



Report on IQM Inclusive School Award



School Name: Montalbo Nursery and Primary School

School Address: Fairfield Road
Barnard Castle
County Durham
DL12 8TN

Head/Principal Mr Chris Minikin

IQM Lead Sarah Channell

Assessment Date 7th December 2023

Assessor Mrs Emily Carr

Sources of Evidence:

This was the school's first IQM Assessment. The school submitted a comprehensive self-evaluation report, along with a detailed timetable, thus enabling the assessor the opportunity to review a broad range of evidence linked to the eight elements of the IQM framework. Throughout the one-day assessment, the assessor evaluated the school's commitment to inclusion through an extensive range of written evidence and an inclusion evidence file, including:

- IQM Self-Evaluation Report (SER)
- School website
- Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) report
- Pupil progress information
- Pupil books
- Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) floor books
- School Development Plan (SDP)
- School Evaluation Form (SEF)
- Parent report feedback
- New reception children welcome PowerPoint
- Progress data
- Interventions tracker system
- Individual Learning Plans (ILPs)
- Sensory Intervention Plans
- Learning walks evidence
- School Improvement Partner reports
- Headteacher reports
- Testimonials from professionals who work with the school
- Subject action plans
- Planning
- Weekly overview for the year, outlining national awareness days, religious festivals and events
- Policies



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During the assessment, the assessor also toured the school and visited classes, viewed displays and observed learning.

Meetings Held with:

- Headteacher
- Members of the school Senior Leadership Team (SLT)
- IQM Lead
- Governors, including the Chair of Governors
- Teachers
- Teaching Assistants (Tas)
- Parents and carers
- Pupils



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Overall Evaluation

Inclusion is embedded in Montalbo Nursery and Primary School's ethos and underpins all aspects of school life. Leaders are committed to providing an offer that is holistic and aspirational. Children are at the centre of every decision. Staff are committed to ensuring that pupils are happy and confident and that the opportunities that are provided for them are relevant to their needs. The school's tagline, 'Collaborate, Endeavour, Inspire' is a nod to the three school values of: 'To endeavour; to be inspired and to collaborate'. These values are lived and breathed across the school.

Montalbo Nursery and Primary School is a smaller-than-average sized, Local Authority (LA) maintained school in the market town of Barnard Castle, County Durham. The school catchment is diverse and the school serves both the town and rural community. An increasing proportion of children come from the growing village of Startforth. The school has large classes due to an extension which was completed in 2019; however, this has not diluted the offer that each child receives.

The school was inspected in January 2023 and received a grade of outstanding and it is clear to see why. Children enjoy being part of this school and the whole school community is passionate and proud of their school and the work they do. The strong leadership of the Headteacher, his accessibility, commitment to inclusion and providing opportunities for all children, is a strength of the school. In discussions with the Headteacher, his commitment to the school and the local community shone through when he talked about some of the work they do. He explained, "we use the local history of where we live to bring the community into the school and give children a sense of place". The school attends regular community events such as the 'Meet Parade'. Staff also bring local history to life with learning opportunities such as children across the school creating published books about the local area and landmarks, e.g., The Market Cross and Egglestone Abbey. History for children, by children. In discussions with a parent, they said, 'there is a lovely community feel'. A child said, "I love our history lessons!"

Across the school there is a sense of love, nurture and family. All staff know their pupils and this dedication allows them to ensure children are happy, well-rounded and achieving. Throughout the assessment day, many staff talked about how well they know their children and the 'family feel at Monty'. During the learning walk and tour of the school, it was clear to see that inclusivity is part of the whole school ethos. Pupils have a voice and are seen as individuals. Warm relationships exist throughout the school. Staff are adept at adapting resources and the curriculum, to suit the needs of all and to ensure all children can access the ambitious curriculum offer. On the assessment day, one child said, "the staff are kind and help you out". Another said, "we can talk to adults here. They are all reliable."

