

Montgomery Primary School

Redvers Road, St Thomas, Exeter, Devon EX4 1BS

Inspection dates

5–6 June 2019

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	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The head of school's passion and high expectations have been central to the rapid improvement of the school. He has steered the school through a difficult period of staffing turbulence with great professionalism.
- The governing body provides appropriate challenge for school leaders. Governors know that there are further improvements to outcomes that need to be made.
- Since September 2018, outcomes have risen. The vast majority of current pupils now make strong progress from their starting points in reading, writing and mathematics.
- There is a strong safeguarding culture at the school. The effective pastoral support at the school means that pupils behave well and feel safe. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe.
- Disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) make strong progress from their individual starting points.
- The physical education (PE) and sport premium funding is effectively spent. Pupils receive a broad range of sporting opportunities, both within lessons and at the start and end of the school day. As a result, pupils compete often in a wide range of regional finals.
- Parents and carers are overwhelmingly supportive of leaders. They also speak very highly of teachers and other staff.
- Leaders ensure that the promotion of equality, is a thread which weaves through all aspects of school life.
- Children in the early years get off to a flying start on their learning journey. As a result, they are well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- The quality of teaching is good. Teachers have been supported well by leaders to improve their practice. As a result, pupils' outcomes are improving strongly. Nevertheless, strong teaching is not consistent across all year groups.
- In the past, too few pupils in key stage 2 attained as well as they should in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils experience a broad curriculum. Most pupils make good progress in a variety of subjects. However, in some year groups, pupils do not have enough opportunity to deepen their knowledge and understanding.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve leadership and management by:
 - sustaining the strong improvement in pupils' outcomes, so that by the end of key stage 2, pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics is at least in line with the national average
 - ensuring that the curriculum is planned to provide a clear progression of knowledge and skills in subjects other than English and mathematics.
- Continue to improve the quality of teaching by using the best practice in the school to secure consistently good teaching across all year groups.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The recently appointed head of school works with great determination and has played a pivotal role in improving the school. Following a significant period of staff turbulence, he has collegiately formed a cohesive team who are motivated and determined to continue to raise standards. Middle leaders also take the initiative for school improvement and have a firm and thorough understanding of the quality of teaching across the school.
- Leaders have established a positive culture of mutual support and improvement among staff. They share a clear sense of direction and a desire to ensure that pupils achieve their very best. Staff who spoke with an inspector are enthusiastic about the changes that have been made and say that their practice has improved. Staff who completed the survey are fully supportive of leaders. Staff morale is high.
- The leader responsible for pupils with SEND is effective. Pupils with SEND are supported well, receive well-designed support and make good progress from their starting points. Leaders track pupils' progress carefully and swiftly adjust their provision if their progress slows. This ensures that pupils have full access to the curriculum.
- Leaders have made good use of the additional funding for disadvantaged pupils. In recent years, disadvantaged pupils did not achieve as well other as other pupils in reading, writing and mathematics. Staff are focused to ensure that they meet disadvantaged pupils' welfare and academic needs. Consequently, disadvantaged pupils' achievement is improving rapidly.
- Most pupils experience a broad curriculum. However, leaders recognise that further work is needed to the wider curriculum, and improvements are ongoing. This is because leaders prioritised pupils securing basic skills in English and mathematics. In some year groups and in some subjects, teachers do not routinely plan activities that help pupils to deepen their knowledge and understanding. As a result, pupils do not make the same rates of progress in subjects such as science and modern foreign languages as that seen in English and mathematics.
- Equality, diversity and difference are promoted effectively throughout the school through a range of curriculum opportunities and assemblies. For example, Chinese students from Exeter University visit the school to teach pupils about the Chinese New Year. Pupils have a breadth of opportunities to visit different places of worship and learn about other cultures, such as Judaism and Islam. This prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain.
- The PE and sports curriculum is a strength of the school. The highly qualified leader responsible for the additional funding for PE ensures that all pupils have access to a wide range of sports and opportunities. Equality of opportunity is at the forefront of leaders' decision-making. As a result, pupils with SEND have been very successful in sporting competitions at both local and regional level. The school has received national recognition for the quality of sporting provision.
- Following the previous inspection in 2017, the executive headteacher and head of school worked closely with the local authority to address the areas requiring improvement. As an example of this work, the quality of teaching, learning and

assessment was reviewed to establish consistency across the school. Consequently, leaders have secured improvements in the quality of teaching. Teaching is now strong in nearly all areas of the school.

