

Montgomery Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	114750
Local Authority	Essex
Inspection number	357608
Inspection dates	11–12 November 2010
Reporting inspector	Glynis Bradley-Peat

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	210
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Nigel Allen
Headteacher	Bill Aylett
Date of previous school inspection	26 June 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 25 lessons, observed nine teachers and held meetings with the headteacher, the senior leadership team, teaching staff, representatives of the governing body and pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at pupils' books, documents including the school improvement plan, systems for tracking pupils' progress, safeguarding documentation and school policies. They also analysed information from 73 questionnaires from parents and carers, in addition to those received from staff and pupils.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following.

- Are leaders having an impact on raising attainment and accelerating rates of progress, particularly in writing?
- To what extent does teaching have a good impact on learning and achievement, particularly in writing?
- Are the strategies leaders have put in place to minimise the impact of high levels of pupil mobility effective?
- How well do leaders and managers embed ambition amongst staff and parents?

Information about the school

This is a smaller than average sized junior school. Almost three-quarters of its pupils come from the Colchester Garrison; hence, the proportion of pupils who join or leave the school other than at the usual times is very high. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is lower than average. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups and the number with English as an additional language are well below average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/ or disabilities is broadly average but fluctuates from year to year. In some year groups, the percentage is well above average. The needs of these pupils are mostly related to moderate learning difficulties.

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

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Pupils thoroughly enjoy attending Montgomery, which is a good and improving school. Parents' and carers' views are overwhelmingly positive, with the vast majority praising the school for the quality of education it provides for their children. One wrote, 'I think the school is doing a great job. My son looks forward to going to school each day. A very big thank you!' There were a number of other comments from parents and carers about how much they appreciate the care, support and guidance afforded to their children, particularly whilst some fathers are on tours of duty in Afghanistan. Inspectors judge that this is an outstanding area of the school's work.

The excellent leadership of the headteacher, described as 'inspirational' by some members of staff, has ensured that the rate of improvement has accelerated markedly over the last year in particular. He is ably supported by his senior leadership team, whose ambition for the school is clearly evident. Governance is satisfactory but the strategic leadership of the governing body is underdeveloped. This limits its ability to hold the school rigorously to account for its work. In addition, the governing body does not promote community cohesion as well as it could. Members of staff are well trained in aspects of child protection and procedures to ensure that the well-being, health and safety of pupils are good. All parents and carers who returned questionnaires during the inspection said the school keeps their children safe.

The school celebrates what it does well but also has a clear view of what it could be doing better. This is one aspect which demonstrates the good capacity of leaders and managers to improve the school even further. Another aspect is the dramatic improvement in mathematics brought about by the assertive mentoring programme put in place this year by the school. The impact on attainment is plainly evident. Standards reached in mathematics in national tests this year were above average for the first time in over six years. A similar programme has been initiated recently in writing and the impact of this can be seen in the quality of work scrutinised in classrooms during the inspection. Since the time of the last inspection and the more recent visit by one of 'Her Majesty's Inspectors' to look at English, the school has tackled the areas for improvement well. Curriculum enrichment contributes particularly well to pupils' achievement, as does the use of technology to enhance learning.

Progress is accelerating and is consistently good across most groups of pupils, including for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. This is because teaching and assessment are of good quality. However, some of the more able pupils do not always make the progress of which they are capable in mathematics and English. This is because teachers do not always provide tasks which are suitably challenging or which develop pupils' independent thinking skills. In addition, sessions of whole class questioning do not consistently target individuals or groups of pupils effectively to ensure that all have to

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prepare answers and participate fully. Staff are held to account rigorously for the work that they do through a systematic approach to developing practice. Leaders are clear about the strengths and weaknesses evident in teaching and know what to do to improve it.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment in English and mathematics, but particularly in writing, by:
 - providing greater challenge for more able pupils in lessons
 - targeting teachers' questioning more explicitly on individuals and groups of pupils.
- Improve the impact of governance by:
 - implementing a programme of training for the governing body so that its members become more influential in determining the strategic direction of the school
 - ensuring more effective promotion of community cohesion.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Attainment on entry is broadly average but the very high rate of mobility means that a large majority of pupils who join at the beginning of Year 3 move on before the end of Year 6. The small minority who spend the whole of Key Stage 2 in the school make at least good progress and reach above average standards. The large number of pupils who join during the key stage, often with lower prior attainment, also make good progress to reach average standards.

