

Mount Pleasant Junior Infant and Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	130925
Local Authority	Kirklees
Inspection number	315660
Inspection dates	12–13 September 2007
Reporting inspector	Robert Robinson

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	511
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Cllr Mrs Watson
Headteacher	Mrs S Thompson
Date of previous school inspection	9 June 2003
School address	Lockwood Road Lockwood Huddersfield West Yorkshire HD1 3QS
Telephone number	01484 223198
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This large primary school is situated in an area of economic disadvantage. A very high proportion of pupils are learning English as an additional language. Eligibility for free school meals is above average. The school has had intensive support since February 2007 from the local authority and through a Primary National Strategy initiative. The school is an Investors in People and has gained the Healthy Schools and Artsmark Gold Awards.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Mount Pleasant Junior, Infant and Nursery School is a satisfactory school. Children enter the Nursery with much lower than normally expected levels of skills. Achievement is satisfactory. However standards by the time pupils leave the school remain well below average. Parents are generally well pleased with most aspects of the school's work, although a few have concerns about behaviour. They should be reassured because pupils behave well both in the classroom and around school as the management of pupils by staff is good.

A stimulating learning environment awaits pupils on entry to the Nursery, both indoors and outdoors. However, provision in the Reception is not equally as exciting. The outdoor area is particularly uninspiring. As a result, children make merely satisfactory progress overall in the Foundation Stage and enter Year 1 with standards well below national expectations.

The quality of teaching and learning throughout the school is satisfactory, though variable. Teachers plan their lessons in a similar way but occasionally, it is not matched sufficiently well to pupils' prior attainment. Sometimes lessons are too teacher-led and there are too few opportunities for pupils to use their initiative and to work independently. Where teaching is good, this excites pupils to learn and they make good progress in their learning. Teaching assistants are used well to help those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and pupils learning English as an additional language. This is particularly the case when pupils work with a member of staff in small groups on specific tasks linked to their particular needs.

The personal development of pupils, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is satisfactory. Pupils are proud of their school. They get on well together irrespective of gender or cultural backgrounds. They have a good understanding of healthy lifestyles and feel safe and secure in the school. Pupils' attitudes to work are generally positive but their low standards and the limited development of independent learning skills restrict their preparation for future learning.

The leadership and management of the headteacher and senior managers are satisfactory. The monitoring of teaching and learning and information about pupils' attainments are in place but the information gained is not used rigorously enough to speed up pupils' progress. Senior leaders have sought advice as to how to raise standards and have acted upon it. The school improvement plan shows it has a good grasp of what it must do to improve. As a result of recent initiatives, pupils' progress is slowly beginning to speed up, which provides the school with satisfactory capacity to improve.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Provision in the Foundation Stage (Nursery and Reception) is satisfactory as are the leadership and management of it. Children start in the Nursery with poor skills, particularly in language, communication and personal development. Progress in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory overall. However, it is now accelerating through new initiatives to develop language skills. By the end of Reception, most children's skills are still well below those expected for their age. Children in the Nursery respond well to the good teaching, stimulating learning environment and good range of activities that engage their interest. This good practice is being built on in the Reception classes, although here, activities are not always matched well enough to the children's needs. Teaching and the curriculum are satisfactory overall. The outdoor provision

in Reception limits the range of activities for developing skills in all the areas of learning. In some instances children sit listening for too long, activities are too teacher-directed and this limits children's opportunities to develop initiative and independence. Throughout the Foundation Stage relationships are good. Children are happy and secure and settle into school routines quickly because of effective induction procedures. Adults work well as a team and children's progress is carefully monitored. Parents are supportive and staff work hard to involve them in their children's learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards at the end of Year 6 to ensure that achievement for all groups of pupils is at least good.
- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better through the rigorous monitoring of pupils' learning and the effective use of assessment information.
- Improve the provision for children in the Reception.
- Provide pupils with more opportunities to take responsibility for their own learning.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

The achievement of all groups of pupils is satisfactory. Pupils join Year 1 with standards that are well below national expectations. Pupils' progress is satisfactory overall in Years 1 to 6. As a result, standards remain well below average. In the national tests at the end of Year 2 and Year 6, standards have been well below average since the last inspection. The strategies recently put in place by the leadership and management, and the local authority in conjunction with a Primary National Strategy initiative are slowly beginning to hasten pupils' progress but this has yet to be shown in significant improvements in standards. The school has made satisfactory progress towards meeting demanding targets during the past academic year.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils enjoy school, particularly information and communication technology (ICT) and swimming, although a few say they find some lessons boring. Pupils report that they feel safe and they know who to turn to when there is a concern. Bullying and racist incidents are rare. Any problems are resolved quickly. The school council is well established. Pupils are very aware that they require a broad and balanced diet and regular exercise. They are able to identify how to eat healthily and have access to a range of different sports and dance programmes. Attendance levels are slightly below average. There are very high levels of authorised absence as a result of lengthy family holidays and this has a negative impact upon pupils' learning.

