

Mount Pleasant Primary School

Mount Pleasant, Quarry Bank, Brierley Hill, DY5 2YN

Inspection dates 23–24 October 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The headteacher gives inspirational leadership. Together with other senior leaders, she has much improved teaching and achievement.
- Governors provide strong leadership. They challenge leaders to account for the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement to ensure improvement.
- Pupils have outstandingly mature attitudes to learning by the time they leave. Attendance is high because pupils love school.
- The care shown to pupils by staff is exceptional. The quality of teamwork between teachers and other adults who support pupils is impressive.
- Teaching is always at least good. Much teaching of writing and mathematics is outstanding.
- Pupils make good progress throughout Key Stages 1 and 2. Some make excellent progress in writing and mathematics.
- Pupils are well prepared for their future lives in modern Britain. Staff reinforce key values regularly. Pupils gain a very keen and mature awareness of spiritual, moral, social and cultural issues.
- Children make an excellent start to learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage, where teaching is outstanding.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The teaching of reading is not outstanding, mainly in Key Stage 1, so pupils do not reach their highest standards in this skill.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 21 lessons, five of which were shared with senior leaders.
- Meetings were held with pupils, representatives of the governing body and staff, including senior and subject leaders.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read, looked at their work in a wide variety of books and talked to them about their learning.
- Too few parents responded to the online questionnaire (Parent View) for results to be analysed. Inspectors looked at the school’s own parental questionnaires and also spoke informally to parents and carers.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documentation, including: the school development plan, policies, and information about pupils’ progress and attainment. They also scrutinised records of how the school sets targets for teachers to improve their work and looked at child protection and safeguarding procedures.

Inspection team

Kath Campbell, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Gerard Ball	Additional Inspector
Sajid Gulzar	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Mount Pleasant is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are White British. Very few speak English as an additional language.
- Just over 10% of pupils in the school are disadvantaged and eligible for pupil premium funding. The proportion is lower than that found nationally. The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after.
- Just under 10% of pupils in the school are disabled or have special educational needs supported at school action. This is below the national average. Approximately 15% of pupils are supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs. This is twice the national average.
- Children join the Nursery on a part-time basis in the term following their third birthday.
- Care is provided for pupils before and after school during term time.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make the teaching of reading outstanding and increase the proportion of pupils, particularly in Key Stage 1, reaching the higher levels in this skill, by making sure that:
 - staff who support pupils with reading have the opportunity to share and learn from some excellent practice in the teaching of reading in the school
 - pupils build up basic reading skills as they move through the school so that they are never held back from gaining the more advanced skills they need to reach higher levels of attainment
 - teachers keep a more careful check on the books that pupils read, particularly the most able in Key Stage 1, to make sure that they are challenging enough to develop reading skills further.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher has very successfully created a positive climate for learning, where both pupils and staff are able to flourish. She ensures that pupils' attitudes to work and behaviour are outstanding. She remains forthright and reflective in evaluating school performance and strives for further improvement.
- The tenacity of the headteacher, deputy headteacher and other senior leaders in their pursuit of excellence has helped to build on the good standards found at the time of the previous inspection. The commitment towards improvement has resulted in, for example, better teaching and a rise in attainment.
- Subject leadership is good. The leadership of special educational needs and that of the Early Years Foundation Stage is particularly strong and reflected in the impressive results achieved in these areas of responsibility. Staff morale is high and there is a shared commitment towards improvement.
- The school development plan targets appropriate priorities. Reading is currently given high profile, particularly that of the most able in Key Stage 1. Training has improved staff professional skills in the teaching of phonics (letters and sounds). Staff who support pupils with reading have not had enough opportunities to share and learn from the excellent practice that inspectors observed in the school. Initiatives to improve the teaching of reading have not run long enough to have had the impact intended.
- Teaching is well led. Checks on the quality of teaching and learning are thorough. Teachers are made accountable for the standards pupils achieve. Systems for tracking pupils' progress are much improved. They identify pupils at risk of underachieving so that support can get pupils quickly back on track.
- The school has prepared well for recent changes to the National Curriculum. New opportunities, including performing arts and a 'Forest School', make a major contribution to pupils' enjoyment of learning and to their personal development. Pupils learn first hand about other religions and cultures. They develop a good understanding of the responsibilities of citizens in modern democratic Britain.
- All groups of pupils achieve well because staff successfully break down barriers to learning so that everyone has equal opportunity to succeed. The school uses pupil premium funding effectively. Disadvantaged pupils have a full part in school life and many benefit greatly from additional help. The impact is clear from the narrowing of the gaps in attainment between these pupils and others. There is no discrimination; relationships across the school are excellent.
- The school makes effective use of its sports funding by providing specialist training for staff. Pupils have more opportunities to take part in competitions and to try new sports. This extended range of activities, combined with a good choice of sporting clubs, contribute well to pupils' healthier lifestyles.
- Links with parents are very strong. Parents' support contributes well to pupils' learning.
- Safeguarding procedures meet current government requirements.
- The local authority knows the school well and provides appropriate support. It has provided funding for enhancing teachers' skills in mathematics. The initiative ensured improved mathematics teaching and the school is currently used as an example in the local authority in the development of mathematics.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governors are well led by an experienced Chair of the Governing Body. They have a good balance of expertise. Governors have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and how it can improve. They ask challenging questions to make sure it is continuing to improve based on their accurate analysis of the data on pupils' attainment and progress. They set priorities for future development.
 - Governors are knowledgeable about the quality of teaching. They support the headteacher in making sure that only teaching that enables pupils to make good progress is rewarded and underperformance is

