

Murray Park Community School

Murray Road, Mickleover, Derby, DE3 9LL

Inspection dates 17–18 June 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Achievement is good. Students make good progress from their low starting points and attain broadly average standards at GCSE.
- Due to the vision of the headteacher, the governing body and the work of staff, this school has improved quickly since the last inspection.
- Teaching is typically good with an increasing proportion that is outstanding. Teachers' subject knowledge is strong and their questioning is skilful.
- Students feel safe. They behave well in lessons and around the school. Students speak proudly of their school, noting the many positive changes which have been made under the leadership of the headteacher.
- School leaders and governors are relentless in their ambition to raise achievement and improve the quality of teaching further.
- The school promotes students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. As a result, students work very well together, and relationships are respectful and harmonious.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The leadership skills of a few subject leaders are not as highly developed as those of others. Consequently, their checks are not precise enough in identifying what needs to be done to make teaching and achievement outstanding.
- Attendance, although improving quickly, is slightly below the national average for secondary schools.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 34 part lessons. Four observations were carried out with the headteacher and other senior members of staff. Inspectors also observed nine registration sessions and an assembly.
- Inspectors spoke to four groups of students representing Years 7 to 10; Year 11 students were on examination leave. Inspectors had informal discussions with students at the start of the school day, breaks and lunchtimes.
- The met the Chair and another member of the Governing Body. Inspectors held discussions with members of the senior leadership team and heads of subjects. In addition, a discussion was held with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of 95 responses to the Ofsted Parent View online questionnaire and reviewed 85 responses to the staff questionnaire. Inspectors also took account of 400 responses to the school's own survey of parents views conducted in March 2014.
- Inspectors saw the school at work and scrutinised internal and external student progress and attainment data, students work samples in Years 10 and 11, school development planning and the school's view of its own performance. They also considered a range of documentation on the work of the school and looked at minutes of the governing body.
- Inspectors evaluated school policies and practice in relation to child protection, safeguarding, behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors observed students read in class and talked to them about their reading.

Inspection team

Dilip Kadodwala, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Deirdre Duignan

Her Majesty's Inspector

Dorothy Martin

Additional Inspector

Kevin Harrison

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Murray Park is smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- The very large majority of students are White British and live locally. The remaining small number of students are from a wide variety of minority ethnic heritages.
- The proportion of students who speak English as an additional language is lower than average.
- The proportion of students supported by the pupil premium (additional government funding for students known to be eligible for free school meals or looked after by the local authority) is above average.
- The proportion of disabled students and those with special educational needs supported through school action is higher than most schools nationally. The proportion of students supported at school action plus or who have a statement of special educational needs is lower than average.
- Six students in Years 10 and 11 attend part-time alternative provision run by the local authority called 'Junction 16'. 30 students attend Derby College to study work-related courses such as construction. Most students access these courses one day week and are taught in the main school for the rest of the time. Two students are educated wholly off-site at a local special school which is part of a Pupil Referral Unit.
- The school holds Career Mark accreditation.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen the quality of subject leadership and management so that it is consistently of a high standard by ensuring that:
 - leaders' checks on learning are precise and actions taken subsequently lead to making teaching and students' achievement outstanding.
- Ensure that attendance continues to rise to at least the national average by:
 - extending the partnership work with some parents and carers to make sure that students who are absent more frequently are helped to benefit from the good education that the school offers.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Since the last inspection, improved teaching is raising standards and rates of progress are now good. Achievement across subjects and year groups is improving and students currently in the school achieve well.
- Students start at the school with attainment that is well below average. In 2013, the proportion of students who attained five or more GCSEs at grade C or higher, including in English and mathematics, was broadly in line with the national average.
- The turn-around in students' achievement during the past year is significant. Forecast data from the school suggests that current progress across year groups in a wide range of subjects, including in English and mathematics, is consistently good. This contrasts with the most recent published data which reflect a period when not enough students were making better than expected progress, notably in English.
- Leaders have made a determined effort to improve the progress that students make in English. Through their raised expectations of teaching and suitable interventions, the proportion of students who are on track to make better than expected progress has risen considerably from 2013. Work in books and that seen by inspectors in lessons confirms the school's tracking evidence.
- In 2013 the gap between those Year 11 students who were in receipt of pupil premium funding and those who did not was wide. In English, the gap was around two-thirds of a GCSE grade and in mathematics, around one grade. In the current Year 11, the school's tracking information shows that this gap has narrowed; reduced to half a grade in English and two-thirds in mathematics. Leaders are determined to close the gap completely by using one-to-one support, small group teaching and raising aspirations through effective mentoring.
- In Years 7 to 10 many of the pupils eligible for the pupil premium are making at least as good progress as their peers. This is because of rigorous checking systems to make sure that dips in progress are not allowed to continue.
- In 2013, the most able students made good progress in mathematics and in single sciences. In subjects where students did not do as well, the trend is now upward. Assessment data show that more-able students are now making rapid progress and leaders are confident that a greater proportion should attain the highest grades at GCSE in 2014.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs make the same good progress as their peers as a result of the focused support they receive from teachers and teaching assistants.
- The few who speak English as an additional language make good progress. They, as much as the other students, benefit from the school's approach to promoting literacy across a wide range of subjects.
- Students' reading and communication skills are developing well. The Year 7 catch-up premium is being used to fund early intervention reading work. As a result, some have significantly improved their reading ages. Enthusiastic teaching of the sounds that letters make (phonics) is helping supported students to become confident and resilient readers.

