

Montgomerie Primary School

Rushbottom Lane, New Thundersley, Benfleet, Essex SS7 4LW

Inspection dates

4–5 July 2017

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Since her appointment, the executive headteacher, now ably supported by the new headteacher, has instilled a sense of ambition and transformed school practice.
- The quality of teaching and learning has improved through leaders' robust performance management and unremitting focus on high-quality staff development.
- As a result, teaching overall is consistently good, enabling pupils to make good progress, especially in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Leaders are rigorous in checking on pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics. This enables them to address any emerging underachievement in these subjects swiftly.
- Tracking in other subjects is less well developed. Consequently, leaders do not have such a good overview of pupils' progress in these subjects.
- Governors are committed, highly skilled and knowledgeable about all aspects of school life. They have the expertise to hold leaders to account for key aspects of performance.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are disadvantaged make good progress because of the effective support they receive.
- Teachers plan and deliver interesting learning opportunities. Occasionally, they miss the signs that could help them to recognise when pupils are ready to be moved on to more challenging learning.
- Teaching in the early years is imaginative and well planned. This helps children to make good progress and prepares them well for Year 1. Outdoor provision does not reflect all the strengths of indoor provision.
- Outcomes at the end of key stage 1 and key stage 2 this year have built on the positive outcomes achieved last year. However, not enough pupils achieved at the higher levels in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and have very positive attitudes to learning and life in school. They take pride in their work, which is mainly well presented. However, the work in their topic books is not always as neat as work in mathematics and English.
- Closer work with families and the introduction of more thorough tracking have reduced the rate of persistent absence. Nevertheless, pupils' attendance, overall, remains slightly below average.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportions of pupils who achieve greater depth and the higher levels at the end of all key stages, including the early years, by ensuring that:
 - the new strategies, put in place to increase the level of challenge for the most able in lessons, are implemented consistently across the school
 - pupils are moved on quickly to the next level once they have demonstrated that they have an understanding of what is being taught across the school
 - the strength of the outside provision for learning in the early years matches that inside.
- Continue to improve the overall attendance of pupils, and further reduce levels of persistent absence, by taking robust action with the minority of parents who do not make sure that their children attend school regularly.
- Continue to improve the effectiveness of assessment and tracking, so that the good practice seen in English and mathematics is reflected in all subjects.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Since her arrival as leader of the school, just over a year ago, the executive headteacher has been a driving force for improvement across the school. Working together with the new headteacher, an ambitious ethos has been established. This ambition is shared by all staff and governors. The continued focus on improving pupils' progress is successful in ensuring that outcomes for all pupils improve rapidly.
- Leaders have strong systems to ensure accurate and precise evaluations of teaching and the difference the teaching makes to pupils' learning. Good practice is identified and shared, both within the school and across the trust. Where weaker teaching is identified, a range of professional development opportunities, together with effective performance management, help to ensure that teachers' practice improves.
- Leaders and governors are highly effective in identifying the school's overall strengths and areas for improvement. The 'rapid improvement plan' has ensured that the outcomes seen in 2016 have been maintained and further enhanced this year.
- The subject leaders for English and mathematics have identified appropriate actions to make sure that more pupils achieve at the higher levels. Actions include building on the newly introduced challenge levels, in all classes, and ensuring that the mathematics curriculum provides more opportunities for reasoning and problem solving. These leaders have benefited from good opportunities for professional development, including working with other schools in the trust. In turn, they have provided appropriate training for all staff.
- Leaders have developed effective and accurate assessment systems that identify pupils' current progress in reading, writing and mathematics, as well as the actions needed to address any underachievement. Systems for tracking pupils' progress in subjects other than mathematics and English are less well developed. Leaders have rightly identified this as an area for improvement.
- The additional funding, to support pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, is used wisely and helps to ensure that they make good progress from their starting points. The leader of special educational needs works closely with teachers to plan provision for pupils that meets their needs. Information about their progress, and the difference any additional support makes, is collected and analysed to ensure that the help offered is working effectively.
- Leaders and governors check the spending and impact of the additional funding for disadvantaged pupils carefully to ensure that it is used well. This funding is used appropriately in a variety of ways, including additional staffing in key year groups, counselling, work with individual pupils and their families, strategies to continue to improve attendance and a range of targeted interventions. The effective use of such funding contributes to the good progress of most eligible pupils and has also helped to improve the rate of attendance of this group.
- The additional government funding to promote sport and increase physical activity is used well. The school is part of a local school sports partnership. Trained coaches deliver specialist courses. These courses increase the opportunities for pupils to participate in a variety of sports, as well as developing their skills and fitness. Funding

also provides sports equipment for pupils to use, during breaktimes and lunchtimes, and supports training for staff to enable them to deliver high-quality lessons in physical education. Additional swimming lessons are funded for pupils who have not yet learned to swim.

