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6 March 2017

Mr Bernard Cassidy  
Headteacher  
Mount Primary School  
Mount Pleasant Road  
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Merseyside  
CH45 5HU

Dear Mr Cassidy

### **Short inspection of Mount Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 14 February 2017, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. The visit was the first short inspection carried out since the school was judged to be good in September 2011.

#### **This school continues to be good.**

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Your exceptional leadership has created a highly effective self-improving school. You also work with leaders of other schools to support their schools' improvement. You and the deputy headteacher analyse school data in detail. As a result, you have a very accurate understanding of what is working well in the school and what needs improving. You strive for excellence in all areas of school life. Governors and staff share your drive and ambition for the school.

Pupils appear confident, happy and engaged. They speak very positively about school and the opportunities they have to learn. Pupils' behaviour is good. In addition to the broad curriculum, school leaders provide pupils with a stimulating range of curriculum enrichment activities, delivered by specialists. You have a strong focus on spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. Consequently, your pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. The responses on Parent View show that the vast majority of parents are very positive about the school and say their child is happy, safe and making good progress. Parents to whom I spoke shared the same positive view and described the school as 'brilliant' and 'fantastic'.

Staff feel well supported by senior leaders and staff morale is high. Governors know the school well. They value the fact you provide them with lots of detailed information about the school. This has enabled them to effectively challenge

and support you. At the time of the last inspection, the school was asked to raise the expectations of all staff so that practice was consistent across the school. This was specifically in relation to pupils' handwriting and presentation of work, and maximising the use of time in lessons. You have successfully addressed these issues. Presentation in work books, including handwriting, is of a high standard. Teachers' marking demonstrates they have high expectations for pupils. During my time in school, all pupils were engaged in their lessons and no learning time appeared to be lost.

Although pupils are reaching and exceeding expected standards at key stage 1, attainment is still below national average for pupils working at greater depth. You rightly identify that teachers need to raise their expectations to make sure that pupils make more rapid progress and attain more highly.

Your current attendance data shows that attendance has improved, and that it is presently in line with the national figure. Your persistent absence figure has also improved due to the effective systems you have in place to monitor and support pupils. However, your published attendance is still slightly below the national average and your school attendance figure remain vulnerable to changes in the patterns of attendance of a small number of pupils.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

- School leaders are vigilant about all aspects of safeguarding and all systems of recording information are detailed and robust.
- Staff and governors are highly trained and have all completed Level 2 safeguarding training. There is a rolling programme of training for staff that includes training on anti-bullying, the 'Prevent' duty, female genital mutilation and child sexual exploitation. Training is tailored to the roles of staff. For example, administrators complete data protection training.
- Pupils' records show a robust internal referral system. Staff report concerns, no matter how small, as they know a minor issue may form part of a bigger safeguarding concern. The designated safeguarding lead has no hesitation in referring pupils to social services. Referrals are followed up and escalated to more senior colleagues if needed.
- E-safety is taught and regularly revisited within lessons. Senior leaders promote the safe use of the internet, within and out of school. They have provided workshops to parents on internet safety. Secure filtering systems are in place and are used effectively to monitor any potential misuse of pupils and staff.

### **Inspection findings**

- The recently appointed leader of reception and key stage 1 is beginning to have an impact. Teachers have been challenged to raise their expectations about what pupils can achieve in Reception and key stage 1. As a result, teachers have a sharper focus on age-related expectations and are beginning

to present pupils with more challenging work.

