

Mount Pleasant Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	132691
Local Authority	Service Children's Education (SCE)
Inspection number	331009
Inspection dates	3 - 4 February 2009
Reporting inspector	Bradley Simmons HMI

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Ministry of Defence
Age range of pupils	4 - 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	24
Appropriate authority	Service Children's Education
Chair	Wing Commander Paul Bell
Headteacher	Mrs Hazel Jones
Date of previous school inspection	22 - 24 February 2005
School address	RAF Mount Pleasant BFPO 655
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors.

Description of the school

Mount Pleasant Primary School serves the children of British Forces personnel based at Mount Pleasant on the Falklands Islands in the South Atlantic. It is unusual for any pupil to remain at the school for longer than 18 months. Teaching staff are posted to the school for periods of up to two years. All teaching staff including the headteacher took up post in September 2008. At the time of the inspection, there were two classes. Three children are in the Early Years Foundation Stage which, with Years 1 and 2, forms the infant class. Children from Years 3 to Year 6 are taught in the junior class.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Mount Pleasant Primary is a good school. The headteacher provides outstanding leadership and is well supported by an able assistant headteacher. They communicate a very high level of ambition for their pupils. This translates into a determined commitment from all adults to ensure that they offer the best to the children in their care. Staff overcome the considerable challenges of having up to four National Curriculum year groups in one class by meticulous planning to meet their specific learning needs. In combination with good assessment of pupils' skills and abilities, this planning lays the foundation for teaching that is usually good or better. For the youngest children, the basics are well taught; the teaching and assessment of phonics for early reading and writing is particularly strong. At times, however, opportunities are missed to pose the occasional question or brief challenge to the oldest pupils in the infant class and, momentarily, the engagement and motivation of these pupils drops. In the junior class, adventurous teaching ensures that pupils are independent learners, able to make well thought out choices about the methods they decide to use to tackle a task or problem. Throughout the school, teaching and learning is marked by good use of humour, much enjoyed by pupils, which gives this small school a family feel.

The impact of this high quality teaching is to maintain and build upon the high standards that have been achieved by pupils over the past few years. Standards have generally been and remain above the national average, and pupils have made good progress while they are at the school. Within this good picture, standards in writing have been slightly weaker, a little more markedly for boys than girls. In response, staff have introduced a writing initiative which gives pupils the tools they need to develop their writing and the time to hone it further. Evidence shows that pupils are making good progress in writing as a result. The skill of teachers in planning and delivering improvements in pupils' writing augurs well for the recently initiated work to develop the wider curriculum, which is satisfactory at the moment. Although covering each national curriculum subject, and incorporating an increasing number of genuinely exciting elements for pupils, the school recognises that the curriculum is not underpinned systematically by plans to ensure that pupils are able to build their skills and knowledge as progressively in all subjects as they do in English, mathematics, information and communications technology and science.

Pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development is good. Assemblies and curricular topics such as 'Eco Warriors' give pupils the opportunity to learn about and reflect upon the changing nature of life in an increasingly diverse Britain. The very distinctive location of the school allows pupils to ponder the wonder of nature whilst effectively developing social skills with adults and children. Behaviour is good at all times. Pupils make an outstanding contribution to Mount Pleasant Complex. Their live appeal on British Forces Broadcasting Services Radio for volunteers to help paint the playground helped to foster a sense of community whereby people came together for the good of the school'

All parents responded to the inspection questionnaire and are overwhelmingly positive about the school. The school is working effectively to become increasingly accountable to parents; pupils' learning logs and weekly diaries provide parents with

a good level of information about their children's achievements and targets. Pupils appreciate the way teachers discuss with them ways to improve their work. As a result, they make better progress.

The impact of work by staff since their appointment to build upon the improvements made since the last inspection indicates that this school has good capacity to continue to improve.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage Grade: 2

The school makes good provision for the very small number of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage, ensuring that they have a distinctive and enjoyable start to their school career. They join the school with skills and abilities that are higher than those normally expected for children of their age. Historically, successive groups of children have exceeded national expectations by the time they start Year 1.

