

INSPECTION REPORT

MOUNT PRIMARY SCHOOL

Wallasey

LEA area: Wirral

Unique reference number: 104993

Headteacher: Mr John Martin

Reporting inspector: Mrs Barbara Crane
21227

Dates of inspection: 6 – 7 June 2000

Inspection number: 189206

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Hamilton Road Wallasey Wirral
Postcode:	CH45 9JF
Telephone number:	0151 6392988
Fax number:	0151 6911201
Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Peter Adams
Date of previous inspection:	September 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members	
Mrs Barbara Crane	Registered inspector
Mr Michael Romano	Lay inspector
Mrs Pauline Goodsell	Team inspector

The inspection contractor was:

Sandfield Educational Consultants Ltd
16 Wychwood Drive
Trowell Park
Nottingham
NG9 3RB

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The Office for Standards in Education
Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school is larger than most, with 285 pupils on roll. Children enter the Reception class in the September of the year in which they are five. The assessment of the current intake of children shows that they are an average ability group, but the assessment on entry to the school for other year groups shows that the children's attainment is generally below average. Twenty-six per cent of the pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is above average. Eighteen per cent of the pupils have special educational needs, which is average. Six pupils have additional support to meet specific needs. There are very few pupils from ethnic groups other than white. A small number of pupils are learning English as an additional language.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a very effective school. Standards are good. Pupils of all abilities achieve well because the teaching is very good. The leadership by the headteacher is very good and he is well supported by the staff and governors. The school provides very good value for money.

What the school does well

- The pupils' writing reaches a very good standard because of the teachers' high expectations and the interesting work.
- The pupils develop a high level of confidence in using computers because the teachers plan very good opportunities for them to use information technology in lessons.
- Pupils of all abilities make good progress as a result of the teachers' assessment of what they have learned and need to do next.
- The pupils work hard because they know what they need to do to improve and they want to succeed.
- The school looks at its strengths and weaknesses and is clear about what it needs to do to improve.

What could be improved

- The school could help the parents to have a better understanding of its work. Homework could be better organised.

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made very good improvement since its last inspection in 1996. Standards in English, mathematics, science and information technology have improved. The work for more able pupils is more challenging. Teaching has improved. The teachers are clear about what will be learned in the lessons and work is planned to meet the needs of all of the pupils. The pupils now have good opportunities to solve problems and undertake investigations in mathematics and science. The issues regarding the building have been addressed successfully.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 11 year olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with				<i>Key</i>
	all schools			similar schools	
	1997	1998	1999	1999	
English	C	B	B	A	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
Mathematics	C	C	C	A	
Science	C	E	C	A	

The results of last year's tests show that the standards achieved by eleven year olds are above average in English, when compared to all schools. The results in mathematics and science are average. The school's results are well above those in similar schools. The school's results over the past four years have kept pace with the national trend in standards.

The inspection evidence supports the view of above average standards in English, mathematics and science by the age of seven and by the time the pupils leave the school. The improvement in mathematics and science has been largely brought about through the school's careful analysis of past performance and subsequent adaptations to teaching. The assessment of what pupils can do and need to learn next has been sharpened and used well to plan work and raise standards at Key Stage 2. There are some examples of very high standards in writing, information technology and art.

The pupils' achievement is good. Pupils of all abilities make good progress because their needs are taken into account when the teachers plan lessons. The school is on track to meet the suitably high targets it has set for this year.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. The pupils enjoy school and work hard because the work is interesting.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. The pupils behave sensibly, both in lessons and when they play together. They show self-discipline when they work unsupervised on the computers.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. The pupils willingly take on responsibility and get on very well together.
Attendance	Average. The pupils are punctual.

The pupils learn the school's 'golden rules' in the youngest class and develop a strong sense of right and wrong. They are keen to improve and concentrate well in lessons.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Very good	Very good	Very good

Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Satisfactory' means that the teaching is adequate and strengths outweigh weaknesses.

All of the lessons seen were good or better and 67 per cent of the lessons were very good or better. Seventeen per cent of the lessons were excellent. The basic skills in English and mathematics are thoroughly taught and so the pupils approach their work confidently. The teachers have high expectations of both work and behaviour and this results in a good working atmosphere where the pupils are keen to please and do their best. The teachers encourage the pupils to write at length and for a wide range of purposes. The teachers know the pupils well and give them good guidance on what they need to do to improve. The lessons are interesting and well planned to meet the needs of different groups of pupils. The teachers' high level of confidence and expertise supports the pupils' very good progress in using information technology. All of the teachers make good use of the computers to help the pupils to learn.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good. The pupils benefit from a rich, broad and relevant curriculum. Information technology is very well used to support the pupils' learning. There are, however, few extra-curricular activities.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The work is well tailored to meet their needs and the pupils are well supported.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	These pupils make good progress because their needs are well met.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good provision for the pupils' personal development. They are encouraged to think about important issues and develop a sense of responsibility. The pupils show respect for others' feelings and beliefs.
How well the school cares for its pupils	A good level of care is provided for all of the pupils. The staff know the pupils well and their well-being is given high priority.