All staff feel passionately about supporting all children to help them reach their full potential. They know that a holistic approach to education is needed. Wellbeing is taken seriously by the school and there is even a dedicated wellbeing page on the school's website. Leaders prioritise the wellbeing of the whole school community. In January 2023, Ofsted reported, 'Leaders are committed to staff development and wellbeing. Professional development is prioritised. Subject knowledge and leadership



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skills are continually developing. Staff value the lengths to which leaders go to ensure that staff are looked after and that their workload is manageable.' This was triangulated in discussions with the Headteacher and the IQM Lead, with the Headteacher stating, "I like to develop staff and support them in growing. There are lots of opportunities for professional growth and continuous learning, for example, staff completing National Professional Qualifications." The wellbeing and development of children is also a high priority. Across the school, several staff are trained in supporting children with mental health and wellbeing, as well as working with the Emotional Resilience team or other professionals where necessary. Each class has two children as Wellbeing Champions who look out for their classmates. Parents voiced their appreciation of the wellbeing support for children and themselves, with one saying, "there are strong relationships across the school and support is put in place for us when we need it". Another summed it up simply stating, "it is a unique place with a family feel".

The school has formed excellent relationships with all stakeholders, from parents and carers to outside agencies who help provide advice for the children of Montalbo. Many families choose this setting as staff provide a great environment for all children to learn in, adapting the curriculum where necessary to ensure all children can succeed. One parent articulated this when they explained, "I moved from another area so my child could come to this school. The right support is put in place and my child now has his needs met. It is all that I hoped for and more." Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) are included within all areas of the curriculum, including after-school clubs and make strong progress in academic, emotional and social skills during their time at the school.

Leaders at Montalbo are clear about the vision and next steps for the school. They are a reflective team ensuring all staff are included and valued and buy into the school vision. This is an outward-facing, research-driven school that share best practice and are keen to learn from others. As one Governor explained, "leaders are good at keeping up with research and best practices to keep driving the school forward".

At Montalbo, inclusion is more than a policy; it is a way of life. The culture of inclusion is woven into the very fabric of the school, evident from the purposeful, ambitious and welcoming learning environment, the sensory resources on offer in every classroom, the classroom displays and the carefully planned curriculum.

The dedicated and inspirational IQM Co-ordinator produced an accurate and detailed evaluation of the school's position. This was further supported by conversations with various people from the whole school community, which illustrated that the written evidence was accurate. Suggestions for future development outlined in this report have been identified accurately through the school's self-evaluation.

I am of the opinion that the school fully meets the standard required by the Inclusion Quality Mark's Inclusive School Award. There are only minor areas requiring development and the school is aware of these. I recommend that the school be awarded the Mark and be reassessed in three years' time.

I also recommend that the school should consider applying for Centre of Excellence status subject to the inclusion within its plans of the appropriate areas for development



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and the completion of the Centre of Excellence documentation. If the school chooses to pursue this status and it were to be awarded the school would be subject to annual review from this point forwards.

Assessor: Mrs Emily Carr

Findings confirmed by Inclusion Quality Mark (UK) Ltd:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. McCann".

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Joe McCann MBA NPQH
Director of Inclusion Quality Mark (UK) Ltd



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Element 1 - The Inclusion Values of the School

The school Inclusion policy starts with the following quote, 'Inclusion is seen to involve the identification and minimising of barriers to learning and participation and the maximising of resources to support learning participation' - Index for Inclusion, Booth and Ainscow 2000. Staff at Montalbo have worked hard to minimise barriers to learning and maximise resources to support learning participation. Inclusion is central to the school's ethos. Leaders have ensured that supporting and enabling every individual child to develop their full emotional, social and academic potential is central to the school's aims and vision. Staff hold inclusion as a high priority and it is evident in all areas of school life.

The school values, 'To endeavour; to be inspired and to collaborate' are discussed regularly and modelled in every interaction. Displays around the school celebrate these values. The children are at the heart of every decision staff make to ensure that they are happy, confident and that the opportunities that are provided for them are relevant to their needs both now and in the future. The Headteacher articulated this when saying, "we want the best for our children so they can go on to have successful futures". Staff are effective role models, understanding and fully engaging with the inclusion agenda and promoting high standards. They take professional responsibility for the individual needs of learners within their class. A strength that has been evidenced through the recent Ofsted inspection and highlighted in school improvement advisor visits, is their ability to support individuals: 'All staff are determined to provide the best education and care for every pupil, including those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). Leaders' decisions are based on a strong understanding of how pupils learn'. (Ofsted, January 2023). This gives external validation to the strong practice in school. Children with SEND are well-known to staff. This is important as it ensures children are well supported, using approaches that work best for them, so they achieve well. Throughout the school, Special Educational Needs (SEN) children are included and are not treated differently. All teachers see themselves as 'teachers of SEND'. This shows that all children are considered and that the curriculum is adapted so all learners can access it and make progress. Quality first teaching practices are strong which means that all children receive strong teaching.

