



Mount Wise Community Primary School

Inspection Report - Amended

Unique Reference Number 113300
Local Authority Plymouth
Inspection number 289577
Inspection dates 25–26 September 2006
Reporting inspector Mike Kell

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	James Street
School category	Community		Devonport
Age range of pupils	3–11		Plymouth PL1 4LA
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01752 567602
Number on roll (school)	173	Fax number	01752 605332
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	David Furze
		Headteacher	Chris West
Date of previous school inspection	4 December 2001		

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
3–11	25–26 September 2006	289577

Amended Report Addendum

Report updated to resolve formatting inconsistency

© Crown copyright 2006

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average primary school. The school has a falling pupil roll due to housing redevelopment and the relocation of families. It serves one of the most socially and economically disadvantaged areas of the city. An extremely high percentage of pupils is eligible for free school meals. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational need, is more than two and a half times that generally found in primary schools. Virtually all pupils are White British and speak English as their first language.

There is a high level of mobility, as pupils leave and join classes. The proportion of pupils who stay together as a class from Years 1 to 6 is relatively small. This turbulence has had a significant negative impact on the school's results.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Mount Wise Community School does a satisfactory job in difficult and challenging circumstances. Some aspects of the school's work are good. In particular, it provides an environment in which pupils grow in confidence. Educational visits, visitors into school and out-of-school activities contribute to widening pupils' horizons and extending their opportunities. Pupils' personal development is good and they receive good levels of care, guidance and support. That is why they enjoy their learning and many take part in after-school activities. The school influences pupils greatly in helping them to adopt safe and healthy lifestyles. It succeeds in encouraging pupils to contribute to the school and local communities. There is satisfactory provision for the early development of the skills that pupils will require when they move through secondary school and into employment.

Parents are generally pleased with what the school does for their children. A number were particularly complimentary about the Foundation Stage. Comments were made about how quickly the staff enabled children to settle and how supportive they had been when accepting children who were developing particularly slowly. The newly built foundation block houses both nursery and reception children. This is good provision. The children achieve well. Skilled teachers assess pupils' abilities quickly and teach a good range of activities. These make the most of very good accommodation and resources.

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory in Years 1 to 6. At the end of Years 2 and 6, standards are broadly average compared with pupils nationally, with standards at the end of both key stages improving year on year for the past three years. In 2006 this trend was reversed slightly at the end of Year 2, but in contrast there were impressive rises in the proportion of pupils who attain in line with national expectations and above this average at the end of Year 6. Pupils receive a satisfactory curriculum and are taught well, but some pupils' progress is hindered by factors such as poor attendance and changing schools part-way through their primary education. In addition, teachers generally do not always make the most effective use of assessment information to ensure that all pupils make the best possible progress.

There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection. The key issues identified then have been addressed appropriately. Governors ensure that all statutory requirements are met but the governing body is under strength and so too few governors make regular visits into school other than to attend meetings. The newly established senior management team is beginning to determine the direction in which it wishes the school to proceed, but its procedures for checking on the school's performance are not yet fully effective. As a result, it is trying to do too many things at the same time rather than focusing on a few of the most important priorities.

What the school should do to improve further

- Make better use of the information gained from analysing data about pupils' progress to plan ways to improve pupils' achievements and raise standards.

- Introduce more effective self-evaluation procedures that enable senior managers to identify and act upon the most important development priorities.
- Introduce a programme of regular and focused visits for governors that will enable them to develop first-hand understanding of the school's work.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Children enter the Foundation Stage with most areas of their development delayed compared with the majority of children of their age. In particular, their language and communication skills and personal and social development are below the expected levels. Children make good progress during their time in the Foundation Stage. By the time they transfer into Year 1, there is still some delay overall but many are now closer to having the same skills, knowledge and understanding as children nationally.

The improved standards at the end of Year 6 in 2006 were as the school anticipated, as this group had achieved results that were notably higher than those of previous classes at the end of Year 2. These results reflect the fact that staff have been increasingly deployed in ways that best match their skills with the age and needs of different age groups. Although pupils' learning is good in lessons in Years 1 to 6, the progress they make over time is no better than satisfactory. There are three main reasons for this.

First, a very high proportion of pupils have learning difficulties and a handful of them are poor attenders.

Second, the high proportion of pupils who join and leave the school at various times during the year has an adverse effect on standards.

