

Murray Park Community School

Murray Road, Mickleover, Derby, Derbyshire DE3 9LL

Inspection dates

29–30 January 2019

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Senior leaders did not ensure that pupils continued to make consistently good progress following the previous inspection. Standards declined but are now beginning to improve again. Pupils' progress is improving but is not yet good across the school.
- Many middle leaders are new to their roles. They do not yet have the skills needed to improve the quality of teaching and pupils' progress.
- Leaders do not use their improvement plans systematically to check on how successful their actions are in improving the school.
- Too many pupils do not focus sharply enough on their learning. New leaders have raised expectations for good behaviour. New approaches are ensuring that more pupils behave well.
- The quality of teaching is not consistently good. Leaders do not provide teachers with sufficient access to high-quality training. Pockets of good teaching are not used successfully to help others to improve their practice.
- Teachers do not routinely plan activities that are well matched to pupils' needs. This is especially true for the most able pupils.
- Leaders do not use the extra funding for disadvantaged pupils to best effect. Disadvantaged pupils' progress is too varied. This is also true for Year 7 pupils who receive extra funding to improve their literacy and numeracy skills.
- Some pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) do not make good progress. They are cared for well and new arrangements are providing more effective support.

The school has the following strengths

- The new headteacher has gained a quick understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Senior leaders are taking effective action to improve the school.
- Leaders have changed the curriculum to provide pupils with a broad range of subjects and improved option pathways at key stage 4.
- The governing body has been restructured. Governors know the school well and are now providing leaders with strong challenge and support.
- The school's systems help pupils to stay safe and feel safe. Leaders have also ensured that pupils' attendance has improved.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the impact of leadership and management by ensuring that senior leaders:
 - tailor teachers’ professional development and training to meet the needs of teachers
 - provide support and training for middle leaders and check their effectiveness in improving their respective areas
 - evaluate the impact of actions to improve the quality of teaching and pupils’ progress, and use the findings to plan their next steps
 - make more effective use of the extra funding provided for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND, and the Year 7 literacy and numeracy catch-up premium.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and support all pupils in making strong progress by ensuring that all teachers:
 - make use of opportunities to share the most effective teaching approaches and act upon the guidance provided by leaders to improve their practice
 - use information from assessments to plan activities that are well matched to pupils’ needs, especially to challenge the most able pupils
 - provide more opportunities for disadvantaged pupils to catch up with other pupils.
- Improve pupils’ behaviour by ensuring that all teachers engage pupils in their learning and follow the school’s policies to eliminate low-level disruption and incidents of poor behaviour.

An external review of the school’s use of the pupil premium funding should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- The new headteacher has taken decisive action and is beginning to rectify the weaknesses that have built up in the past. Other senior leaders – also new to their roles – are providing effective support but much of their work is at an early stage of development.
- Senior leaders are demonstrating the capacity to make sustained improvements. They have established a firm base from which to move forward. Leaders know what needs to improve and have set up new systems and approaches to help them achieve this. They do not know, however, how successful their actions are because they have not yet evaluated the approach they are using.
- Leaders' actions to improve the quality of teaching have not led to good teaching across the school. They do not provide teachers with sufficient high-quality training to improve individual teachers' skills and teaching practice, although more opportunities are planned. Leaders are not as thorough as they could be in checking that the quality of teaching is improving. Senior leaders have not, however, been afraid to tackle weak teaching. They have taken difficult but firm action to reduce this.
- Some middle leaders do not yet have the skills necessary to make a marked improvement in their respective areas. New middle leaders have not yet benefited from the support that they need to carry out their duties well. They are not meticulously following the school's adopted approaches to checking on and improving the quality of teaching and pupils' progress. Senior leaders do not systematically check on middle leaders' work to ensure that their actions have the desired impact.
- Senior leaders have introduced a new system to record pupils' progress and attainment and help to identify gaps in pupils' learning. They do not, however, use this system to full effect. The accuracy of teachers' assessments is not rigorously checked. Teachers do not routinely use accurate pupil assessments to plan learning at the right level.
- Leaders do not make the best use of the extra funding for disadvantaged pupils or for pupils with SEND. The Year 7 catch-up funding – for pupils who join the school with low literacy and/or numeracy skills – is also not used as well as it could be. The progress of these groups of pupils, therefore – despite some improvements – remains too varied.
- A review of the school's curriculum has led to improved opportunities for pupils to study a wider range of subjects. Option choices at key stage 4 provide a good balance of academic and vocational subjects. The proportion of pupils who choose the English Baccalaureate subjects, however, is well below average. Leaders have restructured option pathways to allow more pupils to take the relevant subjects in future. A small number of pupils follow alternative curriculum programmes that meet their needs.
- Pupils benefit from a personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE) programme of study. This plays an important role in contributing to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Leaders have, however, recognised that teachers have not delivered this programme in key stage 4 as methodically as they should have.

