

Montgomery Primary Academy

White Road, Sparkbrook, Birmingham, B11 1EH

Inspection dates 24–25 September 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected
	This inspection:	Good 2
Leadership and management	Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Good	2
Quality of teaching	Good	2
Achievement of pupils	Good	2
Early years provision	Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The principal provides strong leadership. The systems used by leaders and staff to check pupils' progress and teachers' performance are robust.
- The Management Board (governing body) is effective and has succeeded in recruiting competent leaders and good teachers. The leadership team and staff have done a great deal to raise standards and demonstrate good capacity to secure further improvement.
- Teaching is effective and continues to improve. The vast majority of pupils make good progress in all classes.
- Children throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage get off to a good start in early literacy and mathematics. This is built upon in Years 1 and 2 and continues through Years 3 to 6. As a result, standards are broadly in line with the national average in reading, writing and mathematics and are rising quickly and securely.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are supported very well and make good progress.
- The funding for pupils eligible for the pupil premium is being used effectively to support their learning. These pupils achieve as well as others across the academy.
- Pupils in the early stages of learning English make good progress and are given effective support in lessons and at other times.
- Pupils are courteous, respectful of others and are well behaved. They are energised by the range of subjects and topics they study and enjoy the many activities and visits provided by the academy.
- Pupils feel safe and secure. There are positive and trusting relationships between pupils and staff. Teachers and support staff make sure that pupils are kept safe and are committed to pupils' care and well-being.
- The academy makes a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils are taught to respect the views and beliefs of others which prepares them for the next stage of their education and for life in modern Britain.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- In a few lessons, teachers and support staff do not always plan activities or question pupils to extend their understanding, or check that pupils fully understand the next steps in their learning.
- Although standards in reading are improving well, pupils in Years 3 to 6 are not encouraged sufficiently to read widely or often enough to extend their vocabulary further.
- Fewer pupils reach the higher levels in mathematics than they do in English.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 33 parts of lessons. A number of these were observed jointly with the principal or vice principals.
- Intervention and support groups were observed by an inspector along with the teacher responsible for managing special educational needs provision.
- In addition to lesson observations, inspectors reviewed pupils' work; listened to groups of pupils reading; and observed pupils' behaviour in the playground and at other times during each of the two days of inspection.
- Meetings were held with the senior leadership team, middle leaders, including staff responsible for managing subjects or phases of the school. Meetings also took place with six members of the Management Board and the Regional Director (Midlands) for the Academies Enterprise Trust (AET) which is the academy's sponsor.
- Inspectors spoke informally to a number of parents and carers at the start of each school day. Inspectors considered the 19 responses to the online Ofsted questionnaire Parent View.
- Questionnaire responses from 29 members of staff were reviewed.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documentation, including the academy's raising attainment plan, senior leaders' and the Management Board's evaluations of the academy's effectiveness and performance.
- Information about pupils' achievement, progress and performance was scrutinised with senior staff.
- Inspectors looked at minutes of meetings, including those involving senior leaders and the Management Board, and information related to teaching, behaviour, attendance and safeguarding was inspected.
- The academy has received two monitoring inspections, led by Her Majesty's Inspectors, in the last two years. This is the first full inspection since becoming a sponsor-led academy in 2012.

