

Mursley Church of England School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	110444
Local Authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	356744
Inspection dates	21–22 June 2011
Reporting inspector	Madeleine Gerard

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 under pilot arrangements; it was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Infant
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	42
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Richard Rouse
Headteacher	Alexandra Owens
Date of previous school inspection	23 June 2008
School address	Main Street Mursley MK17 0RT
Telephone number	01296 720305
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Age group	4–7
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Introduction

This pilot inspection was carried out by one additional inspector. The inspector observed six lessons or parts of lessons, taught by three teachers and held meetings with groups of pupils, staff and members of the governing body. The inspector observed the school's work, and looked at work in pupils' books, tracking data showing pupils' attainment and progress, the school's self-evaluation and development planning, and policies and records for safeguarding pupils. The inspector considered the 27 responses to the questionnaire received from parents and carers, and the two responses to the staff questionnaire.

Information about the school

This is a smaller-than-average-infant school with Early Years Foundation Stage children in one Reception class, and one class for pupils in Years 1 and 2. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is below average. There is a below average proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. No pupils are currently known to be eligible for free school meals. None of the pupils speaks English as an additional language. There have been a number of staff changes over recent years. The school works in an informal collaboration with two other local schools under one headteacher. The three schools have separate governing bodies which have agreed to work together in partnership. Mursley Kingfishers Pre-school has been managed by Mursley Church of England School since May 2011 and is the subject of a separate inspection.

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	2
Achievement	2
Teaching	2
Leadership and management	2
Behaviour and safety	2
Does the school adequately promote the pupils' well-being?	Yes
Does the school adequately promote community cohesion?	Yes
Does the school provide value for money?	Yes

Key findings

- This is a good school that serves its local community well. All pupils are valued, known as individuals and enjoy themselves in the school's safe and caring environment. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is good and pupils understand clearly how to keep themselves safe.
- Achievement is good. Children get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Progress through Years 1 and 2 is good. Pupils' attainment in teacher assessments at the end of Year 2 is above average in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make similar good progress from their starting points.
- Teaching is good. Planning ensures that work is well matched to pupils' learning needs. Additional adults contribute well to pupils' learning in lessons. There are a few inconsistencies in the use of personalised targets, marking and feedback on pupils' work which occasionally restrict their ability to improve their progress further.
- Well-planned topic themes foster pupils' positive attitudes to learning and ensure they make good gains in their basic skills across the curriculum. The teaching of joined-up handwriting to support pupils in presenting their work neatly is not always as rigorous as it should be.
- All pupils appreciate opportunities to take part in extra-curricular clubs with pupils from the partner schools. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 benefit from joint lessons with pupils from the partner infant school in science, physical education and at the forest school outdoor site. Consequently, they enjoy friendships across the partner schools, promoting their good social skills and preparing

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them well for transition to the partner junior school.

- The school is well led and managed. Leaders, managers and members of the governing body have worked with determination to successfully improve teaching and other provision.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Use marking and target setting consistently to ensure pupils know how to improve their work.
- Improve the consistency with which pupils develop their handwriting skills so that they make swift gains in using joined-up writing, and present their work neatly in all subjects.

Main report

The headteacher is a strong leader with a clear vision for the school. Leaders, staff and members of the governing body work well together as a strong team to embed ambition and bring about sustained improvement well. Through accurate self-evaluation, the school has successfully tackled key priorities for development and refined many aspects of its work. The school's leaders have secured sustained improvements to teaching, the curriculum and provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage. By increasing the teaching of phonics (children's knowledge of letters and the sounds they make), developing the outdoor areas in the Early Years Foundation Stage and ensuring the curriculum reflects pupils' interests, they have effectively consolidated pupils' good academic outcomes since the previous inspection. Close collaboration with the two other partner schools has been successfully established. The school's capacity to make even further improvements is good.