In the majority of lessons, pupils make good or better progress and achieve well because teachers plan effectively to ensure that they enjoy their learning. In a good science lesson, pupils listened intently to the teacher's account about her own teeth and how she had not cared well enough for them. Pupils talked excitedly about this and one said to the other, 'She must have eaten too many sweets!' Whoops of laughter then followed when the teacher produced one of her own teeth which had had to be removed. Pupils clearly understood the link between a bad diet and rotten teeth. Pupils' good behaviour enables paired and group work to be highly successful. In all lessons, pupils are eager to please and to do their best. This gives rise to good learning.

Historically, there had been some underachievement in mathematics and English until this year when pupils reached average attainment in English and above average in mathematics. The school's own tracking and analysis of data show that pupils are set to improve further and reach higher standards in 2011. This is the result of the school putting in place highly effective mentoring systems which have accelerated progress and paid particular attention to each individual pupil.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils show respect for each other and share good relations with adults in the school. However, the cultural aspect is weaker. The school is aware of this and also that pupils' contribution to the wider community is underdeveloped. Within school, pupils' contribution through the school council is satisfactory. Attendance is above average and contributes well to pupils' future

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economic well-being. Pupils acquire a good level of basic skills and work well together in groups. They know how to keep themselves safe and are confident that the adults in the school are approachable and listen to their worries. They are pro-active in ensuring their own safety and have an excellent understanding of what constitutes unsafe practices. Their understanding of the importance of internet safety is thorough and this is articulated well.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	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
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

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

How effective is the provision?

Teachers use new technology well to enhance and enliven learning. For example, in a good literacy lesson, pupils used computers confidently to write responses to a friend's dilemma. Other resources are also used well to support learning and to promote good assessment. Teaching assistants support and assess the learning of those pupils with moderate learning difficulties and work closely with the class teacher during the planning stage.

A range of activities ensures that pupils are able to learn in a variety of ways. They respond well to the speaking and listening opportunities that teachers give them. In many lessons, teachers provide good opportunities for pupils to discuss their learning in pairs and groups. In a good science lesson about building circuits, good use of talk partners enabled pupils to clarify their ideas, think aloud and plan their circuits more effectively. In some lessons, teachers question pupils effectively, targeting particular questions to

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particular pupils. Consequently, pupils move on in their learning. However, in some lessons, there is over-reliance on taking answers from only those pupils who put up their hands. As a result, some pupils do not try to prepare answers and this hampers the development of their thinking skills. Teachers generally attend to the needs of individuals and use a variety of activities to suit the different learning styles and abilities of their pupils. Nevertheless, the work seen in some lessons did not always challenge those more able learners effectively to ensure they made maximum progress. The tasks provided did not encourage deeper thinking. In these lessons, the expectations of what some pupils could achieve were not high enough.

The good curriculum clearly engages pupils and results in their evident enjoyment. It concentrates on developing pupils' skills and ensures that different subjects are linked well together in topics to make learning more meaningful. Activities are very relevant and delivered imaginatively. For example in a literacy lesson in preparation for writing, pupils participated in a 'catwalk' show to display their recycled clothes which they had designed and made themselves. 'Enrichment Days' are a strength; pupils talk positively about the activities they enjoy and the specialist teaching they receive, for example in music, sport, French and information and communication technology. Good partnerships with other institutions enhance learning and well-being. Recently, a small group of pupils and a teacher are working on an anti-bullying film initiated and supported by the local football club. A wide variety of extra-curricular opportunities is provided and the take-up of these is high, for example gymnastics, recorders, tag rugby, computers and football.

Provision for the care and support of pupils whose parents are overseas is outstanding. One parent wrote, 'The school shows concern to the children of serving soldiers and understands when the parents are away that the children need extra care and give this.' This view echoes that of a number of parents and carers. Training is provided for staff, prior to operational deployments, in looking for signs of stress and how to support pupils at this time. The newly created 'Gruffalo Room' is seen as a quiet sanctuary where pupils can go to discuss any concerns they may have. They are actively encouraged to do so. The learning needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are met well and exemplary pastoral support for them ensures that they make consistently good progress. Excellent systems for newly arrived pupils at other than the usual Year 3 transfer include a 'passport' so that the new pupil has a buddy and nothing is over looked. Transition at the usual times is described by one parent as 'brilliant'.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

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How effective are leadership and management?