- The school makes valuable use of informal collaboration with other schools to improve its effectiveness. For instance, senior leaders have recently commissioned a peer review of SEND to help them identify their next steps for improvement.
- Newly qualified teachers benefit from a bespoke programme of development. This is valuable in helping them to gain the skills, knowledge and understanding that they need to become effective practitioners.
- Leaders provide parents and carers with valuable information about their children's learning, for example in helping parents to understand the new approaches to learning mathematics. A parent forum provides parents with opportunities to discuss some of the school's plans. Most parents are positive about the school's work.

Governance of the school

- The governing body has been restructured to improve the effectiveness of its role. New members have been recruited. Governors bring a broad range of skills and experience to their roles and are committed to improving the school.
- Governors understand the school's strengths and weaknesses. They have good professional knowledge of leaders' work and the actions they are taking to make the required improvements. Governors provide leaders with challenge and support. Sometimes, however, governors are not able to measure leaders' actions as accurately as they could. This is because leaders do not present them with enough detail regarding what actions are making a difference in improving the school.
- Until very recently, governors had not made sufficient checks on the use of extra funding to improve outcomes for some groups of pupils. Governors have increased their checks on the use of the pupil premium funding and on the funding for pupils with SEND. They have not, however, increased their checks on the use of the Year 7 literacy and numeracy catch-up premium.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Checks to ensure the suitability of staff and volunteers are carried out correctly. The designated teacher for child protection and safeguarding implements procedures thoroughly. Records are accurate and well maintained. Staff are provided with relevant training and understand the systems for reporting any concerns.
- The curriculum contributes well to raising pupils' awareness of safe practices, such as when using the internet. Groups of pupils who spoke with inspectors said that they feel safe in the school. Leaders work well with parents – and external agencies – to support pupils and keep them safe. Most parents who responded to Ofsted's online survey agreed that their children are safe.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is not yet good across the school. Effective practice is not shared well enough to improve the quality of teaching further. Although relationships between staff and pupils are generally positive, some pupils do not focus enough on their learning. A few teachers do not reinforce expectations about good behaviour. Sometimes, low-level disruption or misbehaviour interrupts learning.
- Too few teachers make best use of the most effective teaching to improve their own practice. At times, good teaching enables pupils to make strong progress. For example, questioning was used skilfully to help pupils in Year 11 think more deeply about the poems they were studying. This does not, however, reflect typical teaching practice across the school.
- The activities that teachers set are not consistently well matched to pupils' learning needs. Too few teachers provide the most able pupils with a sufficiently high level of challenge. For instance, the most able pupils are often held back while other pupils catch up. Sometimes, they are asked to repeat tasks that are insufficiently demanding. In the most effective lessons, however, teachers plan activities that make the most able pupils think harder. This inconsistency means that the most able pupils' progress is not as good as it should be.
- The support for pupils with SEND is too variable for them to make good progress across the school. Some pupils with SEND attend the school's 'Hub' provision. Here, pupils are provided with a tailored timetable to better meet their learning needs. In the small-group-based activities – and where teaching assistant support is effective – pupils with SEND make good progress.
- Teachers often use their specialist subject knowledge to routinely guide pupils through their learning. However, they rarely use it to plan engaging and stimulating activities that motivate the pupils. Occasionally, teachers do encourage pupils to be more self-directed and independent in their learning. In Year 10 photography, for instance, pupils demonstrated high levels of enthusiasm and self-motivation while working on their chosen projects.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe, fit and healthy. Pupils told the inspectors that they feel safe in school.
- Pupils are typically considerate and respectful towards each other and adults. Most pupils take pride in their learning, their environment and their appearance. Occasionally, however, a minority of pupils use unacceptable language that is not routinely challenged by adults.
- Pupils are developing the skills that they need to become confident learners but this is not yet consistent across the school. Leaders provide pupils with opportunities to be well prepared for life in modern Britain. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is promoted through the school's values, and is more explicitly taught using the school's

PSHCE programme. Elements of this programme, however, are not as effective as they could be in helping some pupils to develop a broad range of skills. Equally, they do not help the few pupils who have less positive attitudes to be reflective about – and responsible for – their actions.