Achievement for all groups of pupils is good. Children join the school with levels of skills and capabilities that are generally those expected for their age. Pupils make good gains in their learning as they progress through the school. This was illustrated in a series of lessons where pupils in Years 1 and 2 were learning to write descriptions using adjectives. In preparation for writing their descriptions, they enjoyed inventing imaginary animals using the body parts of animals found in Australia. Pupils made good progress when they discussed their ideas in pairs in order to describe an animal, part-kangaroo and part-crocodile. Working independently to create their own descriptions, they used punctuation carefully, worked hard to include a variety of adjectives and wrote complex sentences by linking their ideas together. Equality is promoted and discrimination tackled well so that all pupils, including those with complex needs and those whose circumstances make them most vulnerable, are well supported and learn and progress well. In all lessons, additional adults make an effective contribution to pupils' learning. Small

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group sessions, as well as individualised and carefully tailored support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, ensure that all pupils receive the necessary level of challenge and guidance they require. At the age of six, the attainment of the large majority of pupils is at or above the expected level in reading. By the time they leave the school at the end of Year 2, their attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is above average.

Home visits by staff, and opportunities to visit the school before they join, ensure that children settle quickly and are happy in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Staff work successfully to establish positive relationships and create an environment where children can grow in confidence and develop their independence and skills in all areas of learning. Literacy and numeracy are rightly prioritised. Children's knowledge of letters and the sounds they make is supported effectively because it is prioritised daily. Children in the Reception class confidently practised their reading skills by sounding out letters and miming actions that helped them to recall each letter sound quickly. There is a good balance of adult-led tasks and activities for children to choose for themselves. As part of a project based on a story about three goats and a troll hiding under a bridge, children were making model trolls using modelling clay. Children working with an adult were observed using their knowledge of phonics to write descriptions of trolls on 'wanted' posters. In another group, they were retelling the story of the goats crossing the troll's bridge using small puppets.

Children work and play well together. Routines are well established. Children independently remove their shoes and socks before going into the sand tray and they know to keep themselves dry wearing plastic aprons when playing at the water tray. Children in the Reception class develop their knowledge and understanding of the world particularly well through weekly forest school sessions, going into the local woods in all weathers. Here, children learn about the natural environment and enjoy positive outdoor experiences. Records of ongoing observations of children's learning are made and used to plan suitably challenging tasks. Adults often extend children's learning effectively. Occasionally, adults do not make the best use of opportunities to ensure children make even faster gains in their skills through sharply planning the next steps in their learning. Children make good progress in the Reception Year and enter Year 1 with above average outcomes.

Teaching is good. Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and are motivated to do well because teachers plan interesting work for them to do; they often think and concentrate well. Teachers make use of a variety of resources to ensure pupils take an active part in lessons. Explanations of new learning are clear because teachers' subject knowledge is good and they ensure pupils build steadily on their understanding. Well-trained additional adults lead small group sessions in literacy, numeracy and phonics to meet the full range of pupils' learning needs in the Years 1 and 2 class. Their independence is fostered effectively, for example when they choose for themselves the level of difficulty of some tasks they do. Opportunities for pupils to write at length in a variety of different styles, regular reading and daily mathematics lessons underpin their good achievement in basic skills. Although pupils' work is always careful, presentation is not always as neat as it could be because

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handwriting is less consistently promoted. The school has effective systems to check the progress pupils are making. Assessment data are reviewed regularly and teachers' planning ensures that work is suitably challenging in lessons for all groups of pupils. Most pupils know what they need to do to move up to the next level in their work, particularly in literacy, because they can explain their personal targets. The use of targets in mathematics is less consistent and when teachers mark pupils' work in books, comments and feedback do not always make clear to pupils how to improve further.