Pupils understand what is right and wrong and this helps pupils to maintain their good behaviour. They are helped to celebrate their individual cultures and through topics and visits they learn about the heritage of Britain. The lack of opportunities created for pupils to reflect on their lives, such as in assemblies, limits the development of their self-awareness. Pupils actively support those in need by contributing to charities; for example, the survivors of the earthquake in Kashmir where many of their extended families live.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. There are examples of good lessons. In these lessons, pupils are actively involved in their own learning and make good progress. The pace of learning is brisk, and teachers' high expectations challenge pupils effectively to think for themselves. The demands of the work are matched well to pupils' prior attainment. Pupils are encouraged to become independent learners. However, this is not a consistent picture throughout the school. In some lessons, the pace of learning is slow and work is sometimes too easy or too difficult for pupils. As a result, some pupils do not make the progress they should. Pupils' opportunities to take responsibility for their own learning are too few. This teaching does not excite the pupils to learn at a fast enough pace. Throughout the school, teachers manage pupils' behaviour well and encourage good relationships. Teaching assistants make strong contributions particularly to the teaching of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and those for whom English is an additional language.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory. Whilst there is a strong focus upon literacy and numeracy, standards in these areas are exceptionally low. Opportunities for pupils to write extended pieces of writing in different styles are limited. Literacy and numeracy skills are not used sufficiently in other subjects to enable pupils to practise and extend their learning. ICT supports learning well in other subjects. The linking of subjects to add interest and purpose to learning is being developed though not yet fully implemented. The curriculum is enriched by a wide range of extra-curricular clubs as well as educational visits. The 'Learning through Growing' initiative has enhanced pupils' understanding of the source of a variety of fruit and vegetables which the pupils grow, pick and eat. This has impacted strongly upon their understanding of how to maintain a healthy diet.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Pastoral support is good. Pupils are well cared for in a happy and secure learning environment. Procedures for child protection are in place and all other checks to safeguard pupils' health, safety and well-being meet current requirements. The support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those at an early stage of learning English as an additional language enables these pupils to be fully included in all activities. The learning mentor and other staff sensitively support the more vulnerable pupils and outside agencies provide valuable specialist support when needed. Pupils' academic progress is regularly monitored but individual targets and teachers' written guidance are inconsistently used across the school. Individual targets do not challenge pupils sufficiently and marking often does not suggest how they can improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

In view of the school's low standards, the headteacher, ably supported by a committed team of senior managers, has taken positive action in seeking help to promote improvement since the last inspection. New initiatives are linked to good resourcing and staff development, and are slowly beginning to impact on pupils' progress. Self-evaluation systems are in place. Findings are discussed and, together with the recommendations from the local authority and the Primary National Strategy consultant, are used to inform the school improvement plan. However, the school is overgenerous in evaluating most aspects of its provision and performance. Systems for monitoring and evaluating pupils' progress, and teaching and learning are not rigorous enough in helping drive up standards and improving the quality of teaching throughout the school. The governing body is supportive and aware of the school's priorities but does not fully fulfil its role as a critical friend. School leaders have an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. This, together with the purpose and commitment with which colleagues at all levels are approaching new developments, indicates that the school has satisfactory capacity to improve.

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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	School Overall
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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
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4
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?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
How well learners enjoy their education	3
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
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?	3
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?	3

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.

Annex A

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	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Inspection of Mount Pleasant Junior, Infant and Nursery School, Huddersfield, HD1 3QS.

Thank you for welcoming myself and the other members of the inspection team to your school. We enjoyed the two days we spent with you and our discussions with you. I was particularly impressed with the way you were working when I walked around your school with the headteacher.

Your school provides you with a satisfactory education. However, the standards you reach in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 6 are lower than they should be. In order to raise your standards, we have asked the school to help you make better progress, and to make sure that the quality of teaching is good. We also want the school to look at your work more closely and to make better use of the information gained. You also need more opportunities to work independently as this will help you to speed up your learning and help you to work well on your own at home, school and in the future. In addition, we have asked your school to improve the Reception education, particularly outdoors.

Your personal development is satisfactory as is the school's care, guidance and support for you. We were impressed by your good behaviour. Your attendance is slightly below average because some of you take holidays in term time. You have a good understanding of how to keep healthy and we enjoyed walking around your 'learning through growing' area. The fruit you have grown looked delicious.

We appreciated talking to you about your work and watching you learn. We trust that you will continue to help the headteacher and other staff to continue to improve the school. We wish you well for the future.