

The Mount School

Independent school inspection report

DCSF registration number	382/6006
Unique Reference Number (URN)	107787
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Reporting inspector	Christine Inkster HMI

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Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under section 162A of the Education Act 2002¹, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005², the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

This was a light touch inspection which focused principally on the quality of education provided by the school; its provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development; the arrangements for safeguarding pupils and the improvements the school has made since its last inspection.

Information about the school

The Mount School is a non-selective independent day school for girls and boys aged three to 11 years. It was founded in 1950 and moved to its present premises in Huddersfield in 1961. There are currently 123 pupils on roll, including two part-time pupils. Before- and after-school care is provided for pupils. The school provides for pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage in one Lower Kindergarten class and one Kindergarten class. There are currently 27 children who are funded under the Nursery education scheme. The school is situated in a building that was once a private home and is spread over three floors. The school was last inspected in June 2007.

The school's motto 'Live to Learn, Learn to Live' is central to the school's work. The school aims to 'provide a welcoming, stimulating and caring environment in a co-educational setting for children aged three to 11 years, in which they can flourish and develop'.

Evaluation of the school

The Mount School provides a good quality of education and care for its pupils and meets its aims effectively, including in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Pupils make good progress because the quality of the curriculum and teaching and assessment are good. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and their behaviour are outstanding. The provision for the welfare, health and safety of pupils is good; safeguarding arrangements are in place and meet requirements. The school has successfully addressed the issues identified at the last inspection and now meets all of the regulations for independent school registration.

¹ www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2002/ukpga_20020032_en_14#pt10-ch1-pb4-l1g162

² www.opsi.gov.uk/ACTS/acts2005/ukpga_20050018_en_15#sch8

Quality of education

The quality of education and the provision made for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are good. The curriculum is good in school and in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The school teaches all subjects of the National Curriculum and has a strong focus on developing pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. There are effective policies and schemes of work for each subject and year group which ensure progression in learning for pupils and these are regularly reviewed. As a result, pupils make good progress. Cross-curricular work is planned effectively, particularly in Key Stage 1, through a range of topics and themes, making learning more exciting for pupils. An effective programme of personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE) is provided through discrete lessons, but is also woven through other areas of the curriculum. The provision for information and communication technology (ICT) has been enhanced by the establishment of a well-resourced ICT suite and the installation of interactive whiteboards in classrooms. Pupils from Year 1 to Year 6 learn French. A wide range of musical activities are provided and pupils are very successful in music festivals and examinations. Art is a strength of the school and work displayed throughout the school is of a high standard. There are a wide variety of extra-curricular activities on offer including a design club, choir, speech and drama lessons, musical tuition and a range of sporting activities. Pupils are also given the opportunity to visit local places of interest to enhance their learning and visitors are welcomed into school. Older pupils participate in residential adventure experiences including a wide range of exciting outdoor activities such as abseiling, kayaking and team-building activities.

Teaching and assessment are good in school and in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Pupils are taught in small classes and many lessons are taught by subject specialists, for example, in science, art, music and physical education. As a result, most teachers have good subject knowledge and teaching is effective, enabling pupils to make good progress. Teachers ensure that pupils continue to progress because they build upon previously-learned skills. Pupils are keen to respond to teachers' challenging questions but also to ask pertinent questions as they want to understand and contribute in lessons. Pupils take great care in the presentation of their work and this is because teachers have high expectations. The quality of writing is of a high standard throughout the school. Pupils are keen to share their ideas and have good attitudes to learning. However, while planning has improved since the last inspection, teachers do not always consistently and precisely identify next steps in learning for individual pupils in the evaluations of their lessons.

Assessment arrangements, including those in the Early Years Foundation Stage are good. The school uses a variety of internal tests and assessments on a regular basis and these are used to identify appropriate curricular targets for pupils. Pupils know their targets and understand what they have to do next to improve. The school has an accurate view of pupils' attainment and the headteacher and deputy headteacher

carefully monitor the progress made by pupils. They identify any areas of underachievement and provide additional support or challenge to pupils as required. More formal tests are carried out twice per year and appropriate records are kept on a tracking system and shared with the next teacher. Marking has improved since the last inspection. Teachers mark pupils' work very carefully. Marking identifies what pupils have done well and what they have to do next to improve. Assessment arrangements in the Early Years Foundation Stage are good. Detailed observations and assessments are carried out on a regular basis and are used effectively to plan for future learning.

Pupils make good progress in relation to their capability and starting points both in school and in the Early Years Foundation Stage because of the good curriculum and good teaching they receive. Evidence seen in pupils' work and in lessons confirms this view. Teachers' assessments show that a high proportion of pupils attain Level 5 by the end of Year 6 in English and mathematics. They reach high standards in writing, music and art.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is outstanding in school and in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Pupils are extremely friendly, respectful and articulate from an early age, and behaviour is outstanding overall. Pupils develop their self-confidence through their roles of responsibility, for example, as prefects, members of the school council and in their highly effective running of the school library. Pupils grow in self-esteem through aesthetic and creative pursuits such as art and music, and they participate with enthusiasm in lively discussions and debates. Pupils thoroughly enjoy their learning and their attendance is high.