- The curriculum is broad and balanced, providing a good range of experiences to excite pupils about their learning. It is enhanced further by after-school clubs, including gymnastics, netball, football, multi-sports, choir and dance. Pupils also benefit from a range of trips. For example, during day 2 of the inspection, Year 2 pupils visited a local pizza restaurant. They spoke enthusiastically with an inspector about this and their experience of making and eating pizza. Year 6 pupils were excited about their forthcoming residential visit. Visitors to the school, such as from the local police force, fire brigade and paramedics, also add to the breadth of pupils' learning experiences.
- The curriculum contributes well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils have an awareness of different types of families, races, cultures and religions that shows considerable respect for equality and the rights of others. They understand the importance of tolerance. The six school values, of resourceful, reflective, ready, resilient, responsible and respectful, underpin all aspects of school life. Pupils model these values very well and, in particular, are very respectful of each other and all members of the school community.
- Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain because of the strong emphasis that leaders place on their understanding of equalities and British values. The school's effective work around its values ensures that pupils can articulate their understanding and respect for others, as well as showing it in their actions and points of view.

Governance of the school

- The governing body has been a driving force in setting the vision for school improvement. Governors are highly committed and ably led by their chair. They have ensured that aspirations across the school are high.
- Efficient systems are now in place to help keep governors well informed about all aspects of the school. Regular and timely visits provide them with a sharp insight into the day-to-day working of life in school. They scrutinise information about pupils' progress regularly and pose challenging questions about it to school leaders and, if they are not satisfied, they ask for further detail.
- As a result of their efficient ways of operating, governors have a clear understanding of the schools' strengths and weaknesses. This helps them to hold leaders fully to account, for example for the use of additional funding for physical education and sport and for disadvantaged pupils. In doing so, they track how the funding is spent and evaluate the difference it makes to pupils' progress to ensure that it is being used effectively.
- Governors ensure that performance management systems are fit for purpose and that leaders and teachers do not receive a pay rise unless they meet their improvement targets. Where poor performance in teaching is evident, they support senior leaders in taking prompt action to address it.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school's single central record of pre-employment checks meets statutory requirements. The record is well maintained and reflects the school's robust approach to ensuring that only suitable people are employed to work with children.
- All staff receive regular and appropriate training in all aspects of safeguarding. This ensures that they are able to carry out their roles relating to safeguarding highly effectively. An overview of training dates is meticulously maintained to ensure that all staff have received training within the required timeframe.
- Pupils speak enthusiastically about the lessons that teach them how to keep safe, including when working online and using social media. They have regular visitors to the school to reinforce these messages. For example, during the week of the inspection, there was a visit from a representative of the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC).
- The school works closely with a range of other agencies and partner schools. Where additional support is needed, assistance is provided to families, including help to make sure children attend school regularly. Any issues relating to the safety of children are recognised and acted on speedily. All safeguarding records are detailed, chronological and of high quality.
- Pupils feel safe and say that they know they can trust staff with any concerns they have. Relationships between pupils and staff are very warm. Parents who responded to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, agree that their children feel safe in school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The quality of teaching and learning has improved. Senior leaders have focused on this aspect of the school's work. They have taken effective action to address any concerns. As a result, teaching is now good across the school.
- This is reflected in the good progress that pupils make, which is visible in their books and in classrooms. Pupils are interested and eager to learn. They demonstrate very positive attitudes to their learning. The school's focus on developing a 'growth mindset' supports pupils' development of resilience to failure and persistence to achieve when solving problems.
- Teachers provide appropriate advice and support to pupils about the next steps in their learning. Most do so in line with the school's marking policy. Pupils respond well to feedback and understand what they need to do to improve their work further.
- Teachers develop pupils' mathematical skills with increasing effectiveness. In Year 6, pupils were learning about algebra and worked at a high level, applying their understanding of the order of operations to solve algebraic expressions. Pupils' work in books highlights the frequent opportunities to develop fluency and consolidate their skills. However, there are fewer opportunities for regular problem solving and to work at greater depth. Leaders have accurately identified that this is an area for development and appropriate plans are in place to address this.
- The curriculum provides many interesting stimuli to enthuse pupils to develop and

improve their writing skills. For example, pupils in Year 3 were motivated by the opportunity to write about ancient Egypt. Year 2 pupils produced good writing about foods of the world. Teachers also provide pupils with opportunities to write in a range of genres. For example, Year 6 pupils had written high-quality recounts of their trip to the Houses of Parliament and the House of Lords. These approaches are leading to good progress for many pupils, but not enough pupils are achieving greater depth in their writing.

