

# Mount Charles School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	111907
<b>Local Authority</b>	Cornwall
<b>Inspection number</b>	378386
<b>Inspection dates</b>	7–8 November 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Paul Garvey

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	409
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Angus Fosten
<b>Headteacher</b>	Paul Willetts
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1–2 July 2009
<b>School address</b>	Morven Road St Austell PL25 4PP
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<b>Age group</b>	4-11
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**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. They saw teaching and learning in 19 lessons, taught by 15 teachers. A number of shorter visits were made to classrooms to look at pupils' work. The inspectors held meetings with senior leaders, groups of pupils, staff and the Chair of the Governing Body. They observed the school's work, and looked at pupils' books and tracking data showing pupils' attainment and the progress they are making. They also looked at a wide variety of documentation including teachers' planning, School Improvement Partner reports, local authority monitoring reports and safeguarding documentation. They also considered 88 responses to the questionnaire received from parents and carers as well as those from pupils.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- Whether the positive trend in attainment, seen over the last two years, has continued with the present cohort and whether the variations in rates of progress between some groups of pupils have been reduced.
- Whether the school's provision is flexible enough to cope with differences in the needs of individual pupils as cohorts change.
- Whether leaders and managers at all levels have an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses, and have they sufficient capacity to drive the school forward and to sustain the improvement.

## Information about the school

Mount Charles School is a larger than average primary school which has a new headteacher who started in September 2011. There are 14 classes in the main school, two in each year group, and there are two Reception classes. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is lower than the national average. The proportion of children from minority ethnic backgrounds is low, as is the percentage who speak English as an additional language. The school provides after-school facilities and holds a number of nationally recognised awards, including the Activemark and the Healthy Schools award. The numbers of pupils with statements for special educational needs and/or disabilities is higher than the national average. The school has an Area Resource Base with the capacity for 10 pupils, drawn from a wide area in mid-Cornwall, who have severe and complex special needs and/or disabilities.

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## Inspection judgements

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**

**2**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**2**

### Main findings

Mount Charles is a good and improving school. It is a happy and harmonious community where pupils enjoy their learning. Although there has been the appointment of a new headteacher and a recent change in the Chair of the Governing Body, this has not interrupted a pattern of rising attainment and accelerating progress since the previous inspection. Improving achievement is due to good provision, and good leadership and management, in the school. Pupils gain a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage and continue to make good progress until they leave. As one parent commented, 'I am extremely pleased with my child's progress,' and several commented upon the 'nurturing environment' in the school, which was leading to the pupils enjoying their time there. All groups of pupils achieve well, which reflects that equal opportunities for all groups of pupils in the school are good. It also shows that effective action has been taken by the school to eradicate varying rates of progress by different groups.

Teaching is good overall, though the sharing of success criteria in lessons is not sufficient to allow adults to meet the needs of all pupils in an outstanding way. The curriculum provides some memorable experiences, notably through pupils eagerly participating in the wide range of extra-curricular activities and through the use of storytelling in class to promote imaginative writing. Though the use of the indoor and outdoor environments to support learning is good, it is not always done creatively enough to allow young imaginations free rein. Care, support and guidance are good, especially for pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable. In the Area Resource Base, both outcomes and provision are outstanding. This good provision overall has led to good outcomes and personal development, with the provision for health education being outstanding. Pupils enjoy school life and, as a result, attend well.

Very good systems and structures, and good oversight by the governing body, have allowed a smooth transition to the establishment of a new leadership team. The astute planning and vision of the headteacher, ably supported by talented leaders at all levels, is continuing to drive improvement. This has resulted in all other aspects of leadership and management being good. The school knows itself very well and self-evaluation is strong. As a result, appropriate action has been taken to address any weaknesses, and improvement since the previous inspection has been good. Thus, the school has good capacity for further improvement.

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## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue the upward trend in attainment in 2012 and beyond by:
  - improving teaching by sharpening the focus on success criteria, in order to meet the needs of all pupils in an outstanding way.
  - using the school learning environment in a more creative way to excite pupils' imaginations in order for them to achieve more.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Progress across the school is good. Attainment has risen at Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 in each of the last two years to broadly average by the time the pupils leave. This improvement was seen to be continuing in the current Year 2 and Year 6 cohorts, where most pupils are now achieving levels of attainment which are above average. Pupils join the school with below average skills on entry. These skills are lowest in communication, language and literacy, and most especially, in writing. Good support from all adults for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities allows them to achieve well. This is particularly true for pupils in the Area Resource Base, where pupils receive excellent specialist support, targeted precisely to individual needs, to produce some outstanding learning. Targets are aspirational and assessment procedures are effective. This allows close monitoring of pupils, so help can be given quickly to any who may be seen to be falling behind. This was seen in some skilled reading support, where good use of a range of resources allowed pupils to progress well. This has allowed gaps between groups of pupils to be narrowed and all groups are now achieving well.