Staff work with a wide range of agencies to support and promote wellbeing and pupil voice, taking advantage of a range of opportunities for pupils, both academic and pastoral. The Local Authority (LA) Head of Education and Skills visited the school in November 2022 and reported, "the Headteacher has the needs of all children at the core of his actions - tenacious work with external agencies is paying off for pupils". The school works hard to engage families and carers, offering additional opportunities and support for vulnerable groups. Staff talked about the wide offer they have created to support all families, giving examples of pre-loved events they run, to allow families the opportunity to get good quality clothes and the good wrap-around care offer for families, with a breakfast club and an after-school club that is open until 5:30pm. Support staff talked about the 'Connections through Coffee and Crafts' afternoon sessions they offer parents once a half term, explaining, "these are great for allowing us to build relationships and allowing parents to get to know us and share any issues they are facing." During discussions, staff demonstrated that they would do all they can for their school community.



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Staff are passionate about providing a broad and balanced curriculum and this is enhanced by rich opportunities for all pupils. Support for personal development and wellbeing is a key feature of Montalbo and all staff truly believe in nurturing the holistic needs of each pupil. Children are offered a wide range of learning experiences to enrich their understanding of the curriculum and themselves.

Leaders are reflective and constantly evaluate practices, procedures and processes to ensure the best outcomes for all. Leaders engage with inclusion, monitoring from policy to practice. The vision of all, that everyone can achieve and succeed, is embedded.

Next Steps:

- To re-share the SEND Policy with all staff, highlighting areas of importance and ensuring this is read in induction and annually by staff.
- To update website statements on key information – vision, ethos and values – to fully reflect the inclusive practice that takes place within the school.
- To consider further staff training on English as an Additional Language (EAL) and effective teaching strategies to support the recent influx of EAL learners to the school.



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Element 2 - Leadership and Management and Accountability

Leadership is a strength at Montalbo Nursery and Primary School. The Headteacher and his leadership team have a strong knowledge of the school and a clear vision of the ever-changing educational landscape. All leaders, including Governors, share in the inclusive ethos and vision; they are involved in all aspects of development planning, policy formulation and review of practice.

Leaders are committed to ensuring the best outcomes for all children and have developed a strong staff team who share that aim. They have a clear moral compass and part of that is about the need to nurture and support staff. Leaders are passionate about empowering and developing staff. They ensure staff engage fully in focused professional development so that professional knowledge consistently improves over time. Leaders recognise that for young people to be happy and succeed, the staff need to be happy and well-supported. They work to develop expertise and ensure successful succession and retention. There are progression routes and opportunities for all staff. Succession planning is a key part of the Headteacher's vision for staff and he works hard to recruit talented, committed staff to 'Team Monty'. He provides opportunities for staff to develop their leadership skills. Leaders invest in training and developing their staff to make sure curriculum delivery is of the highest possible standard. Continuing Professional Development (CPD) is well developed and planned and meets the needs of the pupils' and staff personal development; this is linked to school priorities and personal growth. Throughout the day, all staff commented on how proud they are to be part of the team and reflected on how the leaders of the school care for them and make this a happy place to work. One teacher said, "we are a tight team who take time to check in on each other". There is a strong and stable staff team who have all bought into the school vision and created a shared ethos of love and ambition. Leaders ensure that staff are well-trained and confident in their practice. One Teaching Assistant (TA) talked about the wide range of opportunities on offer, explaining how they can regularly go on courses to develop as professionals and have an impact on the children of Montalbo.

Staff wellbeing is important to leaders and staff feel well-supported. Early Career Teachers (ECTs) are well supported through high-quality training and mentoring. During the day, many staff discussed the wide offer of CPD open to them and talked with passion about how they have developed under the leadership of the Headteacher. One staff member said, "Mr Minkin is an ethical leader who cares". Another said, "we all support each other and everyone has a voice".

