

# Murray Park Community School

Murray Road, Mickleover, Derby, DE3 9LL

**Inspection dates** 17–18 January 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires Improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Students' achievement, the quality of teaching, behaviour and safety and the school's leadership all require improvement.
- Student's achievements vary considerably. At one end of the spectrum they are exceptional while for the majority they are broadly average. A small minority of students' achievements, particularly in English, mathematics or science, fall below expectations.
- The impact of teaching on students' learning is inconsistent and does not ensure that all students make at least good progress in developing their knowledge, skills and understanding across the range of subjects. Some outstanding teaching was evident during the inspection but equally there was evidence of inadequate teaching.
- Despite the school's best efforts to date, students' rates of attendance are much lower than national averages and levels of persistent absence are higher than average; the number of fixed term exclusions remains stubbornly high.
- The school's leaders have not ensured that the school provides good value for money by providing all students with a good quality of education.

### The school has the following strengths

- A fresh strategic approach, including new leadership, more effective governance and high-quality support from the local authority, is having some success and there are green shoots of improvement in the quality of teaching and some students' achievement.
- Although it is not yet consistently good, behaviour is improving and bullying is rare.
- Leaders and governors have created a shared ambition and commitment among staff to do whatever it takes to improve the school.
- Where provided, the support for students who speak English as an additional language is effective.
- Students', spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted effectively.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 42 lessons taught by 42 different members of staff at the school. The lead inspector conducted 6 joint observations with the school’s senior leaders. Inspectors also visited: the school’s Pupil Inclusion Centre, which provides support for students that are at risk of exclusion; some of the ‘New Horizons’ provision, which integrates literacy development and humanities subjects for targeted students in Years 7 and 8; an assembly; and several tutorial sessions. Inspectors also explored different areas of the school site during lessons and at break and lunchtimes.
- Meetings or discussions were held with: the Chair of the Governing Body and the Chair of the Governors’ Strategic Group; senior staff, including the headteacher; several directors of learning, the school’s Literacy Champions and other staff responsible for raising literacy’s profile across the curriculum and developing students’ reading skills and understanding of the sounds that letters make. Inspectors also spoke to three different groups of students.
- Inspectors took account of the 52 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View), along with an analysis of the school’s own parental questionnaire. Inspectors also evaluated questionnaire responses from 99 school staff.
- The inspection team examined a range of school documentation including: documents about safeguarding and child protection arrangements; development policies and self-evaluation plans; lesson and departmental plans; records of lesson monitoring and checks on students’ work and the minutes of meetings, including those of the governing body. Inspectors also looked at records relating to behaviour and attendance. They considered the school’s arrangements for making best use of pupil premium funding, which provides additional funding for children in the care of the local authority, those whose parents are in the armed forces and for students known to be eligible for free school meals.
- During this inspection, inspectors asked additional questions designed to ascertain the school’s views of the impact and effectiveness of local authority services to support school improvement. This information will contribute to work being carried out by Ofsted to assess the use, quality and impact of those services.

## Inspection team

John Young, Lead inspector	Her Majesty’s Inspector
Peter Bailey	Additional Inspector
Beverley Mabey	Additional Inspector
Ahson Mohammed	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Murray Park Community School is a smaller than average-sized secondary school. In September 2011, a new headteacher and a new Chair of the Governing Body took up post.
- The very large majority of students are White British and live locally. The remaining small numbers of students originate from a wide range of minority ethnic heritages. The proportion of students who speak English as an additional language is lower than average.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium has grown significantly over the past three years and now exceeds the national average.
- The proportion of students supported at school action is a 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.
- A small number of Year 10 and Year 11 students attend a range of work-related courses such as construction, care and general farming at providers in Derby. Several students are involved in projects to help re-engage them with learning, or access one-to-one support to promote more effective learning. Two students attend a Special School in the area. Most students access these courses one day a week and are taught in the main school for the rest of the time. Three students are educated wholly off-site.
- The school provides a range of extended services such as study support, community access to their facilities and adult learning courses.
- The school holds Career Mark accreditation.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which are the minimum levels expected for students' attainment and progress in secondary schools.

