



Montgomery High School - A Language College

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 119735
LEA Blackpool
Inspection number 280646
Inspection dates 21 September 2005 to 22 September 2005
Reporting inspector John Ashton

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

Type of school	Comprehensive	School address	All Hallows Road
School category	Community		Bispham
Age range of pupils	11 to 16		Blackpool, Lancashire
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01253 356271
Number on roll	1390	Fax number	01253 352305
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr Ian McKay
Date of previous inspection	11 October 1999	Headteacher	Mr Paul Moss

Age group 11 to 16	Inspection dates 21 September 2005 - 22 September 2005	Inspection number 280646
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by five additional inspectors.

Description of the school

Montgomery High School is an above average sized comprehensive school for students aged 11-16, with 1390 students on roll, a specialist language college since 1997. It is oversubscribed and its intake is largely from the surrounding neighbourhood. A smaller than average proportion of the students is eligible for free school meals. Attendance in recent years has been consistently above average. There are more boys than girls on roll. The vast majority of the students are White British, with very few from minority ethnic groups. Fewer than one per cent of students have a first language other than English. A lower than average proportion have special educational needs. Standards on entry are close to average.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school and aspects of its work are outstanding. From largely average levels of attainment on entry, students make reasonable progress up to Year 9 and then good progress to attain above average standards at GCSE. Students' attitudes to learning are very positive and their behaviour is very good indeed. They feel safe from bullying and understand the importance of a healthy lifestyle. The good teaching and imaginative curriculum they receive prepares them very well for adult and working life. The school knows that the teaching would be even better and achievement more secure if the teachers' planning concentrated more on students' learning than upon the content to be taught. The school knows itself well although one or two of its self assessments are over-generous. Leadership and management are good overall. Some aspects of leadership are outstanding but there are some relative weaknesses in management. The school has the capacity to improve quickly these weaknesses in the same way that the few matters for improvement from the last inspection were tackled. Students thoroughly enjoy school ("I love it here", a Year 7 student told the inspectors). The vast majority of parents also think highly of the school.

not applicable

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve students' achievements in Years 7 to 9 to match those in Years 10 and 11.
- Improve further the quality of teaching, especially in Years 7 to 9, by helping teachers to focus more upon students' learning.
- Improve financial management, particularly the monitoring of the budget.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards are above the national average and improving in line with those nationally in Years 7 to 9 and in Years 10 and 11. They are further above average in the GCSE examinations in Year 11 than in the national tests in Year 9, reflecting the satisfactory progress students make between Year 6 and Year 9 and then good progress up to Year 11. There was concern in 2004 that students were underachieving compared to their previous attainment, particularly in the national tests in Year 9, especially in English. The school is able to demonstrate a good measure of improvement in the 2005 results for Year 9, including in English. There was little difference in the relative performance of girls and boys overall in this age group in 2005. The 2005 GCSE/GNVQ results are the school's best ever: 63 per cent of students achieving five or more grades A* to C. The most noticeable progress was made in English, and in 17 other subjects the results were well above the national average. In view of the students' average overall attainment when they begin school, this represents good achievement. Girls overall outperformed the boys in this age group, mirroring the national picture. Students with

special educational needs make good progress throughout the school and achieve well at GCSE.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Students' behaviour is exemplary and they have very good attitudes to their learning. They thoroughly enjoy their experience of school, are proud of its achievements and fiercely loyal to it. The school has high expectations of its students and they work hard to achieve the targets set for them. Consequently, there are few exclusions. Students have excellent opportunities to take responsibility, for example, as stewards, prefects, peer mentors or serving on the school council. The council is very effective in bringing about changes and students feel that the management of the school positively seeks and is influenced by their views. The students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good, their language college status bringing a rich, diverse dimension to their cultural experience. Students are confident that any incidents of bullying or racial harassment would be dealt with very effectively. They show great respect for each other and enjoy excellent relationships with their teachers. "In this school, we all help each other along", said one Year 8 boy. Lessons in personal development encourage students to adopt a healthy and safe life-style very effectively. The school ensures that the students eat and drink healthily whilst at school, choosing from a wholesome menu, for example. Students participate in school health surveys and 'stop smoking' groups. Students become mature, independent, responsible and self-confident young people as they make progress through the school. This is a most impressive part of the school's work and students are admirably prepared for their future education, employment, family life and contribution to the wider community. Attendance is consistently above the national average as a result of all the school has to offer students, and because teachers work hard to combat the very few examples of poor attendance.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The school judges its teaching and learning to be good overall and inspection evidence confirms this, although it is better in some areas than others. The school's effective monitoring procedures (a key area for improvement at the last inspection) now ensure that the leadership is aware of the various strengths and weaknesses, which largely coincide with the varying standards and progress in different subject departments. Notable strengths in the better teaching include the teachers' command of their subjects and the effective way they capture and hold students' attention. Enthusiasm and good relationships are well to the fore. Good use is made of the school's excellent accommodation and learning resources. Starter activities are used well in lessons and students are actively involved as soon as possible and not expected to be passive receivers of knowledge. On the other hand, lesson planning is less sharp than it ought