Safeguarding is central to everything and procedures in place are rigorous and effective. Governors are skilled and experienced and have a good knowledge of the school. The chair discussed how, "inclusion comes from the top and is evident in all areas". The Governors are well established with a good range of members to bring expertise, challenge and support. They are fully involved in every aspect of school life. In discussions on the assessment day, they demonstrated that they are knowledgeable about inclusion and use this to help shape the strategic vision of the school. They are ambitious and well-informed about the strengths and areas for improvement in the school. They visit regularly to conduct learning walks and observe practices linked to key priority areas. This means that Governors can assess the quality of the information



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they receive and are accurate in their evaluation of the school's performance. On the assessment day, Governors were clear that they are constantly working to improve, with one stating, "we are not complacent now we have an Ofsted 'Outstanding' grade. It is about continuing to move forward and improve." Ofsted, January 2023, reported: 'The governance of the school is very strong'.

Leaders are reflective in their practice to ensure that the systems in place are effective and continue to improve provision.

Next Steps:

- To map out staff meetings tightly to include regular SEND updates and pertinent inclusion updates.
- To strengthen leadership capacity to enable further sharing of workload in line with staff wellbeing.
- To ensure more information is shared with staff on the role of Governors to ensure all staff are fully aware of the important role they play within school. Chair of Governors to share overview of Governor areas of interest.
- Governors to monitor the provision for children with EAL. Chair of Governors to assign a Governor with responsibility for EAL children and to begin some monitoring.



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Element 3 - Curriculum – Structure, Pupil Engagement and Adaption

The curriculum at Montalbo is broad, balanced and ambitious. The curriculum aims to provide opportunities for children to develop as independent, confident and successful citizens who enjoy learning. There is a high focus on developing children's moral, spiritual, social and cultural understanding creating a respectful, thoughtful and a reflective culture. Montalbo Nursery and Primary School ensure that children are 'secondary ready' and well prepared for life in modern Britain.

The curriculum is built upon the values of the school and these values form the three key drivers that permeate through the curriculum and are visible in every aspect of Montalbo. All adults working within the school are kind and nurturing and all contribute to the strong inclusive ethos. This can be seen in their interactions with children and families and in the curriculum offer and classroom. The Deputy Headteacher explained, "we get to know the children well and create a bespoke offer when needed. We treat children as individuals."

Ofsted reported in January 2023, 'Leaders have designed a highly ambitious curriculum. Work in pupils' books is of a very high quality and reflects the high expectations of adults. The experiences that are provided for pupils extend significantly beyond the curriculum.' Staff have developed a well-sequenced and progressive curriculum, running from Nursery to Year 6. Subject leaders have worked together to create a cohesive, sequential and progressive curriculum. The curriculum covers all subjects outlined within the National Curriculum and the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) curriculum and is broad and responsive to the children. Children are appreciative of their curriculum, with many children talking with passion about the wide range of lessons they enjoy. One child explained, "teachers stretch and challenge us and we learn a lot". Another said, "it is fun to learn at this school and this school makes you happier".

Subject leads have developed long and medium-term plans for their subjects, using their expertise and knowledge gained through research, training and working with external advisors. Leaders ensure that plans are well-sequenced, cohesive and progressive. They appropriately consider adaptations that can be made to ensure all children access a high-quality curriculum. Staff across the school work hard to continually review and develop the broad, balanced curriculum on offer in school, to refine it for the needs of all pupils. Governors support this process of reflecting and developing, with one Governor explaining, "we regularly monitor the work and conduct book looks. I am blown away by the standard of the work."

The implementation of the curriculum follows research evidence-based approaches to reduce cognitive load and aid memory through spaced retrieval practice. Much staff training took place on this and the impact is outstanding. The expectation is that most children will follow the same curriculum, with adaptations made to the way and amount they record their learning being made for children with SEND. TAs are knowledgeable and experienced and this is valued by teachers and leaders and they are deployed effectively to support those who need it.



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The curriculum offers opportunities for learning beyond the classroom. The school has a broad range of after-school clubs on offer, such as Lego club, Zumba, Art and football and there is a wide range of enrichment in school to ensure all pupils have access to engaging and enjoyable activities to enhance learning and personal development.

Next Steps:

- To further develop and enhance the careers offer to help raise children's aspirations such as the Roar project for Year 6 and Start Small, Dream Big project for Year 5.
- The school is keen to promote the countries of origin of our EAL learners. Headteacher to arrange for children from other countries to share Christmas traditions in assembly, as a starting point for this work - December 2023.
- To continue to closely monitor and provide opportunities for Pupil Premium and SEND pupils to attend after-school clubs. Deputy Headteacher to track this and report to Governors annually.
- To think carefully about external audiences for the children to further consolidate their oracy skills.



