reach the end of Year 2. There is little difference between the attainment of boys and girls.
- In 2016, disadvantaged pupils in both key stages, including the most able disadvantaged, did not attain well compared with other pupils nationally. Very few pupils achieved greater depth in learning.
- Overall, key stage 2 pupils made less than expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities do not make the rapid progress they need to catch up with similar pupils nationally.
- In 2015, the proportion of pupils who attained expected levels in reading, writing and mathematics combined was close to that seen nationally. However, in 2016, at the end of key stage 2, pupils' attainment was well-below national averages in reading, writing and mathematics, suggesting not all pupils are well equipped with the skills needed for high school.
- Work in books and school assessment information show considerable improvement in pupils' work in recent weeks. However, variation in the progress made by different groups remains. The school's own information shows there are considerable differences between the progress of pupils in key stage 1 and Year 3 where progress is weak compared with stronger progress at the upper end of school.
- There is little difference between the progress of boys and girls, or disadvantaged pupils and others within school. However, the least able pupils are struggling to make appropriate progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Most-able pupils are not demonstrating their understanding well enough to reach the high standards of which they are capable.
- Improvement in the teaching of phonics has led to pupils making better progress in this area. In 2016, two thirds of pupils achieved the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check. In Year 2, proportions of pupils achieving the standard rose to just below national average.

Early years provision

Inadequate

- Most children join the Nursery class with knowledge and skills below those typical for their age and around one fifth start with skills well below those typically seen.

However, teaching in Nursery is having too little impact on children's preparedness for school, so that only a small fraction of children are making appropriate progress.

- In Reception, one quarter of children achieved a good level of development in 2015 and in 2016 this rose to around two fifths. The proportion of boys achieving typical levels of development was much lower than that of girls in both years. Consequently too few children are well prepared to start learning in Year 1.
- There have been several changes to staffing and at the time of the inspection there was no early years leader in post. This has led to insufficient clarity about how to improve the setting.
- Assessment has not been used effectively enough to identify children's needs and to plan learning. Staff have not set up activities specifically to guide children to the next stage of their learning, which hampers their progress.
- Teaching in the early years is not consistently good. There is a lack of clarity and purpose in the planning of learning activities and insufficient use is being made of outdoor provision to extend learning opportunities and develop children's basic skills.
- Funding to support disadvantaged children has been spent on ensuring Reception children are taught in smaller groups and on training staff to support children to develop their speech. Despite this, not all additional adults are skilled to develop children's ability to speak in sentences, and to develop their thinking skills.
- Most children are learning to understand letters and the sounds they make. However, activities are not always sufficiently well planned or stimulating to ensure that they apply these skills in their reading and writing.
- Not enough has been done to involve parents in their child's learning. As a result, staff are not able to use opportunities to develop children's interests and strengths to increase the pace of learning. Assessment information is not readily available to parents.
- Staff do not have appropriate knowledge about the statutory welfare requirements. Intimate care plans and written assessments alerting staff to the daily risks children encounter when using play equipment were not available to inspectors.
- Despite this, children are safe. Staff give due regard to safeguarding procedures and whole-school policies are observed. As a consequence, children behave well, play happily and readily get involved in learning activities.
- Senior leaders know there are weaknesses in provision and are working with the trust to secure improvement. An experienced early years teacher from another school in the trust has recently begun working with staff to improve provision, but it was too soon to see the impact of this work at the time of the inspection.

School details

Unique reference number	139270
Local authority	Calderdale
Inspection number	10021121

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	525
Appropriate authority	The academy trust
Chair	Robert Flack
Principal	Cathy Hayton
Telephone number	01422 349618
Website	www.mountpellonacademy.org
Email address	cathy.hayton@mountpellon.calderdale.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	18 March 2015

Information about this school

- This is a larger than average primary school.
- The school is part of the Northern Education Trust.
- Most pupils are from minority ethnic groups, the largest of which is Pakistani.
- The proportion of pupils who are eligible for support through the pupil premium is above average.
- The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above the national average.
- In 2015, the school met the government's floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- Children in the Nursery attend part time. Children in the Reception class attend full time.

- At the time of the inspection, the principal was absent from work due to illness. Several staff have left the school since the last inspection, including four class teachers who have been replaced with newly qualified teachers.
- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of financial information on its website.
- The school does not comply with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish about pupil premium and sports funding.

Information about this inspection

- Together with the acting principal and trust representative, inspectors looked at pupil progress data, information about the performance of teachers, documents relating to behaviour and safety and documents relating to safeguarding.
- The inspectors observed pupils' learning in parts of 32 lessons, some alongside senior leaders of school.
- Inspectors listened to Year 2 and Year 6 pupils read, and observed pupils learning in small groups. They spoke with pupils in meetings, in lessons, at lunchtime and at playtimes.
- Meetings were held with the acting principal, senior and middle leaders and two members of the governing body. Different meetings were also held with five academy trust representatives.
- Inspectors could not consider the opinions of parents through Parent View (Ofsted's online questionnaire for parents) as there were too few responses for any data to be generated, but they did speak with parents at the school gate and on the telephone.
- The inspectors took account of 49 responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Lesley Butcher, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Christine Turner	Ofsted Inspector
Peter Marsh	Ofsted Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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