

# Montgomery High School

All Hallows Road, Bispham, Blackpool, Lancashire FY2 0AZ

## Inspection dates

21–22 March 2018

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- Leaders, including those of the Fylde Coast Academy Trust, do not provide a good quality of education for pupils at the school.
- Pupils' examination outcomes in 2017 were lower than others nationally, especially those of boys. Pupils' current outcomes are improving but they remain variable.
- Leaders do not consistently and effectively monitor, assess and refine improvement plans.
- Leaders' use of the additional funding to support disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities is not consistently effective.
- Subject leadership is variable. Consequently, the quality of teaching is inconsistent between and within subjects, especially mathematics.
- Teachers do not consistently set pupils work which closely matches their ability, including for pupils in Year 7. In these cases, pupils do not make the progress that they should.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are variable. A minority of pupils engage in low-level disruption where teachers' expectations of pupils' behaviour do not match those set by senior leaders.
- Pupils' attendance is improving but it remains below average. Persistent absence is above the national average.
- The conduct of a minority of pupils around school requires improvement.

### The school has the following strengths

- School leaders, including those of the Fylde Coast Academy Trust, have demonstrated the capacity to improve the quality of education at the school.
- The quality of teaching, especially in English and science, has improved. As a result, pupils are making better progress than was the case previously.
- Most pupils move on successfully to next steps in education, employment and/or training.
- School leaders, including governors, routinely review the curriculum that they provide for pupils. As a result, the courses offered, including those at key stage 4, match current pupils' needs and interests.
- School leaders have acted effectively to secure pupils' emotional well-being. Pupils, especially those in key stage 4, acknowledge and value the actions that leaders have taken to eradicate bullying.

## Full report

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

- Improve pupils' outcomes, particularly in mathematics and for disadvantaged pupils and boys.
- Improve leadership and management by ensuring that:
  - leaders monitor, evaluate and refine improvement plans regularly and effectively
  - the effective subject leadership evident in some subjects becomes the norm across the school
  - the recommendations of the review into provision for disadvantaged pupils are implemented
  - additional funding for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is used as well to support pupils with in-school support plans as it is for those who have education, health and care plans.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by:
  - removing inconsistencies in the quality of teaching between and within subjects, including mathematics
  - ensuring that pupils, including those in Year 7, are routinely set work that closely matches their ability, so they make the progress they should
  - insisting that all teachers have the highest expectations of what pupils can achieve.
- Improve pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare by:
  - ensuring that leaders continue to improve the attendance of all pupils so that it is at least in line with the national average
  - promoting more positive attitudes to learning and so eliminating poor behaviour in lessons and around the school.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Requires improvement

- Leaders, including those of the Fylde Coast Academy Trust, which sponsors the school, accurately describe the standard of education that the school provides as requiring improvement. Despite the trust effectively supporting improvement in some key areas since the previous inspection, such as the leadership of science, there are variations in other aspects of the school's effectiveness. This includes the progress of boys, disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities.
- Senior leaders are aware of the challenges that the school faces, not least a legacy of inadequate teaching for the pupils who are currently in key stage 4 and difficulties in recruiting and retaining good teachers in mathematics. Leaders' high expectations of staff, and aspirations for pupils, mean that they are not discouraged by these challenges. They are versatile and hands-on in providing solutions. For example, to strengthen the teaching of mathematics for current pupils in key stage 4, senior leaders have added a teaching timetable to their responsibilities. This has assured that pupils who have not been taught well at key stage 3 are provided with an acceptable standard of education in mathematics as their examinations approach.
- Leaders' actions to ensure that pupils experience a good quality of education have brought about improvements since the previous inspection. However, these are not consistent in their impact. This is because of variation in how effectively they are monitored, evaluated and refined. As a result, the quality of teaching, pupils' conduct and attendance, and pupils' progress, especially that of boys, requires improvement.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils at the school is larger than average. The Fylde Coast Academy Trust has responded positively to this by employing leaders with previous experience of success in supporting disadvantaged pupils' education. Despite signs that the progress and attendance of disadvantaged pupils are improving, including for those who are boys, the actions that are planned do not have the consistently positive and rapid impact that senior leaders demand. As a result, leaders have been proactive and recently commissioned an independent review of the school's use of the additional funding for disadvantaged pupils. This provides an accurate view of its strengths and weaknesses and recommends sensible next steps.
- School leaders recently reviewed the effectiveness of the school's SEN provision. As a result, the leadership of this area has been strengthened. However, despite improvement, inconsistency remains in how well leaders manage and use the funding for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. Pupils with an education, health and care plan are generally supported well. However, there is variation in the effectiveness of the support that pupils with in-school support plans currently receive. Consequently, the use of this funding requires improvement.
- When meeting with inspectors, senior leaders demonstrated a secure understanding of the characteristics of effective teaching. Their current evaluation of the quality of teaching across the school is accurate. Senior leaders recognise that teaching requires improvement. Therefore, plans to improve teaching, including staff training, are based upon a precise picture of current practice and needs. As a result, although improvement is variable, there is consistently better teaching in science than