- Regular pupil progress meetings are used to successfully identify pupils not on track to meet their targets. The rigorous tracking systems are evidence of the school mantra: 'Keep up, not catch up.' Pupils do not fall behind, due to the rapid implementation of tailored interventions.
- Pupils of all abilities have a good knowledge of phonics and can use phonic skills to read and spell words. Pupils rapidly gain skills in reading and can read with confidence. More-able pupils read with fluency and expression, and could answer questions about the text and meaning of words, when I talked with them.
- School leaders know that pupils in key stage 1 are attaining less well than pupils in key stage 2. In key stage 2, you have a highly successful model of teaching. You have employed an extra teacher to create smaller teaching groups and have provided better-quality resources. Consequently, to improve progress, you are beginning to repeat this model in key stage 1.
- Leaders and teachers have a focus on disadvantaged pupils. They know precisely what progress these pupils make and target funding accordingly. Teachers and teaching assistants work with pupils requiring additional support. This includes disadvantaged pupils who have been identified as able to make more rapid progress. According to current school data, disadvantaged pupils, including more-able disadvantaged pupils, are making progress in line with other pupils and attaining at greater depth in all subjects, especially pupils in key stage 2.
- School progress data shows that pupils on free school meals in Reception are making rapid progress from their starting points. However, this group is not on track to achieve in line with other pupils. Leaders have taken swift actions to make sure that this group of pupils improves even more.
- To increase rates of progress for boys in Reception, teachers have focused on activities that have specifically engaged and motivated them. School assessments now show that the progress of boys matches that of girls.
- School leaders have put a lot of effort into improving pupils' attendance. Current school data shows attendance is improving and is above the national figure. There is currently no difference between the attendance of boys, girls or pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Some pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are unable to attend school due to their medical needs. School leaders have worked closely with education welfare colleagues to ensure that these pupils have home education plans. Therefore, pupils are not missing school.
- School leaders have taken highly effective actions to reduce the persistent absence of a small number of pupils. Each pupil with persistent absence has an action plan personalised to their circumstances. This individually targeted response has resulted in increased attendance. School attendance data shows that the percentage of pupils persistently absent is on track to be below the national figure by the end of the school year. However, school leaders recognise that the improvement in attendance is not yet secure and

continuous monitoring and support for pupils and families is needed.

- Senior leaders have taken a number of strategic actions to ensure that pupils make good progress in a range of subjects and progress is rigorously tracked. For example, senior leaders made links with the local high school to add further challenge to pupils' learning of history. Middle leaders have responsibilities to develop teaching and learning in all subjects.
- A 'Pupil Learning Guarantee' provides pupils with a core package of curriculum enrichment activities, including specialist teaching in music, arts and sports, and curriculum visits.
- The impact of sports funding is measured in detail. For example, as a direct result of additionally funded sports activities, school leaders report that obesity in pupils has decreased and the school has the lowest levels of obesity in the local ward.
- The development of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is successfully woven into all aspects of school life. For example, classrooms are named after modern day heroes. Equality and diversity are actively promoted through high-quality displays that include motivating quotations from a diverse range of people. There is a strong focus on teaching about other faiths and cultures to ensure that pupils have a good understanding about life in modern Britain.

### **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teaching in key stage 1 provides greater challenge to pupils to enable them to achieve at greater depth.
- vulnerable pupils continue to make accelerated progress from their starting points and attend school regularly.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Wirral. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Elizabeth Loftus  
Ofsted Inspector

### **Information about the inspection**

I met with you to talk about the improvements which had been made since the last inspection. I looked at safeguarding records and explored your recruitment and vetting procedures. I also looked at the following documents: your school evaluation and improvement plan, attendance data and pupil progress data. I held discussions with: five governors, including the chair of governors; the early

years and key stage 1 leader; and six teaching staff including a newly qualified teacher, a recently qualified teacher and subject leaders. I spoke with your local authority school improvement partner. Together, we completed a learning walk of almost all key stage 1 and 2 classes. With the deputy headteacher, I looked at a sample of pupils' books from Year 2 to Year 6. I heard four pupils from Year 2 and Year 6 read. I also had a discussion with ten pupils from Year 2, Year 4 and Year 6. At lunchtime, I briefly observed in the dining hall and playgrounds, and informally spoke to a number of pupils about attendance, punctuality and behaviour. I looked at the pupil, staff and parent survey results and considered the comments.