

Inspection of Montgomery Junior School, Colchester

Baronswood Way, Colchester, Essex CO2 9QG

Inspection dates: 19–20 November 2019

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Montgomery Junior School serves a diverse community, including pupils from families who serve in the armed forces. Pupils often join throughout the year, yet settle quickly due to the welcoming and supportive ethos of the school. Pupils feel happy and safe and their needs are well catered for. Many parents and carers appreciate the support which is on offer. One parent commented, 'This school cares deeply for the children's progress, well-being and future.'

Pupils enjoy coming to school and say that learning is fun. Pupils work hard in lessons to achieve their best. They appreciate the rewards they receive when they do well as it makes them 'feel nice inside'. Pupils enjoy work that challenges them. One pupil said, 'It is a huge accomplishment when you get it right.'

All staff have high expectations for pupils' behaviour. They give good support to pupils who find it difficult to manage their behaviour. This helps these pupils to succeed. The school's work to develop pupils' self-esteem and well-being is a real strength of the school.

Pupils understand what bullying is. They say that bullying is rare in their school. They are confident that teachers will deal with it quickly if it ever happens. There are good relationships between pupils and staff. Pupils know that they can always talk to an adult in school if they are worried about anything.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Since the previous inspection, leaders have been developing the curriculum for subjects other than English and mathematics. Curriculum leaders have supported teachers so that they are confident about what to teach and when. Leaders have identified the skills and knowledge pupils should learn in each subject that build on their understanding from one year to the next. Despite these changes being new, leaders' actions have already had a positive impact. Pupils talk enthusiastically about the skills and knowledge they have learned in a range of subjects. In art, for example, pupils have enjoyed using a range of equipment and learning different techniques, such as shading. However, some subjects are further ahead than others. Leaders need to keep a close eye on how well the new plans are being delivered so that they can accurately gauge their impact across all curriculum areas.

The teaching of writing is a strength. Pupils study different types of text and learn which features to include in their writing. Pupils practise grammar skills and apply them to their writing. Following work with a local author, older pupils understand the importance of editing and redrafting. Pupils enjoy writing and many see themselves as authors.

Leaders place a strong focus on reading. They have purchased new books and run reading competitions and book fairs. There are reading displays around the school. Teachers read aloud to their pupils regularly. This has encouraged a love of reading.

Reading sessions skilfully develop fluency and comprehension. As a result, most pupils develop into confident readers. Some pupils join the school with phonics skills below where they should be. They benefit from additional support to help them to develop their phonics knowledge. However, a sharper focus on the provision for pupils who are behind, and the books they read, would enable them to catch up more quickly.

The teaching of mathematics is sound and well organised. Outcomes in mathematics at the end of key stage 2 in 2019 improved significantly. However, pupils are not always given opportunities to apply and extend their mathematical skills in different contexts.

The curriculum is enhanced by trips and a wide range of extra-curricular clubs, for example football, table tennis and boot camp. The school has a strong link with the armed forces. Pupils enjoy listening to the brass ensemble in assembly and regularly take part in military celebrations and commemorations. Service families appreciate the additional support they receive. One parent commented, 'My child really benefits from attending military club, especially while her dad is serving away', while another said, 'The service family supper was fantastic.'

Disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive the support they need to help them make as much progress as their peers. These pupils are fully included in all aspects of school life.

The headteacher is ambitious for the school. She is determined that all pupils should achieve well as they only have 'one chance' at school. Her high expectations are shared by governors and staff.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff are well trained. Teachers know the pupils well and are quick to identify and report any signs that may suggest a child is at risk of harm. The electronic system for recording and monitoring concerns is used effectively by all staff. Due to the mobility of some pupils, this system ensures that records are passed on quickly and securely for pupils who leave the school. The safeguarding team is rigorous in following up concerns with appropriate action. It works closely with the relevant agencies. Governors monitor leaders' actions to be certain that the correct checks are made on everyone who works in the school.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders should carefully monitor the impact of the changes to the curriculum to ensure that the plans are being delivered well so that pupils' outcomes are consistently high across each subject.
- Leaders need to ensure that the teaching of phonics enables pupils who find reading difficult to catch up quickly. Leaders need to check that the books these pupils read help them to practise and apply their phonics knowledge.
- The teaching of mathematics is well sequenced and of a good standard. However, teachers do not always provide enough opportunities for pupils to apply their arithmetic skills through reasoning and problem-solving. Leaders need to ensure that pupils have opportunities to extend and deepen their knowledge so that they can achieve more.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you're not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	114750
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10110225
Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	326
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Susan Faulkner
Headteacher	Michelle Wright
Website	www.montgomery-jun.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	22 November 2018

Information about this school

- This school is larger than average and has recently expanded to three classes in each year group.
- The school serves families that are in the armed forces. As a result, mobility is higher than average.
- The majority of pupils are of White British backgrounds and speak English as their first language.
- The headteacher started on 1 September 2018.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- We met with the headteacher, the leader for disadvantaged pupils, the sports leader, the leader for nurture provision and the special educational needs coordinator. I met with one governor and spoke on the telephone to the chair of governors. I also had a telephone conversation with a representative from the local authority.
- The subjects considered in depth as part of this inspection were reading,

mathematics, writing, art and history. In each subject, we visited lessons, scrutinised the work in pupils' books and held discussions with subject leaders, teachers and pupils.

- We also met leaders from other curriculum areas, such as computing, modern foreign languages, religious education, music and spiritual, moral, social and cultural education.
- We observed pupils' behaviour and spoke to pupils to gather their views of the school. I also reviewed school information related to pupils' behaviour and attendance.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, I reviewed the school's policies and procedures. I also met with the designated safeguarding leader to review the actions taken to keep children safe. We spoke to staff to check that they understood the school procedures.
- I took into account the views of the 17 members of staff who completed the Ofsted questionnaire.
- We spoke to parents at the start of the school day. We also considered 25 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, including 25 free-text comments.

Inspection team

Rachel Welch, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Simon Harbrow	Ofsted Inspector
Katherine Douglas	Ofsted Inspector

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