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

- Take decisive action to increase the impact of teaching on students' learning so that it is consistently good or better in all subjects by:
  - ensuring teachers always plan learning activities that stretch and support all students, such as the least able, most able and more vulnerable groups, by focusing sharply on effectively promoting learning, developing understanding and extending students' skills in every subject they study
  - eradicating mediocre and inadequate teaching and establishing the most effective learning strategies as commonplace in every classroom, and by giving students more chances to develop, apply and reinforce their literacy and numeracy skills in all subjects
  - improving the consistency and quality of marking and feedback by reviewing students' learning more effectively, addressing their misconceptions, always making clear to them exactly what they need to do to reach and exceed their subject targets
  - making better use of questioning to enable students to explore their grasp of subject-specific concepts and skills at a deeper level.
- Ensure that achievement is good or better for all groups of students by:
  - raising attainment in those subjects where standards are not high when compared with national averages, including English, science and humanities
  - making better use of the wealth of assessment and progress data the school collects to effectively target, support, challenge and improve achievement
  - giving particular focus to those students who are not yet making at least good progress,

including those known to be eligible for the pupil premium and disabled students and those who have special educational needs.

- Urgently raise attendance and reduce levels of persistent absence by:
    - more effectively raising the profile, importance and expectation of excellent attendance among all students and staff
    - developing more effective strategies to raise attendance, particularly among those students who are persistently absent
    - working with parents and carers to secure their support for improvement initiatives by ensuring they are fully aware of the negative impact of poor attendance on their children’s education.
  
  - Improve leadership and management so that the school’s overall effectiveness is at least good at the time of the next inspection by:
    - increasing the strategic influence of senior leaders and members of the governing body to more effectively drive school improvement
    - ensuring that all actions to improve provision deliver the best value for money, such as those linked to accelerating the achievement of groups deemed most vulnerable, the early entry to GCSE policy, literacy development and the use of assessment data, and support staff
    - making certain that there is consistent application of agreed school policies and procedures and more effectively challenging and supporting staff to improve the impact of their work.
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## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- In each of the past three years students' attainment has been at least in line with national averages in relation to the proportions gaining five or more GCSEs at grades A\* to C including English and mathematics and average point scores. When set against their starting points on entry which vary considerably, students' progress during their time in the school has also been at least average over the past three years, and it was significantly above average in 2012. However, beneath this headline there are some notable disparities and inequalities for different groups of students and subjects. It is clear that the school has not made best use of the wealth of data it collects to target, support, and ensure all students make at least good progress, particularly those students deemed more vulnerable.
- While some groups of students achieve well and make outstanding or good progress from their starting points, the majority make average progress. The achievements of some of the smaller groups of students, such as those eligible for the pupil premium and students supported at school action plus, are not as good as they should be in core subjects such as English language and science. The achievement of students at the early stages of learning the English language and the various groups of Black and minority ethnic students is broadly average.
- Overall, students' attainments in subjects such as English language, applied science and citizenship have consistently been below national averages, which contrasts with outcomes in the single sciences, design and technology and statistics which exceed national averages. The students' attainments in several subjects fluctuate.
- The school's assessment information, which inspectors deem reliable, and inspector's findings from lesson observations confirm that, currently, students throughout the school are on track to reach their challenging targets in most subjects, including English, humanities, science and mathematics. It is clear that students are now making stronger progress and standards are slowly rising as some of the school's improvement strategies begin to take effect, with schemes such as the New Horizons programme, buddy reading, readathons and a young writers competition are boosting students' literacy skills. Similarly, initiatives to improve the progress of students supported at school action plus and those eligible for pupil premium funding are showing some signs of beginning to close the attainment deficit with other students; however, their attainment still lags behind that of other students.
- The progress of students studying off-site work-related courses such as care, farming and construction, is closely monitored. These students make the same broadly average progress as the majority of students in the school, and gain suitable City and Guilds qualifications.
- Historically, large numbers of students have been entered early in a range of GCSE subjects, including mathematics and English. This has not proved wholly successful, particular for more-able students who have failed to gain the highest grades. The school acknowledges the need to re-think this strategy and has scaled back the number of entries more recently.
- The school knows that to encourage good progress they must more effectively support and stretch all groups of students, including those eligible for pupil premium and groups of students with special educational needs, who do not yet make good progress, and increase the effectiveness of subjects where progress has been slower over time.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- The quality of teaching is inconsistent and varies considerably. While there are examples of outstanding teaching, these are counter-balanced by inadequate teaching which inhibits students' learning. Too much teaching is run-of-the-mill rather than high-quality and this has not been good enough to ensure that all students make good or better progress in all of their subjects.
- Staff have good subject knowledge and have largely embraced the training they have received

