

# Murray Park Community School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	112991
<b>Local Authority</b>	City of Derby
<b>Inspection number</b>	357246
<b>Inspection dates</b>	5–6 October 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Susan Walsh

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Foundation
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	965
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Dr P Branson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Eddie Green
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	17 March 2008
<b>School address</b>	Murray Road Mickleover, Derby DE3 9LL
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by five additional inspectors. Inspectors visited 38 lessons and saw 38 teachers teach. Meetings were held with staff, members of the governing body and students. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at the school's development plan, the school's records of students' progress and school policies. They scrutinised 94 parental and carer questionnaires and also looked at questionnaires completed by students and staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- What is the rate of students' progress in mathematics and English?
- Whether teachers make full use of assessment to support learning, particularly their use of assessment in lessons to inform the planning of subsequent lessons and involving students in checking their own learning?
- How effective is the support for students with special educational needs and/or disabilities on their well-being and progress?

## Information about the school

Murray Park School is a specialist school for mathematics and computing. It is similar in size to most other secondary schools. Although the proportions of students from minority ethnic groups and those who speak English as an additional language are below average, these proportions are increasing. The proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average although the proportion with a statement of special educational needs is average. The school has achieved Healthy Schools status and a bronze International School award.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**

**3**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**2**

## Main findings

Murray Park is satisfactory school. Good quality teaching combined with an innovative curriculum and good quality care, guidance and support result in students making good progress and achieving well. Until recently attainment has been broadly average but in 2010 attainment improved significantly when an above average proportion of students gained 5 A\* to C grades including English and mathematics. Significant improvements have been made to students' achievements in mathematics and English since the previous inspection and students are now making good progress in these subjects. This is because the quality of teaching has improved and the curriculum has been enhanced. However, the school is aware that assessment information is not always used effectively to fully support learning. Occasionally the work set for students is not finely matched to their needs. In particular, sometimes the needs of students with special education needs and/or disabilities are not always taken fully into account and the work is sometimes too difficult for them.

The school offers a highly personalised curriculum which offers students a good range of opportunities. The good provision for vocational education is successfully enhanced by effective partnerships with colleges and local industry. Students appreciate the high level of personal support they get through the 'commitment to success' scheme in Year 11 and describe their teachers as 'very caring'. Students are well prepared for the future. They are clear about pathways to further and higher education as well as future careers. This is because of much improved careers guidance and the school's commitment to providing good quality courses directly linked to future occupations.

The headteacher is ambitious for the school and is supported by a determined and highly skilled team of senior leaders. Expectations of academic achievement are consistently high amongst staff but expectations of students' attitudes and behaviour are more variable. Consequently a small minority of students do not always behave responsibly and a small proportion of behaviour out of classes is relatively immature. The school has an accurate understanding of its strengths and weaknesses because systems for monitoring its performance are rigorous. It has well laid plans for future development. All this underpins the pursuit of ambitious targets and, together with recent improvement to attainment, particularly in English, mathematics and science, demonstrates the school's good capacity for further improvement.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve behaviour from satisfactory to good by:
  - ensuring that staff recognise and take a consistent approach to addressing low level misbehaviour

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- encouraging students to take more responsibility for their own behaviour.
- Improve the way that assessment is used to inform learning by:
  - ensuring that students with special educational needs and/or disabilities have their needs accurately identified
  - rigorously monitoring the progress of the students with special educational needs and/or disabilities
  - consistently taking account of individual students' particular needs when planning lessons, to ensure that the work set is at the appropriate level for their ability.
- Up to 40% of the schools whose overall is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils****3**

Students' attainment on entry to Year 7 is usually broadly average although in some years it dips slightly below. Outcomes for students are improving year on year. In 2010 there were particularly good improvements in mathematics but attainment in other subjects including science also rose. More-able students do particularly well when they study single sciences. In many lessons students make good progress, are keen to do well and learn new skills. Many students prefer learning through practical activities and find lessons such as design technology, engineering, physical education and science particularly enjoyable. Students from minority ethnic groups usually make good progress in lessons and say that they feel fully integrated into the life of the school. Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities generally make good progress because there is a good range of successful intervention strategies to support them. However, occasionally their progress slows in lessons because teachers have not taken the needs of these students fully into account when planning activities. In a small proportion of lessons, progress is hampered by the lack of commitment of a minority of students. On these occasions, teachers often work hard at motivating students. Although the majority of students behave well, a small number are reluctant to take responsibility for their own actions outside class and petty misbehaviour is not always rigorously addressed. Nevertheless the majority of students say they feel safe in school and are confident that the school takes bullying seriously.

Students are knowledgeable about healthy eating and there is a good take-up of opportunities for sport. Opportunities to take on extra responsibility such as involvement in the community council and school council are taken seriously. The school listens to and acts upon students' views and this is very evident in the way the curriculum is planned. Students often work effectively in groups and students from different backgrounds get on well together. When a consideration of values, feelings and beliefs are introduced into lessons, such as during a mock trial of Shakespeare's Prospero in an English lesson, students react well. However there are missed opportunities for students to develop their social skills by listening more carefully to the contribution of others in class.

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*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	3
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>3</b>

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

## How effective is the provision?

Teachers have good subject knowledge which they share well with their students. Relationships between teachers and students are usually good and give students a great deal of self-belief. As a result of the school's computing specialism, many teachers use information communication technology (ICT) well to enhance the quality of teaching. Teachers are provided with a very well thought-out format for planning, consequently lessons are usually well structured. When teaching assistants are present they usually provide students with good quality support. In many lessons teachers match the work carefully to the needs of students but occasionally all the students in a class or set are set similar work. As a result, the work provided on these occasions lacks challenge for the most able, is too hard for those who find learning difficult and has a detrimental effect on students' attitudes as well as the progress they make. In some lessons, notably English and textiles, students are closely involved in learning how to assess and improve their work, but in other subjects teachers do not always capitalise on opportunities to link students' learning with National Curriculum levels or examination requirements.

