

# Inspection of Montgomery Infant School and Nursery, Colchester

Baronswood Way, Colchester, Essex CO2 9QG

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Inspection dates:	12 and 13 November 2024
The quality of education	<b>Good</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Good</b>
Personal development	<b>Good</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Early years provision	<b>Outstanding</b>
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

Until November 2020, the school was exempt from routine inspection because it was judged as outstanding for overall effectiveness at its previous inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. The school has not been inspected under section 5 of the Act since 19 June 2013. Since September 2024, schools have not been awarded an overall effectiveness grade.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

The school embraces its diverse community. This includes pupils with families who serve in the armed forces and those who speak English as an additional language. Many pupils join the school midway through the year. They are warmly welcomed through the 'buddy system' and settle quickly at school.

Pupils exemplify the school's expectations within 'The Monty Way'. This encourages them to behave well, respect everyone and achieve highly. Pupils work hard and persevere in more difficult tasks. Pupils achieve well across the curriculum. In particular, children in early years thrive. Staff are very ambitious for children and ensure they are fully prepared for Year 1.

Pupils enjoy coming to this school and love learning 'everything'. Pupils respond well to praise provided through the weekly 'Monty Achievers' assembly. This motivates them and supports them to make a positive contribution to their own learning.

The school provides the chance for pupils to enhance their learning through trips and visitors to the school. There are increasing opportunities for pupils to develop their talents and interests. This includes access to a range of clubs, for example a military club that offers additional support for pupils whose parents are on deployment.

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

Since the previous inspection, there have been significant leadership changes in the school. The curriculum has undergone a period of refinement and is now ambitious for all. The curriculum reflects the school's motto of 'We achieve together'. The focus on pupils achieving well is woven throughout.

Where the curriculum is most established, pupils achieve well. In early years, the curriculum is very well thought out and reflects the vision of children being able to read well so they can access the rest of the curriculum well. Staff carefully consider children's starting points and the needs of the many children who speak English as an additional language. This enables children to make rapid progress. As a result, children are extremely well prepared for the next stage of their education.

The teaching of reading is a notable strength. This begins in Nursery, where children are completely immersed in stories, poems and rhymes that create a language-rich and vibrant environment. In Reception, skilled teachers deliver lessons which help children remember sounds and apply them to their day-to-day reading. Teachers rapidly identify those children who need extra help to keep up and provide effective support. The school ensures that the books children read match the sounds they know. As pupils progress through the school, they learn to understand more complex vocabulary through well-chosen texts. Consequently, pupils become fluent and confident readers. This in turn helps them successfully access all areas of the curriculum.

Where the curriculum is more recently in place, the changes are already impacting positively on pupils' learning. This is because the school has precisely identified the skills and knowledge pupils need to build each year. While this is the case, there remain a few curriculum areas where the process for checking how well the curriculum is being delivered is not as fully developed. This means that leaders have not got as secure an oversight of how well pupils are remembering and building on their learning.

The school has revised the approach to teaching handwriting. At present, this approach is not being consistently delivered. This can sometimes hinder the progress some pupils make. There are also variations in the expectations of the quality of pupils' writing for different purposes throughout the curriculum. In these instances, the quality of pupils' work is variable and does not truly reflect how well they are learning and remembering aspects of the curriculum.

Pupils with special educational and/or disabilities (SEND) are very well supported. Their needs are quickly identified, and appropriate support is put in place. Teachers provide skilful adaptations to ensure that all pupils can access the same learning as their peers. Pupils with the most complex needs receive a bespoke programme with high levels of support. The effectiveness of this support means that pupils with SEND achieve well from their starting points.

The school celebrates the diversity of its community in a range of ways. For example, the school hosts the annual summer festival. Families dress in clothes from their culture and learn about the different cultures within the school. Pupils also learn about different faiths and cultures through books chosen for their diversity. Pupils build a strong understanding of tolerance and respect. Pupils learn about the key values of being a citizen in modern Britain through voting for their school councillors. They also take responsibility for their own learning and actions by following 'The Monty Way'.

Staff enjoy working at the school. They feel very well supported by leaders in managing their workload and well-being.

Governors closely check improvements within the school and hold leaders to account effectively. They have absolute confidence in the new leaders to fulfil their high expectations.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- There are inconsistencies in teachers' expectations of pupils' written work and the application of the agreed handwriting programme. In a few subjects, pupils do not routinely apply the writing skills they know within their written work. This means that

pupils' writing does not always reflect how well they are learning, or the ambition of the curriculum. The school should ensure that teachers' expectations of pupils' written work are consistently high in all subject areas and the agreed system to teach handwriting is followed by all.

- In a few subject areas, the checks that the school makes to ensure the successful delivery of the curriculum are at an earlier stage than in other subjects. This means that the school does not have as clear an understanding of the impact of the curriculum on pupils' progress in all curriculum areas. Therefore, it is unclear if pupils are making the progress they should. The school should make sure that leaders have a secure oversight of the implementation, and impact, of the curriculum and that they have the systems established to check that pupils remember what they have been taught.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	114751
<b>Local authority</b>	Essex
<b>Inspection number</b>	10336963
<b>Type of school</b>	Infant
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 7
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	276
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Sue Faulkner
<b>Headteacher</b>	Michelle Wright
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.montgomery-inf.essex.sch.uk">www.montgomery-inf.essex.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	19 June 2013

## Information about this school

- The school has experienced considerable changes in leadership since the last inspection.
- The headteacher has been in post since 1 April 2024.
- The school serves families that are in the armed forces. As a result, mobility is higher than average.
- There is a large proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language.
- The school does not use an alternative provision.

## Information about this inspection

The inspector carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school’s education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the 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 met with the headteacher and other school leaders.
- The lead inspector met with members of the governing body, including the chair of governors.
- The lead inspector also met with a representative from Essex local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, design and technology, and geography. For each deep dive, inspectors visited lessons, reviewed curriculum plans and spoke with curriculum leaders and teachers. They also spoke with pupils about their learning and looked at the work they have completed. Inspectors also viewed pupils’ writing across the curriculum, including in science and English.
- The inspection team scrutinised the school’s records of behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted’s online pupil and staff surveys. They considered responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. Inspectors spoke with groups of pupils to understand their experience of school.

### **Inspection team**

Rowena Simmons, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Mike Wade	Ofsted Inspector
Nicola Shadbolt	Ofsted Inspector

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