

# Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Montgomery Junior School, Colchester

Baronswood Way, Colchester, Essex CO2 9QG

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Inspection dates:

4 and 5 March 2025

## Outcome

Evidence gathered during this ungraded (section 8) inspection suggests that the school's work may have improved significantly across all areas since the previous inspection. The school's next inspection will be a graded inspection.

## What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are immensely proud of their school. They recognise and value the very high-quality education and opportunities that they access as 'Monty' pupils. They enjoy the wide-ranging and well-taught curriculum. The school has very high expectations of pupils. Over time, pupils thrive and achieve well.

Pupils' right to feel and be safe, to learn and to be treated with respect, underpin the work of the school. Behaviour inside and outside of the classroom is exemplary. The school acts quickly and effectively on the very rare occasions that incidents occur. Pupils typically describe their daily experience of school as 'joyful'.

The school prioritises timely, tenacious and thorough support for pupils. The school listens to pupils actively and acts on any views diligently. Effective engagement with parents and carers helps open and useful communication. Parents and carers particularly appreciate being able to speak to leaders and staff at the school gate, if they have any questions or concerns.

Pupils embrace the exceptional range of extra opportunities available to them, especially the educational visits and clubs. They particularly enjoy the interesting morning assemblies. Here, pupils of all ages are exuberant in their engagement with the many visiting speakers and interesting content.

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

The school is ambitious about what it wants pupils to learn. Pupils learn a wide-ranging curriculum. The school has thought carefully about the order and content that is taught so that it helps pupils to remember more over time. The school monitors closely how well staff are delivering the curriculum. Teachers know how well pupils are learning the intended content.

Teachers select activities that enthuse and engage pupils exceptionally well. Pupils have plentiful opportunities to revisit prior knowledge so that they can apply their learning in increasingly complex ways. Teachers check routinely any misconceptions and gaps in pupils' knowledge. They resolve any misunderstandings quickly. Consequently, pupils' knowledge develops exceptionally well over time.

The school identifies pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) effectively. For example, the school uses a range of screening strategies and toolkits. The school works closely with external specialist teams to identify pupils' needs precisely. There is ongoing guidance and effective training for staff. Staff use this guidance to support pupils, including pupils with SEND, to access their learning effectively. Additional one-to-one or small-group sessions support pupils when they need extra help. Pupils with SEND enjoy their lessons. They progress well from their various starting points.

Many pupils arrive with significant gaps in their learning. A high number of pupils are at the early stages of learning English. Other pupils are at the early stages of learning to read. The school provides high-quality, focused support for these pupils. This includes well delivered and well-resourced phonics sessions, plus reading and writing support. Pupils learn to read fluently, write extensively and apply this to their learning across subjects. Over time, pupils flourish in their learning. This includes many pupils who attend the school for short periods before moving on. By Year 6, pupils are very well prepared for secondary school.

The school works effectively to promote regular school attendance and set high expectations for behaviour. On the rare occasions where pupils' behaviour or attendance falls short of these expectations, leaders intervene quickly and effectively. As a result, pupils value their education, attend very well and behave in an exemplary way.

A large proportion of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, take part in the array of clubs, educational visits and competitive sporting events. The school reviews these constantly. This ensures that they are responsive to pupils' interests and talents so that all pupils can join in with these opportunities.

Pupils articulate the importance of respect for different faiths, beliefs and lifestyles confidently. They have an age-appropriate understanding of healthy lifestyles, relationships and keeping safe, including online, and how this should develop as they get older. Pupils value the opportunities for their 'voices to be heard', such as through the school council, eco-committee or through charity fundraising. Pupils are energetic, confident and considerate citizens of the school community.

Leaders and governors have an insightful understanding of the strengths and areas that need development. The actions they take are always in the best interests of pupils. Typically, parents and staff are fulsome in their praise.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

## **Background**

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024, graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged to be good for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good for overall effectiveness in November 2019.

## **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>             | 114750                                                                   |
| <b>Local authority</b>                     | Essex                                                                    |
| <b>Inspection number</b>                   | 10345130                                                                 |
| <b>Type of school</b>                      | Junior                                                                   |
| <b>School category</b>                     | Community                                                                |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                 | 7 to 11                                                                  |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                    | Mixed                                                                    |
| <b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b> | 341                                                                      |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>               | Local authority                                                          |
| <b>Chair of governing body</b>             | Susan Faulkner                                                           |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                         | Michelle Wright                                                          |
| <b>Website</b>                             | <a href="http://www.montgomery-jun.org.uk">www.montgomery-jun.org.uk</a> |
| <b>Dates of previous inspection</b>        | 19 and 20 November 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005       |

## Information about this school

- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- Since April 2024, the headteacher, governors and some staff have been working with Montgomery Infant and Nursey School. This school is due to merge with Montgomery Junior School in September 2025. At this point, Montgomery Junior School will become a primary school for pupils aged four to 11 years but is due to retain its current unique reference number.

## Information about this inspection

- 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. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, staff and pupils.

- The inspector met with representatives from the governing body, including the chair of governors. She also held a telephone meeting with a representative from the local authority.
- The inspector visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspector reviewed the responses to Ofsted's survey for pupils. To gather evidence about pupils' experiences, the inspector observed them at different times during the school day, spoke to them during social times and met with groups of pupils across all year groups.
- The inspector considered the views of parents submitted via the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including free-text comments. They also reviewed the responses to Ofsted's survey for school staff.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector: 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.

### **Inspection team**

Kim Pigram, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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