

Inspection of Montgomery Academy

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

Inspection dates: 22 and 23 February 2022

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Good

Previous inspection grade

Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Most pupils enjoy coming to school. Pupils spoken to said that behaviour has improved because of the high expectations from their teachers. The school is generally a calm and orderly place. Pupils are taught to be responsible for their own actions and to respect others. They behave well in lessons. Most pupils behave sensibly around the school during breaktimes.

Pupils feel safe. They reported that bullying does not happen often, but if it does staff sort it out quickly. Pupils told inspectors that there is always an adult they can speak to if they need help.

Pupils enjoy a wide range of extra-curricular opportunities, including the photography club, choir and sports. They spoke enthusiastically about their experiences in the science, technology, engineering, art and mathematics project. Leaders provide a range of support for pupils' mental health.

The quality of education is getting better than it has been in the past. However, pupils' progress is still not good enough. Pupils do not experience a suitably ambitious curriculum in some subjects.

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

Leaders, including trustees and governors, want all pupils to do well. They have worked effectively together with staff to improve many aspects of the school. In partnership with representatives from the Fylde Coast Academy Trust (FCAT), leaders are continuing to review and improve the quality of education that pupils receive.

Leaders have been particularly successful in bringing about positive change in key stage 4. Older pupils follow a wide range of academic and vocational subjects. The curriculum in key stage 4 is well organised and carefully thought through. In many subjects, teachers are aware of what should be taught and when this content should be delivered.

The quality of education in key stage 3 is stronger than it has been in the past. However, there is still work to do. Leaders are in the process of developing the curriculum in key stage 3 to ensure that it has the breadth and ambition of the national curriculum. This is because, in some subjects, pupils do not gain the rich body of knowledge that they need for key stage 4. In addition, some subject leaders are still in the process of thinking about the important knowledge they want teachers to teach and the order in which this should be taught. This means that some pupils have gaps in their knowledge.

Teachers use their strong subject knowledge to explain subject content clearly. They place a strong emphasis on developing pupils' subject-specific vocabulary. Leaders

have introduced a range of approaches to enable teachers to check what pupils have learned. However, in some subjects teachers do not use these strategies well enough to assess how well pupils have understood their work or to identify any misconceptions. As a result, some teachers do not have a good understanding of what pupils know and what they need to do to make up for gaps in their learning.

Leaders have developed plans to support pupils who are in the early stages of learning to read. Leaders have identified that some pupils have gaps in their reading knowledge. Staff provide extra support to help weaker readers catch up. However, leaders' strategies are not fully embedded. This means that some pupils are not able to read confidently and fluently. This hinders their access to the curriculum.

Leaders have improved the systems to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). These pupils have their needs identified effectively. Leaders ensure that staff are provided with the information and training that they need to support pupils with SEND. This is helping these pupils to improve their learning across the curriculum.

Leaders have introduced a new behaviour policy which is understood by pupils. Teachers apply the behaviour policy consistently. This means that most lessons proceed with little disruption. Some pupils struggle to meet teachers' high expectations. However, they are learning to better manage their behaviour because of the support that they receive from leaders and staff. Most pupils have positive relationships with each other and their teachers.

Pupils participate in a wide range of trips and visits. They build their knowledge of relationships and consent in an age-appropriate way. Pupils learn about citizenship and the rule of law. They learn to respect and celebrate differences between people. Pupils receive high-quality careers information, advice and guidance. Leaders have developed strong links with employers. This helps pupils to make informed decisions about their next steps.

Staff morale is high. Staff enjoy working at the school. They feel that leaders are supportive and considerate of their well-being and workload. Trustees and governors support and challenge leaders effectively. They are committed to helping the school to improve further.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff are vigilant. They receive regular safeguarding training. They know how to spot potential signs of abuse and what to do if they have any concerns about pupils' safety or well-being. Leaders follow up concerns promptly with outside agencies, including the police, to ensure the safety of pupils. Leaders make sure that pupils who attend alternative provision are safe. Pupils are taught about different risks and how to keep themselves safe. Those who spoke with inspectors said they learn how to recognise sexual harassment and how to report it.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The curriculum in key stage 3 is underdeveloped in some subjects. As such, subject leaders are in the process of deciding and defining exactly what will be taught in some subjects. This means that pupils do not acquire sufficient knowledge to prepare them for their GCSE courses. Leaders should ensure that they identify the important knowledge that pupils must know and remember in these subjects.
- In some subjects, teachers do not always use assessment strategies well enough to check whether pupils have learned the essential knowledge that they need to remember. This means that some teachers do not identify or address misconceptions quickly enough. As a result, some pupils, particularly those in key stage 3, have gaps in their knowledge. Subject leaders should ensure that assessment strategies are used more effectively to identify pupils' misconceptions so that they can build their knowledge over time.
- Some pupils have gaps in their reading ability. This affects how well they access the wider curriculum. Leaders should embed their systems for addressing deficits in reading knowledge so that pupils are helped to read confidently and fluently.

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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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 are the school and you are 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	137973
Local authority	Blackpool
Inspection number	10211689
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	1,170
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Joel Arber
Headteacher	Stephen Careless
Website	www.montgomeryschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	9 May 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- School leaders use five alternative providers for a small number of pupils.
- The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

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

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors spoke with the headteacher, executive headteacher, other senior leaders, subject leaders, staff, the chief executive officer and the director of education of FCAT, trust officers, members of the academy council and the chair of the trust.

- Inspectors spoke to many pupils about their experience of school and their views on behaviour and bullying. Inspectors also observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and at breaktimes.
- Inspectors checked the school's safeguarding policies and procedures, including the school's single central record. Inspectors met with leaders, staff and pupils to check how effective safeguarding is in the school. An inspector held telephone calls with representatives from alternative providers.
- Inspectors reviewed a wide range of evidence, including the school's self-evaluation document, improvement plans, minutes of governing body meetings and records relating to pupils' behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in art and design, English, geography, mathematics and science. Inspectors met with staff, visited lessons, looked at pupils' work and spoke with pupils about their learning.
- Inspectors reviewed leaders' curriculum plans and pupils' work in a range of subjects. Inspectors spoke with subject leaders in some of these subjects.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View and the responses to Ofsted's pupil and staff surveys.

Inspection team

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