

Montsaye Academy

Greening Road, Rothwell, Kettering, Northamptonshire NN14 6BB

Inspection dates

22–23 January 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	Requires improvement
16 to 19 study programmes	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Inadequate

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The determined vision and leadership of the principal and senior leaders has successfully created a positive culture which has led to rapid improvements at the school. This is underpinned by the school's core values – excellence, resilience and aspiration.
- The morale of staff is high. Pupils say they are happy to be at Montsaye Academy. The majority of parents would recommend the school and the number of pupils attending the school is rising.
- The school improvement board is highly effective. Leaders are held stringently to account for their work. The support provided by the board, and the trust, has enabled the school to improve rapidly.
- Leaders constantly review the curriculum to ensure that it has breadth, balance and meets the needs and aspirations of pupils.
- Pastoral support is a strength of the school and has brought about improvements in pupils' behaviour and attendance. The programme for pupils' personal development is well considered and complemented by additional support for pupils' emotional and mental well-being.
- Pupils' behaviour has improved markedly and is routinely good. Most pupils are polite, courteous and helpful.
- Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well supported and are beginning to make better progress, particularly at key stage 3.
- Leaders have ensured that arrangements for safeguarding are very effective. Designated leaders ensure that all pupils, particularly those at risk of harm, are well cared for.
- The leadership of the sixth form is strong. Students benefit from effective teaching and support, enabling them to achieve well.
- The quality of teaching is good overall. Leaders have ensured that subject leaders are well supported in achieving consistency in most subjects. Where weaknesses remain, for example in mathematics, leaders are taking action to address this.
- The progress made by pupils across a range of subjects is strengthening, particularly at key stage 3. Previous variations between subject outcomes are reducing. However, the improvements in teaching are yet to be reflected in published examination results.
- The progress made by middle-ability and disadvantaged pupils by the end of key stage 4 is improving. However, outcomes in key stage 4 are not yet strong enough and therefore require improvement.

Full report

In accordance with section 13(4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve outcomes by the end of key stage 4 by ensuring that all pupils, particularly middle-ability and disadvantaged pupils, make consistently strong progress across the curriculum.
- Further develop the expertise of subject leaders so that they are fully effective in sustaining improvements in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and in eliminating elements of weaker practice, particularly in mathematics.
- Further reduce the proportion of pupils, especially disadvantaged pupils, who are regularly absent from school.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Since her appointment in September 2017, the principal has brought about rapid improvements at the school. Together with a reduced size senior team, she has restructured the leadership within the school to great effect. Leaders have a clear vision which is shared and understood by all staff. Her leadership of the school is valued and respected by staff.
- Leaders have a clear vision which is shared and understood by all, underpinned by high expectations and a clear set of core values – excellence, aspiration and resilience (ERA). There is a positive and caring ethos that pervades the school and, despite challenging circumstances, staff morale is exceptionally high.
- Leaders are ambitious for the school. They have an accurate understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the provision. The drive for improvement is supported by a meticulous and regularly reviewed development plan. This is complemented by clear criteria by which the future success of the school can be measured.
- The majority of parents who responded to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, say that their children are happy at school and the majority would recommend it. They believe that the school is well led and managed. As one parent put it, 'The school has changed completely since the new leadership has been in place.' The number of pupils applying to join the school in Year 7 is increasing.
- The leadership of the sixth form is strong. The curriculum is well planned, and the quality of the provision is robustly checked and tracked. Students benefit from very close support and guidance, underpinned by high expectations. As a result, students in the sixth form are making good progress and applications to join the sixth form are increasing.
- The leadership of the curriculum is effective and the curriculum is kept under constant review. Pupils access a broad and balanced range of subjects across all key stages, including in the sixth form despite its small size. Leaders have taken a decisive step to reorganise key stage 3 across three years, preserving the breadth of pupils' learning from a wider range of subjects. In addition, leaders consider the local context of the school and employability with the provision of courses, such as health and social care and computer science.
- Leaders have improved the way that they set targets for all pupils and check their progress against these targets. Targets are ambitious and reflect the high expectations leaders have now established. The progress of current pupils is improving across the majority of subjects, particularly at key stage 3.
- Leaders' evaluation of the quality of teaching is accurate and informed by much-improved and robust processes for checking the quality of the school's provision. Effective support is provided for teachers whose practice has not been strong enough. Successful coaching and mentoring programmes, supported by numerous external subject reviews, are resulting in clear improvements. Where weaknesses remain, for example in mathematics and computer science, leaders are taking action to address them.