Children are well behaved and, encouraged by staff, they become increasingly independent and act thoughtfully towards each other. A close watch is kept on them to ensure that they are safe in the playground, and do not drift within the wider infant class. These younger children enjoy the opportunity to mix with the older children and develop effective social skills that stand them in good stead for the future.

The headteacher and infant classteacher teach these children effectively and are ably supported by a part time teaching assistant. Judicious planning across the six early learning areas ensures that children experience a good balance of teacher directed and child initiated learning and they thus make good progress. Good assessment and incisive observation ensures that children's skills are built upon accurately and rapidly.

Provision is well led and managed overall. The indoor environment is well organised and provides rich learning experiences for children. The outdoor area is used well for specific planned learning tasks, but activities on offer in this area do not yet reflect the breadth of the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum.

What the school should do to improve further

- Deploy a wider range of strategies, including targeted questions and brief challenging discussion, to maintain the enthusiasm for learning and engagement of older children in the infant class.
- Build on work to establish and deliver an exciting, enjoyable and relevant curriculum which will enable pupils to build their skills and knowledge progressively in all subjects.

Achievement and standards Grade: 2

Pupils make good progress during their time at the school and attain high standards. Over the past few years, national assessment results at the end of Year 2 and Year 6

show that it has been unusual for any child to attain below the national expected level in reading, writing and mathematics. Indeed, standards in reading and mathematics have been particularly high in comparison with national averages and information and communication technology is now above the standard normally expected for pupils in Key Stage 2. The school has correctly analysed that, over time, boys' writing has not been as strong as girls, and that few pupils in recent years have gained the highest level in writing at the end of Key Stage 1 or 2. In response, the school targeted this area to good effect. Boys and girls exercise books seen during the inspection show that pupils are making good progress and that standards are rising in this area. The school's careful tracking shows that pupils with learning difficulties are making at least good progress over time.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils at Mount Pleasant are sociable, polite and welcoming to visitors and considerate towards each other. The school council reported that there is absolutely no bullying at this school. Pupils feel very secure at the school, and several said how much they enjoy living on a base where they see both parents daily. Pupils move around the school and the wider base in a highly responsible manner, taking care of younger children in the playground and as they travel, for example, from school to the swimming pool. They adopt healthy lifestyles in so far as they are able; they are very active, for example, during energetic swimming lessons and are highly aware of the need to use sun protector. They know about the importance of regular exercise and a balanced diet, but are also aware that it is difficult to eat five portions of fruit and vegetables each day because of the lack of availability of these items on the islands. Indeed, realisation of this underpins the efforts of the school council to arrange to buy a polytunnel so pupils can grow salad vegetables in the school grounds. The school council gives regular reports on this and other matters to the rest of the school, who make suggestions for improvements which are followed up assiduously. Pupils' good skills in English and mathematics, their high level of competence in ICT and their ability to work well individually and in teams, provide a strong foundation for their future economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are strong overall. Staff review their practice reflectively with the aim of providing pupils with the best possible learning experience. The headteacher is the lead professional, spending much time in classrooms, modelling good practice and helping staff to develop their potential. The best teaching is outstanding and is marked by warm and purposeful working relationships. During such lessons, teachers build highly successfully on pupils' existing knowledge and skills and ensure that children of all ability levels are stretched and motivated. They give good oral feedback so pupils know exactly how well they are doing. There is a high level of debate between pupils, who demonstrate a genuine independence, choosing, for example, the best methods and tools to get the job done efficiently. This good teaching notwithstanding, occasionally opportunities are missed to tailor discussion and questions to the older children in Key Stage 1 to keep them fully