- Students who attend Derby College and the off-site provision provided by the local authority are closely checked on about their attendance, behaviour and progress. There is effective communication between school and alternative provider staff. Students have an equal opportunity to succeed and are making good progress in their courses of study. The two students educated wholly off-site are also making good progress from their low starting points.
- The school does not enter students early for GCSE examinations.
- Most parents who responded to Parent View and the school's own recent survey consider that their children make good progress.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching has improved significantly since the last inspection. In most subjects, including in English and mathematics, it is typically good and sometimes outstanding. The leadership of teaching is good with senior and middle leaders united in their determination to further improve teaching and students' achievement.
- Leaders have supported teachers by concentrating on areas, identified through performance management and the periodic tracking of teaching over time, where mediocre teaching needed to be better. Support and the sharing of best practice are resulting in a greater proportion of good and outstanding teaching and the elimination of inadequate practice.
- Students, including disabled students and those who have special educational needs, those for whom English is an additional language and the most able, make rapid progress and achieve well. This reflects senior leaders' drive for making sure that teachers know their students' abilities well and provide teaching that suits. An example of this was seen in a Year 10 science lesson where students were learning about chemical reactions. Students of all abilities were challenged through carefully structured teaching and checking of progress in the lesson and over time.
- The best teaching is inspiring so that students take a delight in learning and use a broad range of skills. For example, in a Year 9 mathematics lesson students had to understand the meaning of 'value for money.' By using examples from daily shopping, students were progressively required to calculate using integers and decimals, explain their choices so that they practised literacy skills and worked in pairs so as to develop their social skills.
- Since the introduction of a marking policy, students have a very clear picture of what they need to do to improve. Across the school in different subjects, teachers are consistent in providing feedback on 'what went well' and 'even better if'. Students' response to teachers' good advice and expectations about improvement are almost universally followed up. This is a major factor in students' rapid progress now and their positive attitudes to learning and motivation to succeed.
- Teachers help students to think deeply about what they are learning through effective questioning and by step-by-step building on students' prior learning. Teachers keep a good record of how different groups of students are progressing over time and make adaptations to reverse underperformance.
- Teaching assistants make a good contribution to learning. They are trained well to ensure that those students who require additional support receive this in a timely and effective way. There is a good balance between support and students being able to master skills for themselves.

- Homework set is suitable and further improvement to its frequency is being addressed in the light of suggestions made by the school's parents' forum.
- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is supported well in lessons, tutor time and assemblies. For example, inspectors saw how well students were invited to reflect on poverty, as part of the theme for the week, during tutor sessions and their positive responses.
- Reading, writing, communication and mathematics are taught effectively across different subjects so that students are prepared well for their next stage of education or work.
- Most parents and carers who responded to Parent View felt that their children are taught well.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of students is good. Students are proud of their school, with many older ones commenting how behaviour has improved significantly over the last year. They are friendly and well-mannered and are respectful of students' social, religious and cultural diversity. Students make their way to lessons promptly after break and lunchtime and come well prepared for lessons.
- School records show that any incidents of poor behaviour are managed well by teachers, support staff and the pastoral team. The number of fixed-term exclusions is reducing significantly because leaders take action to support those students who are at risk. Staff make sure that students who are excluded, do integrate well into school and lesson routines once they come back.
- Students are attentive and keen to learn in lessons. They are confident of responding to teachers' questioning, even when they are not sure about their answers or points of view. They are respectful to each other and work well on their own or in groups.
- Students say that they feel safe in school. Students who spoke to inspectors reported that incidents of bullying are rare: as one Year 10 student put it, 'That is because we show respect for one another'. The school's records of incidents reflect this view. Students are clear that if bullying did occur it would be dealt with effectively and quickly by staff. A small minority of parents who responded to Parent View disagree with the statement that the school makes sure that students are well behaved. However the school's own recent survey of parents, with a much larger sample, shows a more positive response.
- Students say that they know how to keep themselves safe, particularly when using the internet or social media. They have a good understanding of different types of bullying and the negative effects of name-calling, particularly those based on race, sexuality or disability.
- Attendance is improving because the school is working hard to involve parents and use external support to motivate and sustain the improvements gained since the last inspection. However the overall rate is still slightly below the national average. There remain a small proportion of students whose attendance is persistently below average.
- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is good. Care is taken to ensure sure that the school is safe and that safeguarding policies, procedures and practice are rigorous.