- Reading is taught well. Phonics is taught accurately and systematically, on a daily basis, from Reception and across key stage 1. This enables the vast majority of pupils to read fluently. Older readers read texts that are suited to their ability. They enjoy reading and display good overall comprehension of the texts in their books. Pupils benefit from a refurbished and well-stocked library.
- Teachers and teaching assistants have secure subject knowledge. They use this effectively to ask probing questions which both challenge and support pupils' learning. They are skilled at working with groups of pupils and with individuals. Together, teachers and teaching assistants plan and provide well-targeted support both in and outside the classroom. This helps any pupils who need additional support, including those who are disadvantaged and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, to make good progress.
- Teachers' clear and accurate assessments now enable them to plan work based on what pupils have previously learned and what they understand. They are swift at identifying pupils who need additional support. New initiatives to provide higher challenge for all pupils, including the most able, are starting to make a difference. However, a few teachers do not yet use these consistently and, consequently, the most able pupils sometimes do not receive work that really challenges them. Occasionally, teachers do not move these pupils on to more challenging work swiftly enough in lessons.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Pupils are confident and articulate. During the inspection, they engaged willingly with inspectors to talk about their learning and all aspects of school life.
- Pupils value the kindness and support of their teachers and other pupils. They feel that bullying is extremely rare and are confident that if they have any concerns, adults will deal with these. One commented, 'All pupils are really nice and if you feel upset, someone will come over and make you smile.'
- Pupils say they feel safe in and around school. They have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe in a variety of situations, including when using the internet or social media. This is because the planned curriculum ensures that these themes are revisited regularly. Parents also agree that their children are kept safe. One commented, 'I cannot praise the school enough. I am listened to and any concerns are addressed. The headteacher is lovely and all staff are approachable; you can speak to anyone and they will find a solution.'

- Pupils take on responsibilities enthusiastically and enjoy the many opportunities they have to contribute to school life. For example, they decide on the stalls they want to run at the school fete, the new play equipment they would like outside and the fun activities they would like as rewards at the end of term. All pupils are involved in the democratic process of voting for school council members.
- The school's promotion of its core values helps pupils to develop resilience and to be prepared for the next stage in their learning. During the inspection, pupils from different year groups spoke about what each of the core values meant to them in assembly. Their comments showed that they understand these values and also truly live them.
- Pupils develop physical well-being through the school's emphasis on sport and through opportunities to engage with the outdoors at lunchtimes and breaktimes. Younger children benefit from learning in a 'forest' area.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils conduct themselves very well at all times, both in and out of lessons. The large majority of parents and most pupils and staff all say that pupils behave well.
- Pupils are courteous and polite when engaging with adults and with each other. In lessons, when they are working collaboratively in pairs or groups, they pay attention to and listen to each other's opinions, embodying the school core value of respect.
- Pupils enjoy their learning and work conscientiously. Behaviour management systems encourage positive attitudes to learning. Pupils understand these. There are few incidents of low-level disruption and the rare examples of misbehaviour are usually addressed efficiently.
- Leaders have introduced strong systems and close partnerships to promote improved levels of attendance. This work has had a significant impact upon many pupils' attendance, especially those who have previously had a high level of persistent absence. They are now attending more regularly.
- Levels of persistent absence for a few pupils are still too high, however, and this impacts on overall attendance figures. The school has identified appropriate actions to further strengthen existing systems. This, rightly, includes taking more robust action against the small minority of parents who do not ensure that their children attend school regularly.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Improvements in teaching and learning have resulted in better outcomes for pupils. Current pupils are making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics and other subjects across the school.
- The outcomes achieved in 2016, at the end key stage 2, have been sustained and built upon. Unconfirmed results for 2017 tests show that the proportions of pupils achieving age-related expectations in reading and writing have risen and are above national figures. Assessment information in mathematics is in line with this year's national figure. The proportion of pupils achieving age-related expectations in reading, writing

and mathematics combined is above this year's national figure. The proportion achieving the higher levels in all subjects has improved from 2016, but remains below that seen nationally.

- At the end of key stage 1, in 2017, the proportion of pupils achieving age-related expectations in reading, writing and mathematics is above that seen nationally in all three subjects. The proportions achieving above age-related expectations have increased from 2016 and are closer to those seen nationally.
- The quality of work in pupils' books for reading, writing and mathematics is good. Pupils take pride and care in the presentation of their work in English and mathematics. Pupils' presentation in other subjects is not as high because teachers' expectations of pupils' application of their skills and presentation is less strong in these subjects.
- The proportion of pupils who achieve the expected good level of development at the end of the early years is above that seen nationally.
- Outcomes in the Year 1 phonics screening check are above the national figures for 2017. The good grounding that younger pupils receive is effective in developing their early reading skills.
- The many interventions support pupils effectively with reading, writing and mathematics. Skilled staff focus on small groups in designated areas which provide good visual support for learning in English and mathematics. Disadvantaged pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are targeted for additional support and interventions which contribute to the good progress they are making.
- Although pupils across the school are making good progress, not enough reached the higher levels in national tests over the last two years. This is because of the legacy of some weaker teaching in which teachers were focusing predominantly on ensuring that as many pupils as possible reached age-related expectations by the end of each key stage. School assessment information and work in pupils' books show that a higher proportion are on track to make better progress next year. This is because of the consistently good teaching they are now experiencing.