motivated. The effect of this is to limit very marginally their engagement and enjoyment in learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The school agrees that its curriculum is satisfactory. Progression for pupils in reading, writing and mathematics is assured. The early reading curriculum, including systematic phonics is well planned and the writing curriculum is well considered so that it motivates boys and girls and enables pupils to make good progress. Across other subjects, staff have begun to plan exciting opportunities for children's learning. For example, the recent 'Out and About' week capitalised on the unique location of this school, enabling children to visit islanders in their settlements and farms and learn much about the culture and geography of the islands. The recent 'Big Brew' gave pupils an opportunity to develop their enterprise skills, as they set prices for the cakes to be sold, ran the stalls and worked out profits to be distributed to the *Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Families Association*. Such opportunities provide good foci for learning. Overall, the wider curriculum is not yet systematically planned so these events are capitalised upon to build pupils' skills and knowledge progressively as they move through the school.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The family ethos that is the hallmark of this small school is very much the result of the good care and support that pupils receive. The bulk of this is provided by the staff, as Mount Pleasant does not have immediate access to the usual range of SCE services. Appropriate safeguarding and child protection arrangements were in place at the time of this inspection, and the school carries out its responsibilities for pupils' health and safety diligently. Academic guidance has some exemplary elements; the weekly diaries for Key Stage 2 pupils give parents a very clear picture of how they can support their children's learning across the curriculum. The same quality of information is available for parents of pupils in the infant classroom for reading and writing. Learning logs are a developing and valuable tool to keep parents fully updated with their children's targets in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils appreciate the way that targets are discussed with them and addressed in marking to help them make progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher is an accomplished teacher and provides excellent leadership. She has successfully communicated her ambition for her pupils to parents and staff. Her ambition is underpinned by the dedication and support of the assistant headteacher who shares much of the strategic work of the school. School improvement planning is focused upon improving outcomes for pupils and the number of priorities is sensibly limited in order to maximise impact. Their success in this is already seen in the good progress that all pupils, but particularly boys, are making in writing. Targets for pupils are challenging, but realistic, in that pupils are getting the focused teaching they need to reach them. The school contributes effectively to community cohesion outside the immediate community by making visits to, and hosting visits from island education settlement

schools. It facilitates its pupils working with islanders in the 'Watch Group' which undertakes, for instance, beach cleans. Pupils have, over the past term, acted as reporters, editors and publishers for the forces community newsletter which brings together the interests of the people across Mount Pleasant Complex. The school governance committee (SGC) plays a supportive part in the life of the school. No member of the SGC remains in place for more than 18 months. This being so, the present chair has correctly prioritised the development of structures to ensure that the school is held to account for its work by successive members of the SGC.

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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	16–19
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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?	2	
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2	

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2	
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2	
How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2	
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2	
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2	
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2	

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	
How well learners enjoy their education	2	
The attendance of learners	2	
The behaviour of learners	2	
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	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.

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of 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	

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2	
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2	
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2	
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	NA	
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



9th February 2009

Dear Children

Inspection of Mount Pleasant School, BFPO 655

Thank you so much for the very warm welcome you gave me when I inspected your school recently, and for the time you spent answering my questions. It was very clear to me that you really enjoy being at Mount Pleasant, and that you are all making good progress with your work. Well done!

I was very impressed by the way that you take part in the community in which you live. I really enjoyed hearing about 'the Big Brew' and the radio broadcast you did on BFBS to get your playground painted. It was very interesting to look at the work you are doing and to see how quickly you are improving your writing because of the 'Big Write'. Many of you told me that you really like having targets because they help you to know how to improve your work.

The teaching at your school is good. It is well planned so that you do work at the right level for you, but it also keeps you on your toes, so you don't find things too easy! I have asked the teachers in the infant class to make sure that the older children are really kept involved in lessons, so, if you are in Year 2, do make sure you listen out for questions and quick tasks or discussions designed by teachers especially for you!

One of you said to me that, "Our teachers are friendly. They are never *really* cross with us." Your school really does have a family feel; you all look after each other well and there is lots of laughter in and out of lessons.

Your teachers have started to include some very interesting activities for you. The 'Out and About' week sounded great fun, and you clearly found out lots about the Falkland Islands. I've asked your teachers to make sure they plan so that activities like these are used to develop your skills, for example, in history or geography or art.

Overall, by the time I left, I decided that Mount Pleasant is a good school because the staff give you a good education. Thank you again for your help and enjoy your time on the Falkland Islands!

With best wishes

Bradley Simmons
Her Majesty's Inspector



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE