

## School inspection report

10 to 12 December 2024

### **The Mount School, Huddersfield**

3 Binham Road

Edgerton

Huddersfield

HD2 2AP

The Independent Schools Inspectorate is appointed by the Department for Education to inspect association independent schools in England. Our inspections report on the extent to which the statutory Independent School Standards and other applicable regulatory requirements are met, collectively referred to in this report as 'the Standards'.

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## Summary of inspection findings

1. Leaders have a clear vision of what they hope to achieve and implement meticulous systems of evaluation to ensure that everyone acts in the best interests of the pupils in their care.
2. The rigour of approach by leaders and managers to ensure the mental health and wellbeing of pupils through specific initiatives is a significant strength. This impacts highly positively, not only on the pupils' personal development in terms of their emotional wellbeing and mental health, but also on their academic progress and attainment.
3. The pupils' work is of a high standard and very often surpasses national age-related expectations.
4. Teaching enables pupils of all abilities, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and high prior attainment, to make good and sometimes rapid progress from their starting points.
5. Teachers provide a supportive environment based on their detailed knowledge of each pupil. They have high expectations for both pupils' academic success and their personal development. However, when commercially available worksheets are used, teachers do not always suitably adapt them to the needs of pupils, meaning that the pupils' acquisition of knowledge and skills at these times is more limited.
6. The curriculum is comprehensive and is supported by a suitable range of additional opportunities through extra-curricular activities.
7. Behaviour management is consistent and effective. It enhances the learning environment and ensures that pupils remain on task and are respectful towards each other. Pupils value each other's feedback and celebrate the successes of their peers. They collaborate well and listen to each other.
8. Leaders enable pupils to contribute to others in the school through committees, councils and roles of responsibility.
9. Leaders ensure pupils' effective learning about economic matters such as financial, economic and money management through a bespoke scheme of work that they have created.
10. Safeguarding is effective. Staff are well trained in their safeguarding roles and they understand their responsibilities.
11. Leaders typically provide parents with all required information. However, when the inspection commenced, the current attendance policy was not available to parents. Leaders rectified this during the inspection.

## The extent to which the school meets the Standards

- Standards relating to leadership and management, and governance are met.
- Standards relating to the quality of education, training and recreation are met.
- Standards relating to pupils' physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing are met.
- Standards relating to pupils' social and economic education and contribution to society are met.
- Standards relating to safeguarding are met.

## Recommended next steps

Leaders should:

- ensure that the school's policy on attendance is always made available to parents
- ensure that when teachers are using published resources, these are always adapted to meet pupils' specific needs effectively.

## Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

12. Leaders have a thorough process of self-evaluation which reviews every aspect of school life. This process supports both the academic and pastoral development of pupils. Reports from the school management team are critically analysed by the proprietor, with this process providing both challenge and clear target setting for future development, as well as ensuring that leaders fulfil their responsibilities effectively and that the Standards are met. Each element of self-review is suitably focused and as a result leaders respond with a range of structured systems and initiatives to support the pupils. This in-depth evaluation has a demonstrable impact on pupil development such as in the high quality of their academic outcomes and the care that is afforded to pupils' notable sense of self-worth. Examples of the quality of this process include an approach to monitoring wellbeing where pupils give feedback on their feelings and emotions. Their responses are carefully tracked and revisited. These records follow pupils as they move through the school and are used effectively to identify any patterns or potential concerns. As a result, highly effective targeted support is put in place when required.
13. Leaders effectively use their knowledge and skills to implement a rolling review process of policy content and its effective implementation. This covers all key documentation, including that relating to safeguarding.
14. Leaders liaise effectively with agencies outside of the school, particularly in relation to safeguarding. They seek advice and support in a timely manner to support the wellbeing of pupils.
15. The management of risk is given a high priority. Risk assessments are undertaken regularly and periodically reviewed, such as those for the classrooms and outside areas for early years children. Comprehensive assessments are also in place for appropriate activities such as trips and visits and sporting events. In all cases, potential risks are identified, and the assessments show how such risks are to be mitigated.
16. A systematic approach typically ensures that all the required information is made available to parents, most of which is available on the informative website. The information supplied also includes details of the school's aims and ethos which leaders ensure are incorporated into school life. Details of funding for pupils on education, health and care (EHC) plans are appropriately made available to both the relevant parents and the local authority. However, when the inspection commenced, the school's policy on pupil attendance had not been made available to parents. This was rectified by leaders during the inspection.
17. Any complaints, whether informal or formal, are followed up appropriately as set out in the school's procedures and are recorded thoroughly. Leaders also maintain an effective overview of any minor concerns that parents may have through detailed record keeping and through a thorough analysis of matters raised.
18. Leaders place a high priority on making certain that the school meets the requirements of the Equality Act 2010. Leaders are rigorous in ensuring that pupils are treated fairly. They actively promote an environment that celebrates diversity and individuality. There is a suitable accessibility plan in place that focuses on both the physical development of the site and on how key information may be accessed.

## The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to leadership and management, and governance

**19. All the relevant Standards are met.**

## Section 2: Quality of education, training and recreation

20. Leaders provide a broad curriculum for pupils of all ages and abilities. The curriculum is well planned. Schemes of work methodically develop content which goes beyond that in the national curriculum. This is supplemented by a broad range of before-school, after-school and lunchtime activities such as chess, archery and ukelele group which strengthen pupils' skills and exposes them to a range of activities to capture their interests. High focus is given to preparing pupils for entrance examinations to local grammar and other schools. This is reflected in the time given in the school day for mathematics, English, verbal and non-verbal reasoning. The before-school groups also support older pupils well as they prepare for these examinations.
21. Structured programmes of study and skilled teaching ensure that pupils' linguistic development begins from secure foundations in the early years. As a result, children in the pre-school classes converse with clarity and demonstrate mature listening skills. Staff provide many opportunities so that children enjoy working and playing together. Older children develop their skills in matching letters to the sounds that they make to a high level and can identify rhyming words such as bow, crow and snow. Teachers then successfully build upon pupils' knowledge as they move through the school. Teachers provide many opportunities for pupils to write expertly for a variety of purposes, such as in older pupils' use of Greek mythology as a stimulus for their own detailed and captivating pieces.
22. Teachers expertly develop early counting skills and number recognition up to 10 in the Nursery which provides a firm basis for numeracy progression. A focused emphasis on mathematics through the schemes of work enables younger pupils in the main school to identify the properties of three-dimensional shapes and older pupils confidently multiply decimals. Through timetabled lessons and cross-curricular topics, pupils' technological skills develop well, from confident use of the interactive whiteboards in the early years to playing number and word games to older pupils' application of their knowledge of computing in work on debugging and loops.
23. The needs of pupils who have SEND are met well. A variety of strategies are used successfully, guided by teachers' use of additional provision maps. For example, the use of adaptive teaching and questioning, the effective deployment of teaching assistants and the supplying of electronic devices for recording purposes all contribute to the good progress made by pupils who have SEND from their starting points.
24. Teachers work methodically through curricular programmes of study to ensure all aspects are covered. They generally adapt materials well to suit individual needs. However, on occasions, when using pre-prepared commercial worksheets, not enough attention is always given to adapting them to reflect the pupils' learning needs. When this is the case, pupils' development of knowledge and skills is sometimes limited.
25. A suitable assessment framework is in place and makes effective use of pupils' self-assessment, peer assessment and teachers' assessment. Teachers' feedback and marking and their identification of pupils' next steps in learning provide pupils with clear understanding of how to improve their work and progress further. Leaders use assessment data effectively to inform provision and support for individual pupils should they require it.

26. Teachers' subject knowledge is of a high standard, with lessons often including interesting and additional pieces of knowledge and information to complement the planned learning. For example, in science, real life examples are used to give the context for the key learning points. Teachers know their pupils well and this facilitates a learning environment where pupils feel supported and well cared for. Teachers provide individual support in lessons, exploring pupils' understanding, addressing misconceptions, and extending their thinking through targeted questions. Consequently, pupils are intellectually curious and have an enthusiasm for learning. They are highly motivated and show a desire to extend their learning so that they produce the best work possible and present it to a high standard and with care. As a result of the support given, pupils of all abilities achieve highly, making good and sometimes rapid progress from their starting points. Pupils are successful in their applications to a range of schools, some of which have competitive entry requirements.