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Element 4 - Teaching and Learning – Learning Environment, Planning Resources, Pedagogy

The learning environment reflects the inclusive ethos of the school. On the tour of the school, it was evident that the inclusive environment promotes attitudes of understanding and acceptance of individual differences where learners and staff can thrive. The school is warm and nurturing. Classrooms are appropriately equipped with sensory resources such as fidgets, wobble cushions and now and next boards. Where necessary, classrooms have a sensory area or calming area. Safe spaces for learners are also available outside the classroom, e.g., the Nurture Pod and purposeful sensory spaces. Support staff are trained in offering a range of targeted interventions for those who need them, such as phonics, gross motor intervention and Zones of Regulation. The school environment is finished to a high standard. The new extension has ensured that there is more space and allowed for purpose-built spaces that are used effectively to engage students, for example, a purpose-built Information Communication and Technologies (ICT) classroom is used to enhance the curriculum.

Promoting high-quality teaching and effective learning is an integral part of the whole school curriculum, underpinned by the aims of the school. It is based on high expectations and up-to-date research on effective teaching and learning strategies. The leaders are outward-facing and research-driven. One teacher said, “we never stand still as a school. We have done a lot of training on cognitive load and developed a clear approach to ensuring children build up their knowledge and gain a depth of understanding.”

Resources are engaging and carefully planned to ensure children learn and make progress. SEND pupils are integrated into the classroom. The dedicated Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Co-ordinator (SENDCo) has had a huge impact across the school, with many people voicing how highly effective she is and with one Governor stating, “she is phenomenal. She ensures children make progress and have their needs identified and met.” Teachers and leaders highlighted the importance of SEND pupils being within the class rather than supported out of class. The school’s ‘red dot approach’ to lessons is embedded in research on cognitive load and SEND. Staff developed their highly effective, bespoke approach after working together to reflect on best practices and the positive impact of a ‘ping pong - your turn, my turn’ mastery approach in mathematics. Teachers talked with passion about this approach, with one saying, “it has worked so well. Children retain knowledge.” The approach was evident in all pupil books. The mathematics mastery approach accounts for all learners, ensuring challenge for all. Adaptations are made to lesson input and tasks to ensure all children can access them at their appropriate level. Furthermore, adaptations are made to lesson resources for children with visual impairments and appropriate approaches and equipment used for children with hearing impairments. Pre-teaching vocabulary is also used, especially for SEND and EAL pupils. Personalised curriculums are used where necessary for individual children, particularly those with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs).



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Adults are deployed effectively within lessons. TAs at Montalbo have a wealth of experience and use this to support the children effectively and quickly in their care. Support staff are carefully deployed each academic year to classes according to needs, ensuring SEND pupils are exposed to different members of staff. Teachers and support staff work closely together to ensure appropriate provision is in place for all learners. One TA articulated their work, explaining, “we are always reflecting on what is working well and what we can do to improve further”. Another said, “we are adaptive to needs and we know our children so well”.

Staff are reflective and are always looking to develop and improve practice for the children in their school.

Next Steps:

- To continue to reflect on and build on the school’s strong teaching and learning practices.
- To reflect on current pilots in school, e.g., plan, do, review in Nursery and Welcome in Reception.



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Element 5 - Assessment

Data is used effectively to inform the next steps and to ensure all children make progress and achieve their potential.

The Senior Leadership Team (SLT) has worked hard to make every teacher a teacher of SEND. Progress for all pupils demonstrates how effectively the school promotes equal opportunities and showcases the impact of high expectations and strong teaching. Books are well presented and demonstrate the high expectations and standards across the school and the progress children make from their starting points. Many summer report parental feedback forms demonstrate how pleased parents and carers are with the progress their children make at Montalbo. One parent wrote, "you create an excellent learning environment that allows children to learn and make progress, whilst having fun".