Pupils benefit from specialist teachers in music and physical education. They are consulted to ensure that topic themes reflect their interests. For example, as part of a topic investigating different countries, pupils have enjoyed creating Aboriginal dot paintings, learning some French words and tasting French breakfast foods. This, together with close links with the local church, learning about many religious festivals from a variety of faiths, weekly forest school sessions and pupils' caring attitudes towards one another, promotes their good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Gardening is a highlight. Pupils are particularly proud of the vegetables and fruits they have grown, harvested and sold to parents and carers to raise funds to buy sporting equipment to use at break time. A wide range of popular clubs, organised together with the partner schools, including gymnastics, dance, football, cookery and karate, visitors and regular visits to local places of interest, is a strength of the curriculum.

Behaviour and safety at the school are good. A larger-than-average proportion of parents and carers responded to the questionnaire. In the survey, all agreed that their children feel safe at school and the very large majority of them confirmed that their child is happy there. Pupils are confident that adults will help them should any problems occur and keep them safe from bullying. Visits from the local emergency services and guidance on road safety ensure pupils are generally clear about the steps they should take in order to keep themselves safe. Leaders and members of the governing body ensure that safeguarding arrangements are secure. Staff are well trained and the school site is well maintained. The school rightly emphasises the importance of regular attendance and good punctuality. Attendance has been consistently high for the last three years.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Mursley Church of England 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 12 statements about the school.

The inspector received 27 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 42 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
Q1 My child is happy at school	20	77	5	19	1	4	0	0
Q2 My child feels safe at school	19	70	8	30	0	0	0	0
Q3 The school helps my child to achieve as well as they can	13	48	10	37	3	11	0	0
Q4 The school meets my child’s particular needs	12	44	10	37	5	19	0	0
Q5 The school ensures my child is well looked after	15	56	11	41	1	4	0	0
Q6 Teaching at this school is good	15	58	10	38	1	4	0	0
Q7 There is a good standard of behaviour at this school	14	52	12	44	0	0	0	0
Q8 Lessons are not disrupted by bad behaviour	12	44	13	48	1	4	0	0
Q9 The school deals with any cases of bullying well	9	33	12	44	1	4	0	0
Q10 The school helps me to support my child’s learning	14	52	11	41	2	7	0	0
Q11 The school responds to my concerns and keeps me well informed	12	44	11	41	4	15	0	0
Q12 The school is well led and managed	14	52	10	37	2	7	1	4

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	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

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 2010 to 31 December 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 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.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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">■ The achievement of all pupils.■ Behaviour and safety.■ The quality of teaching.■ The effectiveness of leadership and management. <p>and taking into consideration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ how well the school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
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.



23 June 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Mursley Church of England School, Mursley MK17 0RT

Thank you very much for your friendly welcome and for helping me when I visited your school recently. I enjoyed talking to you very much and listening to all that you had to say. I was particularly pleased to hear about all the exciting activities you have been doing in the woods during your forest school sessions and to see the vegetables and fruit you are successfully growing in the school gardens. This letter is to tell you about the judgements that I reached.

Mursley Church of England School is good. I was pleased to see how well you all get on together and how well behaved you are in lessons and around the school. You understand how to keep yourselves safe. The adults look after you well and make sure that you feel safe at school. This helps to make your school such a happy place to be. Your parents and carers like the school, too. The youngest children get off to a good start in the Reception class. You make good progress and your attainment at the end of Year 2 is above average. You enjoy the interesting work that the teachers plan for you to do. You also like the clubs, outings and visits that the school organises, and enjoy opportunities to make friends with pupils from the community through partnerships with other local schools. The staff make regular checks on how well you are making progress. Those of you who need extra help are well supported so that you make good progress.

When teachers mark your work, we have asked that they give you feedback and set you targets to make sure all of you know what you need to do in order to move up to the next level in your work. We would also like you to practise joined-up handwriting as this will help you to present all your work more neatly. All of you can help by continuing to work hard.

Finally, I would like to thank you again and wish you well in the future.

Yours sincerely

Madeleine Gerard
Lead inspector

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