



Mount Pleasant Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 103780
Local Authority Dudley
Inspection number 286754
Inspection dates 28 February –1 March 2007
Reporting inspector Jacqueline Wordsworth HMI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Mount Pleasant Quarry Bank Brierley Hill DY5 2YN
School category	Community	Telephone number	01384 816910
Age range of pupils	4–11	Fax number	01384 816911
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Chair	Stewart Jarvis
Number on roll (school)	399	Headteacher	Jo Hartill
Appropriate authority	The governing body		
Date of previous school inspection	1 November 2001		

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Introduction

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

Description of the school

Mount Pleasant School is a larger than average size primary school. Almost all pupils come from a White British background; there is a small number of pupils of Indian and Black Caribbean origin. The proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties and disabilities is below the national average as is the proportion of pupils who are eligible for free school meals. Overall, children's attainment when they begin school is broadly as expected for their age. The headteacher took up post in April 2006. A new deputy headteacher was appointed in September 2006.

The school provides a family centre. The school holds a number of national awards including Active Mark gold, Arts Mark gold, silver ECO award and Pride of Place award.

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 is a harmonious community that deeply respects the contributions of all its members. It provides a satisfactory education for its pupils underpinned by sound procedures for care, guidance and support. The pupils report that they feel safe and free from bullying because they know whom to turn to for advice if a problem should occur. A particular strength is the provision of a counsellor who regularly attends school to support the most vulnerable pupils.

The pupils show consideration for others in many ways, for example in joining numerous groups such as the Eco group, school council, the 'bully line counsellors' and active playground monitors. It is through such activities that pupils show immense respect for the personal dignity of others. Pupils have a strong sense of right and wrong which they demonstrate through their good behaviour in and outside of lessons. As a result pupils' personal development and well-being, including their spiritual, moral and social education is good.

Cultural development is satisfactory. The pupils know about their local community and have some sense of the wider world, appreciating that there are people who have a different faith or religion to themselves and that this makes people behave in different ways. Nevertheless, there is need to further broaden this range by introducing pupils to a broader range of cultures so that they are better prepared for life in the society they will experience in later life. The pupils achieve satisfactorily and reach average standards, including pupils in the Foundation Stage who enter school ready to learn. The curriculum and teaching are satisfactory but do not always provide sufficient challenge for pupils. Standards in writing across all year groups are lower than in reading, and pupils make slower progress in this area, because there are too few opportunities for pupils to write at length and for sustained periods. Appropriate systems are in place to assess and track pupils' progress throughout the school. However, teachers do not make the most effective use of assessment information, which results in the pupils not being challenged enough, especially those who are more able. Targets are set for literacy and numeracy but pupils do not always know them or how to reach them. The leadership of the headteacher is strong with whole-school self-evaluation diligently carried out. However, some of the judgements made about the quality of the school's provision are more positive than are supported by inspection evidence. The records of the headteacher's lesson observations show that regular checks are made on the quality of teaching. Some useful feedback is given to teachers, however feedback does not always place sufficient emphasis on how well pupils are learning and how the teaching brings this about.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the skills of all leaders and managers in the monitoring of teaching and learning and in evaluating the effectiveness of their actions on raising standards.
- Raise the standard of pupils' writing by offering more opportunities for them to write and by enabling them to be more aware of targets to improve their work.

- Improve the use of assessment information to match work more closely to the needs of individuals, especially higher attaining pupils.
- Enable pupils to understand what it is like to live in a culturally diverse modern society by increasing the opportunities for them to learn about the different cultures, groups and religions in Britain.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Standards as pupils left the school in 2006 were slightly above average and this represents satisfactory achievement. Current standards across the school, as indicated by the school's assessment information and work seen in pupils' workbooks, are broadly average with pupils making satisfactory progress. The pupils enter Reception with skills and abilities that are in line with those of children of their age. They make satisfactory progress, and by the time they leave Foundation Stage the majority have reached the expected levels for their age across the six areas of learning. By the end of Year 2 the pupils reach broadly average standards and achieve satisfactorily. Nevertheless, progress is sometimes inhibited because the teaching does not always place sufficient demands on pupils, especially the higher attaining pupils. Additionally, pupils' writing skills are underdeveloped. This lessens the pupils' ability to express what they have learnt in writing, which in turn lowers teachers' expectations of what pupils can attain. The school has put in place measures to raise standards in writing but these are inconsistently applied across the year groups. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are well supported and make adequate progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The school has a strong commitment to the personal development and well-being of its pupils, resulting in pupils who attend regularly, display positive attitudes towards to learning and involve themselves in all aspects of school life. The school has been awarded a number of national awards for physical activity as well as health promotion, which demonstrates that the pupils have a good understanding of how to lead a healthy life. The pupils state clearly how they have worked with the school's leadership team to increase the availability of healthy food at lunch and snack time. Almost all pupils take advantage of the very good healthy options offered by the school both in the dining hall at lunchtime and in the school playground.