tackled. Governors manage the performance of teachers effectively.

- Governors keep their skills up to date with training and carry out their statutory duties well. They make sure national requirements for safeguarding and child protection are met.
- The governing body demands the school is effective in promoting tolerance and respect for others.
- Governors check closely that pupil premium funding enables disadvantaged pupils to achieve as well as their classmates. They make sure that sports funding is providing more opportunities for pupils to take part in physical activities.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Pupils develop exceptionally positive attitudes and strong enthusiasm for learning. In every aspect of school life, pupils take responsibility seriously.
- Pupils behave impeccably in lessons, in the playground and around school. They are unfailingly polite, courteous and friendly to visitors. Pupils of all ages get along exceptionally well together. Older pupils care about their younger friends in the Early Years Foundation Stage and pupils of all ages show real appreciation of each other's success.
- Relationships among adults and pupils are exceptionally helpful to learning and to pupils' personal development. There is genuine respect for each other and total trust. As a result, pupils want to do their best because they know it matters to their futures.
- Nearly all pupils have a thirst for knowledge and are keen to do whatever is asked of them – and more. They are highly motivated, answer questions enthusiastically and take great pride in their work.
- Pupils are very proud of their high attendance and say how much they like school and their work. The school keeps a careful eye on any pupils at risk of falling behind to make sure that their attendance remains high.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. The headteacher takes great care to ensure that the school site is secure and that staff are rigorously checked prior to appointment.
- The school is exceptionally caring of its pupils. Pupils know they are part of a deeply caring community where each one of them and each adult is valued as an individual.
- Parents are rightly very confident that the school keeps their children safe. Records show that incidents of bullying are extremely rare and are very quickly dealt with by highly experienced staff. In discussion, pupils are very well informed about different types of bullying.
- Pupils have a very keen awareness of how to keep themselves safe. They recognise potential dangers, including when using computers and the internet. They know who to go to if they have concerns and are adamant that what they say will be taken very seriously and acted upon immediately.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is good and ensures pupils' successful learning and good achievement. The teaching of literacy and mathematics is never less than good and often outstanding, and reflected in pupils' impressive progress and attainment in these skills. The teaching of reading is generally good, but less effective.
- Pupils learn well because teachers plan activities that capture their interest. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and achievement. Work is usually demanding, particularly for the most able. These pupils thrive because they respond exceptionally well to the challenge they are given.