The pupils are encouraged to think for themselves and solve problems. They know what they need to do to improve and take pride in their achievements. The teachers use their assessments of what the pupils can do to plan the next steps in their learning. Good quality support is given to pupils of all abilities.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher gives a clear direction for the school and is very well supported by the deputy head and staff. They work well together as a team and are committed to raising standards.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors are well informed and give good support to the school. They work hard and fulfil all of their duties efficiently.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. The school looks closely at its past performance and knows what it needs to do to improve.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. The school budgets carefully and seeks the best value in its expenditure.

The Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been implemented confidently as a result of the very good management provided by the English and mathematics subject managers. The staff plan together, share their expertise willingly and look for ways to improve their teaching.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Their children like school.• The teaching is good.• They find the staff approachable.• The school expects children to work hard.• They receive good information about how their child is doing.• The school is well led and managed.• The school works closely with parents.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Homework could be better organised.• Better information about their child's progress.• Closer links with parents.• More extra curricular activities.

The views of the parents who attended the meeting with inspectors reflected those who returned the questionnaires. The inspection findings support the parents' positive views. There is evidence to support the parents' views in most of the areas where they expressed concern. The parents receive appropriate information about their child's progress. Homework is very well organised in some classes, but not all. The school does not do all it could to help the parents understand its work and aims. There are few extra-curricular activities.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

The pupils' writing reaches a very good standard because of the teachers' high expectations and the interesting work.

1. The pupils achieve high standards in writing. The basic skills are taught very well and so the pupils write confidently and fluently from an early age. By the time they are seven, most pupils can express their ideas and feelings at some length in writing. They enjoy using language and become increasingly discriminating in finding the right word to create an effect in poetry.
2. The pupils are given good opportunities to use the skills that they have learned in their English lessons in other subjects. They write accounts in geography and history and decide how to record their findings in science. The teachers' expectations that work is neatly presented and that spelling is checked are consistently reinforced. The pupils are encouraged to look at the way in which authors and poets use language to create effects and atmosphere. In an excellent lesson with older Key Stage 2 pupils, for example, the teacher asked the class whose point of view a story was written from and how it made them feel. Her instruction that they must find evidence in the text to support their point of view, led to a detailed analysis of the passage and lively discussion. The pupils were able to explain how the writer had created a sense of empathy through characterisation, language and setting. They then used these devices when writing their own introductions to a story.
3. The teachers' precise use of language results in the pupils developing a wide and rich vocabulary that they use in their writing. The pupils are encouraged to look for more interesting ways to construct sentences. Year 4 pupils, for example, redraft their work to improve its structure and vocabulary when writing an account of a fight. They achieve a good balance of prose and dialogue, with correct punctuation and sensitive characterisation.

The pupils develop a high level of confidence in using computers because the teachers plan very good opportunities for them to use information technology in lessons.

4. The pupils are excited by the possibilities of computers and the precision with which they can present their work. They learn to use information technology as a tool in a range of situations. All of the teachers are confident in using information technology because of the school's carefully planned programme of in-service training. Consequently, the use of information technology is well planned by the teachers and is part of the pupils' everyday experience.
5. The youngest pupils quickly develop dexterity with the keyboard and are very keen to work on the computers. By the time they are seven, the pupils know what to do when things go wrong. Because the school's computers are linked, the skills taught in the classroom can be practised elsewhere and assessed by the teacher. The Year 2 pupils can explain what they are doing as they research information or work independently on programs in English and mathematics in the information technology room. Year 3 and 4 pupils can search and sort information using a data handling program. The Year 5 and 6 pupils use light sensors to measure increases in electrical output in science. They work with a digital camera, recording equipment and computers to produce multi-media books. They scan pictures and add animations, record conversations and add sound effects. The pupils are very confident and enjoy trying out their own ideas. They work very well together on projects.

Pupils of all abilities make good progress as a result of the teachers' assessment of what they have learned and what they need to do next.