- A well-coordinated programme of professional development activity is now in place and is having a positive impact on the quality of teaching and the accuracy of assessment. Staff say that they value these opportunities. While there have been rapid improvements in the quality of teaching, it is too soon to see the impact of recent initiatives on improving outcomes at the end of key stage 4.
- Newly qualified teachers are positive about the support they have received as they begin their professional careers.
- The leadership of provision for pupils with SEND is effective. Pupils benefit from highly personalised support from staff within the school. Leaders' engagement with parents and external agencies are regular and effective. As a consequence, the progress made by these pupils is beginning to improve rapidly, especially at key stage 3.
- Pastoral leadership is a strength of the school. Accommodation has been reorganised to establish the school's 'care centre', which provides a safe space and drop-in centre for pupils who require additional support. Staff are making a significant difference in helping them to manage their learning.
- Leaders have implemented a carefully planned programme of activity to ensure that pupils understand the options open to them later in life. The careers programme extends across all years and includes access to impartial careers advice for all pupils at key stage 4. As a result, the proportion of pupils securing appropriate placements in education, employment or training which meet their needs and aspirations is above the national average, including for disadvantaged pupils.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is developed well. The many and wide-ranging displays throughout the school creatively showcase a variety of themes, including aspiration through the promotion of 'what next?' relating to careers, a celebration of different cultures and faiths and the PE 'wonder wall' celebrating pupils' sporting achievements. Pupils also develop a good understanding of fundamental British values, including tolerance, individual liberty and democracy.
- Pupils say that there is a good range of extra-curricular activity, including an array of sporting clubs, dance, cheerleading, choir and gardening. They are appreciative of these opportunities.
- Leaders use catch-up funding in Year 7 well. Pupils who arrive at the school with skills in literacy and numeracy below those expected for their age are provided with effective support. As a result, these pupils are quickly catching up with their peers, particularly in reading.
- The trust has provided effective support in the development of subject leadership across a wide range of subjects and has commissioned reviews to validate further the quality of the school's provision – including safeguarding, the use of pupil premium funding and pupils' attendance. This has enabled leaders to drive the pace of improvement rapidly.
- Subject leaders are held more stringently to account than has been the case in the past. They say they are well-supported by senior leaders, including trust leaders, in the provision of external reviews to validate the quality of provision and provide bespoke subject professional development, particularly in ensuring the reliability of teachers' assessment. There are weaknesses, however, in some subject areas, including

mathematics and computing. Leaders are aware of this and are acting to address the concerns identified.

- The leadership of additional government funding for pupils in receipt of the pupil premium is strengthening. Clear plans are now in place. This was not the case at the time of the last inspection. Leaders can account for pupil premium spending but have yet to ensure that this spending is having the desired impact on the achievement of disadvantaged pupils.

Governance of the school

- Through the school improvement board (SIB), the governance of the school is effective.
- The members of the board are highly skilled and knowledgeable. They are very ambitious for the school and kept very well informed about the school's development priorities. Members know the school's strengths and areas for further improvement well. This knowledge is strengthened by frequent visits to the school, enabling members to use their expertise in gaining a detailed oversight of development priorities. Members of the board can identify clear improvements to provision as a result of their work, including supporting the monitoring of teaching and learning, pupils' attendance and safeguarding.
- The SIB holds school leaders stringently to account. Effective links have been established across all aspects of school improvement. The lead inspector's scrutiny of meeting records illustrates that members of the board review the information they receive thoroughly and ask challenging questions of leaders. They are prepared to take decisive action where necessary in the best interest of pupils.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders have ensured that a culture of vigilance has become established at the school.
- The training of staff and members of the SIB in safeguarding is rigorous and of a high quality. All staff understand what to do if they have any concerns about a pupil's well-being. Staff are provided with regular updates and regular checks are made on their safeguarding knowledge. Training on radicalisation and extremism is included as part of the safeguarding induction of all staff.
- Leaders systematically check that staff have read and understood the school's child protection policy and statutory guidance.
- A cohesive team of staff, who are appropriately trained, provide effective support for the senior designated safeguarding lead. School records are detailed and well organised. These records demonstrate that staff know individual pupils well and take prompt and timely action to meet their needs and keep them safe. The care for pupils who are vulnerable is well considered, sensitive and sustained.
- Pupils say that they feel safe in school. Pupils know the adults they can talk with if they have any worries or concerns. The clear majority of parents who responded to Ofsted's survey agree that their children feel safe in school and are well cared for.

- The checks made on the recruitment of staff are secure and monitored by senior leaders and a member of the SIB. Effective procedures are in place to ensure that all visitors to the school are suitably vetted.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Pupils benefit from teaching that is mostly of good quality. Some teaching, for example in English, humanities and PE, is much stronger.
- Pupils who spoke with inspectors were positive about their learning experiences overall. They expressed appreciation for the reduction in the proportion of lessons taught by temporary staff. Pupils also said that the quality of their lessons is much better than at the time of the previous inspection.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge. They know their pupils well and plan learning to challenge pupils and, in doing so, meet their needs. This is achieved through the mostly consistent application of the school's planning framework – cautious, confident, challenge and challenge plus – in providing pupils with work that encourages them to think independently.
- In most lessons, pupils are purposefully engaged in their learning because their lessons are well organised. In a Year 11 history lesson, for example, the use of a film clip about the Second World War and atomic weaponry was complemented by effective teacher questioning. This enabled pupils to participate in a high-quality debate about the moral purpose of such weaponry.
- Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are high. They have significantly improved since the previous inspection, including expectations for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND. As a result, pupils are making good progress in the majority of their lessons, particularly in key stage 3.
- Teachers ensure that their assessments of pupils' work are carefully planned and reliable. Staff work in a collaborative way to ensure that assessment results are accurate. Teachers use assessment information to plan learning that enables pupils to make good progress over time, particularly in key stage 3. However, it is too early to see the improvements in teaching reflected in published examination results.
- There are positive relationships between pupils and staff across most areas of the curriculum. Pupils respond promptly to teachers' instructions and they work well in most of their lessons.
- Opportunities to develop pupils' literacy and communication skills are well developed in key stage 3. The implementation of 'Oracy' learning in English and humanities is having a positive impact on pupils' development of reading, listening and speaking skills. These skills are further enhanced in French, where inspectors observed pupils responding to their teacher's questions and instructions purposefully using the target language.
- The school's newly implemented policy on providing feedback to pupils is used consistently well by all teachers. Pupils are informed about their successes in learning and about how they can further improve their work. There is some variation, however, in how well pupils respond to the advice they receive during 'target time'.
- Occasionally, teachers do not allow pupils sufficient time to complete work to the high

standards expected. Sometimes learning is moved on too quickly before pupils' understanding has been fully secured.