Inspection team

Charalambos Loizou, Lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Jonathan Sutcliffe	Additional Inspector
Margaret Dutton	Additional Inspector
Helen Jones	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The academy is much larger than most primary schools.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage comprises a Nursery class for three-year-old children who attend either part-time or full time, and three Reception classes for four-year-olds who all attend full time.
- The vast majority of pupils, a much higher proportion than average, are of Pakistani or Bangladeshi heritage. Other pupils come from a range of backgrounds; the largest groups are represented by pupils of African heritage. Nearly all pupils speak English as an additional language, a much higher proportion than average, although only 7% of pupils are in the very early stages of learning to speak, read and write in English.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils eligible for the pupil premium (additional government funding to support pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and looked after children) is well above average.
- The proportion of pupils receiving special educational needs support is above average. The percentage of pupils with a statement of educational needs or an education and health care plan is also above the national average.
- The academy meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- There have been significant staff changes in the last two years since the school became a sponsor-led academy. One of two Vice Principals joined in January 2014 and five newly qualified teachers joined the academy at the start of September 2014.
- The academy is part of a group of primary schools known as the Midlands Academies Enterprise Trust Primary Cluster.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make sure that in all teaching, teachers and support staff check that pupils fully understand what they are learning, adapt tasks or activities and question pupils to deepen their knowledge and understanding, particularly for the most able pupils.
- Build on the improvements made to pupils' achievement in reading and mathematics by:
 - making sure that the most-able pupils are provided with the right level of challenge in mathematics so that they all reach higher levels
 - ensuring that pupils practise and show the methods they use when setting out number calculations or solving problems
 - improving planning to ensure that pupils in Years 3 to 6 read widely and often in order to extend their range of vocabulary and to experience a broader range of books, authors and genres.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The principal and her senior leadership team have been determined to eliminate inadequate teaching and complacent practice. They regularly observe lessons, rigorously monitor teachers' and teaching assistants' work, check pupils' workbooks and provide guidance and support where needed to continually improve teaching and learning.
- After a period of many staff changes during the last two years, the academy now has a strong and skilful leadership team. They are keeping the academy on a sustained course of improvement and have maintained staff morale that is clearly reflected in the positive responses from staff in the inspection questionnaire and during meetings with inspectors.
- The systems used to assess learning are robust and the information available to check pupils' progress is accurate and accessible to staff and the Management Board. These systems help to quickly identify and target pupils who may be at risk of underachieving, enabling leaders to plan timely support and accelerate pupils' progress. Leaders have not yet focused their efforts enough on identifying the most able pupils earlier in order to optimise opportunities for more pupils to reach higher levels, particularly in mathematics.
- Senior and middle leaders, including those who manage subjects and phases of the academy, contribute to making class teachers accountable for their performance and the progress of the pupils they teach. The academy's raising attainment plan has clear measures of success from which to monitor and gauge how well teachers and pupils are doing. However, the plan does not always specify who is monitoring or evaluating improvements to ensure consistency and objectivity. Nonetheless, leaders are aware of this and are putting in place more specific references to key personnel responsible for monitoring and evaluation.
- The Principal provides clear direction and oversight of the academy and works closely with governors and the 'Quad', which is a team comprising of members of the Management Board, including headteachers of good or outstanding schools and senior representatives of the Academies Enterprise Trust (AET). The 'Quad' is an effective professional development team for both staff and governors and is well managed and scrutinised by the academy's sponsor AET.
- The staff are excellent role models. They promote and maintain good behaviour and a positive climate for learning. Middle leaders effectively manage subjects in curriculum teams, as reflected in the 'Talk for Writing' project that has resulted in a significant improvement to standards in pupils' writing across the school.
- The staff team makes a significant contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This results in mainly good behaviour and attitudes to learning in lessons. There are very good opportunities for pupils to learn about other faiths, customs and traditions through religious education, the arts, music and themed topics, projects and educational visits. The academy is successful in promoting a strong emphasis on tolerance and equality, which prepares pupils well for life in a modern democratic Britain.
- The primary school physical education sports premium is used extremely well to provide full-time sports coaches. These coaches provide a wide range of opportunities for pupils to engage in team games, sports events and activities that promote healthy and active lifestyles. The additional holiday schemes and activities planned by the coaches outside school hours are also managed well with evidence that the school has secured good participation rates in sport and after-school activities.
- The staff are vigilant and effective in keeping pupils safe. Parents and carers are very positive about the academy and are pleased with the way that leaders and staff are committed to pupils' well-being and safety. Staff vetting and safeguarding procedures are robust and fully meet statutory requirements.
- All teachers who are paid to manage subjects or phases of the academy are good or outstanding teachers themselves. The performance management of staff is very well managed by the AET and the academy's