There is a clear programme and methodology for tracking learners' ongoing progress. Leaders and staff at the school have designed their assessment frameworks to track children's progress in different subject areas. Internal tracking grids have been developed for different curriculum subjects. These tracking charts illustrate the importance the school places on ensuring children are tracked and monitored so that gaps are closed quickly. Spaced retrieval exercises and end-of-block assessments help form teacher judgements. Staff have used evidenced-based research and refined their practice to ensure spaced retrieval takes place at the start of each lesson. Staff identify key knowledge that the children learn in lessons, reiterate in homework and are 'assessed' on in lessons. Teachers talked about how they use homework to support children in consolidating their learning, with one saying, "homework is based on our 'locked in learning' approach so that children can reinforce their understanding of what they have learnt in school". Staff use internal tracking sheets for each subject to mark children's progress which can be reviewed by Subject Leaders.

Staff have a good awareness of children's prior knowledge. Staff check children's knowledge and revisit through spaced retrieval exercises, appropriately developed following research on cognitive load and retrieval. Staff feedback to pupils to improve learning by instant feedback wherever possible. Staff use live marking as much as possible to try to mark children's work during their activities, to maximise impact. This way feedback can be acted upon quickly, leading to better understanding.

Children's targets are shared with parents and carers three times a year for most children, in Parents' Evenings and end-of-year reports. For children with SEND, more regular target sharing with parents occurs and meetings take place to discuss progress. Staff have worked hard to instil a growth mindset in children and the school value of 'endeavour'. High expectations are evident in lessons and the work produced. Children are keen to act upon feedback to improve.

Staff are knowledgeable about their school and their students and are tireless when it comes to ensuring children achieve their best and have successful pathways in place.



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Next Steps:

- To continue to keep up to date with best practices of formative assessment. SLT and Subject Leads to attend regular training (throughout the year). The headteacher is to work closely with the Leadership Adviser and consider changes where necessary at the end of each term.
- To analyse the end-of-term/year data and evaluate provision considering findings.



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Element 6 - Behaviour, Attitudes to Learning and Personal Development

It is a primary aim of Montalbo Nursery and Primary School that every member of the school community feels valued and respected and that each person is treated fairly and well. Staff have created a caring community, with values that are built on mutual trust and respect for all. Leaders have created a behaviour policy designed to support how all members of the school can work together in a supportive way. It aims to promote an environment in which everyone feels happy, safe and secure. This aim has been achieved.

In January 2023, Ofsted reported, 'pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning are exemplary. They are engaged and attentive in lessons and there is a culture of respect for everyone.' On the assessment day, pupils were polite, well-mannered and friendly. In every class visited, children were engaged and focused and demonstrated strong attitudes towards learning.

Staff believe that all behaviour is communication and are proactive about identifying potential behaviour triggers. Teachers have a good understanding of the factors that influence pupils' mindsets and their ability to learn. Staff work with children, parents/carers and other agencies to ensure that each child's needs are met so they are equipped to behave in appropriate ways and achieve success. The school leaders have recently spent time getting staff across the school trained in trauma-informed practice to allow them to further support children by giving them more knowledge on the impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs).

At Montalbo, pupils learn how to manage their feelings and emotions. Pupils experience a range of activities that are aimed at developing their social and emotional skills. Some children, who need extra support, engage in interventions such as the Zones of Regulation. At Montalbo, mental health truly matters. Promotion of good mental health and wellbeing practices are central to the school's ethos and children are taught how to protect their own and others' wellbeing. All children are given opportunities to explore and discuss how they can experience 'The Five Ways to Wellbeing'.

The school has developed strong relationships with external agencies who support the work staff do in school. These include the School Nurse, Health Practitioners, Educational Psychology, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, Behaviour Support, Social Services and Specialists in supporting Special Educational Needs. The Qualified Teacher of Deaf Children and Young People, who works with the school, emailed a testimonial stating, "the educational experience and ethos they provide is exemplary. Teamwork is at the core of their outstanding practice."

Staff listen to children's opinions and use their feedback to shape several areas of school life. For example, children can be School Councillors, Eco Councillors and Young Sports Leaders.

The hard work from staff is having an impact. Behaviour across the school is positive.



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Next Steps:

- To continue to work with families where attendance is not as strong (90-95%) and persistent absentees. Offer wraparound care incentives where applicable.
- To use appropriate strategies for individual children, e.g, Playfulness, Acceptance, Curiosity and Empathy (PACE). Relevant staff to receive training.
- To refine the outdoor learning curriculum to include further opportunities for personal development.



