

The Mount School

3 Binham Road, Edgerton, Huddersfield, West Yorkshire HD2 2AP

Inspection dates

12–14 December 2018

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The proprietors are committed to improving the school further. They ensure that the school complies with the independent school standards.
- The leadership has ensured that the quality of teaching is good. Consequently, pupils make good progress from their different starting points.
- There are a range of opportunities for pupils to write at length in English. Opportunities to write at length in other subjects are more limited.
- Pupils relish the chance to take on extra responsibility in their roles as eco-monitors and house captains, and in providing help to younger pupils. These opportunities help to develop their leadership skills.
- Pupils feel safe in school. Parents and carers who made their views known agree that their children feel safe.
- Children's phonics development is prioritised and taught every day. However, there is a lack of consistency in approaches to the teaching of phonics between the early years and Year 1.
- Support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is increasingly effective. However, most-able pupils are not consistently challenged in their learning.
- Leaders have ensured that the curriculum is broad and balanced. Pupils appreciate the range of enrichment and extra-curricular activities available.
- Staff safeguarding training is regularly updated. However, records do not consistently reflect the actions taken by the school to safeguard pupils.
- The proprietors and leaders are clear about the school's strengths and areas for further improvement. However, the school's improvement plan does not identify clear success criteria and measurable targets to evaluate the effect of actions.
- Children in the early years are happy and well cared for. Children make good progress and are well prepared for Year 1. Leaders agree that improving outdoor learning would enhance children's learning experiences.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - all records precisely identify the actions taken by the school to safeguard pupils
 - improvement plans identify clear success criteria and milestones to check the effect of actions taken to improve the quality of teaching and pupils' progress.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by:
 - increasing opportunities for pupils to write at greater length in subjects other than English
 - providing greater challenge for the most able pupils so that they think more deeply about their learning
 - further developing the range of opportunities for children in the early years to practise their basic skills – such as in number and early writing – outdoors
 - ensuring that there is greater consistency to the approach to the teaching of phonics between the early years and Year 1.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The proprietors are ambitious for the school. They are passionate about providing a positive learning environment for pupils. They ensure that the independent school standards are met and that the building and site are well maintained. For example, they have recently invested in a new library with a wide range of books for pupils to enjoy.
- After a period of uncertainty about the future of the school, staff now feel buoyant. They understand the priorities for improvement and are fully behind the vision of the proprietors.
- Staff have access to professional development and training. Staff appreciate the opportunities to develop their teaching practice. Teachers made clear during the inspection that they would welcome the opportunity to establish links with other schools so that good practice can be shared.
- Leaders and the proprietors ensure that the curriculum is broad and balanced. The rationale for the curriculum has been well considered by leaders. There are a wide range of opportunities for pupils to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding, for example through the numerous enrichment activities and educational visits. Leaders are currently reviewing the curriculum to ensure a wider range of cross-curricular links, including opportunities for pupils to write at length in subjects other than English.
- Most parents hold positive views about the school. All parents who responded to the Ofsted online survey, Parent View, would recommend the school. Parents told inspectors that communication between home and school is now stronger. Parents also talk positively about the individual support provided by staff to pupils.
- The school improvement plan identifies the main priorities for improvement. However, the plan lacks precision about how leaders check the effect of actions to improve the quality of teaching and pupils' learning and progress.