leaders and governors. This ensures that salary progression is closely linked to good or outstanding teaching performance and pupils' achievement.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governance is good. The Management Board consists of a relatively small team of highly skilled governors. This arrangement enables the team to keep in regular touch with the academy's leaders so that it can hold them and the staff team to account for the standards achieved and staff performance.
- Governors have been diligent in recruiting strong leaders and they work with the academy's leadership team to develop and continually improve the performance and effectiveness of teaching and support staff.
- The performance of all staff is clearly linked to pay progression and management responsibilities. Governors receive regular updates about pupils' progress and achievement. The data shared is accurate and enables the Management Board to challenge underperformance.
- Governors are linked to specific aspects of the academy. They enhance their knowledge and understanding of the academy's effectiveness through undertaking joint monitoring reviews with academy leaders.
- Governors have a clear enough understanding of the most important priorities related to pupils' achievement and progress, although greater emphasis is now needed on increasing the proportion of pupils reaching higher than age-related standards.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils cooperate well in lessons and at other times. They are kind and helpful to each other and willingly offer praise to other pupils, including those who have additional learning needs or disabilities. These positive characteristics make a very good contribution to pupils' moral and social development.
- The pupils spoken to during lessons and break times said that it is easy to make friends and, as pupils say, "We are respectful." Pupils say that they trust the adults who care for them, including those who supervise them at lunchtimes. There are warm and positive relationships amongst pupils and with adults.
- The academy's indoor and outdoor environment and resources are well maintained, clean and stimulating which is appreciated and respected by pupils. During break times, for example, pupils willingly offer to tidy up after eating their morning toast and there is no litter or unkempt area of the academy reflecting how well pupils care for their school community.
- Pupils respond very well to learning in lessons and the good opportunities they have for reflection in assemblies. This makes a significant contribution to their spiritual and moral development. Pupils are keen to answer questions or contribute to discussions. During a writing lesson, for example, pupils in Year 6 offered suggestions when asked to improve or edit sentences, often helping others to look up words in a dictionary or check each other's finished work.
- The academy is successful in tackling any form of discrimination in a cohesive and supportive school community. Special topics; cultural and religious festivals and celebrations; and the wide range of educational visits or visitors, such as specialist advisers, tutors or artists, improve pupils' knowledge and understanding of the different cultural, religious and ethnic traditions that exist in the United Kingdom and beyond. These activities make a positive contribution to pupils' cultural development.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school and they are punctual. This is reflected in attendance rates that are above those of most primary schools. There is very effective monitoring and supervision of the few pupils who arrive late for school. The administrative staff are vigilant and keep regular contact with families at home to ensure that pupils are safe and attend punctually. There have been no exclusions in the last two years and persistent absence rates are reducing because of positive relationships with families.
- The academy's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils are safe and they feel safe. They learn a lot about staying safe and healthy. During this inspection and previous monitoring inspections, pupils were able to explain the precautions they need to take when using computers, including the use of online

messaging websites. Pupils say that bullying is very rare. Pupils confirmed that the few incidents, like name-calling or teasing, are dealt with very well by leaders, teachers and support staff.

- Pupils have good opportunities in most lessons to contribute and share ideas but in a few lessons, the tasks are not always demanding enough so pupils either lose interest, mark time by repeating the same level of work, or chatter. Although teachers encourage pupils to discuss their learning with a partner or as part of a group, in a few lessons these talk sessions are not productive enough and slow learning.