Third, senior managers track pupils' achievements but they do not work closely enough with teachers to plan specific strategies that will accelerate individual pupils' progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Raising individuals' self-esteem lies at the heart of the school's work. It achieves this very successfully. Pupils can serve on the school council, be a class captain and become a trained peer mediator to resolve conflict between pupils. Pupils show a good understanding of the needs of others, converse politely and listen respectfully. The school's strong focus on promoting personal development is evident in the way pupils are developing an understanding of safe and healthy lifestyles. Attendance is erratic and is generally just below the national average. The school's hard work in trying to improve this has been rewarded recently.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Given the ethnic constitution of the local area, the school has taken imaginative and successful steps to widen pupils' multicultural experiences. These have included theatre workshops on racism, Asian dance, African drumming and storytelling sessions.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teachers have good subject knowledge. Classrooms are well organised and lessons are well planned and prepared. Teachers and teaching assistants develop extremely good relationships with their pupils. This gives pupils the confidence to participate and communicate. Pupils respond very well to teachers' high expectations of their behaviour. Teachers manage their pupils very well and pupils follow well-established classroom routines. Teaching assistants are fully briefed and this enables them to contribute significantly to pupils' learning by managing small groups and encouraging pupils' participation. The good teaching does not result in good achievement over time because of the weak attendance of a minority of pupils and the coming and going of pupils as they transfer into and leave the school, interrupting their education. Teachers also do not make the best use of their assessments of pupils to plan future work to maximise their progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum has some clear strengths, such as an introduction to French in Key Stage 2 and good provision to support the pupils' personal, social and health development, but there are some notable areas for development. Curriculum planning does not always fully meet the needs of all groups of pupils in order to ensure that they make the best possible progress. There is an effective programme for developing pupils' information and communication technology (ICT) skills and teachers are becoming more confident with using ICT equipment, but pupils do not use ICT routinely to support work in other subjects.

The school provides a broad programme of enrichment activities. For instance, it arranges a history week in association with the Plymouth museum service and there are residential visits for outdoor activities. Pupils can join a wide range of school clubs.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

All the adults in school know the pupils very well. The staff team has created an environment in which the pupils feel secure. This has a very positive impact on all areas of pupils' personal development. The health and safety of all pupils is very high on the school's agenda and all necessary vetting checks are carried out. Pupils who are at risk are identified early and this triggers very effective monitoring procedures. Pupils have social targets that are reviewed regularly. This is having a beneficial impact on behaviour and attitudes. Individual learning targets are not always as focused as they could be.

The school works very hard to engage with parents. In some cases, this partnership is very effective in supporting pupils. For instance, parents can participate in a number of imaginative courses held in the foundation block that are designed to help them in supporting their children.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Senior managers review how well the school is doing in the different areas of its work but the information gathered is not always used effectively to identify the most important priorities for improvement. In some instances this is because the information is not scrutinised critically. As a result, the school is trying to pursue too many objectives at the same time.

Other information is examined very closely, such as the tracking data of pupils' academic and personal progress. Some outcomes of this analysis are put to good effect. For example, teachers have been deployed to work with particular year groups and all pupils have been given social targets. The impact of these developments can be seen in Year 6 pupils' results and pupils' overall good attitudes and behaviour. In other instances, analysed data is not used effectively. Details of whether pupils are on track to attain national standards are circulated to class teachers but there is insufficient follow up. Senior managers do not work closely enough with teachers to introduce clear strategies designed to ensure that standards are raised across the board.

The senior management team is at an early stage of translating enthusiasm into effective systems and procedures. However, it is a very committed group that is anxious to improve the school. Steadily rising standards and pupils' good personal development show that the school has a satisfactory capacity to improve.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----------------------

Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3
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	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	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	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

¹ 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.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
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	3
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	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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

Thank you very much for making us so welcome when we visited your school. We thoroughly enjoyed the two days we spent with you.

We think that your school does a satisfactory job. The staff look after you especially well and they work very hard to make sure that you are safe and well cared for. The school is good at encouraging you to be aware of the needs of others and the world around you. We were impressed with your politeness and the way you behaved in lessons, on the playground and around school. Most of you go to school most days, although a few of you could attend more regularly. You told us that you like your school and enjoy your lessons. We saw that for ourselves as many of you got very involved in the activities that your teachers gave you. Lessons in your school are good as learning is interesting. You make satisfactory progress in your work and could do better than this if you attended school regularly.

We know that your teachers and governors are always trying to make the school better and we have given them three suggestions that will help them to do this:

- Teachers could help you to achieve more in your work by giving each of you very clear guidelines and support.
- The staff and governors are so keen to improve your school that they are trying to do too many things at the same time. They should try and do just a few of the really important things each year.
- Many governors have jobs and are very busy people, but it would help if they could spend more time in your school looking at what goes on.

Once again, thank you for welcoming us to your school and we both hope that you have a very good year in your new classes.