

Murrow Primary Academy

73 Murrow Bank, Murrow, Wisbech, PE13 4HD

Inspection dates 24–25 March 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	NA
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Leaders, managers and governors are having a positive impact on teaching and pupils' achievement.
- Leadership and management are good and consequently the academy is improving rapidly.
- There is a shared vision for the academy and a determination to provide the best possible education for all groups of pupils.
- Leaders are very thorough in their arrangements for keeping pupils safe and free from harm and parents agree.
- Pupils behave well because members of staff are good role models and relationships across the academy are strong and supportive.
- Pupils feel exceptionally safe at the academy and are very knowledgeable about how to stay safe.
- Parents are pleased that their children come to this academy and are especially positive about how well their children are looked after.
- Teaching is good. Teachers explain clearly what pupils are to learn enabling them to get on with their work without fuss. Teachers are knowledgeable and ensure that pupils enjoy learning by providing interesting activities.
- Good use is made of teachers' marking to show pupils what they do well and what they need to do next to improve.
- Achievement is good because pupils of all abilities make good progress across the academy in reading, writing and mathematics. Attainment is broadly average and rising swiftly.
- Children do well in the good early years provision, especially in reading and personal development.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils do slightly less well in writing than in reading and mathematics. They are not always expected to check and correct their spelling mistakes and some opportunities are missed for them to use their writing to support learning in other subjects.
- There are times when pupils, especially the most able, are not given challenging enough work in science and topic so that their knowledge and understanding is deepened.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching and learning in 11 lessons, all with either the headteacher or deputy headteacher.
- Meetings were held with leaders, teachers, pupils and members of the governing body.
- The inspector took into account the 10 responses to the online survey, Parent View and held informal discussions with a number of parents.
- The inspector considered the views expressed in the survey responses from 17 members of staff.
- A range of information supplied by the school was scrutinised, including the academy's own information about how well pupils are doing, planning documents, checks on the quality of teaching, the academy development plan, and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding procedures.

Inspection team

Alison Cartlidge, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Murrow Primary Academy is much smaller than the average-sized primary school. The academy became a sponsor-led academy school on 1 July 2013. When its predecessor school, Murrow Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, its overall effectiveness was judged to be inadequate overall.
- There is one full-time Reception class in the early years provision.
- Most pupils are White British, with a larger than average proportion of pupils being of Gypsy-Roma or Traveller heritage.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the academy receives the pupil premium is above average. This is additional funding for disadvantaged pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children who are looked after.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is well above average.
- There have been several changes in teachers and senior leaders since the school became an academy.
- The headteacher and senior leaders also lead and manage the sponsor school.
- The governing body of the sponsor school is responsible for governance.
- The academy meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 6.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment and increase progress in writing, by:
 - ensuring that pupils are expected to check and correct spelling mistakes in their work
 - increasing opportunities for pupils to use and extend their writing when working in other subjects.
- Increase the level of challenge, especially for the most able, by making sure that they are always given work that deepens their knowledge and understanding, especially in science and topic work.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- Leaders and managers set a clear direction for the work of the academy and have been unrelenting in moving the academy forward. As a result, teaching and pupils' progress have improved rapidly under the leadership of the sponsor academy, and are continuing to improve.
- The headteacher and senior leaders have been swift in establishing an academy where good teaching and pupils' progress can thrive. Good relationships between staff and pupils have been fostered and there is the expectation that all should do well. Members of staff make positive comments such as, 'I'm proud to be part of the Murrow team' and 'I know what we are trying to achieve'.
- The leadership of teaching is strong. Good procedures are in place to check up on teaching and to help teachers to develop. Clear targets are set for their improvement, strengths are rewarded and support is given for weaker elements of practice. The two academies work together closely so that best practice is shared effectively.
- Leaders are fully aware of what needs to be done next to make the academy even better and their self-evaluation is accurate and used well to prioritise improvements. Developments in teaching reading and marking pupils' work are particularly well-established and are having a positive impact on learning.
- Middle leaders are effective. They have a good understanding of strengths and weaknesses in the areas they lead and are influential in bringing about positive change. The academy has adopted the new national literacy and numeracy plans and has modified plans in other subjects in the light of the revised expectations.
- The curriculum is of good quality. British values are taught well in assemblies and lessons, and are demonstrated through the positive behaviour of members of staff. As a result, pupils have become particularly tolerant and respectful. Pupils learn about the importance of British culture in their lives. For example, pupils in Years 1 and 2 have learned about why certain buildings in London are important.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are promoted well and pupils appreciate their learning. For example, one pupil in Year 5 said, 'I'm fascinated by science. It's amazing how electricity travels around a circuit'. Good provision is made for providing pupils with a variety of additional experiences through sporting and cultural events with other schools in the area. Pupils develop a sense of belonging through the school motto and there is a strong sense of community when they join in with the singing of hymns during collective worship.
- The additional funding for physical education and sport is used well to provide specialist coaching, swimming lessons, and attendance at clubs and competitions. There has been a positive impact on pupils' enjoyment of the academy and their involvement in sporting activities. As one pupil pointed out 'It keeps you fit'.
- Leaders promote equal opportunities effectively and make sure that there is no discrimination of any kind. Funding for pupils who are disadvantaged is having a good impact on accelerating the learning of these pupils and providing them with access to all activities available at the academy. Teaching in small groups by qualified staff has made it possible for teachers and teaching assistants to identify and fill the pupils' gaps in knowledge and understanding.
- Safeguarding arrangements meet requirements. Leaders are exceptionally vigilant in checking that staff are suitable to work with the pupils. All staff are fully trained in looking out for concerns about the pupils' well-being. There are very thorough systems for recording and following up all accidents that happen at the academy and parents are kept fully informed. Records show that members of staff are very thorough about following up concerns about the pupils' safety, including potential risks over e-safety.