- Teaching has a positive impact on the attitudes to learning of both boys and girls throughout the school. Pupils speak enthusiastically about how much they enjoy their lessons, especially writing, and are proud of their progress. They recognise how much their work has improved.
- Teachers effectively promote the use of correct vocabulary in all subjects. For example, in a Year 2 writing lesson, the teacher and other adults encouraged pupils to choose effective vocabulary in writing to the author, Julia Donaldson, resulting in much perceptive work.
- The teaching of mathematics enthuses and encourages pupils to learn and gain confidence in using number. Pupils of all ages engaged freely in mature discussion of mathematical ideas.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, staff are highly effective and take every opportunity to develop children's language and number skills.
- Although good, the teaching of reading is not as strong as that of writing and mathematics after pupils enter Year 1. Not all pupils in Key Stage 1 read regularly enough with an adult or in groups. Consequently, older pupils lack the same level of maturity when talking about books they have read, as when they discuss their writing or mathematical work.
- Pupils, especially those in Key Stage 1, are not consistently challenged to read widely enough to enhance their skills to reach the highest levels. Fluent younger readers are sometimes held back from making better progress by reading books that are too easy. Consequently, they do not build on their very successful start in the early years provision and gain greater confidence in using reading skills to the same extent they do in other subjects.
- The teamwork between teachers and adults who support pupils that find learning difficult is impressive. Disadvantaged pupils, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs achieve as well as other pupils because they receive exactly the right level of support to learn successfully.
- Teachers assess pupils' levels of understanding well. They adjust learning to make sure that everyone understands the work. Marking is thorough and provides clear suggestions for improvement. Pupils act on this guidance because teachers check pupils' next piece of work to make sure they have taken notice.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children enter the Nursery with skills that are, overall, typical for their age. However, early language skills and social development are weak. They make excellent progress throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage. Last year, an above-average proportion of children achieved a good level of development.
- Pupils make good progress in Key Stages 1 and 2. School data show that attainment in 2014 in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2 improved on that of the previous year. Attainment by Year 2 is close to national standards. This represents good progress given pupils' limited language skills on entry.
- In 2013, at the end of Key Stage 2, attainment was above average. In 2014, attainment in writing and mathematics advanced to be well above the latest national averages; reading was above average. All groups of pupils achieved well.
- Attainment in reading lags behind the improvements in writing and mathematics, particularly in Key Stage 1. Many pupils lack the skills needed to reach higher levels. However, staff training is beginning to have an impact as shown in further improved national Year 1 phonics screening check results in 2014.
- Achievement in writing is good, with much that is outstanding. In Key Stage 1, the school has successfully increased the proportion of pupils reaching higher levels. Younger pupils are confident writers who present their work well. Older boys and girls write with great maturity about, for example, the First World War.
- Pupils' achievement in mathematics is at least good and, at the end of Key Stage 2, sometimes

outstanding. Pupils' current work shows impressive mathematical understanding. Their mathematical vocabulary is exceptional. By the time they leave, older pupils develop very mature mathematical thinking.

- The progress of disadvantaged pupils compares well with that of others in the school, but varies between subjects. In 2013, at the end of Year 6, there was no gap between the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and their classmates in mathematics. In reading, disadvantaged pupils were about one term ahead of their classmates but almost two terms behind in writing. When compared with all pupils nationally, the latest validated data show that disadvantaged pupils attained above the national average in all subjects.
- The progress of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is at least good. These pupils are very determined to succeed. The support they receive within the classroom and at other times is carefully directed and helps them to achieve well.
- Throughout the school the most-able pupils make good progress. Most reach higher levels in writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6. Reading attainment is a little behind their other skills but teachers are increasingly providing them with more challenging tasks and materials. In discussion, these pupils demonstrate high levels of motivation to do their best so that they can reach the highest level possible.

The early years provision

is outstanding

- The quality of Early Years Foundation Stage provision has strengthened since the previous inspection. By the time they move into Year 1, children are very eager to learn and are very well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- Excellent leadership makes sure that resources are used very effectively and that children's progress is meticulously monitored. The seamless teamwork between teachers and other adults contributes a great deal to the outstanding progress that children make.
- Changes to the teaching of reading have already had a very positive impact on standards in Nursery and Reception, but have not yet had equal impact throughout the rest of the school.
- Children thrive in the vibrant learning areas. Staff provide many impressive opportunities for children to be creative, to develop their speech and language skills and to become increasingly confident learners.
- The quality of care is excellent. Highly knowledgeable staff make sure that children are extremely safe. Children newly arrived in the Nursery receive exactly the right amount of support they need to settle quickly. Parents appreciate the opportunity to become involved in their children's education from the start.
- The achievement of all groups of children is outstanding. Their behaviour is excellent and carries through to the rest of the school.
- Through excellent teaching that continually challenges all to do their best, including the most able, children make very rapid progress. They learn to speak clearly, to wait their turn, work cooperatively, make sensible choices and share. Staff make learning absorbing and fun.

What inspection judgements mean

School	Grade	Judgement	Description
	Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
	Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	103780
Local authority	Dudley
Inspection number	448259

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 of pupils on the school roll	344
Appropriate authority	The local authority
Chair	Stewart Jarvis
Headteacher	Jo Hartill
Date of previous school inspection	29 September 2009
Telephone number	01384 816910
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