The pupils' sporting success allows them to be ambassadors, showing to other people the high quality opportunities which the school provides. Inspectors saw a large number of pupils participating enthusiastically in after-school football training, and pupils told them about the very large numbers of staff and pupils who participate in lunchtime cross-country. This has helped the school to achieve the Activemark. In addition, there is a good take-up for the provision of healthy meals, and young pupils could easily identify the healthiest elements of their lunches. The school holds the Healthy Schools award, and pupils' understanding of healthy living and their adoption of healthy lifestyles is excellent as a result of the outstanding provision. Pupils say they feel safe, and this is promoted by a safe emotional ethos in lessons and assiduous safeguarding procedures. Good behaviour, especially in lessons, supports this feeling of safety and pupils were seen to demonstrate good social and moral skills, not only in lessons, but also around school.

Pupils get good opportunities for reflection and their cultural education is enhanced by exchanges of letters with Bangladeshi pupils in a school in inner-city London and by a range of visitors to the school. Pupils of all ages were quick to say how much they enjoy school and, as such, their attendance has recently improved rapidly and is

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now above average. They also talked about a range of responsibilities which they undertake. The school council manages a budget and determines pupils’ fund-raising. Year 5 pupils were seen to be enjoying helping younger pupils with their lunches and very young children were seen taking the responsibility of returning the registers very seriously.

Money skills were being tested well in an information and communication technology lesson where pupils had to cost the design of a bedroom. Together with improving skills in literacy and numeracy, this shows that pupils are being well prepared for their future economic well-being. Pupils contribute well to their local community through their participation in activities such as a local festival of speech and music, and they raise money for a number of charities both inside and outside the United Kingdom.

*These are the grades for pupils’ outcomes*

<b>Pupils’ achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attainment <sup>1</sup>	3
The quality of pupils’ learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils’ behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attendance <sup>1</sup>	2
<b>The extent of pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

**How effective is the provision?**

Teaching is good in all years and, at its best, was seen to be characterised by planning which allows teachers and other adults to target individual needs accurately. In a Year 1 class, all pupils responded well to a good range of literacy-based resources that provided the right level of challenge for pupils of all abilities. Where other adults are well directed, this supports clear matching of tasks to needs. In lessons where success criteria were not clear, pace slowed and progress was not as fast. Engagement with the learning was good in most lessons and was highest during the opportunities that pupils had to discuss their work with each other.

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

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Engagement was seen to slip when the learning was too teacher-led. Detailed planning to meet individual needs in the Area Resource Base allowed excellent personalisation of the pupils’ learning.

The curriculum provision is also good, especially the use of storytelling in literacy lessons across the school, which is helping to accelerate progress in writing. In a Year 5 class, pupils were very keen to respond to descriptive writing, after having seen two of their classmates being dressed up as characters from a poem. The school’s teaching in personal, health and social education allows pupils to speak sensibly and knowledgeably about aspects of their personal development, including the dangers of drug-taking. A range of visits is organised, some residential, to enhance the curriculum. Pupils in the Area Resource Base were seen, in a DVD, to have used their visit to the National Aquarium to good effect in their art work. Last year, Year 6 enjoyed a residential trip to an outdoor pursuits centre, where all pupils, including those with severe special educational needs and/or disabilities, were seen, on a DVD, to be enjoying their learning to the full. Opportunities are missed to make some classrooms and outdoor areas more exciting to spark pupils’ imaginations and help them to learn better.

Good care, guidance and support enable pupils of all abilities to make good progress and allow the school to provide a welcoming environment for pupils. Questionnaire responses from pupils, parents and carers were very positive about the standard of care that pupils receive. Examples were seen of excellent support for pupils in the Area Resource Base, and for other pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable, which allows some individuals to make very rapid progress towards both academic and personal targets. Year 6 pupils spoke of already having attended ‘taster’ days at secondary schools and, although some said they were reluctant to leave Mount Charles, they were already beginning to feel confident about moving to the next stage in their education. The good standard of care provided in the after-school club leads to pupils of different ages mixing well together and enjoying their snacks and activities.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils’ needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>2</b>

**How effective are leadership and management?**

Responsibilities are clearly distributed and leaders and managers at all levels, including the governing body, have developed their roles effectively to each play an active part in monitoring the quality of the school’s provision. As a result, priorities

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for action have been successfully implemented in order to bring about sustained improvement and embed ambition well. This allows all groups to achieve well with the absence of discrimination, as demonstrated in the excellent way that the Area Resource Base pupils and the small number of minority ethnic pupils are warmly welcomed into the school community, so that all pupils have a good opportunity to achieve well. The school has managed the changes in the profiles of the cohorts of pupils very well. Rigorous monitoring of teaching and learning has allowed the school to identify and address weaknesses, so that all years now have access to good quality teaching. This has allowed the school to successfully drive improvement since the previous inspection. As well as supporting the school, the governors are now offering a good level of challenge, which is of increasing value in holding the school to account.

