

Inspection of Montgomery Academy

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

Inspection dates: 22 and 23 May 2024

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

The headteacher of this school is Stephen Careless. This school is part of The Fylde Coast Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Dean Logan, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Mark Gutteridge.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are warmly welcomed by staff each morning as they arrive at Montgomery Academy. The positive relationships between pupils and staff contribute to pupils feeling well cared for, safe and happy. Pupils are proud to be members of their school. They were keen to tell inspectors how much the school has improved.

Pupils strive to follow the school's rules. Most pupils behave well in lessons and around school. They have positive attitudes towards their learning. Similarly, pupils learn the importance of treating each other with kindness and respect.

Over recent years, the school has considerably increased its expectations of pupils' academic success. Stable staffing, and a renewed and ambitious curriculum offer, means that pupils currently at the school typically achieve well.

The school provides a wide range of extra-curricular opportunities to develop pupils' interests, including boxing, gaming, first aid and working towards the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme. Additional activities also complement pupils' learning of the curriculum, for example through taking part in science club or reading challenges.

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

The school, with the support of the trust, has successfully brought about positive change since the previous inspection. The impact of this work is evident in pupils' attitudes to school, their behaviour and their progress through different subject curriculums. Members of the trust have a secure insight into the school's strengths and weaknesses. Their work has contributed considerably to the school's improvement.

The school has overhauled the curriculum offer to ensure that it is broad, ambitious and tailored to pupils' needs and future success. For example, an increasing number of pupils are choosing to study the English Baccalaureate suite of subjects. Staff have been supported well during this period of change. The school has made sure that staff have not felt any additional pressure on their workload throughout this time.

Over time, the published data for this school does not reflect the impact of recent changes. In 2023, the proportion of pupils who left school with the qualifications that they needed to make a smooth transition to further education or employment was significantly below the national average. This was due to weaknesses in the previous curriculum offer, instability in staffing and high pupil absence levels.

The school has overcome these challenges and these factors are no longer playing a part in pupils' learning. For example, the school's effective approach to promoting good attendance means that far fewer pupils are regularly absent. Consequently, most pupils know and remember what they have been taught across a range of

different curriculum areas. Even so, some older pupils, especially those in Year 11, have gaps in their learning which make it difficult for them to build new knowledge.

In most subject curriculums, the important knowledge that pupils should know and the order in which it should be taught is clearly identified. In these subjects, teachers design activities to help pupils build key knowledge effectively. Teachers use their subject expertise to explain concepts to pupils clearly. They typically use assessment information well to address misconceptions in pupils' learning.

In a small number of subjects, teachers do not deliver the curriculum consistently well. Sometimes, teachers do not ensure that pupils have sufficient opportunities to apply their knowledge in different contexts. As a result, in these subjects, some pupils do not deepen or extend their learning as effectively as they could.

The additional needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), are identified well. Staff are furnished with the information that they need to adapt the delivery of the curriculum to meet pupils' needs effectively. Staff value the training that they receive to continually develop their teaching expertise. This enables teachers to provide appropriate support so that pupils with SEND can learn successfully.

Reading is of utmost importance across the school. Staff identify any gaps in pupils' reading knowledge accurately. These pupils receive targeted support to help them to catch up quickly. As a result, pupils become fluent and confident readers. Pupils develop a love of reading, for example through exposure to high-quality texts during regular, whole-class reading sessions.

Pupils demonstrate positive attitudes to learning. On occasion, when pupils' behaviour does not meet the high expectations demanded by the school, staff deal with these incidents consistently well.

Pupils follow a well-designed programme that promotes their personal development. They learn about the importance of healthy relationships and staying safe. Interwoven through this programme are clear messages about equality and diversity. Pupils also receive a wealth of information about careers. As a result, they feel well informed about their next steps in education and training.

The school provides a range of extra-curricular activities and visits. Some pupils take full advantage of these opportunities. However, some pupils are reluctant to participate in these activities and, as such, miss out on the chance to expand their interests and talents.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some older pupils, particularly those in Year 11, still have gaps in their learning from weaknesses in the previous curriculum. This hampers them from benefiting fully from the improved curriculum offer. The school should ensure that the gaps in pupils' knowledge are identified and addressed swiftly so that pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their learning or employment.
- In a small number of subjects, teachers do not provide pupils with sufficient opportunities to apply their learning to more sophisticated concepts and ideas. This means that some pupils do not learn as deeply as they could. The school should ensure that teachers are well equipped to deepen pupils' knowledge of the subjects that they study.
- Some pupils do not choose to participate in the extra-curricular offer. This limits their opportunity to expand their interests or find new talents. The school should review the current offer to encourage wider participation and promote pupils' wider development.

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.

Further information

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

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	137973
Local authority	Blackpool
Inspection number	10321429
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	1,171
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Mark Gutteridge
CEO of the trust	Dean Logan
Headteacher	Stephen Careless
Website	www.montgomeryschool.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	12 and 13 February 2022, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of Fylde Coast Academy Trust.
- The school makes use of five registered alternative providers for a small number of pupils.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

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

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.

- Inspectors discussed the continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, science, modern foreign languages, computing and geography. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers and pupils, and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors spoke with the headteacher, other senior leaders, subject leaders and members of staff.
- The lead inspector met with the CEO of the trust, members of the trust, trustees and members of the local governing body. She also spoke with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors spoke to groups of pupils from Years 7 to 11 about their experiences of school and their views on behaviour and bullying. Inspectors also observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and at breaktimes.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments.
- Inspectors also considered the responses to Ofsted's online surveys for staff and pupils.

Inspection team

Eleanor Overland, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Dympna Woods	Ofsted Inspector
Michael Wright	Ofsted Inspector
Tim Long	Ofsted Inspector
Scott Maclean	Ofsted Inspector

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