

Montgomery Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113082
Local Authority	Devon
Inspection number	311098
Inspection dates	9–10 December 2008
Reporting inspector	Anne Newall

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	390
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	52
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Kathryn Wilson
Headteacher	Nigel Hughes
Date of previous school inspection	21 June 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	21 June 2005
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Redvers Road St Thomas Exeter EX4 1BS
Telephone number	01392 273751
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Montgomery Primary School is a larger than average primary school. Most pupils are White British and the proportion who speak English as an additional language has increased recently to approximately one in ten pupils. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is average. The percentage of pupils with a statement of special educational needs is above average whilst the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. A small number of pupils have speech and language difficulties, and a few have behavioural, emotional or social problems. The school provides Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) provision for children in a maintained Nursery and Reception classes.

The school provides a breakfast club, a lunchtime club for the Nursery children, and an after-school club, which are run independently of the governing body.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The quality of education provided by Montgomery Primary School is satisfactory, in a caring environment where pupils are happy to come to school. The school has made satisfactory improvement since the last inspection. Achievement is satisfactory. Standards have been below average for a number of years, but the most recent data provided by the school for 2008 show that standards at the end of Key Stage 2 are now average, with pupils meeting challenging targets. This is due to procedures put in place by the school to identify variations in pupils' progress and provide appropriate support. However, assessment information is not always used effectively to plan lessons which match work closely to meet the needs of all pupils. Some pupils find the work too hard, whilst others find it too easy, resulting in uneven progress across the school. In addition, the use of marking for pupils and guidance on how to improve their work is inconsistent.

Pupils speak highly of their teachers and support staff, and the mutual respect is evident from the good relationships which exist and the good behaviour of children. These contribute to the good personal development of the pupils. Most parents have a positive view of the school and appreciate the pastoral support provided. One parent described her son's increased self-esteem and confidence, and another is 'very impressed with the care and attention my child has received'. However, a small minority would welcome more information about their children's progress. This is an inclusive school; pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and pupils with English as an additional language, are well supported throughout the school and are encouraged to fully participate in all activities.

The curriculum is suitably broad and is enriched by a range of visits, visitors and extra-curricular activities. New initiatives have been introduced to make lessons more engaging and lively, but these are not consistently used throughout the school.

Governors provide good support, and their ability to monitor the work of the school and to provide challenge for the school's leaders is developing. The school works in partnership with other local schools and with agencies such as educational welfare and education advisers who provide support for the teaching of pupils who have English as an additional language.

The school's capacity for further improvement is satisfactory, because the school's leaders have a satisfactory understanding of its strengths and weaknesses, and have correctly identified areas for improvement. Less well developed is the leaders' role in monitoring the impact of their actions upon teaching and learning. Consequently, teachers do not always receive guidance on how to improve their classroom practice.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The Nursery and Reception classes provide a happy and safe environment for children to learn. They feel cared for and gain confidence because clear routines are established. Effective links with parents help to involve them in their children's care and education: an open session for both parents and children on early reading skills was especially helpful. The enthusiastic staff have comprehensive systems to assess and observe children and this helps to give a very accurate understanding of children's strengths. Good transition arrangements help children to settle quickly into school, interact well with the class teachers and gain confidence.

As a result of good teaching, children make good progress in their learning from their starting points, which are well below average in most areas of learning. The youngest children show a very good understanding of shape and space and aspects of mathematics, and speak French phrases with confidence. Strong emphasis is given to children's personal development and this means that their standards of behaviour are high. Children's language and social skills are less well developed on entry to the EYFS. Staff have provided increased opportunities for children to develop their speaking skills by encouraging them to justify their choices and explain what they are doing but these opportunities are still too limited. Staff are effective in supporting children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, many of whom reach the same standards as their peers. The school makes good use of a covered outdoor learning environment to further enrich children's experiences. Leadership and management of EYFS are good and there is close teamwork between staff.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning by ensuring activities in lessons match the learning needs of all pupils.
- Ensure senior leaders make more rigorous use of monitoring systems in order to provide teachers with guidance on how to improve and to sustain the recent improvement in standards.
- Ensure that information about their progress is shared with pupils and that they are given guidance on how to improve their work.
- In the EYFS, provide increased opportunities for children to develop their language and social skills.

A small proportion of schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils make satisfactory progress from their well below average starting points. Standards reached by pupils have previously been low across the school. However, the most recent results show that standards at the end of Key Stage 1 are below average. Standards at the end of Year 6 have improved and are now average, because of well targeted support for pupils and higher expectations. Challenging targets are being used more effectively to reduce gaps in attainment. Despite most pupils reaching the expected Level 4, results in English and mathematics are lower than in science because smaller proportions reach the higher Level 5 in these subjects. Last year, the school focused on more closely tracking the progress made by pupils in each year group, leading to an increase in the numbers of pupils working at age-appropriate levels. For example, the intensive work in reading in Years 3 and 4 led to improved achievement for those pupils. Carefully targeted support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those with English as an additional language enables them to make progress in line with their peers nationally.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' social and moral development is strong, and they have positive attitudes towards each other. Their spiritual development is promoted through regular assemblies led by the Initiative for Christian Education (ICE) team. Pupils understand the principles of living a healthy lifestyle,