### **The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to the quality of education, training and recreation**

**27. All the relevant Standards are met.**

## Section 3: Pupils' physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing

28. Pupils' mental health and emotional wellbeing is actively promoted by leaders. The personal, social and health education (PSHE) scheme, which incorporates the relationship and sex education (RSE) programme, provides a clear framework to ensure all appropriate aspects are covered. The schemes of work ensure appropriate attention is given to elements such as recognising and dealing with emotions, how to deal effectively with any stress and anxiety and challenges that pupils might face in life such as the impact on health of smoking and alcohol misuse. Through the topics covered, pupils understand at an age-appropriate level what it means to build healthy relationships covering aspects such as compromise, privacy and how their bodies change. The religious education curriculum supports pupils' spiritual development through the study of different religions and world views. Staff seize every opportunity to praise pupils and to make them feel positive about their learning experiences. As a result, pupils are engaged, happy and show high levels of self-esteem and self-confidence.
29. Leaders implement a programme of pastoral support that focuses on pupils' wellbeing, based on individual rights and strengths. Staff effectively use wellbeing indicators such as respect, responsibility, safety, health and achievement to build up a comprehensive picture of pupils' development in these key areas. When required, strategies can then be put in place where indicators show that more in-depth support and guidance may be required.
30. Leaders promote pupils' positive behaviour through an effective rewards and sanctions procedure. This impacts positively on behaviour around the school and in lessons because pupils understand the importance of this to help create a harmonious school atmosphere. Any behavioural or bullying concerns are appropriately logged, and action taken when required. The low number of bullying incidents recorded reflects the success of leaders' approach in this area.
31. Supervision of pupils, including during break and lunchtimes, is effective through the suitable deployment of staff. Correct ratios are maintained in the early years through detailed rotas for all inside and outside areas. Playtime activities are structured, through staff support, to encourage physical development and fitness, through matches and mini-Olympiad contests. There are always adults available to whom pupils can talk should they have any worries or concerns.
32. The premises and accommodation are inviting and well maintained and utilised to create a sense of belonging to which pupils respond positively. Appropriate and effective attention is given to all aspects of health and safety and fire safety. Leaders maintain meticulous records in relation to health and safety and fire arrangements. Regular checks are made on fire equipment and electrical installations. Fire risk assessments are regularly reviewed, and leaders effectively prioritise any actions required.
33. First aid provision is suitable. Leaders analyse data, such as any relating to accidents and injuries, to identify patterns and to take remedial action when required. There are suitable arrangements in place for the appropriate administration of medicines. Staff are suitably trained in first aid, with there being effective deployment of those with paediatric first aid qualifications.
34. The physical education (PE) curriculum successfully incorporates not only a progression of skills and knowledge around team games, movement and dance but also focuses on healthy lifestyle choices,

including fitness, nutrition and hydration. Pupils become knowledgeable about these aspects. Children in the early years develop their fine and gross motor skills successfully. This is achieved through a range of stimulating activities such as role play areas, climbing apparatus and drawing, writing, colouring and cutting tables.

35. Admission and attendance registers are suitably maintained containing all the required information. The local authority is appropriately informed when any pupil leaves or joins the school at non-standard transition points. Leaders actively monitor attendance and punctuality, engaging with parents and guardians to address any barriers, which may include aspects such as lateness due to roadworks, access restrictions and congestion.

### **The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to pupils' physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing**

- 36. All the relevant Standards are met.**

## Section 4: Pupils' social and economic education and contribution to society

37. Pupils' understanding of equality and the importance of mutual respect is developed effectively by the PSHE scheme of work. Leaders have strengthened this provision through additional topics that focus pupils on issues of inclusion and diversity well. For example, the '*Carry My Story*' project, organised and funded by the local authority, enabled pupils to broaden their understanding of what it means to be a refugee and asylum seeker. They were able to meet refugees, find out about their stories and build up a picture of what life means for people who have had to flee their homelands. Pupils' breadth of understanding of different cultures and lifestyles is strengthened through a range of library books that reflect various religions, skin colours and families in all their forms. Leaders make conscious decisions surrounding aspects such as gender stereotyping. An example of this is the adoption of two types of uniform known through a letter rather than referred to as 'male' and 'female'.
38. Pupils develop their knowledge of English institutions through visits to the local town hall for debating competitions, listening to speeches from the local mayor and hearing about the work of magistrates through a visiting speaker. Leaders place a high value on ensuring that pupils understand other aspects of British values such as democracy. When head pupils are elected the pupils receive polling cards which carry the names and photographs of each candidate. Votes are cast secretly in polling booths and every member of the school community receives just one vote. There is an official count, and the results read out to the whole school at sports day. Any discussions featuring political content are conducted fairly and without bias.
39. Pupils are morally mature and understand the importance of making principled and considerate choices from an early age. Leaders have instigated a weekly philosophically based question to encourage pupils to reflect on moral issues. From an early age pupils learn about the personal skills required to be effective social members of the school community developing well their understanding of the importance of fair treatment and honesty. Nursery children learn to share and behave in a polite manner. Older pupils develop their sense of responsibility towards others by contributing to school life, whether this be through the school council or in their roles and responsibilities as heads of houses or head pupils. Pupils mix well with one another, with the older pupils often supporting those younger than themselves. The high expectations of social interaction are expertly role modelled by leaders and staff.
40. Leaders have developed their own financial, economic and money management scheme of study for pupils. This strengthens pupils' understanding of areas such as budgeting, bank accounts and their use of tax language including VAT. The oldest pupils use this knowledge to design, market and sell a product at their Christmas show to support local charities. This provides the opportunity for pupils to experience a real-world entrepreneurial experience. Additionally, pupils benefit from fund raising activities, many of which focus on supporting the local community.
41. Pupils are well prepared for life beyond the school through their levels of understanding, supported by the 'dreams and goals' elements of the PSHE programme which encourages them to think about future careers and pathways.