Early years provision

Good

- Children start the Reception Year with a wide range of abilities and skills. The proportion who achieve the expected good level of development has improved over the last two years. It is above that seen nationally this year, based on provisional information supplied so far. This represents good progress for children, from their varied starting points, and ensures that they are well prepared for their entry into Year 1.
- The early years environment is stimulating and well resourced. Children are inquisitive, enthusiastic and persevere for extended periods of time. They move smoothly from adult-led activities to those they select themselves. Children are happy and content in this supportive environment. Outdoor provision does not currently fully reflect all the strengths of that seen indoors. For example, there are fewer opportunities to develop children's writing and number skills.

- Much productive learning was observed by inspectors. Children were highly engaged and enthused by a pirate project. All areas of learning were set up to reflect this. Children loved making pirate hats and flags. They delighted in making fruit kebabs on their pirate swords. This topic also inspired children's writing, as they wrote letters home from the pirate island.
- Effective teaching ensures that children develop their basic skills in reading, writing and mathematics well. Phonics skills are taught accurately and systematically and adults ensure that they reinforce these skills when working with children to develop their reading and writing.
- Children learn in a climate of respect and responsibility. They understand the school values from an early age. They are well behaved and have good relationships with each other and adults.
- Teachers plan activities based on accurate assessment of children's knowledge and skills. The broad curriculum offers a range of activities and covers all areas of learning. Children show impressive levels of concentration when working all together as a class. However, occasionally teachers do not challenge the most able children early enough in these activities.
- Staff work closely with pre-school providers to ensure that they gain as much information as possible about children joining the school. They also visit children at home to gather the views of parents and carers. This means they are well placed to meet children's individual needs from the start of the Reception Year.
- Leaders ensure that the additional funding for disadvantaged pupils is used appropriately to ensure that individual needs are met. This includes provision of specific support for developing children's speech and language skills.
- Safeguarding practices in the early years are effective and all statutory requirements are met. Children are safe. Staff know them very well and ensure that individual needs are catered for.
- The early years leaders have a clear understanding of strengths and areas for improvement. For example, they have identified that further improvement of the outside learning area is required, to ensure that it reflects the high standard of provision indoors.
- The partnership with parents is positive. An online system gives them the opportunity to contribute to their children's learning journals. Parents have a positive view of the quality of learning in the early years. One parent commented, 'Foundation stage is brilliant, I cannot fault it.'

School details

Unique reference number	141182
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10031336

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	204
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Adrian Spreadborough
Headteacher	Diana Mason
Telephone number	01268 757881
Website	www.montgomerieprimary.essex.sch.uk/
Email address	admin@montgomerieprimary.essex.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.
- The school meets the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in 2016.
- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils who are eligible for free school meals is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below the national average, as is the proportion with a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan.
- The proportions of pupils who are from minority ethnic backgrounds and speak English

as an additional language are below the national averages. The majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds.

- Montgomerie Primary School became a sponsored academy in September 2014, when Kingston Primary School (a local outstanding school) created the Robus Multi-Academy Trust. Two other local good schools joined the trust in January 2015.
- The executive headteacher of the trust has led the school since April 2016, following the sudden departure of the substantive headteacher.
- A new headteacher was appointed from April 2017 and she has worked with the executive headteacher this term for a handover period.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in all classes across the school. Many observations were made jointly with the executive headteacher and headteacher.
- During observations, inspectors took account of pupils' work in a range of subjects, including English and mathematics.
- Inspectors met with a group of pupils and also spoke with pupils throughout the inspection, during breaktime and lunchtime and when they were participating in a 'walking assembly.'
- Meetings were held with leaders, including subject leaders. Inspectors also met with five governors from the local governing body and a representative from the trust.
- Inspectors considered a wide range of documentation, including the school's own evaluation of its performance and its development plans, and information about pupils' attainment and progress. They also looked at information relating to behaviour, bullying and attendance records and all aspects of safeguarding. Reports from trust reviews were also scrutinised.
- Inspectors took account of the following responses to surveys: 87 from pupils, 12 from members of staff and 48 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire. They reviewed 49 responses to Ofsted's free-text service and spoke with parents who were delivering their children to school.

Inspection team

Joan Beale, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Wendy Varney	Her Majesty's Inspector
Paul Hughes	Ofsted Inspector

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