Governance

- The school does not have a governing body.
- The proprietors have a background in education. They provide effective challenge and support through their regular meetings with the headteacher and deputy headteacher. Minutes of meetings show that arrangements to safeguard pupils are discussed at every meeting. The proprietors frequently discuss the progress of pupils with the headteacher to ensure that appropriate intervention is put in place if required.
- The proprietors have an office on the school site. They visit the school daily. As a result, they have a good understanding of the strengths of the school and the areas for further improvement.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school's safeguarding policy refers to current government requirements and is available to parents on the school's website.
- Staff safeguarding training is regularly updated and their knowledge is tested out through quizzes and discussions at weekly staff meetings. As a result, staff understand that safeguarding children is – as they say – 'everyone's responsibility'. Staff are clear about the important role they play in keeping children safe and passing on any concerns, no matter how small.
- Pupils told inspectors that they feel safe in school. Parents who responded to Parent View agree that their children feel safe in school.
- Leaders and the proprietors ensure that appropriate risk assessments are carried out for the school site and for educational visits.
- The designated senior leader for child protection works with external agencies to support vulnerable pupils and their families when required. Despite this, records do not consistently and precisely reflect the actions taken by the school to safeguard pupils.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The quality of teaching is good. Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge. They have consistently high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Classroom routines are well established.
- Teachers probe pupils' understanding through effective questioning. Because of positive relationships between pupils and their teachers, pupils are confident to answer questions and contribute to class discussions.
- Teachers provide regular opportunities for pupils to discuss their learning. Pupils are keen to support and help each other. For example, in a Year 2 English lesson visited, pupils eagerly discussed in pairs how they could improve their piece of writing.
- Teachers provide a number of opportunities for pupils to write at greater length in their English lessons. During the inspection, Year 6 pupils were enthusiastic about producing a piece of descriptive writing based on an advert. Effective teacher and pupil modelling of this writing ensured that pupils were clear about the standards expected. Nevertheless, opportunities for pupils to practise their writing skills in subjects other than English are more limited.
- Teachers understand the needs of pupils with SEND. As a result, these pupils make good progress because they are well supported by their teachers and teaching assistants.
- Pupils told inspectors that they enjoy their lessons. For instance, pupils spoke enthusiastically about conducting experiments in science lessons. They also enjoy the range of sporting activities that they participate in during physical education lessons.
- The most able pupils are not routinely challenged in their learning. At times, teachers do not pitch activities at the right level. Consequently, some pupils can drift off-task.

Teachers do not consistently challenge pupils to think more deeply about their learning and maximise their progress, particularly the most able pupils.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils enjoy the wide range of leadership roles available to them. Inspectors observed pupils carrying out their roles as prefects, eco-monitors and register monitors. Leaders place high importance on encouraging children to take on responsibility from an early age. Pupils relish this responsibility.
- Pupils told inspectors that there is an adult in school they could talk to if they had any worries or concerns. Pupils also told inspectors that the head boy and head girl are very visible around the school and they are also available for pupils to talk to.
- Pupils have a good understanding of different types of bullying. School leaders record any incidents of bullying, including details of follow-up actions. Pupils told inspectors that bullying is rare and, if it does happen, it is dealt with effectively by staff. A few parents who responded to Parent View did not share this view.
- Pupils are respectful and tolerant of difference. After a recent review of the curriculum, leaders are planning additional opportunities for pupils to learn about the protected characteristics.
- Pupils enjoy learning about different religions and cultures. Some Year 2 pupils told inspectors that they enjoy learning about the 'country of the week'. Older pupils understand the importance of British values. Pupils in Year 6 spoke confidently about their understanding of democracy. Some pupils also take an active interest in current affairs.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. There is a calm environment throughout the school.
- Pupils have a clear understanding of the school's sanctions and rewards system. Pupils and parents told inspectors that pupils behave well. From scrutiny of the school's behaviour records and visits to all classes, inspectors agree that low-level disruption is rare. Pupils show positive attitudes towards their learning. However, when pupils are not challenged sufficiently – particularly the most able – their attention dwindles and they lose focus on their learning.
- Pupils are exceptionally polite to visitors. They are enthusiastic about talking about their school and the difference it makes to them. Pupils told an inspector, 'This is an amazing environment and we are proud to be part of this school.'
- Pupils wear their uniforms with pride. Pupils enjoy coming to school. As a result, pupils' attendance is in line with the national average.
- Most pupils are confident learners. They contribute well to class discussions. Pupils ask, as well as answer, questions. Pupils work well with their peers. They are keen to help and support each other.

