

The Mount School

3 Binham Road, Edgerton, Huddersfield HD2 2AP

Inspection dates	9–11 February 2016
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 and headteacher have a clear vision and ambition to provide the highest quality of education for pupils in a safe and caring environment. This motivates staff, who share this vision, and generates a positive ethos throughout the school's work.
- Proprietors have a detailed knowledge of the day-to-day work of the school. They and leaders work with determination to ensure that all the independent school standards are met.
- Proprietors and leaders check how well pupils are taught and make progress. They take effective steps to improve teaching and pupils' achievement. As a consequence, the school is improving.
- Pupils respond very positively to their learning about people of different faiths or who come from different cultures. Pupils value their education and the opportunities for leadership.
- The headteacher and senior leaders ensure that the rich curriculum meets the learning needs of pupils and provides good opportunities for pupils' personal growth and academic achievement.
- Pupils enjoy their learning and behave well. They say they feel safe and secure at school and that they are cared for well. Parents agree. As a result, pupils' attendance is high.
- Good leadership in the early years ensures that children achieve well, develop good personal and social skills and are kept safe.
- Teaching is good and improving. Pupils achieve well, making good progress across a range of subjects.
- Proprietors and staff make effective arrangements to safeguard pupils so that they are safe.
- The curriculum is highly effective. Pupils demonstrate a very good understanding of right and wrong. They know how laws are made and learn about democracy in practical ways. They are tolerant and respectful of others and celebrate difference.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Proprietors and leaders do not always make use of all the information available to them to evaluate the school's performance with precision.
- Teachers do not always move the learning of the most-able pupils on quickly enough to deepen their understanding and as a result, a very small number of the most-able pupils do not make all the progress they could, particularly in Key Stage 1.

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?

- The proprietors should ensure that they make full and precise use of the findings of monitoring and evaluation of the school's performance, so they can challenge and hold school leaders more rigorously to account.
- Further improve leadership and management by ensuring that all key policies, for example the school's marking and feedback policy, are fully developed and implemented consistently by teachers.
- Improve the quality of teaching so that a greater proportion of pupils, particularly the most able, make more than expected progress, by:
 - developing teachers' skills further, so that they routinely ask questions that deepen pupils' understanding
 - providing more frequent opportunities for pupils to write extended passages across a range of subjects.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The proprietors and leaders set a clear direction for the school and ensure that all the independent school standards are met. They have high aspirations for pupils to develop their personal skills and gain knowledge that prepares them well for the next steps in education. Staff and pupils alike share in this endeavour. As a consequence, staff are motivated, pupils achieve well and are happy and feel safe at school.
- The proprietors and leaders have a sharp focus on ensuring that pupils can thrive in a safe environment and that the arrangements to safeguard them are effective. All the required checks to ensure only suitable adults work with children are carried out thoroughly and recorded properly. Staff are trained well to recognise signs of abuse or neglect. Staff know what to do if they have a concern. The school's safeguarding leaders work effectively with other teams and agencies to keep pupils safe. Leaders make sure that pupils learn about how to deal with risks themselves, for example how to use the internet safely.
- Leaders check on the quality of teaching and provide staff with feedback to help them develop their practices. A range of opportunities for continuing professional development, including for safeguarding and first aid, is provided. Leaders are beginning to make good use of strengths in teaching to share good practice more widely. This is sustaining and improving the impact of teaching on pupils' progress.
- Leaders do not ensure that teachers deepen the most-able pupils' understanding by asking probing questions.
- Leaders do not insist that the school's feedback policy is implemented consistently by teachers.
- Proprietors make sure that all the checks and tests, needed to ensure that equipment and installations are safe, are carried out regularly. They arrange for regular services, for example on the fire alarm system and ensure that fire drills are carried out at regular intervals. The site is very well kept, is litter free and access to the building is well regulated. Leaders and staff insist on good conduct and supervise pupils appropriately, which helps to keep pupils safe. As a result, pupils behave well, are considerate of others and feel well-looked-after by all the adults at the school.
- Leaders have developed a well-thought-through curriculum, which provides a rich range of learning opportunities that nurture personal development and academic achievement. The curriculum ensures that pupils have ample opportunity to develop healthy lifestyles by learning about healthy food. Pupils enjoy a well-planned programme in physical education and have a wide range of after-school clubs that complement their learning and enrich their development.
- Leaders have recently developed the citizenship programme to supplement pupils' learning in personal, social and health education. Alongside aspects of learning in other subjects, leaders ensure that pupils learn about religious beliefs, cultures, and public institutions, governance and law making. In actively promoting fundamental British values in this way, leaders help pupils to be respectful and tolerant of differences. This helps prepare pupils very well for life in modern Britain.
- Leaders go out of their way to ensure that different traditions, beliefs and cultures are celebrated and use the diverse range of pupils' backgrounds to bring this to life in the everyday work of the school. Leaders recognise that further development is needed to ensure that opportunities are provided for pupils to learn about different family arrangements and relationships in an age-appropriate and sensitive manner.
- Leadership in the early years is effective in providing good-quality resources and opportunities for children to develop and achieve well, so that they are well prepared for their transition into Year 1. Leaders have not developed systems to provide enough opportunities for pupils to follow their interests and aptitudes, and explore their ideas fully. In the early years, attainment is well above the national average and children make very good progress from their starting points.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Proprietors have a very good knowledge of the day-to-day work of school because they work on site several days per week and participate in leading some after-school activities.
 - Proprietors evaluate pupils' achievements and often find out information about pupils' learning by looking at work books and by talking with pupils about their learning. Proprietors use this information to set the strategic direction of the school and to identify with the headteacher the key areas for development. However, the proprietors do not always analyse performance with enough precision to be able to hold school leaders fully to account.
 - Directors take direct responsibility for the performance management of the headteacher and have an oversight of the staff's performance management.