- The overwhelming majority of parents who spoke to inspectors or who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, said that the school has been transformed in the last two years. One parent's comment, that encapsulates many, said: 'The school has certainly improved since the new head of school started. The new teaching staff are committed and have created a positive school environment.' Another parent said, 'It is like a different place from two years ago.'

Governance of the school

- Governors are honest in their evaluations. They recognise that previously they were not as effective as they should have been, and their external review was a catalyst for change.
- Governors now have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and provide a good balance of challenge and support. They work closely with senior leaders to ensure that pupils' needs are met.
- Governors execute their safeguarding and statutory responsibilities well.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The school's vigilant culture ensures that pupils are kept safe. Staff know pupils well and are alert to changes in their behaviour that may indicate a safeguarding concern. Pupils feel safe in school and are very positive about the school's pastoral team, who provide them with support if they have any worries or concerns.
- The school works very closely with other agencies to keep pupils safe and to provide additional support for vulnerable families. During the inspection, the lead inspector held a discussion with an external agency to ascertain the effectiveness of the school's provision. This correlated with wider inspection findings that leaders are relentless in their pursuit to ensure that vulnerable pupils and families are well supported.
- Leaders carry out all the correct employment checks on staff and make sure that they receive regular and up-to-date training. This ensures that staff are alert to any potential risks to pupils. All staff are aware of the important role they play in keeping children safe.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The quality of teaching at the school has improved significantly. Over the past two years, the staff team has focused on getting the basic skills of reading, writing and mathematics right. As a result of leaders providing staff with relevant training courses, teachers now have strong subject knowledge. Most teachers use questioning skilfully to check what pupils have understood in lessons, so that they can deepen pupils' knowledge and understanding further. As a result, pupils currently make strong progress from their different starting points.

- Teachers introduce new learning by encouraging pupils to make connections with what they know already. For example, in a Year 2 writing lesson, pupils were observed using their knowledge of single-word suffixes to develop their sentence structure and composition.
- In nearly all classrooms, there is a well-established, positive attitude to learning. Classrooms have a purposeful learning ethos and pupils are expected to achieve their very best. This is because teachers and support staff have created positive relationships with pupils that are based upon mutual respect. As a result, pupils want to work hard and please their teachers.
- Teaching assistants play an integral role in pupils' learning. They provide skilful support in lessons and challenge pupils to achieve their very best. They use questioning effectively to ensure that pupils can access work and make strong progress.
- The teaching of reading has come on in leaps and bounds. Leaders have introduced a reading programme to promote pupils' reading of unfamiliar texts. Pupils read regularly and enjoy the challenge the scheme brings. The online system enables pupils' progress to be monitored closely, and weekly reports identify pupils who are falling behind their expected reading age. This enables teachers to identify weaknesses and put in timely support. Pupils who read with inspectors did so with strong fluency and understanding. Pupils told inspectors that they like the new approach to reading, particularly the quizzes at the end of the texts. As a result, pupils' progress in reading is strengthening.
- There has been a clear drive to provide pupils with more opportunities to write at length across the curriculum. Teachers provide pupils with a wealth of opportunities to refine and develop their knowledge and skills. Pupils are taught effectively to write in a range of styles for different audiences and purpose. Evidence in pupils' books and work from across the curriculum show that pupils are able to transfer their literacy skills to other subject areas. Current pupils' writing across the school is strong.
- The teaching of mathematics is also improving rapidly. Basic skills of number and calculation are taught daily and consolidated frequently. Pupils are provided with a wide range of opportunities to reason and solve problems using what they have learned previously. Work in current pupils' books demonstrates that pupils are making strong progress.
- Teachers' assessment of English and mathematics is accurate. Teachers usually match work well to pupils' abilities and prior learning. This ensures that regardless of pupils' starting points, they make strong progress.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. The school's ethos is highly inclusive. Leaders are determined that all pupils, regardless of ability, gender or race, have a right to feel valued and a place in society.
- Leaders have successfully raised pupils' awareness of equalities through a carefully organised programme of assemblies and a thoughtful personal and social education programme. One parent, who responded using the free-text service, reported: 'The role that this school plays in the local community is so positive, and I get the feeling

that everyone is equal from the moment they walk through the gates; that everyone has an opportunity to fly, regardless of their background.'