to improve the impact of their teaching. Nevertheless, the contrast in the best and weakest teaching is startling and needs tackling as a matter of urgency.

- Strengths in the teaching observed included strong relationships between the teacher and students which ensured a positive climate for learning, and good use of assessment data to inform teachers' planning so that lessons were sufficiently challenging. Staff had high expectations of students and used questioning well to deepen students' understanding of subject-specific concepts and skills. Effective lessons also gave students opportunities to develop their ideas and critically evaluate the quality of their own work and the work of their peers.
- The school's leaders know that they must raise the quality, consistency and impact of teaching on learning so that it is good or better throughout the school. They recognise the need to eradicate weak and mediocre teaching, ensuring all teaching stretches students and is suitably tailored to their specific needs, especially those groups who have not achieved well over time. Not all lessons focus sharply enough on promoting learning, building understanding and extending students' skills. Similarly, the quality of questioning, behaviour management and expectations of what students are capable of are not always in line with the school's stated policies.
- Inconsistent application of the marking and feedback policy is hampering students' awareness of how well they are doing. Notwithstanding the good practice that exists, too little attention is paid to reviewing students' learning effectively, correcting their misconceptions and telling them exactly what they need to do to reach and exceed their targets.
- The teaching of literacy and numeracy across the curriculum has had only limited success. A common approach is not embedded across the school and this is reflected in inconsistencies in delivery and quality, despite the best efforts of the school's Literacy Champions. A bright spot is the New Horizons programme and the reading intervention schemes which offer good-quality instruction that is enabling the students involved to hone their literacy skills.
- The support for disabled students, those with special educational needs and students funded by the pupil premium is adequate rather than good. The impact of work in this area is inhibited by a lack of general and specialist support staff.
- Students who speak English as an additional language flourish when supported but this support is not universal. Students placed in the school's pupil inclusion centre receive suitable support and guidance to help re-integrate them back into the main school in a timely fashion. They are able to keep up with their studies, sometimes with the aid of one-to-one tuition.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils**

### **requires improvement**

- The atmosphere in lessons and at social times is typically calm, orderly and respectful. Students are courteous and get along with each other. On the whole, they are compliant and respond suitably to effective behaviour management. They know how to keep themselves and others safe. Yet, where students are not suitably challenged or managed, standards of behaviour can slip. However, it was the exception rather than the rule that students act impeccably and show a real focus and eagerness to learn and develop without close direction from the teacher.
- Students, including minority ethnic students, disabled students and those who have special educational needs, say they feel safe. They say that bullying of any sort, such as racist, homophobic or cyber-bullying is rare, and that where it does occur it is well-managed. Of the parents and carers and staff who responded to the Ofsted questionnaires, 98% feel that students are safe at the school.
- Students' general behaviour is getting better and the number of incidents is falling, but the number of fixed term exclusions remains stubbornly high as some students react to a stricter regime. This is despite the best efforts of the school to moderate and transform the most challenging behaviour.
- The school has made some headway in tackling the issue, but students' attendance is still much lower than average, particularly in Year 10, and the proportion of students who are persistently

absent is high. The school knows the negative impact this can have on students' education and realises that they must win the support of parents and carers, and communicate this point more forcefully to them and their children, if they are to break this cycle.

- The school knows that it needs to be more proactive and effective in raising the profile, importance and expectation of excellent attendance among all students and staff. It is also notable that more vulnerable students are among the persistently absent students.