The quality of teaching is good

- Senior leaders have done a great deal to transform the overall quality of teaching over the last two years. The large majority of responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and all the parents and carers spoken to during the inspection are pleased with the teaching. Inspection findings confirm that teaching is clearly having a positive impact on raising standards and improving pupils' achievement across the academy.
- Workbooks show that pupils are expected to do their best and teachers usually set high expectations in lessons for both behaviour and learning. One pupil commented, 'We are expected to work hard and my teachers are helping me learn more.' Pupils are right. Teaching helps pupils to achieve well, including those eligible for additional pupil premium funding and those who have disabilities or special educational needs.
- Teachers and support staff provide a good balance of whole class teaching and targeted support for pupils who are taught in small groups.
- Pupil groupings and specialised intervention programmes have been carefully tailored to meet the needs of the vast majority of pupils. Those in the early stages of learning English, for example, receive well-focused support, including bi-lingual intervention and opportunities to improve their knowledge of letter sounds and words when reading aloud to an adult.
- Pupils have learning targets to aim for which they understand and often use to check what they have to do to reach a higher level in reading, writing and mathematics. Leaders and class teachers use accurate assessment information and data about pupils' progress and performance and, in most lessons, regularly check that pupils are learning well enough.
- Teachers and very well qualified support staff, some at graduate level, are vigilant and supportive when pupils work independently. Teachers' marking is thorough and very helpful to pupils, especially in writing books. Teachers' questioning is often purposeful and encourages pupils to explain their answers fully in complete sentences. Occasionally, however, questioning does not extend pupils' thinking enough or probe further to deepen their understanding and this slows progress.
- Teachers and support staff help and encourage pupils to improve their first written attempts, known as 'cold drafts', before producing the final piece of writing, the 'hot draft'. This process is highly effective as it gives pupils time to check and reflect on their work before improving it. The academy's well-organised work to improve pupils' writing has contributed significantly to much improved test results and sustained improvements in all year groups.
- In mathematics, the most able pupils are not always challenged enough to extend their knowledge and understanding. Questioning in mathematics is not always sharp enough to establish what pupils have or have not understood before moving their learning on to the next stages.
- The additional pupil premium funding is being used extremely well to support and boost the achievement of eligible pupils. A wide range of teaching and support, including small group, one-to-one tuition and focused interventions in both English and mathematics sessions, have been highly effective. As a result, these pupils achieve as well as others across the academy and the majority reach or exceed age-related levels in reading, writing or mathematics.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils' achievement is improving. Attainment in English and mathematics is broadly in line with the national average by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. This indicates good progress since the academy started in relation to pupils well below average starting points when they first joined.
- Pupils are reaching standards in reading, writing and mathematics that prepare them well for the next stage of their education. The improvements to attainment and rates of progress are being sustained in all year groups and for all groups of pupils, including pupils in the early stages of speaking English as an additional language and those with disabilities or who have special educational needs.
- The most recent national assessments are encouraging and demonstrate that teaching is having a significant impact on sustaining improvements to standards in reading, writing and mathematics. There is no gap between the achievement of pupils eligible for the pupil premium and others. Like other pupils, pupils eligible for this additional funding reach standards that are in line with their peers nationally. At Key Stages 1 and 2, test results, as measured by point scores show that pupils eligible for this funding achieve as well as other pupils and the large majority reach or exceed age-related levels.
- A significant proportion of pupils, approximately one third, have made outstanding progress, particularly in writing, having caught up on previously lost ground. This includes pupils who joined the school in the early stages of learning English as an additional language.
- Although an increasing number of the most able pupils are exceeding the levels expected for their age in reading and writing, fewer reach the higher levels in mathematics because teaching in mathematics is not as good as it is in other subjects.
- Attainment in reading by the end of Year 6 is improving securely, although the most recent test results in 2014 show marginal improvement compared with the previous year. Pupils have made good progress in reading but across Key Stage 2 they are not reading widely or often enough to improve or broaden their vocabulary. This is particularly important for these pupils as most started school in the Early Years Foundation Stage with limited language and literacy skills.
- In both Years 1 and 2, pupils are taught efficient ways to break down and blend combinations of letters and sounds (the teaching of phonics) when reading unfamiliar words. Good teaching and learning like this has resulted in a significant uplift in pupils' achievement in the national phonic screening check.

The early years provision is good

- Most three- and four-year-old children start school with skills and abilities that are well below those expected for their age, particularly in language and communication. Good teaching and strong pastoral support for both children and families in the Nursery and Reception classes are getting the youngest children off to a good start.
- Throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage children are provided with stimulating indoor and outdoor resources that enable them to learn and play safely and settle into school quickly. The inspection took place when Nursery children were just starting their first weeks of school, and most Reception children were in their third week. In both settings the children are already engaging and communicating with others.
- Throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage children are safe and behave well. They receive very good support and guidance from adults to help them cooperate and work with other children, which makes a significant contribution to the children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The teaching and support in the Nursery is of high quality. Adults engage with both children and their parents or carers so that early relationships with families are strong and trusting. The children are already thriving and settling in. Many children, for example, were keen to point out to an inspector what they were doing when digging in the garden. For example, the children were keen to share ideas about 'wiggly

worms', 'funny shapes' and talked confidently to each other and with adults.

- Reception children settle independently into activities. Teachers and teaching assistants skilfully engage children in conversation. Questioning is focused on every child so many soon gain confidence and learn to cooperate and communicate with other children. In this way, the children are learning to express themselves and ask questions. Some Reception children, however, do not sustain an activity and wander between different areas of the classroom.
- Skilful support is provided for both Nursery and Reception children with disabilities or who need additional support and have special educational needs. Effective one-to-one support, for example, helps the children to integrate and communicate with other children.
- Bi-lingual support and a continuous focus on spoken English are helping children who speak both English and another home language to settle quickly and this is also reassuring for those particular parents and carers. The parents spoken to by inspectors confirmed that they are very pleased about their children's progress, and paid tribute to the staff team throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- The leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are very effective in providing children with a good start to their schooling. The staff have carried out home visits and are already undertaking accurate early assessments of the children. Assessments are regular and help to monitor how well each individual child is doing.

What inspection judgements mean

School	Grade	Judgement	Description
	Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
	Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	138864
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	440126

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	661
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jan Moss
Principal	Ruth Murad
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
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