## The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to pupils' social and economic education and contribution to society

**42. All the relevant Standards are met.**

## Safeguarding

43. There is a suitable safeguarding policy in place which reflects current statutory guidance and corresponds with local safeguarding arrangements. The policy is implemented effectively. The proprietor regularly reviews the school's safeguarding arrangements and provides appropriate support and challenge to ensure their suitability.
44. All staff, including those who have designated safeguarding responsibilities are appropriately trained. Staff understand that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and that they should report any concerns they have about pupils to the designated safeguarding lead (DSL). Recent training has focused on updates to relevant statutory guidance as well as a focus on the potential risks of extremism and radicalisation. Annual updates are supplemented through regular additional training at staff meetings. Staff's understanding is enhanced from discussing various safeguarding scenarios and deciding which would be the correct course of action to take in each situation. Staff have a secure understanding of contextual safeguarding, including the 'Prevent' duty, county lines and child exploitation. Staff understand their roles in reporting any low-level concerns about or allegations against other staff members and the importance of adhering to the school's whistleblowing arrangements. Staff training develops their awareness of the potential vulnerability of pupils who have SEND or EHC plans to safeguarding issues.
45. Suitable filtering and monitoring of internet usage is in place. Pupils learn about the importance of staying safe whilst working online, which is effectively covered through both computing and PSHE lessons.
46. The safeguarding team responds to any safeguarding concerns appropriately and in a timely manner. Records of any safeguarding concerns are thorough and detailed. Safeguarding leads liaise effectively when required with local safeguarding partners which include the local authority designated officer, the social services and the police. Staff understand how to record any concerns through the school's pupil management system.
47. Safeguarding leads, including the proprietor, maintain effective oversight of the safer recruitment process. They ensure that all required suitability checks for staff are undertaken before the person commences employment. These checks are recorded accurately in a suitable single central record of appointments.

### The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to safeguarding

- 48. All the relevant Standards are met.**

## School details

<b>School</b>	The Mount School, Huddersfield
<b>Department for Education number</b>	382/6006
<b>Address</b>	The Mount School, Huddersfield 3 Binham Road Edgerton Huddersfield West Yorkshire HD2 2AP
<b>Phone number</b>	01484 426432
<b>Email address</b>	info@themount.org.uk
<b>Website</b>	www.themount.org.uk
<b>Proprietor</b>	Mr Christopher Sellers
<b>Head teacher</b>	Mr Euan Burton-Smith
<b>Age range</b>	3 to 11
<b>Number of pupils</b>	101
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	15 November 2022

## Information about the school

- 49. The Mount School, Huddersfield is an independent co-educational day school. Situated in the suburbs of Huddersfield, it occupies a converted family home. It is owned and governed by the proprietor. The head teacher was appointed in 2019.
- 50. There are 29 children in the early years which are split into two classes, one for children aged three to four years and one for Reception aged children.
- 51. The school has identified ten pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Very few pupils in the school have an education, health and care (EHC) plan.
- 52. English is an additional language for very few pupils.
- 53. The school states its aims are to provide pupils with a wide and challenging education with an emphasis on English and mathematics. It aims to create a nurturing atmosphere in which pupils can feel safe and happy while developing into independent, successful learners.

## Inspection details

### Inspection dates

10 to 12 December 2024

54. A team of three inspectors visited the school for two and a half days.

55. Inspection activities included:

- observation of lessons, some in conjunction with school leaders
- observation of registration periods and assemblies
- observation of a sample of extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection
- discussions with the proprietor
- discussions with the head, school leaders, managers and other members of staff
- discussions with pupils
- visits to the learning support area and facilities for physical education
- scrutiny of samples of pupils' work
- scrutiny of a range of policies, documentation and records provided by the school.

56. The inspection team considered the views of pupils, members of staff and parents who responded to ISI's pre-inspection surveys.

**How are association independent schools in England inspected?**

- The Department for Education is the regulator for independent schools in England.
- ISI is approved by the Secretary of State for Education to inspect independent schools in England, which are members of associations in membership of the Independent Schools Council.
- ISI inspections report to the Department for Education on the extent to which the statutory Independent School Standards, the EYFS statutory framework requirements, the National Minimum Standards for boarding schools and any other relevant standards are met.
- For more information, please visit **[www.isi.net](http://www.isi.net)**.

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