The school's evaluation of its performance is accurate and the senior leadership team clearly knows the priorities for development. The school monitors its performance rigorously: it has a clear picture of its effectiveness and a thorough understanding of its strengths and areas for improvement. Data are analysed exceptionally well and the resulting information is used effectively to help pupils make better progress through making improvements to teaching and the curriculum. This is a clear strength. The outstanding leadership of the headteacher has brought the school forward demonstrably in terms of pupils' achievement. Phase and subject leaders are enthusiastic and keen to monitor their own areas of responsibility and are beginning to do this well. The high aspirations of the headteacher ensure that the vision for the school is embedded amongst staff, parents and pupils alike; all are committed to the Montgomery ethos.

The governing body is committed to supporting the school. Its members make a strong contribution by promoting and contributing to the caring ethos and helping to ensure that safeguarding arrangements meet requirements. However, they are not yet sufficiently influential in determining the strategic direction of the school. Community cohesion is in the early stages of development. There has been some initial analysis and the school already links well with the local community and the army garrison. However, it has yet to engage more fully with the wider United Kingdom and global communities. There are a good number of positive links with other establishments which benefit learners and contribute to their well-being. The promotion of equal opportunities is good and there is no discrimination. Safeguarding policies and procedures are good and are monitored robustly. Parents and carers are unanimous in their view that the school keeps their children safe.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

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Views of parents and carers

Although a minority of parents and carers returned the questionnaires, the vast majority of these were extremely positive about the school overall. All felt that the school kept their children safe. Almost all said that their children enjoyed school and stated that they were happy with the experience their children have in the school. Almost all think the school is well led and managed. Just over a quarter of parents and carers made additional comments. Some spoke of the particularly caring and supportive ethos of the school. Others commented about the good work of the headteacher and teachers. Inspection evidence endorsed this view. A few parents and carers feel that unacceptable behaviour is not dealt with effectively. Inspectors found behaviour and its management to be good during the inspection.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Montgomery Junior School, Colchester 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 73 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 210 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	50	68	18	25	3	4	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	54	74	19	26	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	36	49	35	48	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	41	56	25	34	4	5	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	41	56	27	37	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	35	48	33	45	4	5	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	34	47	38	52	0	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)	29	40	39	53	1	1	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	36	49	32	44	3	4	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	28	38	37	51	6	8	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	26	36	41	56	2	3	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	41	56	31	42	0	0	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	41	56	31	42	1	1	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	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

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 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 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. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

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">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.



15 November 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Montgomery Junior School, Colchester, Essex, CO2 9QG

Thank you very much for the warm welcome you all gave to us during our recent visit to your school. We found that your school provides a good standard of education for you. This means it does lots of things well, but it also needs to do a few things a little better.

We were impressed by your behaviour and the way you treated each other. Some of you took the time to speak to us about your school and this was helpful. We were really pleased to see how much you enjoy your learning. It was also good to see you enjoy using computers to help you to learn. You told us how important it is to choose what we eat carefully and to take regular exercise to stay fit and healthy. You enjoy taking responsibility around the school and those of you in the school council are beginning to help to improve your school. This is highly commendable - well done! You also told us about all the different clubs and activities you are involved in - they sound great fun!

Your teachers teach you well and work hard to plan interesting lessons. The headteacher and his team do a good job and have made some good improvements. They care for you all exceptionally well. We have asked that the headteacher, staff and governors make sure that you achieve higher results in national tests at the end of Year 6. We have asked that teachers give some of you who find work easy, harder work which makes you think more carefully. You can help by always doing your best work and by trying hard. We have also pointed out that teachers need to ask questions of you in lessons without you having to put up your hand. This means you will all need to have your answers ready. The governing body is going to attend more regular training so its members can help run your school with the headteacher more effectively. We have also asked that the governing body helps you to understand what communities are like in other parts of the United Kingdom and abroad.

Yours sincerely

Glynis Bradley-Peat

Lead Inspector

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