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Element 7 - Parents, Carers and Guardians

Leaders believe that effective relationships with parents and carers are essential to ensure the best outcomes for a child.

It is clear to see that Senior Leaders at Montalbo Primary listen. They welcome phone calls and meetings with parents/carers and very much have an open-door policy. Parents feel comfortable talking with staff about their children and themselves and know that their opinions are valued and that support will be offered. One parent, on the assessment day, said, “staff are amazing, I cannot fault them. They are supportive and have even helped me with things such as housing.”

Staff work hard to ensure that parents, carers and guardians feel well-informed of their children’s learning and progress and how staff are supporting them within school. One parent explained, “staff at this school do things. They put support in place and have meetings quickly”. Another supported this, stating, “the SEND support is fantastic. Within half a term support had been put in place for my child and they are given the same opportunities as others.”

High-quality opportunities exist for parents to engage with teachers to discuss the needs of their child at different stages. Staff across the school work tirelessly to identify needs early and share this with parents, ensuring the right professional advice and services can be accessed to support their child. The SENDCo is skilled at ensuring interventions are swift and effective.

Parents talked with, as part of the assessment, were extremely supportive of the school and spoke highly about the impact staff have had on their children. They reported that their children feel safe at this school and that it is a school with no judgement. One parent said, “they are accepting of everyone and show that it is ok to be different”.

Communication is constant at Montalbo. Leaders value effective communication and communicate with parents in many ways. Staff use an electronic communication tool called Weduc where information can be shared quickly and effectively and is also used to celebrate learning. Staff are also highly visible at drop-off and pick-up times for informal chats. This close liaison helps to ensure a two-way monitoring of attitudes, students’ progress and the opportunities to celebrate successes. Staff use translation tools to support communication with families of children with English as an Additional Language (EAL) or arrange for a translator to be present for important meetings, so that parents, carers and guardians have a clear understanding.

Communication at new starter meetings and on newsletters highlights the importance of a partnership between home and school.

Senior leaders work hard to build positive relationships with parents of vulnerable learners. This includes arranging Early Help to support with issues in the home, support with finances/food where possible and signposting families to free holiday activities. These support mechanisms are valued by families. Parents, carers and guardians have confidence in the school. They trust leaders and their feedback due to the strong relationships that are developed.

Parents would recommend this school and have confidence in the school.



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Next Step:

- To develop approaches to communicating face to face with parents, carers and guardians of children with EAL when translators are not present.



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Element 8 - Links with Local, Wider and Global Community

The SLT is passionate about all the experiences and learning opportunities that they give the pupils. Staff, on the review day, talked about how there is a wide world around them and how they work to enrich children's understanding and give them cultural capital. Leaders grab every opportunity to broaden pupils' experiences and develop their understanding of the world around them.

Staff at Montalbo strive to make sure that its pupils feel part of the local community and learn about their local history. The school firmly believes in making children's learning relevant and makes great effort to ensure that the teaching and learning is linked to the local area.

The curriculum is enhanced and enriched by visits and visitors and includes a local, national and international dimension, which is always being explored and developed further by the staff team. The curriculum has been developed to include many visitors to the school to enhance and deepen understanding. These include sports coaches, police, the National Health Service (NHS), scientists and careers workshops.

Staff also work hard to develop pupils' understanding of the global world with well-developed Geography, Religious Education (RE) and Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) plans and a comprehensive assembly offer. The school has participated in the town's Holi Festival and It's a Small World events over the last two years, sharing artwork and singing and dancing with the community. A recent global project was The Lions Clubs International Roar Programme, where children were tasked with identifying a problem, thinking of a solution, building a prototype and pitching their idea to a panel.

The school values partnerships working within the broader community, including other education establishments. Leaders have worked hard to develop meaningful links and they work with several schools. The Headteacher also attends regular Community of Learning meetings with up to 15 local schools, including two local secondary schools. Here colleagues discuss prevalent demands and how they can use shared funding to best meet the needs of children. Leaders arrange CPD and often hear from SEND Leads at Durham County Council.

Montalbo is a community school. Staff ensure that all children have opportunities to extend their knowledge, skills and experiences through the strong curriculum and community offer at Montalbo.

Next Steps:

- To consider ways to find and finance affordable residentials.
- To consider more national/global links that would enhance teaching and learning.