- In a minority of subjects, teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are not consistently high enough. In these subjects, including mathematics and some science lessons, inspectors found that pupils complete less work than they are capable of because they were not sufficiently engaged in their learning. As a result, pupils' attitudes were less positive in these lessons.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Leaders have successfully embedded the school's core values through a carefully considered programme of personal development. Delivered through tutor time, assemblies and off-timetable Montsaye ERA days, these opportunities ensure that pupils know about important issues and their future well-being. These include careers and next steps, healthy relationships, online safety, knife crime and mental health and well-being.
- Leaders promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very effectively. For example, pupils are introduced to a broad range of themes including a celebration of religious festivals, current affairs through 'this week in the world', social justice and an exploration of black history. Leaders have also been active in promoting opportunities for pupils to learn about lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) issues and in ensuring their well-being. The maturity and commitment of this group is a credit to the school. Leaders continue to work to ensure that the casual use of homophobic language by a small number of pupils is eradicated.
- Pastoral care is a strength of the school. Pupils and parents say that they appreciate and value the care and support provided in meeting the needs of individual pupils. This includes access to a school counsellor, for example when pupils feel they need extra support.
- The majority of pupils who spoke to inspectors understood what is meant by bullying and reported that incidences of bullying are rare. They expressed confidence in the ability of staff to handle any occurrence of bullying effectively. The vast majority of parents who responded to Ofsted's survey expressed the view that their child was happy at school and felt safe.
- The advice and guidance pupils receive about future careers opportunities and aspirations is strengthening. All pupils across Years 7 to 11 receive opportunities to explore their future interests and develop employability skills. Together with access to impartial careers advice, the proportion of Year 11 pupils securing places in further education, employment or training which meet their needs and interests is above national figures, including for disadvantaged pupils.
- The very small proportion of pupils who attend alternative provision away from the school site are closely monitored. The school ensures that these pupils are safe and that they attend and behave well.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Most pupils are polite, courteous and helpful.
- Pupils and staff report that behaviour has improved since the last inspection. They attribute this to the improved quality of teaching, the work done by pastoral leaders and the leadership provided by the principal and senior team. Pupils wear their uniform smartly and with pride, which reflects improved attitudes since the time of the last inspection.
- Most staff apply the school's behaviour policy consistently and, as a consequence, the general conduct of pupils around the school site and in lessons is calm and orderly. This is reflected in the school records, which show a marked reduction in the instances of low-level disruption across the school.
- The proportion of pupils receiving permanent or fixed-term exclusions has been high in the past, but this has reduced significantly in the last year. The proportion of pupils receiving more than one fixed-term exclusion has also reduced considerably.
- Overall attendance has improved and is now slightly above the national average. The proportion of pupils who are regularly absent from school has reduced, although it remains slightly higher than the national average. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils who do not attend regularly remains too high. Leaders are aware of this and are using a wide range of strategies to address the issue.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- The overall attainment of pupils across a range of subjects in 2017 and 2018 was below that of other pupils nationally. The attainment of both the disadvantaged and the middle ability pupils was weak overall.
- The proportion of pupils gaining a strong pass in English and mathematics in 2017 and 2018 was below the national average.
- The overall progress made by pupils at the end of key stage 4 in 2017 and 2018 was below that made by other pupils nationally across a wide range of curriculum subjects.
- Although there has been some improvement in 2018 on previous years, the progress made by disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND is below that made by other pupils nationally.
- Current pupils are making stronger progress than was previously the case. Pupils are also making better progress in those subjects where pupils have previously underperformed in 2018, including English and French. However, the proportion of pupils attaining the higher grades in their GCSE examinations, particularly for middle-prior-attaining pupils, requires improvement. The progress of current pupils in mathematics and computing is less strong.
- Over the past year, school records indicate that progress has improved more rapidly for current pupils in key stage 3. The introduction of a recently implemented target and assessment strategy has positively supported this. Disadvantaged pupils are also beginning to make better progress.
- Pupils with SEND are beginning to make stronger progress, particularly in key stage 3.

This is because of the better support and closer monitoring that these pupils now receive.

- The Year 7 catch-up funding is having a positive impact. This funding supports the development of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills, their confidence and resilience. As a result, these pupils are making a positive start to their time at the school and are catching up with their peers quickly, particularly in reading.
- There is effective support and guidance in ensuring that pupils are well prepared for their next steps in education, employment or training. In 2018, almost all pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, secured appropriate places that met their needs and interests.