- At breaktimes and lunchtimes, pupils are well supervised. They play well together, ensuring that no one is left out. The new library – named by pupils as The Book Hive – is well used at breaktimes and lunchtimes.
- The proprietors ensure that the school site is well cared for. Consequently, pupils respect and look after their environment.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Most pupils make good progress from their different starting points. Pupils attain particularly well in mathematics. Pupils have increasing opportunities to problem-solve and reason in mathematics lessons.
- There is a culture of reading. Pupils enjoy reading and they read regularly. The new library is well used by pupils and contains a range of books supporting pupils' understanding of diversity and life in modern Britain.
- The focus on correct pencil grip and the early introduction of cursive script are strongly supporting pupils' early fluidity in writing.
- Pupils with SEND are increasingly well supported due to a member of staff taking on the role of special educational needs coordinator (SENCo). The SENCo is developing more effective interventions for pupils with SEND. These include training for staff on the specific needs of these pupils. As a result, pupils with SEND make good progress from their starting points.
- A much higher proportion of pupils in Year 6 achieve the expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics than found nationally. As a result, pupils are well prepared for their move to secondary school. However, most-able pupils are not consistently challenged to achieve the higher standards.
- Pupils in all year groups have a range of opportunities to write for different audiences, purposes and styles in English lessons. However, work in pupils' books shows that teachers miss opportunities to develop pupils' extended writing skills in other subjects, such as history, geography and religious education.
- Leaders place high importance on the development of pupils' early reading. This includes the daily teaching of phonics. Nonetheless, some pupils in Year 1 are given books that are not well matched to their phonics knowledge. There is a lack of consistency in the teaching of phonics between the early years and Year 1.

Early years provision

Good

- Leaders ensure that the independent school standards for the early years are met.
- As a result of effective teaching, a higher proportion of children than found nationally achieve a good level of development by the end of kindergarten.
- The two early years teachers are aspirational for children. They have a clear vision for the early years curriculum. They understand the strengths and further areas for improvement.
- Children are happy and well cared for. Staff encourage good manners and use praise effectively. As a result, children are kind to each other.

- Teachers place high importance on reading to children every day. Effective phonics teaching in kindergarten ensures that children get off to a good start in reading.
- Parents are well informed about the progress that their child is making. Parents spoke positively to inspectors about the communication between home and school.
- The rich environment indoors enables children to develop their early writing and number skills through child- and adult-led activities. However, teachers agree that the outside area does not reflect the environment found indoors. Teachers have plans in place to enhance children's learning outside.

School details

Unique reference number	107787
DfE registration number	382/6006
Inspection number	10055376

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Type of school	Other independent school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	106
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Chris Sellers and Natalie Sellers
Chair	Chris Sellers
Headteacher	Jan Brook
Annual fees (day pupils)	£7,890
Telephone number	01484 426 432
Website	www.themount.org.uk
Email address	info@themount.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	9–11 February 2016

Information about this school

- The school is a small independent day school for boys and girls.
- The previous standard inspection took place in February 2016.
- The new proprietors took over the school in September 2017.
- There are no pupils who have an education, health and care plan.
- The school refers to early years as lower kindergarten (children aged three to four) and kindergarten (children aged four to five).

Information about this inspection

- The inspection was carried out over two and a half days. The school was given notice of the inspection the day before.
- Inspectors visited a number of lessons during the inspection, covering all year groups. Inspectors also scrutinised the work in pupils' books.
- An inspector met with the proprietors.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils informally during breaktimes, lunchtimes and lesson visits. An inspector also met formally with pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6.
- An inspector listened to some pupils read.
- Inspectors spoke to a number of parents during the inspection at the start of the school day. Inspectors also took account of the 22 responses to the Ofsted online survey, Parent View, including the 16 free-text responses. They considered the two responses to the staff survey.
- An inspector toured the school site with the proprietors and the headteacher.
- Inspectors scrutinised a wide range of documentation, including the school improvement plan and self-evaluation document, information about pupils' progress, attendance and behaviour, documents relating to safeguarding and the school's records of the recruitment checks made on staff.

Inspection team

Michele Costello, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Fiona Dixon

Ofsted Inspector

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