- Pupils views are heard through the school parliament and they feel that their voice is listened to. Recently, pupils organised a fundraising activity to raise money for the Devon air ambulance. They work closely in their community and alongside other charities, such as Age Concern. This contributes well to their spiritual, moral and cultural development.
- Pupils have a strong understanding of the importance of healthy living. Many pupils attend the before- and after-school sports clubs on offer. Pupils told an inspector that 'You need to eat a balanced diet and avoid bad fats to keep fit.'
- Pupils are taught and know how to keep themselves safe, including 'Bikeability' training, encouraging safe cycling. Visits by the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) and the local emergency services help pupils to know how to respond if they feel at risk. They are aware of the dangers of using technology inappropriately. They learn how to stay safe online, how to use mobile phone technology correctly and what actions to take if they feel at risk.
- The very large proportion of parents say that their children feel safe and enjoy coming to school. Parents told inspectors, 'My children look forward to going to school every morning. The teachers and staff are great and cannot do enough if there is the slightest issue.' Nevertheless, a very small proportion of parents feel that bullying is not dealt with swiftly enough. Pupils who spoke with inspectors are adamant that bullying does not exist in the school. They said that pupils do fall out from time to time, but adults listen carefully and sort out any disputes fairly.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Typically, pupils conduct themselves well throughout the day. Pupils listen carefully to their teachers and respond swiftly to instructions with thought and care. However, where teaching is not as strong, pupils do not respond as productively and waste precious time for learning. This hampers their progress.
- Leaders expect pupils to attend school regularly. Over time, attendance rates have improved, and overall attendance is now at the national average. Impressively, the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent from school is now well below the national average.
- Pupils play well during social times. They say that the introduction of 'play buddies' has had a positive impact upon breaktimes. The older pupils support pupils from younger year groups to play games. Incidents of poor behaviour and use of derogatory language are rare.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Inspection evidence shows that current pupils, from higher-than-average starting points, are now making strong progress in reading, writing and mathematics. This is because skilled teaching challenges these pupils, and teachers adapt work effectively to meet pupils' individual needs.

- Pupils currently in key stage 2 have had more time to benefit from improved teaching. Standards are rising rapidly; current pupils are making stronger progress than previously in reading, writing and mathematics. Effective teaching now enables pupils to progress well as they move through the school.
- The proportion of pupils attaining the expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 2 has been below the national averages for the last three years. This is a reflection of the gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding due to previous weaknesses in the quality of teaching.
- The proportion of pupils reaching the greater depth standards by the end of key stage 2 has also been inconsistent and below the national averages in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Over the last three years, by the end of key stage 1, the proportion of pupils in Year 2 reaching the expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics is in line with the national average. This represents good progress from their lower-than-average starting points. In 2018, pupils attaining the higher standards were above the national average in reading and writing and in line in mathematics. Inspection evidence found that this is set to continue.
- Pupils with SEND receive carefully tailored support, which is regularly reviewed and adapted to meet pupils' changing needs. As a result, this group of pupils make very strong progress from their individual starting points.
- Disadvantaged pupils also make strong progress across the school. The school's assessment information and work in pupils' books show that disadvantaged pupils make good progress across a range of subjects.
- As a result of effective phonics teaching, pupils meeting the expected standard in the phonics check by the end of Year 1 have been above the national average for the last two years. This ensures that the vast majority of pupils have acquired the necessary early reading skills.
- The work in pupils' books for subjects other than English and mathematics is variable. In classrooms where this is not strong, it is because pupils are not provided with sequences of learning that help them develop their knowledge, skills and understanding. Too often, work that is provided is superficial and does not provide pupils with the necessary depth of learning required to grasp the subject content.