to be, particularly in Years 7 to 9. It should concentrate more upon what students are expected to learn than upon which tasks the teachers plan for them to carry out.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is one of the school's major strengths. As a language college it provides a very good breadth of language provision including, for instance, Japanese. Provision for students with special educational needs is very good. The curriculum of a good proportion of the students in Years 8 and 9 is considerably enhanced by the imaginative and innovative 'orange pathway' which is very well resourced, very well coordinated and attracts considerable interest from far afield. In Years 10 and 11, there is a very good variety of academic, applied and vocational courses so that students have access to an individual curriculum that meets their learning needs exceptionally well. The least motivated older students are well catered for by extended work placements allied to more formal lessons. Enrichment activities, especially on Wednesday afternoons, broaden the curriculum considerably and two thirds of the students currently take part. The school at this time of the week is buzzing with a tremendously wide variety of purposeful activities led by the school's associate staff and outside coaches. The teaching staff take part in intensive staff development activities which extend beyond the end of the school day. Curricular links with primary partners are strong in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, as well as in languages.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school regards its duty of care toward all its students as paramount and so this really is a school in which every child matters. Child protection procedures are very clear and understood by all staff, and training is up to date and of the highest quality. Health and safety procedures and risk assessments are all strictly followed and regularly reviewed. Students say they feel safe and that they can go to an adult in confidence for help and advice. Support for students with learning difficulties is very good, as is that for children in public care, and the school works with a range of outside agencies on their behalf. Effective links with parents are maintained through newsletters, written reports and parents' evenings. The pastoral team, including the learning mentors, are dedicated to and do a first rate job in supporting students and motivating them to improve their work and raise standards. Links with the community and other schools are very good indeed and enable students' smooth transition, for example, into Year 7. Students know clearly the progress they are making and praise the generous support they receive during and after classes.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good overall. Some aspects of leadership are outstanding but there are some weaknesses in management. The headteacher provides

a high profile and energetic leadership, very effective in developing new initiatives and bringing external ideas and new streams of funding to the school. The senior leadership group is a relatively new and talented one, demonstrably working well as a team and beginning to show that they have the capacity to bring about the necessary changes to make the school an outstanding one. The school's development planning does not yet articulate well enough the strategic direction the school intends to take. The school's self evaluation is satisfactory, if sometimes a little generous, and needs a sharper focus in identifying the key areas for development. The management of the school is satisfactory overall. The management of the provision for students with special educational needs is very good. In its drive to raise standards the school has concentrated successfully on pupils with special educational needs, and those following the 'orange' pathway in Years 8 and 9. Middle managers have also been effective in raising standards in Years 10 and 11 but are not yet as effective in doing the same in Years 7 to 9. The day-to-day management is highly effective and the school runs very smoothly as an organisation, although the management of the budget should be improved. Governance is satisfactory. There is good governor liaison with the leasers of curriculum subjects but the weaknesses in budget control have led to a substantial deficit. Governors are knowledgeable and very involved with the school but would be more effective if they challenged the school more.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	NA
The behaviour of learners	1	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	Yes
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	Yes

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

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22 September 2005

Dear Students

Thank you for the welcome so many of you gave to us. We thoroughly enjoyed our time in your school. A special thank you to those students who met with us on the Wednesday and also those who allowed us to look over their shoulders in class at the quality of their work.

We think your school is a good one and much about it is outstanding, for example, the excellent buildings and facilities, the wide range of languages available to you, and the exciting new curriculum pathways you can follow from Year 8 onwards. We especially enjoyed seeing the interesting variety of voluntary activities taking place on Wednesday afternoon, with so many of you taking part with such enthusiasm.

We have now asked your school to:

Improve the progress you make in Years 7 to 9 so that it matches the good progress made in Years 10 and 11.

Ensure that your teachers build their lessons more around what you need to learn rather than the tasks they wish you to complete.

Improve its financial management so that it does not overspend its budget.

You have every reason to be proud of being a student at Montgomery School and we hope you will continue to continue to work as hard and maintain the school's success.

John Ashton
Lead inspector
Annex B