previously, and boys are making stronger progress in some areas, including English.

- Subject leadership is variable. At its best, such as in drama, geography and science, leadership is pivotal in securing improvement and ensuring that teachers routinely uphold the high expectations set by senior leaders. As a result, pupils are taught well, enjoy learning and make the progress that they should. In other areas, leaders are not effective in ensuring that the same strengths are consistently in evidence.
- Leaders' use of the Year 7 catch-up funding is variable. Actions to improve pupils' literacy, especially reading, have a positive impact. However, pupils do not consistently catch up and attain an age-related standard in numeracy. This is due, in part, to the inconsistency in the teaching of mathematics in Year 7.
- Senior leaders ensure that pupils have access to a range of subjects which match their needs. Pupils follow a range of academic, arts, technical and sporting subjects at key stage 3. Previously, at key stage 4, courses were not well matched to the starting points and aspirations of some of the pupils who followed them. Courses such as the European computer driving licence, were included as part of pupils' curriculum, but this is no longer the case. The current choice available to pupils at key stage 4 is designed to prepare them well for the next stage of their education. It includes appropriate academic and vocational courses. Leaders have responded positively to the lower achievement of boys in their examinations by ensuring that the curriculum that they follow is well matched to their interests and requirements.
- Leadership of careers education is effective. The impartial advice provided means that, despite some of them achieving lower examination results than they should, almost all of them move on to post-16 education, training or employment.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is effective. Leaders ensure that pupils are prepared well for life in modern Britain. Pupils have a clear understanding and knowledge of fundamental British values, including their own rights and responsibilities and those of others.
- Of the 118 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, three quarters of respondents said that they would recommend the school to others.

### **Governance of the school**

- Governance is effective. Those responsible for governance, including trustees, know the school well and demonstrate the capacity to support its further improvement. Despite recognising the challenges that the school faces, for example in the recruitment and retention of high-quality teachers in mathematics, they are insistent on a no-excuse culture.
- Governors understand and embrace their strategic role in setting high expectations for staff, including senior leaders. They provide school leaders with well-informed support and challenge. Governors also rigorously uphold their responsibilities with regard to statutory safeguarding duties.

### **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- During the inspection, issues came to light that suggested procedures in the past for

the safeguarding of a small number of pupils had been too lax. This is not now the case. Senior leaders have taken effective action to ensure that safeguarding policy and processes are robust for all pupils. Leaders are fully aware of, and committed to, upholding their statutory duty.

- Leaders maintain good-quality safeguarding records. There are systematic procedures for checking the backgrounds of staff when they are appointed.
- Staff, including non-teaching staff, are trained in identifying potential risks to pupils, such as radicalisation, bullying and pupils' mental well-being. Staff and pupils' awareness of potential risks is regularly maintained and kept up to date.
- School leaders work effectively with parents and carers and external agencies and act swiftly when required. Checks made by inspectors demonstrated that referrals are followed up in a robust manner and that record-keeping is good.
- Pupils, parents and staff say that pupils are safe and looked after well. Leaders ensure that pupils have a clear understanding of the risks which might affect them and how to keep safe, including when online. Pupils know to whom they should report concerns and how to do this.