Pupils have an excellent understanding of the differences between right and wrong. They have respect for rules through an effective reward system and as part of the ethos of the school. Pupils are encouraged to accept responsibility for their behaviour, show initiative and understand how they can contribute to community life through carol singing, performances for parents and fundraising. Pupils acquire a broad general knowledge of public institutions and services in England through history, PSHE and assemblies. Pupils are prepared very well for their future lives through a strong work ethic in the school and the way in which pupils respond to the high expectations of staff. Pupils achieve high grades and are offered places at prestigious, selective secondary schools. Transition into secondary school is smooth because pupils receive support and encouragement from their teachers and they are familiarised with the secondary system through visits and discussion during their last years at school. Pupils acquire an appreciation of and respect for their own and other cultures in ways that promote tolerance and harmony between different cultural traditions through religious education, PSHE, geography and assemblies. They are interested in other people's points of view and often share ideas and experiences with others. An example of this is a pupil who discussed his visit to Anne Frank's Annexe in Amsterdam with his classmates.

Safeguarding pupils' welfare, health and safety

The provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety is good in school and in the Early Years Foundation Stage. All the issues from the previous inspection have been addressed and there are appropriate policies and procedures in place which are regularly updated. The school has a comprehensive development plan in place to ensure continual improvement in respect of accessibility to the premises with regard to the Disability Discrimination Act 2002. Since the last inspection, a disabled toilet and a ramp into the building from the yard have been installed. There are appropriate ratios of staff to pupils at playtimes and lunchtimes and any incidents are properly recorded. The headteacher and one of the proprietors have undertaken safer recruitment training since the last inspection. The number of complaints registered under the formal procedures is reported to parents and there are now suitable facilities for pupils who are ill. All appropriate checks are made prior to the confirmation of the appointment of staff, including those for qualifications and medical fitness. The school maintains a single central register of all the required checks on staff. Effective safeguarding procedures are in place that meet requirements in school and in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep safe and healthy. Pupils indicate that incidents of bullying are rare, but if they do occur, they are confident that issues will be dealt with effectively. They know how to keep safe, particularly when using the internet. Pupils have a good understanding of how to eat healthily and enjoy opportunities for exercise and participating in sport, particularly through the wide variety of extra-curricular activities. The arrangements for morning and after-school care meet requirements. Pupils are cared for very well by staff who already work in school. Consequently, there is good communication with class teachers and also parents and carers.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

The overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. Children make good progress from their individual starting points and attain above average standards by the time they leave the Reception class. The provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. There is a good balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities both indoors and outdoors. Teaching is consistently good. Planning for adult-led activities and for continuous provision is detailed and opportunities are also taken to follow the individual needs and interests of children. Routines are well established; staff provide good role models and have high expectations of what children can achieve. Children greatly enjoy their learning as shown by their keen participation in role play, based on the story of 'Jack and the Beanstalk'.

The promotion of children's welfare is good. Children have a good awareness of how to live a healthy lifestyle and a good understanding of personal safety. There are

very good relationships between adults and children and, as a result, children are confident in approaching any adult if they have a worry or concern. Children's personal development is outstanding as shown by the way in which they settle in quickly and plan and learn together in harmony with others from a range of different backgrounds. They cooperate very well together and learn to take turns and share equipment. Their behaviour is consistently good and often outstanding.

The leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are very good. Teachers and support staff work closely together as a team, all are highly qualified and the setting has been recognised by the local authority as a centre of good practice, particularly for the great strengths in leadership and management.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets all of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 as amended January 2005.

What the school could do to improve further

While not required by the regulations, the school might wish to consider the following points for development.

- Ensure that evaluations in lessons identify precise next steps in learning for pupils to ensure that their individual needs are more closely met.

Inspection judgement recording form

outstanding	good	satisfactory	inadequate
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The quality of education

Overall quality of education		√		
How well the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of pupils		√		
How effective teaching and assessment are in meeting the full range of pupils' needs		√		
How well pupils make progress in their learning		√		

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Quality of provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	√			
The behaviour of pupils	√			

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The overall welfare, health and safety of pupils		√		
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The quality of the Early Years Foundation Stage provision

How good are the outcomes for children in the EYFS?		√		
What is the quality of provision in the EYFS?		√		
How effectively is the EYFS led and managed?		√		
Overall effectiveness: how well does the school meet the needs of children in the EYFS?		√		

School details

Name of school	The Mount School		
DCSF number	382/6006		
Unique Reference Number (URN)	107787		
Type of school	Preparatory		
Status	Independent		
Date school opened	1950		
Age range of pupils	3-11		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 52	Girls: 69	Total: 121
Number on roll (part-time pupils)	Boys: 1	Girls: 1	Total: 2
Annual fees (day pupils)	£ 5,415		
Address of school	3 Binham Road Edgerton Huddersfield West Yorkshire HD2 2AP		
Telephone number	01484 426432		
Fax number	01484 426432		
Email address	info@themount.org.uk		
Headteacher	Mrs J Goodchild		
Proprietor	Mr N M Smith, Mr P R Gidley, Mrs V M Gidley		
Reporting inspector	Christine Inkster HMI		
Dates of inspection	25 February 2010		