

# 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>	288109
<b>Inspection dates</b>	4–5 July 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Derek Sleightholme

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 on roll</b>	198
School	
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Jenny Dixon
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr David Atkinson
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 November 2002
<b>School address</b>	Kirkwood Drive North Kenton Newcastle upon Tyne Tyne and Wear NE3 3AT
<b>Telephone number</b>	0191 2853793
<b>Fax number</b>	0191 2853025

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This is an average sized primary school serving a socially and economically disadvantaged area. Most pupils are from a White British background. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is well above average, as is the proportion with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs is below average. There are few pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and a very small number are at an early stage of learning English. There are close links with the Sure Start programme, which is based in the school premises. Attainment on entry is well below average.

## Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

This is a good school. 'I am very happy that my children attend Mountfield Primary School and my children are happy going to school', is a typical comment that reflects parents' high regard for the school. The headteacher, ably supported by the deputy headteacher, provides clear direction. They have worked well with staff and governors to ensure that pupils develop well personally and make sustained good progress in all year groups. Two important outcomes of their leadership are the rising trend in standards and marked improvement in attendance.

Pupils are courteous and behave well. They feel safe at school and know how to access help quickly. They understand the importance of regular exercise and the value of a healthy diet. Pupils are keen to offer ideas about how the school might improve. They helped to design the new school garden and suggested the 'buddy bench'. Pupils contribute well to the wider community by charity fund raising and taking part in musical events such as the 'Big Sing' in the Sage international concert hall in Gateshead. Their regular commitment to office duties, such as answering the school telephone, helps them acquire future life skills.

From the low starting point, most pupils achieve well. Children make good progress in the Foundation Stage. This is because the leadership of the Foundation Stage has a strong sense of purpose and direction. Pupils continue to make good progress and by the end of Year 6 reach average standards in English and mathematics and above average standards in science. Teaching and learning are good because teachers possess good subject knowledge, manage pupils' behaviour well and form good trusting relationships. Pupils enjoy school, 'Lessons are fun', they say, 'and help you to learn better.' Progress of the small number of more able pupils is satisfactory, but inconsistent. With the exception of science, teachers do not always challenge these pupils sufficiently. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and those from minority ethnic backgrounds, achieve well.

The curriculum is good, meets requirements and is enriched by visits and visitors. Pupils' work over time shows that their writing skills in English lessons are not applied regularly in other subjects. Care, support and guidance are good. Most pupils receive timely advice on targets. These focus on improving pupils' knowledge and acquiring basic skills.

Leadership and management are good. The strong sense of teamwork stems from the good collaboration between the headteacher and deputy headteacher. School leaders play an effective role in evaluating the work of the school and the identification of priorities. The well-informed governors support the school well. The combination of experienced leaders and a stable teaching staff provides the school with good capacity to improve. The school provides good value for money.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that teachers intensify the level of challenge for more able pupils.
- Extend the opportunities for pupils to apply their writing skills throughout the curriculum.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

Achievement is good. Attainment on entry is well below average. Children make good progress through the Nursery and Reception Years. Despite this, few are securely established in the early learning goals as they enter Year 1. Pupils continue to make good progress and reach broadly

average standards by the end of Year 6. They make good progress in English and mathematics and outstanding progress in science. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and those from minority ethnic backgrounds, achieve similarly to other pupils. Progress of the most able pupils is limited, however, as teachers do not always provide them with sufficiently challenging work, particularly in English and mathematics.

Since 2003, there has been a rising trend in pupil attainment throughout the school. The results of the Year 6 national tests in 2006 showed that standards were above average in science and broadly average in English and mathematics. Science results were impressive because pupils enjoy the practical aspects of this subject and the extensive range of investigative work provided for them. The school met its Year 6 targets for average ability pupils. Few pupils attained the higher level in English and mathematics. Boys outperformed girls in mathematics. The inspection findings are that boys and girls are making similar progress.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Personal development, including pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. From a low start, pupils make rapid progress in their personal, social and emotional development. In lessons, they are well settled, calm and show a positive attitude to learning. Behaviour is good. They feel safe and have no fear of harassment or bullying because they know that if they are troubled, they always have an adult to talk to who will successfully resolve their concerns. They value the work of 'buddies' and 'mini-buds' to resolve loneliness at playtimes. Pupils recognise the value of vigorous exercise and know why it is important to choose healthy foods.