say that they feel safe in school, and report that they are free from bullying but that, if it happened, they would know to whom they should talk. The pupils show respect for one another and for adults, and their behaviour is good. They are encouraged to take responsibility to help with the smooth running of the school, for example the 'buddy' system helps to settle younger pupils who may be feeling insecure. Activities such as performances by the school choir and band demonstrate pupils' good contribution towards the local community, and the pupils are proud to support local and national charities. Attendance is satisfactory, and this is affected by a higher than average proportion of pupils who are persistently absent, despite the school's efforts to promote better attendance. Pupils are increasingly developing their awareness and understanding of life in a multicultural society. Pupils' preparation for their future lives is satisfactory.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching overall is satisfactory. Relationships between pupils and their teachers and teaching assistants are good. Where teaching is good, it is characterised by assessment which identifies the progress of individual pupils and builds on their learning in subsequent lessons. Teachers who are secure in their subject knowledge and provide work that is motivating, exciting and well paced engage the interest of pupils, who display positive attitudes as a result. Good use is made of interactive whiteboards in some classes to demonstrate teaching points or to act as visual reminders, for example in mathematics to highlight the connection between fractions and decimal fractions, and in design and technology work on designing and making bridges. Where teaching is satisfactory, it is characterised by activities which are not always well matched to the abilities of the pupils, and is not consistently meeting their needs, which occasionally leads to boredom and frustration. Pupils with additional learning needs are supported well and make progress, particularly in Key Stage 1. Teaching assistants are deployed carefully by the special needs coordinator, utilising their particular strengths and skills; for example, one teaching assistant who is a talented gymnast, helps pupils improve their coordination, whilst others who have received specialist training work with pupils to improve their speaking and listening skills. There is good support for the increasing number of pupils with English as an additional language.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is broad and balanced, with some strengths. The whole-school focus on Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) has had a positive influence upon pupils' personal development. There is a wide range of enrichment activities, and many pupils enjoy extra-curricular activities and the outdoor visits, for example the Year 2 visit to Dawlish Warren. Parents confirm that their children enjoy school, and are well cared for. Older pupils talk excitedly about the residential visit to France in Year 6, which gives them an opportunity to practise their language skills. Whilst steps have been taken to adjust the curriculum to make learning lively and engaging, for example the focus upon key skills, the impact of this is not yet clear enough upon pupils' achievement and the curriculum does not yet meet the needs of all learners. It is noticeable where good use is made of cross-curricular links to bring learning alive and keep pupils interested, but this is not consistent across the school. French is a strength of the school, with pupils from the EYFS to Year 6 benefiting, and video conferencing promotes the speaking and listening skills of some pupils.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The school keeps pupils safe, and all legal procedures for child protection and safeguarding are in place. Teachers and support staff know the pupils well, and encourage them to enjoy their lessons through good use of praise and effective behaviour management strategies. Pupils have very good relationships with staff, who they say they can talk to about any anxieties, and parents confirm that the staff are approachable. The school works well with parents and local agencies to ensure that pupils are happy and able to make progress.

There are some examples of good use of marking comments and individual targets to help pupils improve their work, but this is inconsistent across the school. Pupils are rarely involved in assessing their own work and are often unclear about their achievements and what they need to do to improve. Systems for setting targets are not fully embedded or regularly shared with pupils and consequently have limited impact. Support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good and includes the involvement of parents and other professionals such as speech therapists and the communication/interaction team.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher provides a satisfactory direction for the school's improvement and has united the staff team in the drive to raise standards. School self-evaluation is satisfactory. Recent improvements to the systems to track pupils' progress have given senior leaders a much more accurate picture of the school's strengths and weaknesses. These systems are more focused on raising standards and have led to improvements in the proportion of pupils working at expected levels by raising expectations. Subject leaders are being encouraged to develop their leadership skills and are providing increasing support for colleagues. Senior leaders are not fully involved in the monitoring of teaching and monitoring fails to provide sufficient guidance to class teachers to enable them to improve their practice. Priorities for improvement are accurately reflected in the school development plan but these plans do not consistently include clear links to raising standards.

The school makes a satisfactory contribution to community cohesion through activities in school and the local community, although pupils' understanding of multicultural issues is less well developed. The school strives to ensure that every child is fully included, and the impact of this is evident, for example, in the way in which pupils with English as an additional language are helped to settle and learn. However, the school has not fully achieved its goals: some aspects, such as the progress that pupils make, are improving but school leaders readily acknowledge that there is still further to go. Governors are well informed about the work of the school and have been instrumental in securing funding for a new building. They are supportive and work closely with the headteacher, and with increased access to assessment data, have set challenging academic targets.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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?	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	3

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

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	3
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

11 December 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Montgomery Primary School, Exeter, EX4 1BS

Thank you so much for the warm welcome you gave me and the other inspectors when we visited your school this week. We know you were very excited about your Christmas dinner and performance!

We particularly enjoyed talking to you about your work, and the other activities you do in school. You certainly like the new equipment in your playground. We were impressed by the sensible and polite way you answered our questions, and by your good behaviour in class and around the school.

We think that Montgomery Primary School is a satisfactory school which is getting better. Most of you work hard and enjoy being in school, although sometimes some of you are given work to do which is too easy or too hard, and you get a bit frustrated. Some of the youngest pupils find it difficult to talk to and play with each other at first. Many of you are making satisfactory progress now with your work. We agree with your opinion that you like your teachers and the other adults in school, who care well for you. You like to eat sensibly and exercise, so that you lead healthy lives.

To help you make better progress in your work, we have asked your headteacher and teachers to:

- Plan more good lessons which you find interesting and lively, and which match your level of ability, so that teaching and learning are improved and you make better progress.
- Keep a close eye on the progress of each pupil, and talk to you about your work so that you know what to do to achieve as well as possible.
- Give the youngest children more opportunities to talk to each other and to adults, and to improve their social skills.

You can help by always trying your best and by talking to your teacher about how to improve your work.

With our very best wishes for your future

Yours faithfully

Anne Newall

Lead inspector