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The proprietors and headteacher meet very regularly to check that safeguarding arrangements are effective and that the site and equipment are safe. The school's safeguarding policy is available on the school's internet website. It is up to date and has regard for the current advice of the Secretary of State. All other required policies are similarly available on the website and paper copies are available from the school office.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- Overall, including in the early years, teaching is good. As a consequence, pupils throughout the school are well prepared for the next stage in their education. They grow in knowledge, skills and understanding and develop personal skills, which equip them well for future challenges.
- Consistently good teaching, ably supported by skilled and well-directed teaching assistants in the early years classrooms, means that pupils from all starting points make good progress and attainment is high.
- Consistently good teaching in Key Stage 2 enables pupils to make good progress and achieve well. A very high proportion of pupils, committed to their learning and engaged by the activities teachers plan for them, make better than expected progress and attain very well. However, in some instances, teachers do not challenge the most-able pupils to achieve the very highest levels of which they are capable.
- Teachers and other classroom staff do not take every opportunity to pose questions that go beyond checking pupils' understanding, so as to prompt deeper thinking, in particular for the most-able pupils. This has the effect of slightly restricting their intellectual curiosity, their learning and progress towards attaining the very highest standards of which they are capable.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Key Stage 1 is increasingly effective. In 2015, the proportion of pupils achieving at levels expected for their age was much higher than the national average. However, too few pupils attained at higher levels, especially in mathematics. Consistently good teaching is now leading to better rates of progress, so that more pupils are on track to achieve higher levels at the end of the key stage. Good practice is beginning to be shared and this is leading to further improvement in the quality of teaching overall.
- Teachers know their pupils very well. They establish positive working relationships with pupils. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and application to learning. As a result, pupils settle quickly to learning activities, enjoy their learning and participate actively. Pupils work effectively, individually and together. Overall, this contributes to the good progress pupils make.
- Good use of subject knowledge means that teachers plan lessons that capture pupils' interest. As a result, pupils apply themselves to their work and are proud of it. A range of pupils told inspectors about the work they are most proud of. These pieces came from a range of subjects, from design technology, to science, English and mathematics.
- Phonics (the sounds that letters make) is taught effectively in the early years. This helps young children develop skills at the earliest stages of reading and writing. These important skills are retained and re-used by older children to support their reading of unfamiliar words. Teachers organise reading well and check on pupils' progress by listening to them read. Pupils enjoy reading and do so with confidence and enthusiasm. They are not put off by tricky words and use their skills well to sound out words and make sense of them.
- Good teaching helps pupils develop the skills to write in a variety of styles and for different purposes. Pupils' books show that they write with increasing accuracy and skill. The quality of their language develops and examples of the high level of writing were seen, particularly in Key Stage 2. However, teachers do not use all the opportunities they have to plan tasks for extended writing across a range of subjects.
- Teachers use questioning well to check that pupils understand and help them move forward if there are misconceptions. Teachers and teaching assistants provide good support, whenever they see that pupils need help and when pupils ask for it.
- Teachers encourage pupils to ask questions. This helps pupils to develop confidence in their learning and a readiness to find out more. Skilful questioning in a religious studies lesson elicited a wide range of responses about what more pupils wanted to know about Sikhism. This set the scene for future learning, which goes beyond simple facts and addresses key principles and beliefs. In an early years activity, skilful questioning helped children playing with their dinosaur park model to develop their ideas and practise their communication skills as they described what was happening and why.
- Pupils know how well they are doing because teachers check their learning through a combination of periodic assessments and by giving feedback on pupils' current work. Pupils respond positively to feedback and, as a consequence, they improve their work. However, not all teachers give enough precise advice on