16 to 19 study programmes

Good

- The leadership of the recently appointed leader of the sixth form is strong and ambitious for the future. Students who spoke with inspectors expressed their praise for the head of the sixth form. They spoke about the very positive and supportive relationships between staff and students.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in the sixth form is good. Expectations are high. Students enjoy their learning and find their lessons interesting and challenging. Teachers use their strong subject knowledge to question, challenge and assess students.
- Teachers provide students with in-depth feedback to enable them to independently improve their work. In English literature, for example, the insightful feedback provided by the teacher enabled students to enhance their analytical skills while comparing the literary styles of two different poets.
- Achievement in the sixth form is good. School information indicates that outcomes in 2019 will strengthen further, and this is supported by inspectors' observation of post-16 lessons.
- The retention and attendance rate of students in the sixth form has improved markedly since the last inspection. This serves as an illustration of how much students value the quality of provision they receive.
- While the number of students entering the sixth form is currently low, far more of the school's current Year 11 pupils have indicated their desire to stay on into the sixth form. This reflects the increased confidence they have in the quality of education that the sixth form now provides.
- The information, advice and guidance about students' next steps in education, employment or training is of a high quality. All sixth-form students receive a tailored personal development lesson each week covering a variety of pertinent issues and development of life skills. Because of this support, all students in 2018 secured placements which met their needs and aspirations for the future.
- Opportunities for work experience are provided for all students in Year 12. While this is an integral part of the sixth-form study programme, leaders have recognised the need to support a greater diversity of work experience placements offered.

School details

Unique reference number	137049
Local authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	10057642

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	977
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	63
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Jill Moore
Principal	Meena Gabbi
Telephone number	01536 418844
Website	www.montsaye.northants.sch.uk
Email address	head@montsaye.northants-ecl.gov.uk
Date of previous inspection	30 November – 1 December 2016

Information about this school

- This school is an average-sized secondary school.
- The school is sponsored by the Montsaye Community Learning Partnership and the academy joined in September 2013. The trust has overall responsibility for the academy and seven other primary schools in the region.
- When the academy was last inspected in December 2016 it was judged to be inadequate.
- Following the last inspection, the Montsaye Community Learning Partnership disbanded the local governing body and replaced it with the SIB.

- The majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils in receipt of pupil premium funding is slightly below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is broadly average compared to national figures. The proportion of pupils who have an education, health and care plan is average.
- The school uses alternative provision for three pupils at the time of the inspection. A very small number of pupils attend the CE Academy or Progress School in the local area.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out under Section 5 of the Education Act 2005.
- Inspectors observed 50 parts of lessons across all key stages and in a wide range of subjects. Inspectors also visited a number of tutor time sessions.
- Inspectors spoke with four groups of pupils across all year groups and with pupils informally during the school day.
- Inspectors met with a range of school leaders, including the principal, senior vice-principal and other senior leaders responsible for teaching and learning, and behaviour and personal development. Inspectors also spoke with the coordinator for the provision of pupils with SEND, the leader with oversight for the spending of pupil premium funding and Year 7 catch-up funding, the designated safeguarding leaders, subject leaders and the leaders for pastoral care. Meetings were also held with a representative group of subject and progress leaders, teaching and support staff and newly qualified teachers. The lead inspector met with four members of the SIB and with the chief executive officer of the Montsaye Community Learning Partnership. A meeting was also held with a small representative group of parents.
- A range of documentation was examined, including the academy's self-evaluation, the school improvement plans, pupils' performance information, behaviour records, a range of policies and the minutes of the SIB.
- Inspectors looked at samples of pupils' work across a broad range of curriculum subjects.
- The lead inspectors evaluated the 121 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, and the 66 responses to Ofsted's school staff survey. The lead inspector also considered parent and pupil survey information provided by school leaders.

Inspection team

Chris Stevens, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Dick Vasey	Ofsted Inspector
Julie Sheppard	Ofsted Inspector
Matthew Sammy	Ofsted Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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