## **The leadership and management** requires improvement

- The combination of new leadership, enhanced governance and skilful intervention from the local authority is proving that the school has the capacity to improve. Leaders have created an optimism and momentum of change that are having an impact and there are clear signs that the school is improving. This is evident in the success of recent initiatives that have begun to accelerate the progress of the more vulnerable students, improve behaviour, increase the quality of teaching and ensure staff have the highest expectations of all students. However, leaders and managers have not had the strategic influence to ensure the school provides a consistently good quality of education over time.
- Self-evaluation is accurate and frank, understanding that the school is still on an improvement journey towards being a good school. Nevertheless, some strong foundations are being laid and in the relatively short time he has been in post the new headteacher has been industrious in developing and sharing a clear vision and plan for school improvement. He has clarified the roles and responsibilities of his senior and middle leadership teams, introduced a raft of new policies and procedures designed to raise students' achievements and improve the climate for learning in the school. Some of this work is at an embryonic stage and impact is not fully evident.
- Improving the quality of teaching is a priority and alongside the support and guidance staff receive, regular monitoring is taking place, but at present there are inconsistencies in the quality of evaluation. What is clear is that while the proportion of good or better teaching is rising, not all staff consistently apply agreed school policies for teaching, assessment and marking.
- The school is aware that as a matter of urgency they need to review and revise as necessary some of their approaches to literacy development, support for students in and out of the classroom, the use of pupil premium funding and early entry for GCSE courses, to ensure they provide best value for money.
- Leaders have the full backing of staff, who say they are proud to be staff at the school. Parents and carers who completed the online questionnaire largely support the school. However, a small minority disagree that the school ensures that behaviour is good or that their children are well taught.
- Performance management is taken seriously and arrangements take full account of the new Teachers' Standards. Leaders have prevented staff from progressing up the pay spine where they were deemed to be undeserving.
- The curriculum is well matched to students' needs and interests. It comprises a mix of traditional courses, some vocational courses such as engineering, construction and beauty and care, and more artistic subjects like music and drama. There are also a range of after school clubs, work experience, visits and visitors and 'immersion days' where students focus on a particular theme.
- The range of alternative off-site provision is suitable and promotes targeted students' academic progress and well-being. The school also works with a group of local schools to share resources.
- Leaders promote equality of opportunity but have not yet ensured that all groups of students achieve equally well.
- Pupil premium funding has been used to mentor targeted students, improve their attendance, literacy levels and behaviour, and to track their progress. It has also been used to train staff to work more effectively with targeted students. To date, this work has not significantly closed the attainment gap that exists between students eligible for the pupil premium and other students in the school.

- Students adopt leadership roles, raise funds for charity, act as peer mentors, volunteer in the local community and participate in a range of sporting, musical and dramatic events. Through the effective citizenship programme, assemblies, visits and visitors and the various subjects they study they are developing a good social, moral, cultural and spiritual awareness.
  - Safeguarding procedures are secure. So too are the systems for safe recruitment of staff, child protection, risk assessment, health and safety and site security. Delegated staff are well trained.
  - The local authority knows the school well. It understands students' performance through the frequent contact of the school improvement officer, regular analysis of performance data and working closely with senior leaders and governors to strategically address identified issues. The local authority is providing a range of effective training, support and professional challenge particularly around addressing the progress of vulnerable students and promoting more effective teaching, which is much appreciated by the school.
  - **The governance of the school:**
    - Members of the governing body are astute, take their responsibilities seriously and have gained a realistic overview of the school's effectiveness from their enhanced knowledge of performance data, regular visits to the school and their wealth of experience and expertise in education and management. These skills help them to discharge their duties appropriately and to monitor, evaluate and strategically influence the school's improvement.
    - Additional training and some key additions to the governing body have added extra capacity and given them the confidence to more rigorously challenge and hold senior leaders to account for the school's performance by asking probing questions about: different groups of students' achievement; curriculum developments; the quality of teaching and budgetary matters; and how effectively pupil premium funding is being spent. This has given them a clearer view of what is happening in the school.
    - Governors have a good understanding of robust performance management, and monitor the links between staff performance and salary progression and/or promotion closely.
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## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	112991
<b>Local authority</b>	City of Derby
<b>Inspection number</b>	405446

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Comprehensive
<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>	920
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Joe Sim
<b>Headteacher</b>	Martyn Owen
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	5 October 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	01332 515921
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