what to do and how, contrary to the school's policy on marking and feedback, so that pupils, especially the most able, are helped to make consistently rapid progress.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare are good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils develop good levels of self-confidence as they move through the school. This is because leaders and staff provide regular opportunities for pupils to celebrate their achievements and develop their resilience as learners. Through music, drama, and presentations in lessons, pupils develop the confidence to speak and perform in front of others and work effectively in collaborative groups.
- The school provides opportunities for leadership, for example pupils now take charge of distributing fresh fruit at breaktime, because they thought the previous system did not work very well. In this way, pupils learn to take responsibility and contribute to their school community.
- Pupils enjoy running around the well-kept extensive grounds. Younger pupils in the early years continue to explore their surroundings and engage in imaginative games with one another. All these contribute to pupils' well-being.
- The school's curriculum ensures that pupils learn about how to be healthy and fit. As a result, pupils are able to explain what they do to be healthy and keep fit. They take part in physical education activities enthusiastically and many attend after-school clubs. Pupils show a growing maturity and sense of responsibility to the wider society. A large number of pupils are members of the school's 'Eco-Club'. These pupils use the knowledge and understanding they gain there to lead assemblies for other pupils, for example, so they too can learn about environmental issues.
- The planned learning in the curriculum does not give as much emphasis to mental health as it does to other areas of health, but is effective in promoting pupils' emotional well-being. Pupils say they are happy in school and that they feel safe and cared for well. They learn about positive relationships, but do not have a suitably well-developed understanding of different family arrangements or same-sex relationships.
- Pupils have a well-developed sense of right and wrong and this helps keep them safe. They learn about bullying and know that it is unacceptable. Pupils respond very positively to the good examples and high expectations of staff and are keen to tell inspectors that their school is about respect for others. They know about the risks associated with using the internet and how to keep themselves safe both at school and out of school. Pupils are confident that should there be an instance of bullying it would be dealt with promptly and thoroughly by staff.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- While well-supervised, pupils of all ages show they are able to regulate their own behaviours and act with consideration towards others.
- Pupils enjoy their social activities together at breaktimes and during lunchtime. They chat and play happily together. They show consideration for each other, and pupils who want to play more energetic games do so carefully away from younger pupils and those who want to spend time chatting quietly.
- Behaviour during lessons is typically good. Pupils apply themselves to their learning tasks very well. They are keen to participate and ask interesting questions. Pupils are set and complete homework regularly.
- Overall, pupils' positive attitudes contribute well to their learning, although, occasionally, some work can be less well presented than it should be.
- Some pupils are not sufficiently self-assured in their learning and sometimes rely on a teacher's direction and expectations. On the rare occasion when expectations slip, some pupils' attention and application to their work wanes. When teachers do not demand enough of the most-able pupils, pupils do not seek out ways that will enable them to excel in their learning.
- The high levels of care and positive day-to-day experience of school lead pupils to attend very well. Attendance rates are well above the national averages for all pupils and for boys and girls. There are no pupils who are persistently absent, and no pupil has been excluded from the school in the past four years.

Outcomes for pupils

are good

- Pupils make strong progress from their starting points, because the well-thought-through curriculum is underpinned by good-quality teaching, good behaviour and positive attitudes to learning. Pupils' progress is consistent across a range of subjects. The secure development of sound knowledge, skills and understanding leads to high levels of attainment at the end of the early years and at the end of Key Stage 2.
- However, a small number of the most-able pupils do not make all the progress of which they are capable, because teachers do not always challenge pupils' thinking and deepen their understanding to move them on quickly enough.
- There are currently no disabled pupils or those who have a statement of special educational needs, or who are disadvantaged. Teachers make sure, nonetheless, that they plan learning carefully for both girls and boys who have different starting points to help them make good progress. As a result, the proportions of pupils making and exceeding expected progress in English and mathematics are consistently above the national average overall. Pupils' work, reviewed by inspectors, and the school's checks on their progress show similarly high rates of progress for pupils in current year groups.
- Attainment in 2015 was very high overall and well above the national average. Over three quarters of the children in the early years achieved a good level of development. Recent changes in the planned learning and effective leadership in the early years have driven improvement forward. As a consequence, this proportion has already been surpassed in the current school year.
- Attainment at Key Stage 1 is well above the national average overall. However, in 2015, a smaller proportion of pupils than the national average attained the higher levels in writing and mathematics, because a small number of the most-able pupils did not make all the progress of which they were capable. However, work in pupils' book shows that this weaker area has been quickly addressed and pupils are making rapid progress.
- A significantly greater proportion of Year 6 pupils achieved at higher levels than the national expectation in English and mathematics in 2015. This confirms a strong trend of high attainment over several years in Key Stage 2, and this positive pattern is on track to be repeated in the school this year.
- School leaders and staff have ensured that from the very earliest ages, pupils read widely and frequently. Effective phonics teaching in the early years helps children develop skills, which they readily re-use later to help them decode and make sense of unfamiliar words in their reading books. As a consequence, pupils read with increasing fluency and convey good levels of understanding as they progress through the school.
- The high levels of achievement in the early years and in Key Stage 2 ensure that pupils are very well prepared for the next stages in their education, as they move from Kindergarten into Key Stage 1 and eventually into secondary school.