### **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

### **Requires improvement**

- Teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement because it is too variable between and within subjects and year groups. Even in the areas where teaching is strongest, such as English, science, geography and modern foreign languages, there are pockets of less effective teaching. Teaching is generally weaker in mathematics and history, but this is not consistently the case. For example, some pupils in key stage 4 are making good progress in mathematics because they are taught well.
- Teachers do not consistently use the assessment information they have about pupils to plan work at the appropriate level. This inconsistency is apparent in Year 7, where some teachers, including some in mathematics, do not take note of key stage 2 test results and other information shared from the pupils' primary schools. In these cases, pupils are often set the same work as their peers, regardless of their starting point or level of understanding. Consequently, pupils' do not make the progress that they should because their work is either too easy or too hard.
- The work of school leaders to improve the progress of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities has led to better teaching of these pupils, especially those who have an education, health and care plan. However, leaders recognise that variation remains, especially for those pupils who receive in-school support. As a result, despite the improvements, pupils do not at times successfully complete the work that they are set.
- Teachers in some subjects, including English and drama, regularly plan questions that provide pupils with the opportunity to think and reason deeply. As a result, these pupils, including boys, respond with detail and sophistication and make good progress. However, in other areas, pupils are not routinely asked such challenging questions. Consequently, they do not make the same rate of progress in these subjects as they do in others.
- Almost all pupils read at the standard in line with others of their age nationally. Those who join the school with lower than average reading levels are provided with effective

support so that they catch up with others by the end of Year 7. Consequently, pupils understand and interpret texts suitable for their age with confidence and accuracy. School leaders' plans to use regular silent writing opportunities to improve pupils' writing, particularly for boys, are having a positive impact where they are used consistently, such as in English and history.

- Pupils and parents say that homework is set regularly and that the work is of an appropriate standard.
- School leaders provided inspectors with reports that they send home to parents. These documents contain information about pupils' current progress. Most parents who responded to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, said that they receive valuable information from the school about their children's progress.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Requires improvement**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- Most of the pupils whom inspectors met during the inspection were confident and courteous. However, some pupils have weak attitudes to learning and lack self-discipline. These pupils require staff to provide a strong and clear message to manage their conduct in lessons and around the school.
- The majority of pupils and parents say the actions that school leaders have put into place to reduce incidents of bullying are proving a success. Anti-bullying ambassadors, surveys and training for pupils have recently been established. Pupils in key stage 4 are particularly positive about the impact of the anti-bullying strategy. They say that there is virtually no bullying at the school.
- Leaders' plans to support the pastoral transition of pupils from primary school are generally effective. Staff gather information that supports pupils' transition to secondary school and they share this effectively. The Year 7 pupils with whom inspectors spoke were positive about the school. They said that they are happy at the school.
- School leaders take their responsibility for pupils' mental and physical health seriously. These aspects are effectively promoted through pupils' learning, healthy eating options and available support services. Leaders ensure that staff are vigilant in identifying signs that a pupil's emotional well-being may be at risk. Leaders provide or direct these pupils to a range of services to support them and meet their needs.
- Pupils are taught how to identify dangers and remain safe online. Their online safety is further supported by safety checks, including filtering systems across the school's computer network.
- Pupils regularly learn about fundamental British values and other faiths and cultures. As a result, they value differences and respect views different from their own. The pupils that spoke with inspectors were very clear that racism and homophobia have no place at the school.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- The actions of school leaders to improve pupils' attendance, including those who are disadvantaged, are starting to have an impact. However, the trend of improvement is not yet consistent or firmly embedded and pupils' absence rates, including persistent absence, remain above average. Therefore, despite these positive signs, leaders recognise that pupils' attendance requires further improvement.
- Many of the pupils who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire and spoke to inspectors said that behaviour in lessons has improved but that it remains variable. This view matches that of inspectors. Pupils generally behave well where teachers have high expectations and set work that matches pupils' ability. However, where teachers' expectations of pupils' behaviour do not match those set by school leaders or when the work that they set is not carefully planned, pupils disrupt learning.
- The sensible conduct of the majority of pupils at breaktime, lunchtime and change of lessons is let down by a minority of pupils. While most pupils move around the school in a purposeful and orderly manner, some do not. These pupils are slow to respond to staff when they encourage them to moderate their behaviour and they fail to arrive punctually at lessons.