The leadership and management are good

- The dedicated headteacher, supported effectively by well-informed senior leaders, is making an immense impact on improving the school. Over the last 16 months since its last inspection, the school has made very good progress on the areas identified for improvement. Achievement has improved across the weaker subjects of English, science and humanities. Students' good achievement in mathematics continues to be sustained. Teaching, assessment and the use of data to raise achievement have improved markedly. The school has the capacity to continue to improve.
- Leaders and governors know their school well and have an accurate understanding of strengths and weaknesses. There are regular lesson observations, scrutiny of workbooks and evaluations of students' progress. There is rigorous setting of targets for teachers. A number of teachers have received support and have made good improvements. Others have decided to leave the school.
- Teachers receive detailed feedback about how they can improve their practice and are provided training and support. There are clear links between teachers' performance, students' outcomes and teachers' appraisal. Teachers no longer receive rewards on the basis of having been at the school for a long time. Instead, pay progression is only agreed by governors when it is clearly supported by evidence of effective performance.
- To further improve the consistency of middle leadership, the headteacher has correctly identified a need for subject leaders now to focus clearly on how students' achievement can be raised from good to outstanding. This is particularly the case for a few subject leaders who, when gathering evidence and making judgements, do not pinpoint precisely enough what could be improved to make teaching and students' achievement outstanding. Senior leaders' accurate understanding about how the best subject leaders provide leadership is a useful platform to build on.
- The choice of subjects offered to students is broad and matched well to their needs. Adaptations are made to meet individual needs, including off-site provision. There is a consistent approach to promote and develop students' literacy and numeracy skills. A rich programme of after-school and out-of-school activities gives students good opportunities to develop their skills and talents.
- The leadership of students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength of the school. Across lessons, assemblies and other learning opportunities, students' sense of right and wrong is developed well. Students consider moral issues that relate to racism and homophobia in citizenship and 'new horizons' lessons and are not afraid to challenge behaviour when it falls short of expectations. Students actively raise funds for different charities and willingly take on responsibility, such as reading mentors. They participate well in visits to theatres and museums.
- The school promotes equality of opportunity well by making sure that all have a chance to succeed.
- Information, advice and guidance students receive is well coordinated and valuable. A good range of activities, including work experience, are arranged to help students plan for the future.
- The school has developed good partnerships with local schools, further and higher education and business and industry. Students benefit by, for example, securing exclusive work experience placements. There are good arrangements to make sure that students from primary schools make a smooth transition to Murray Park.

- The local authority provides the school with good support and has been engaged, for example, in helping the school improve both teaching and learning, particularly in English.
- Safeguarding procedures are effective and meet requirements. All adults are trained regularly in child protection.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The school’s governing body consists of effective professionals with a wide range of skills that are used well in a balanced way to support and challenge leaders. Governors are ambitious for the school to improve and they have a clear understanding of the school’s strengths and weaknesses. Performance management of all staff, including the headteacher, is rigorous. Governors are aware of the quality of teaching across the school and make sure that performance is linked to pay progression. They have supported the headteacher to take decisive action when performance has not met expectations. Governors understand how the pupil premium and the Year 7 catch-up premium are spent and the impact this is having on students’ achievement. Governors ensure financial probity and that safeguarding procedures comply with legislation.

What inspection judgements mean

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

School details

Unique reference number	112991
Local authority	Derby
Inspection number	441868

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

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	860
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Joe Sim
Headteacher	Martyn Owen
Date of previous school inspection	17 January 2013
Telephone number	01332 515921
Fax number	01332 519146
Email address	info@murraypark.derby.sch.uk

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