Early years provision

is good

- Effective leaders in the early years work closely with the headteacher and proprietors to ensure that all the independent school standards relating to the early years provision are met. The provision meets all the statutory welfare requirements. Careful checks made when staff are appointed help keep children safe. Child protection policies and procedures are checked and reviewed regularly.
- Staff are careful to gather relevant information from parents about children as they start at the Kindergarten, so they can plan learning that corresponds well to children's interests and aptitudes. Staff carefully record children's development and shape activities to help pupils make good progress.
- Parents are kept up to date with their children's development on a daily basis and through more formal reports. However, there are not enough opportunities for children to develop their own learning and pursue their interests in less-structured ways.
- The well-organised and planned curriculum ensures that children, whatever their starting points, are provided with well-targeted support and challenge that enables them to achieve well in all aspects of the early years programme. For example, children enjoyed moving rice and beans with a spoon or with chopsticks to help them develop fine motor skills.
- Children from a wide range of backgrounds and cultures are encouraged from the start to work collaboratively, for example, in tidying up materials and carrying them safely. Staff are vigilant and help children to understand how to move around the provision safely, take care of each other, and become increasingly independent. Staff take great care to ensure that the site is safe and that accidents, such as

bumps and bruises, are minimised.

- Children are happy and feel safe. They chat happily, exchanging ideas and play together to construct a police station to keep people safe. Such activities help children recognise the importance of safety and the role of public services in their lives and contribute to their good behaviour.
- Teachers and support staff are observant and adept at asking questions and prompting children to think about choices, make decisions and describe what they are doing and thinking. This motivates them well and develops a wide range of personal and communication skills and promotes their independence.
- A very high proportion of children, well above the national average, is on track to make and exceed a good level of development this year. This represents a further improvement on the high standards achieved in 2015.

School details

Unique reference number	107787
Inspection number	10008554
DfE registration number	382/6006

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	Preparatory school
School status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	99
Number of part time pupils	None
Proprietor	Peter Gidley, Virginia Gidley, Nigel Smith,
Chair	Nigel Smith
Headteacher	Jan Brook
Annual fees (day pupils)	£6,585
Telephone number	01484 426432
Website	www.themount.org.uk
Email address	info@themount.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	February 2010

Information about this school

- The Mount School is a small non-selective independent day school for boys and girls aged three to 11 years.
- There are currently 99 pupils on roll, including in the Kindergarten. The school offers before- and after-school care. The great majority of pupils come from the local town and surrounding areas.
- The school is located in a large former private home, with large grounds that offer ample opportunities for physical education and outdoor learning. The main assembly hall is in a separate building as are additional buildings for some subjects, such as music and science.
- The school was last inspected in February 2010.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provisions for its pupils.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors held discussions with the proprietors and headteacher of the school to check the independent school standards were met. Discussions were also held with other leaders and staff to consider how well the school is improving and whether arrangements for safeguarding were secure.
- Inspectors visited all classrooms during lessons to see how well pupils learn and behave. Inspectors also reviewed the work in pupils' books and considered the school's records of checks on pupils' learning to check the progress that they make. During discussions with pupils in lessons, during social time and at a meeting with them, inspectors found out how pupils apply themselves to their learning, and understand how to keep themselves safe.
- Inspectors took into account the 15 responses to the online questionnaire used by Ofsted to gather parents' views, called Parent View. They also considered the outcomes of the school's own survey of parents and talked with some parents at the beginning and end of the school day. Inspectors also took into account the views of those staff members who completed the staff questionnaire.
- A wide range of documents was examined, including policies and procedures to safeguard children and keep them safe, and the school's records of pupils' progress.

Inspection team

Chris Campbell, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Jonathan Brown

Her Majesty's Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

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