Attendance has improved significantly since the last inspection and is now average. Pupils discuss eagerly their enjoyment of lessons, especially the investigative aspects of science. Pupils serving as school councillors make a good contribution to the life of the school. They represent the views of other pupils well and have worked hard to organise fund raising events for a wide range of charities. Pupils perform regularly in school concerts and public settings and have helped the school gain a good reputation in the community. Pupils are eager to accept responsibilities. These help them to prepare for the next stage of their education and future life.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teaching is good throughout the school. This is the main reason why standards have recently improved and pupils make good progress. Teachers are skilled in pupil management and they form very good relationships with pupils, who respond well to their direction and instructions. Lessons are taught confidently with good emphasis on the acquisition of basic skills. Teachers use marking to provide helpful comments regularly to pupils on how to improve. Pupils say they welcome this guidance. Teachers successfully plan tasks to address most pupils' needs. Teachers are less effective at preparing sufficiently challenging tasks to be undertaken by the small number of more able pupils. This sometimes slows the progress of these learners. Teaching assistants provide sensitive support and encouragement for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and to those who are at an early stage of acquisition of English. This helps these pupils to take part in discussions confidently and achieve well. Adults working in the

Foundation Stage have a very good understanding of how children learn. They plan an interesting range of learning opportunities that stimulate children's progress.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum is good. It meets national requirements and matches the needs of pupils in most respects. Curriculum provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good, ensuring their good progress. It lacks intense challenge for a small number of higher attaining pupils. Pupils develop effective skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology, but there are not enough opportunities for writing skills to be practised in other subjects of the curriculum. The curriculum provides very well for pupils' personal and social development. It is well enriched. Many relevant visits take place, which enhance pupils' understanding in a range of subjects. Well-informed visitors support learning; for example, recent work with a Chinese artist from the local community and the regular visits by a member of the Jewish faith. Pupils express their enthusiasm for a good range of activities out of normal school hours. Pupils in Year 6 benefit from a learning transition programme in partnership with staff of the local secondary school, which prepares them well for the move to secondary education.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

The care, guidance and support of pupils are good. Arrangements are robust for overseeing the safeguarding of pupils, fully meeting national requirements. Appropriate policies and procedures for health and safety, child protection and monitoring behaviour and racism are rigorous and fit for purpose. A particular strength of the school lies in procedures for monitoring and promoting good attendance. This had led to a noticeable improvement in attendance since the last inspection. Staff are consistent in providing a positive role model, which enhances pupils' personal development. Provision is good for potentially vulnerable pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those from a range of different cultural backgrounds. Pupils are provided with good academic guidance and support. Information gathered is used very effectively to support the great majority of pupils and intervene as necessary. As a result, most pupils are provided with clear information on the targets they are set and parents kept well informed about progress towards achieving them. Nevertheless, target setting for the more able pupils does not always recognise their full potential.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher is well supported by a deputy, senior leaders and coordinators. Key outcomes of their purposeful collaboration are the improvements in standards, especially science, and attendance. The roles of school leaders are clearly defined and they discharge their responsibilities by applying consistent monitoring and evaluation practices. The formal scheduling of monitoring ensures that the self-evaluation process is thorough and founded on firm evidence. Accurate analysis of pupil progress data and thematic surveys, such as on the impact of homework, help school leaders and governors to have a good understanding of the strengths of the school and identify priorities.

Despite reductions in staffing and school budget restrictions, improvement since the previous inspection has been good with all former issues relating to pupil achievement addressed. The steady rise in standards since 2003 shows progress was sustained when the experienced deputy headteacher led the school for two years during the headteacher's secondment. The governors discharge their responsibilities well. They are knowledgeable, supportive and committed to improving school provision.

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## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	<b>School Overall</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	2
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	2
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	2

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

## **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

6 July 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Mountfield Primary School, Tyne and Wear, NE3 3AT

Mr Cooper and I enjoyed our recent visit to your school. Thank you for helping us. We enjoyed meeting you and looking at your work. I remember asking some of you what you liked about school and a few of you said, 'Science lessons because we do interesting experiments!' I know many of you make very good progress in this subject.

You attend a good school. Most of you make good progress because you enjoy lessons and behave well. There were many other good things that we saw. First we are delighted that your attendance has improved recently. We are pleased that you feel safe and happy because the adults care for you. We know many of you like helping at school by taking on responsibilities; such as, serving on the school council, being a buddy or mini-bud and assisting with daily routines. Many of you have helped the school gain a good reputation by raising money for charities and taking part in school concerts and musical events.

We usually ask schools to do some things to help them improve. We have asked the teachers to extend your written work by giving you opportunities to write when you are learning in other subjects. After observing you in lessons and looking at your work, we also think some of you who are capable of harder work could achieve higher results in national tests and make even better progress, and we have asked the staff to help with this.

Some of you will leave at the end of term to start a new school. I know that you are already doing some work to prepare you for next term. I hope that you all do really well.

Yours sincerely

Derek Sleightholme

Lead inspector