The curriculum is carefully tailored to meet students' needs and raise their aspirations. The policy of giving students more than one chance to sit their GCSE examinations has contributed to increasing attainment in English and mathematics. The school ensures that students have good quality information about how to keep fit healthy and safe. Transition arrangements are good and the creation of nurture groups in Year 7 ensures that those

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who have most need have access to staff who are experienced in helping students at risk of falling behind. The 'ignite' programme is enhancing the ambitions of more-able students through the development of independent learning skills, and the wide range of vocational opportunities inspires many students. Although there are many useful and successful interventions, especially to support reading, the promotion of literacy in lessons other than English is inconsistent. There are many enrichment activities that widen students' experience and make learning more enjoyable and interesting. For example, the mathematics and ICT departments have organised a 'murder mystery' event for Year 7 students.

The organisation of the school into 'communities' results in a nurturing environment where students are known as individuals and support is usually carefully tailored to their needs. Productive partnerships with a wide range of external agencies enable the school to reach out to potentially vulnerable students and their families and provide sustained support. In particular, the school's work with the education welfare service has reduced the number of persistent absentees and encouraged more students to remain engaged with education. Consequently attendance rates are improving. The student inclusion unit is particularly successful at addressing the more extreme behaviour and has contributed to the falling rates of exclusions. There is appropriate support for students who speak English as an additional language, and those who join the school after Year 7 say that they settle in quickly. However, the school does not always make a clear enough distinction between those students who find learning challenging because of their special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are potentially vulnerable because they face particular challenges in their personal lives.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>2</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

Leaders and managers have provided an effective climate for improvement where both staff and students are well supported and are able to develop their skills. The drive for improvement has understandably centred on raising attainment in English, mathematics and science, and in this respect leaders and managers have been successful. The school is aware that it now needs to ensure that students make equally good progress in all aspects of their personal development.

The school provides a very good forum for staff development and has sensibly focused on improving the way staff use assessment to support students' learning. The school has taken concerted action to ensure that all students are treated equally and have equal access to the good opportunities offered by the school, consequently any gaps in

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outcomes for different groups are closing. Careful checks are kept on students' progress. There is a plethora of information about the progress of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities but this is not always gathered together effectively enough to provide a clear overview of the progress made by these students.

The governing body discharges its statutory responsibility well. It keeps a careful eye on the work of the school and ensures that safeguarding procedures are good. In particular, the way it looks after and supports students whose circumstances make them vulnerable. The school's promotion of community cohesion is good because the school has a good awareness of the community it serves. Both the mathematics and ICT departments are actively engaged in supporting local primary schools. Additionally, the school has worked effectively to develop its international links, particularly with a school in Japan, to extend students' interaction with other students globally.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>3</b>

## Views of parents and carers

Most parents who completed questionnaires are happy with their child's experiences at the school. A small minority of parents have concerns about behaviour. Inspectors investigated these concerns and found that although behaviour is satisfactory overall, the expectations of staff and students regarding standards of behaviour are not always high enough. A few parents were concerned about bullying. While inspectors observed some petty misbehaviour, they did not observe any overtly threatening behaviour. Students and staff were asked about the way the school deals with bullying. Their general opinion was that the school takes bullying seriously, and students' responses in discussion and to the questionnaire indicated that they feel safe. A small minority of parents were also concerned about how the school responds to their questions and complaints and how they are helped to support their children's progress. The school has regularly sought parents'



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views through parental surveys and provides parents with helpful information about their children's progress. The internet also provides a considerable amount of information about the life of the school. Where students have on-going issues, communication with parents is usually good.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Murray Park Community School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 94 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 965 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	31	33	53	56	8	9	2	2
The school keeps my child safe	33	35	54	57	5	5	2	2
My school informs me about my child's progress	39	41	38	40	11	12	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	28	30	50	53	8	9	2	2
The teaching is good at this school	27	29	58	62	4	4	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	22	23	49	52	15	16	2	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	17	18	63	67	10	11	1	1
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	37	39	47	50	3	3	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	26	28	53	56	7	7	2	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	23	24	45	48	13	14	8	9
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	12	13	48	51	13	14	6	6
The school is led and managed effectively	30	32	46	49	9	10	2	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	34	36	47	50	9	10	3	3

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

### Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



7 October 2010

Dear Students

**Inspection of Murray Park Community School, Derby, DE3 9LL**

Thank you for making us so welcome during the recent inspection of your school. You are making good progress not only because of good teaching but because of a good curriculum and good care, guidance and support. Attainment is improving year on year. An increasing number of you are passing your English and mathematics examinations early and attainment in science is improving. It was good to hear about how much you enjoy your engineering, design technology, physical education and science lessons. You have access to a good range of courses that are very closely matched to your needs and aspirations and you told us that you are very well supported. You receive good guidance about your future career pathways and encouragement to stay engaged in education.

Although teaching is good, there are a small number of lessons where improvements could be made. In these lessons, the work is not always finely matched to the needs of all students. As a result, you are not all fully motivated in these lessons. We have asked the school to improve this by making sure that teachers always take into account the needs of all students when planning lessons, and the work is pitched at the right level for you all.. Although many students behave well, a few act in an immature way particularly outside lessons. We have asked staff to take a more consistent approach when managing petty misbehaviour and to encourage all students to take responsibility for their behaviour.

You can all help by always giving your very best in lessons and behaving sensibly.

Yours sincerely

Susan Walsh

Lead inspector

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