6. The teachers know the pupils very well and are clear about what pupils have learned. The pupils build on their existing knowledge and skills and all ability groups make rapid progress because the work meets their needs. Each teacher makes detailed assessments of what the pupils can do in English, mathematics science and information technology. All aspects of each subject are assessed. The results of tests are analysed and recorded in individual pupil profiles. The Key Stage 1 teachers are very good at identifying what the pupils need to do next to improve in reading, writing and mathematics. This ensures that the basic skills are well learned. At both key stages, the information gained about what each pupil can do is used to plan work that covers what needs to be done next. The classroom assistants provide valuable support for pupils with special educational needs.

The pupils work hard because they know what they need to do to improve and they want to succeed.

7. The pupils find the work enjoyable and take pride in their achievements. They are helped by the good quality of teachers' marking, which gives them a clear idea of how to improve. The pupils take note of the comments made in their books. In one lesson observed, for example, when a teacher made a general point to the class about a common mistake, a Year 3 girl commented to her friend 'That's just what he put in my book!'
8. The pupils have individual targets and they are keen to meet them. They eagerly take responsibility for their own learning and enjoy explaining how they have improved over time. Targets sometimes include points for social or personal development. Good work, effort and behaviour are rewarded.

The school looks at its strengths and weaknesses and is clear about what it needs to do to improve.

9. The school's commitment to raising standards is evident in the way in which it looks closely at its past performance and identifies areas for improvement. The present high standards achieved in information technology, for example, have resulted from the school's long term development planning to improve teachers' expertise, extend resources and build the use of information technology into each area of the curriculum. The improved standards in English, mathematics and science have been brought about by the subject managers' detailed analysis of test results, observations in classrooms and sampling of work. The information gained about weaknesses in standards has been used very well to inform teaching. For example, weaknesses in spelling and the structure of narrative writing were identified from looking at the optional national tests for Years 4 and 5. The resulting focus in teaching has very successfully addressed these issues.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

The school could help the parents to have a better understanding of its work. Homework could be better organised.

10. The school could do more to help the parents understand how it works and what it is aiming to do. Communication with the parents is too often as a result of a problem arising rather than the school sharing information as part of its planning to involve parents more in its work. For example, the school holds a meeting to inform parents about the procedures for the national end-of-key stage tests for 11 year olds, as some parents expressed anxiety, but not for the parents of 7 year olds. As a consequence of the school's largely unplanned communication with parents, a minority are concerned that the school does not work closely with them.
11. Homework is very well organised in Years 5 and 6. In these classes the pupils know what they have to do and when it needs to be returned. The work given supports the pupils' learning well. In other classes, homework is sometimes less well planned and the pupils and parents are not sure of what needs to be done.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

(1) Improve the effectiveness of its communication with parents so that they have a clearer understanding of the school's aims and its work and how homework is organised.

(Paragraphs 10, 11.)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	12
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	14

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
16%	25%	42%	17%	0	0	0

The table gives the percentage of teaching observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR- Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	285
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	74
Special educational needs	YR- Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	6
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	52
English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	5
Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	34
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	10

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.5
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0
National comparative data	0.5

Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	19	17	36

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	17	18	18
	Girls	17	17	15
	Total	34	35	33
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	94 (100)	97 (98)	92 (98)
	National	82 (80)	83 (81)	87 (84)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	17	18	18
	Girls	17	15	17
	Total	34	33	35
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	94(98)	92 (100)	97 (100)
	National	82 (81)	86 (85)	87 (86)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	23	15	38

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	17	17	18
	Girls	11	10	12
	Total	28	27	30
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	76(79)	71 (66)	79 (57)
	National	70 (65)	69 (59)	78 (69)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	19	17	20
	Girls	13	12	15
	Total	32	29	35
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	84(79)	76 (70)	92 (89)
	National	68 (65)	69 (65)	75 (72)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	7
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	2
Chinese	0
White	247
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	0	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

This table gives the number of exclusions of pupils of compulsory school age, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR– Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	11.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25:1
Average class size	28

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	6
Total aggregate hours worked per week	105

Financial information

Financial year	1999
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	£
Total income	419168
Total expenditure	414186
Expenditure per pupil	1507
Balance brought forward from previous year	9412
Balance carried forward to next year	14394

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	285
Number of questionnaires returned	45

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	51	38	7	2	2
My child is making good progress in school.	47	42	7	2	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	38	56	2	4	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	31	42	16	9	2
The teaching is good.	64	27	9	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	51	27	16	7	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	64	24	7	4	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	58	36	7	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	53	22	20	4	0
The school is well led and managed.	51	36	4	7	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	49	42	2	2	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	16	47	18	0	20