### Outcomes for pupils

### Requires improvement

- Pupils' examination results in 2017 were variable. In English, mathematics, history and some other subjects, they were significantly lower than those seen nationally. In drama, geography and science, pupils' results were better and they attained grades that were at least in line with the national averages.
- Inspectors' analysis of pupils' current work and leaders' information about their attainment and progress showed pupils' progress is better than it was in 2017. However, it is not yet consistently good. Variation remains across and between departments. Pupils generally make stronger progress in English and science than they do in mathematics. However, inconsistencies remain in all areas.
- Outcomes for disadvantaged pupils require improvement. There are more disadvantaged pupils in the school than is the case nationally. The progress that these pupils made in examinations in 2016 and 2017 was significantly less than that of others nationally. Work seen by inspectors shows that although the differences in attainment between current disadvantaged pupils and others are diminishing, this improvement is not yet consistent across subjects and year groups.
- In 2017, boys' outcomes across a range of subjects were markedly weaker than those of girls. This was particularly the case in English. The work seen by inspectors shows that improvements are under way and boys are currently making stronger progress in English than previously. Despite this, variation remains in English and other subjects, and there is more to be done to ensure that boys routinely make good progress.
- The progress that Year 7 pupils make is not as strong as it should be. Teachers do not consistently use information from primary schools and from the Year 6 test results to set work at the correct level. As a result, the progress that these pupils make is

variable, including in mathematics.

- Despite recent improvements, pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities do not consistently make good progress. Staff do not routinely set these pupils the appropriate level of work or ensure that the support that they provide is well matched to their needs. Consequently, the outcomes of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are variable.
- The proportion of pupils who progress to further education, employment or training is in line with the national average. However, because of the variable quality of their education and weak examination results previously, pupils do not consistently move on to the higher qualifications of which they are capable.



## School details

Unique reference number	137973
Local authority	Blackpool
Inspection number	10045842

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

Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,305
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Graham Mawdsley
Principal	Stephen Careless
Telephone number	01253 356271
Website	<a href="http://www.montgomeryschool.co.uk">www.montgomeryschool.co.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:f.burrows@montgomeryschool.co.uk">f.burrows@montgomeryschool.co.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	12–13 April 2016

## Information about this school

- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Year 11.
- The school is part of the Fylde Coast Academy Trust.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is well below the national average. The proportion of pupils who have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is well below the national average.
- There are currently no pupils attending alternative provision.

## Information about this inspection

- Meetings took place with school leaders, teachers, the chief executive officer and representatives of the Fylde Coast Academy Trust and members of the local governing body. Telephone conversations were held with representatives of the local authority.
- Discussions were held with pupils to gather their views on a variety of issues, including safeguarding, bullying, behaviour, teaching, careers guidance and the curriculum.
- Inspectors examined a range of the school’s documentation, such as self-evaluation, the improvement plan, assessment information, the pupil premium plan, minutes of governing body meetings, attendance and behaviour records and safeguarding information.
- Inspectors considered the 118 responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View, the 46 responses to the Ofsted online pupils’ questionnaire and the 91 responses to the Ofsted online staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors conducted learning walks and lesson observations across a range of subjects and year groups. They were accompanied by school leaders on some of these observations of teaching and learning. Inspectors also checked on the quality of work in pupils’ books by undertaking a work analysis with school leaders.

## Inspection team

Stephen Ruddy, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Annette Patterson	Ofsted Inspector
David Roberts	Ofsted Inspector
Jackie Cahalin	Ofsted Inspector
Dympna Woods	Ofsted Inspector

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