Early years provision

Good

- The leadership of the early years is good. The early years leader has a clear vision for, and high expectation of, what children can achieve. In 2017, leaders took the decision to restructure the early years provision so that children from the Nursery and Reception class play and learn together. During the inspection, inspectors observed younger children mirroring and copying the behaviour and learning habits of the older children. The Nursery children are ambitious to achieve as well as their Reception peers and are well motivated to learn.
- A large proportion of children enter the early years with knowledge and skills that are below what is typical for their age. However, strong teaching and effective leadership have ensured that they get off to a good start. As a result, children achieving a good

level of development by the time they leave the early years are broadly in line with the national average.

- Relationships between staff and children in the early years are a strength. Staff are nurturing and meet children's needs well. Children are encouraged to have good manners and behave well. This helps them settle quickly to learn and form positive relationships.
- The early years setting is a hive of activity. The outdoor provision is well thought out so that children can develop their fine and gross motor skills and experience a broad range of learning experiences. Adults have clearly established children's social skills well. For example, while very excited, children were observed waiting patiently for their turn on the rope swing. Other children were problem solving without adult support, using the low ropes to work collaboratively to cross the tyres. Children are confident, and this enables them to take calculated risks with their learning.
- The learning activities designed provide exciting opportunities for children to read and write for purpose. For example, an inspector observed a group of children making a banana milkshake, using their early reading skills to follow the instructions. The setting is a language-rich environment, and this helps children to develop the fundamental skills of early reading and writing.
- Teachers check the accuracy of their judgements of children's progress with colleagues from other settings and the local authority. There is a consistent approach to assessment. Current children's performance information and work in children's learning records convey that leaders have maintained good progress for 2019.
- Disadvantaged children and children with SEND are identified quickly. This enables leaders to provide early intervention to children who may be at risk of falling behind. The support provided by other adults is effective and this ensures that children make progress in line with their peers.
- Parents hold the early years in high regard. They appreciate the opportunities to contribute to the online assessment information which they receive. They speak highly of all staff. One parental comment that captures many, said: 'My son attends the Nursery and we have just had confirmation that he has been accepted to start Reception in September. We are over the moon. This school is absolutely fantastic. I only have positive things to say about this school.'
- Safeguarding is effective, and all statutory requirements are met.

School details

Unique reference number	113082
Local authority	Devon
Inspection number	10088290

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	421
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Michaela Young
Head of School	Jason Edge
Telephone number	01392 285240
Website	www.montgomeryprimary.org.uk
Email address	montgomeryadmin@ecfschools.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	21–22 February 2017

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school and is part of the Exeter Children’s Federation. The school joined the federation in January 2016.
- The majority of pupils are of White British background.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals is below the national average.
- The school has a combined Nursery and Reception class, taking children part time from the age of two.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is above the national average. The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan is below the national average.
- The head of school joined in June 2017, and a large proportion of teaching staff started in September 2018.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in classes across the school. Most observations were undertaken jointly with the head of school and senior leaders. Inspectors also observed pupils' behaviour around the school and at social times.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders, middle leaders, the leaders with responsibility for pupils with SEND and early years, and a sample of support and teaching staff.
- The lead inspector held a meeting with three governors, including the chair of the governing body.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils formally and informally during their break and lunchtimes and in class. Inspectors also listened to groups of pupils read.
- The lead inspector had a telephone conversation with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors examined a range of documentation provided by the school, including minutes of meetings of the governing body, the school's self-evaluation document, the school's improvement plan and documentation relating to the safeguarding of pupils.
- Inspectors examined a large sample of pupils' books from across the school.
- Inspectors spoke with parents as they brought their children to school in the morning. The lead inspector also considered 105 responses to the Ofsted online survey, Parent View, 31 responses to the staff survey and the 81 responses to the pupil survey.

Inspection team

Matt Middlemore, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Jo Briscombe	Ofsted Inspector
Martin Greenwood	Ofsted Inspector

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