Pupils make an effective contribution to the community, for example Year 5 pupils carry out a range of tasks which help to maintain and improve facilities at the Saltwell Nature Reserve. The School Council members initiate fund raising for a range of charities and show a good understanding of working in a team which contributes well to their future economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Good relationships and behaviour evident in classrooms ensure that pupils concentrate well. All pupils are treated with respect and their contributions are valued. As a result, pupils are motivated, try hard and make satisfactory progress in developing the skills needed for future learning and achievement in the next stage of their education. Teachers clearly explain the tasks that they want the pupils to tackle and provide some opportunities for pupils to discuss ideas with partners. However, the majority of the teaching focuses on whole class teaching with the same starting point and work given to all pupils. The most able pupils are simply given more of the same work which is not challenging enough. Teachers' planning does not yet cater sufficiently for the wide range of ability in each class. The pace of working during lessons is too leisurely and this further lessens the challenge for the more able pupils. Marking of pupils' work is regular but there is insufficient guidance given to let pupils know how well they are doing and how to improve their work, especially in writing.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory. It is balanced and enables pupils to make satisfactory progress in English, mathematics and science. There are some strengths, for example in history pupils in Year 6 produce some good work when they study the Second World War. A recent innovation involving teaching French to Year 6 pupils further broadens the curriculum, adding to their enjoyment of school and extending their cultural understanding. Pupils experience some other cultures through the arts and humanities but this range is too narrow. Visitors to school, visits out of school and a good range of clubs help enrich the curriculum well and contribute significantly to pupils' academic and personal development helping to make school fun. For example, provision in music is strengthened by a visiting musician providing music workshops for pupils throughout the school. These workshops enthuse them to sing and make music to good effect.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory with some strengths. The school works effectively with a wide range of outside agencies, including a visiting counsellor, speech and language therapists and learning support staff. This ensures that those pupils who need additional help are well supported. Induction procedures are good for pupils of all ages who join the school. For example, a new pupil is given a 'buddy' to help them settle into school quickly and contentedly. By the end of Year 6, pupils are well prepared for transferring to their new schools. Well organised visits to their secondary schools take place, including information for pupils with additional needs.

The procedures and systems for child protection are effective: the headteacher has undergone the necessary training and all staff have received the required basic training. Most of the staff are also trained as first aiders and children's safety is a high priority throughout the school and is effectively used. Procedures for monitoring and tracking pupils' learning, including those pupils with additional learning needs, are not always shared with them in lessons. However, pupils' achievements are acknowledged and celebrated, including special pupil of the month awards.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher shows a strong commitment to her school and is assisted by a recently appointed deputy headteacher. This new senior team is beginning to become cohesive; as a result, the school runs smoothly with clear procedures for most of its work, which are generally followed. The school improvement plan is a useful document, which outlines appropriate priorities; importantly, key staff have had an input into its creation. Subject leadership is satisfactory with teachers having a reasonable understanding of the main strengths and weaknesses in their subject. However, they are less sure of how to bring about the necessary improvements. The school has made satisfactory progress since its previous inspection and has sound capacity to continue to improve.

The majority of parents are pleased with what the school offers and how the staff respond to their concerns and views, with no important aspects of the school that cause them concern. Regular questionnaires capture both parents' and pupils' views and there are other appropriate avenues of communication which help shape the way the school develops. Governors are very supportive of the school.

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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
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	3
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	2
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?	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.

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 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 being so welcoming and friendly towards us during our recent visit to your school. We very much enjoyed the opportunity to talk with you and your teachers about how well you are doing. We thought you would like to know what we have said about your school. Overall, we decided it was a satisfactory school.

You behave well and you are kind and considerate to each other. In lessons, we think you listen carefully to what your teachers have to tell you and you try hard to do your best. It was good to see that lots of you are really involved in school life. Many of you take on extra responsibilities such as the Eco team, running the tuck shop, and becoming active playground monitors during break time. We were pleased to see how well you play together at playtime, especially in your very small playground. It is good to see that you have been given Arts Mark gold and Active Mark gold awards. You should be proud of these achievements.

We have made some suggestions to make your school get even better. The leaders can help teachers by checking more carefully on what they are doing well. The school should make more regular checks to see that you are learning as much as you can. By the end of Year 6, many of you do quite well in the tests but we have suggested to your teachers that some of you could do even better, especially in your writing. We have asked the teachers to help you write stories, poems and reports better through more exciting opportunities. When you have completed a piece of work, we would like your teachers to write in your books how you could make it even better. We saw that you know about your local community and have some sense of the wider world. You understand that some people have a different faith or religion to you and that this makes people behave in different ways. We think you could learn more by being introduced to even more cultures so that you are better prepared for life in the society that you will experience in later life.

Many things are good about your school and you, together with your teachers, can make it even better. Please keep working hard and doing the best you can. We wish you well in the future.