- The number of incidents of bullying and racism is low. Pupils understand the different types of bullying and say that adults deal with any bullying that does occur. Most parents agreed that incidents of bullying are rare.
- New leaders are providing pupils with more opportunities to develop a range of skills by engaging in extra-curricular activities. For instance, pupils can learn Chinese or study photography. They can also be more physically active by playing table tennis or being involved in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme. To develop leadership skills, pupils hold positions of responsibility such as peer readers, prefects or international ambassadors.
- A dedicated team of staff provides pupils with a helpful careers guidance programme. It is particularly strong for pupils who attend the school's 'Bridge' provision. It is not, however, delivered as effectively for all pupils. Leaders have established good links for pupils to learn about local companies and industries.
- A few pupils follow different curriculum pathways. Most of these pupils attend the school's own alternative programmes. Leaders make appropriate checks on the personal development and behaviour of the very few pupils who undertake their education on a different site.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. Pupils' attitudes to learning are not consistently positive. At times, pupils lose focus and low-level disruption occurs. Leaders have set higher expectations for good behaviour and pupils talk about the positive difference that this has made. Some staff, however, do not make effective use of the school's behaviour policy.
- Leaders have established different school-based programmes to support pupils who need a more structured approach to their learning. This has helped to reduce the number of fixed-term exclusions. The number of incidents of poor behaviour – although reducing – remains too high.
- Leaders have had a positive impact on improving pupils' attendance. At this stage, pupils' attendance has risen to be similar to the national average. Leaders have also improved pupils' punctuality to school. Some pupils, however, do not display any sense of urgency when moving to their next lesson.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Historically, by the end of key stage 4, pupils have not made good progress. Attainment has also been below average. Pupils have, however, made consistently good progress in English. Progress in mathematics has been more varied over time and in 2018 was below average.
- Following the school's 2014 inspection, there was a period of decline in pupils'

progress. Pupils' progress is improving again but it is not yet strong across the school. Leaders have not yet eliminated the variations in pupils' progress across subjects. Boys do not make as much progress as girls.

- The school's assessment system indicates that current pupils are making better progress. However, high-quality teaching is not yet embedded across the school, and progress is not consistently good across year groups and subjects. Pupils' progress in English continues to be good and is a strength of the school.
- Disadvantaged pupils are making better progress than they have done previously. The school's assessment system indicates that gaps to other pupils nationally are closing for some disadvantaged pupils. This too, however, remains too varied in year groups and across subjects. There is a similar picture of inconsistent progress for pupils with SEND.
- Year 7 pupils who benefit from extra funding to help them improve their literacy and numeracy skills do not catch up quickly enough with other pupils.
- The most able pupils are not provided with enough challenge in their learning to help them reach the high standards that they should. The school's assessment system, however, indicates that more of the most able pupils in key stage 4 are achieving standards similar to those seen nationally.
- The proportion of pupils who are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment is not as high as it should be. The proportion of pupils who move on to some form of higher education is slowly rising.
- Alternative curriculum programmes – both within school and externally – are meeting the needs of a small number of pupils who attend them. This is helping these pupils to make better progress than they have done previously.

School details

Unique reference number	112991
Local authority	Derby
Inspection number	10091476

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	917
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Paul Davies
Headteacher	Nicola Caley
Telephone number	01332 515 921
Website	www.murraypark.derby.sch.uk
Email address	info@murraypark.derby.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	20 November 2018

Information about this school

- The school is an average-sized secondary school. There have been several changes to both the senior and middle leadership teams since the school's previous section 5 inspection. The headteacher was appointed in April 2018. Many middle leaders joined the school in September 2018 and in January 2019.
- Most of the pupils are White British, with a few coming from a small range of minority ethnic groups. The proportion of pupils with SEND is above average. The proportion of pupils who have an education, health and care plan is average. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is average.
- A small number of pupils attend alternative provision at the Derby Pride Academy or the Kingsmead School. Both are registered providers. The school also provides its own alternative provisions. The 'Hub' is for pupils who need extra learning support and the 'Bridge' is for pupils who are at risk of exclusion.
- The school provides a breakfast club for its pupils.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed pupils' learning in 40 lessons. Some of this learning was observed jointly with members of the senior leadership team. Discussions took place with several school staff, members of the governing body and a local authority representative.
- Inspectors met with three groups of pupils and talked informally with pupils. The 48 responses from pupils to Ofsted's survey were taken into account, alongside the school's own pupil survey. Inspectors also listened to Year 7 pupils read and observed assembly and social time.
- Inspectors took into account the 90 responses from parents to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, including 45 free-text comments. Inspectors also considered the 33 staff responses to Ofsted's online survey.
- Inspectors observed the work of the school and looked at a broad range of evidence, including the school's analysis of its strengths and weaknesses, and planning and monitoring documentation.
- The work in pupils' books was scrutinised in the presence of senior leaders. Records relating to attendance and behaviour – and the school's information on pupils' current progress and attainment in English, mathematics and a range of other subjects – were reviewed.
- The school's child protection and safeguarding procedures were scrutinised. Inspectors reviewed the school's website to confirm whether it met the requirements on the publication of specified information.

Inspection team

Vondra Mays, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Christine Staley	Ofsted Inspector
Julie Sheppard	Ofsted Inspector
Michael Wilson	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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