The school’s relationship with parents and carers is good. They say that they feel they are, and are being seen to be, closely involved with their children’s education, especially in the Early Years Foundation Stage classes. Good partnerships are supporting the good outcomes and work with the local sports coordinator is extremely effective. Safeguarding policies and procedures are very well implemented through the school, for example, child-protection procedures are rigorous. Consequently, parents and carers who responded to questionnaires feel that their children are kept safe. The school uses partnerships to good effect to raise standards and engages with parents and carers well, especially in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The value of the school’s multi-agency work, to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those whose circumstances may make them vulnerable, was commented upon favourably by several parents and carers. The school has very good relationships with its local community. This is shown by the many visits to the school by a range of local people and groups. Reciprocal visits by children into the community help to cement this good relationship. Links are still developing in order for children to see lives in other cultures both nationally and globally, so community cohesion is good, rather than outstanding.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school’s engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>



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**The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money**

**2**

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Work in the Early Years Foundation Stage is accurately planned in order to meet the children’s individual needs and abilities. This enables them to make good progress towards the early learning goals in Reception. Teaching is good and the teaching assistants are highly qualified and support the children well. However, their work is not consistently directed and this can result in some uneven quality of learning between different groups of children. Nevertheless, leaders and managers are effective overall and a very strong leader models good practice. Good systems are established to monitor and track each individual pupil’s progress. This informs the way adults direct children’s play, though a large element of child-initiated play was also observed. A wide range of activities are on offer and children have easy access to resources and equipment both inside and outdoors. This engages them well, though the small size of the outdoor learning area can restrict their learning and imagination. The mature way in which children were seen to settle to their morning’s work and play, with very little direction, so early in the year, was both delightful and impressive. All adults provide very good support for the children’s personal development, based upon robust risk assessment and a caring ethos, to which the children readily respond. This leads to children supporting each other well, exemplified by one boy saying, ‘I am helping my friend because he doesn’t know how to use the interactive whiteboard!’

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

## Views of parents and carers

Parents and carers who responded to the inspection questionnaire were overwhelmingly positive, with almost all agreeing that their child enjoys school, that the school keeps their child healthy, that leaders and managers are effective in their work, and that the school keeps their child safe. A few parents/carers expressed written concerns that communication between school and home was disappointing. Inspectors examined this issue and discussed it with the school, but found that these concerns, though important, were isolated examples and did not reflect the whole picture. Avenues for communication overall were found to be sufficient and good.

### Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Mount Charles School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 88 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 409 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	47	53	39	44	2	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	44	52	40	46	2	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	25	29	53	61	9	8	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	30	35	50	58	7	6	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	37	44	47	54	4	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	34	40	48	55	6	5	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	34	40	52	60	2	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	30	35	46	53	3	1	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	33	39	50	58	4	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	31	36	42	48	9	8	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	34	40	43	49	3	1	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	35	41	50	58	2	0	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	47	55	36	41	5	4	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

### Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 08 April 2011 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li> <li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li> <li>■ The quality of teaching.</li> <li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li> <li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li> </ul>
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



9 November 2011

Dear Pupils

### **Inspection of Mount Charles School, St Austell PL25 4PP**

Thank you for making us so welcome when we inspected your school recently. We thoroughly enjoyed the time we spent talking to you, visiting your lessons, looking at your work and seeing all the exciting things you do. It was a privilege to visit you all and the things you told us have helped me greatly in writing this report.

Mount Charles School has improved to be a good school. The headteacher and all his staff do a good job, and as a result, you receive good teaching and care. The varied activities you get to do help you to learn and to achieve well. We saw this especially in the good work you do with storytelling, where we saw you writing detailed and interesting stories, after having your imaginations fired by what you had seen in class. From Reception to Year 6, pupils behave well and get on well together, in class and around school, and we saw pupils of different ages all enjoying your after-school club. You take on lots of responsibilities, such as being prefects and serving on the school council, and you contribute to your community by doing such things as participating in local festivals. You told us you feel safe in school and that you like your teachers, for whom you work hard. You really enjoy your sports and other after-school activities. Combined with your healthy meals and your excellent knowledge of how to stay healthy, this made us feel that the school does an outstanding job of helping you to be healthy.

To help you to attain more highly, we have asked your teachers to:

- ensure that they know that you have learned what is expected of you, so they can accurately plan to meet the needs of everyone
- make your classrooms and outdoor areas more exciting to spark your imaginations and help you to learn better.

We would like all of you to help in this by suggesting ideas for displays and asking questions of your teachers to be clear on what you have to achieve in a lesson.

Yours sincerely  
Paul Garvey  
Lead inspector

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