- The sponsor school has been at the heart of the academy's rapid development over the last 18 months. Tried and tested policies and systems have been brought into the academy so that all the leaders' efforts can be focused on teaching and the pupils' progress.
- The academy has good links with its parents. Parents typically make positive comments such as 'a lovely little school' and 'I'm really pleased'. Parents have asked for more information on how well their children are doing and consequently the academy is in the process of increasing formal opportunities for parents to meet the teachers.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body of the sponsor school provides good support and challenge enabling the academy to improve rapidly. Members have a clear understanding of what works well and what still needs to be done to improve the academy further. Governors take an active part in checking up on provision and pupils' progress. They know how the academy's performance compares with other schools and how good teaching is. They ensure that systems for checking teachers' performance are fully in place and that good teaching is rewarded and weaker aspects of teaching are being developed.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are keen to learn and try hard in most lessons. They are kind and friendly, work together well and help each other. As one pupil commented, 'It's our responsibility to help the person next to us'.
- The academy council is enthusiastic about its work raising money for charities and pupils are good at taking responsibility for tasks around the academy. For example, they are responsible for keeping a register of pupils as they collect their academy lunch to make sure that no one is left out.
- Rates of attendance have risen to broadly average this year. Leaders are ensuring that good attendance is being promoted and rewarded on a weekly basis.
- Pupils are polite and respect each other's cultural differences. Consequently, pupils play together harmoniously. Pupils understand that their behaviour affects the lives of others. One pupil said, 'I know that if I play rough someone would get hurt'.
- Pupils are good at reflecting on what they have learned. For example, in the Reception class children were able to discuss the miraculous elements of the Easter story.

Safety

- The academy's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Pupils say that they feel exceptionally safe at the academy and parents agree. Pupils know how to stay safe because they learn in depth about topics such as e-safety and stranger danger. Pupils preparing for a hockey match at another school were keen to talk about why they needed to wear shin pads.
- Pupils understand about various forms of bullying but report that instances of unkind behaviour are very rare. For example, one pupil said 'definitely not' when asked if any children were unkind at the academy and another said that minor instances of unkindness 'are dealt with straight away'. Pupils are very knowledgeable about what to do should they have any concerns.
- The academy is very thorough about caring for the pupils and ensuring that they are kept well protected. Pupils talk knowledgeably about what to do if they come across something inappropriate when using the internet.
- All safeguarding procedures are regularly reviewed and updated if necessary. All adults are given appropriate training in child protection procedures.

- Health and safety are given a high priority within the academy to ensure the well-being of both pupils and staff.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teachers manage the pupils' behaviour well because they use praise judiciously and form good relationships with them. As a result, lessons are calm and productive and teaching has a positive impact on learning and achievement, including in literacy, reading and mathematics.
- Pupils are clear about what they are to learn because teachers discuss the purpose of their work and make clear through marking what they do well and how they can improve. As one pupil remarked, 'marking gives us courage to do better next time'.
- Teachers ask probing questions to check up on pupils' understanding and to encourage them to think about what they are learning. However, they do not always expect pupils to check and correct their spelling.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge and use resources well to explain new learning to the pupils. For example, in science in Years 4 and 5, the teachers used models effectively to help explain the phases of the moon and what can be seen from earth.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are supported well in lessons so that they can understand what they are learning and take part in all activities. For example, in Years 3 and 4, these pupils were asked additional questions to help them understand their learning and were helped to record their ideas.
- Teachers work closely with the teachers at the sponsor school to share planning and to help provide work with the right level of challenge. Occasionally, teachers do not adapt tasks so that they are sufficiently difficult, especially for the most able. Pupils agree that while work is mostly 'just right' there are occasions when it is 'too easy' and they appreciate 'hard challenges'.
- There are good opportunities for pupils to practise and extend their reading and mathematics when working in subjects across the curriculum, although a few opportunities are missed to strengthen pupils writing in this way.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- When children join the Reception class their attainment is lower than is typical for their age. Children make good progress in the early years provision and attainment has risen to broadly average.
- Attainment has risen across the academy this year. Academy data and pupils' work show that it is broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils do especially well in reading because this was the subject that leaders tackled first. As one pupil said, 'The first year I couldn't read and now I can'. In the 2014 Year 1 phonics (sounds that letters make) screening check, attainment was above average. Pupils across the academy enjoy reading and do so with great expression.
- Pupils do slightly less well in writing than in reading and mathematics. In writing, pupils use interesting vocabulary, but they do not always take enough care with their spelling and make repeated mistakes. In addition, opportunities are missed for pupils to practise and extend what they have learned when writing in subjects other than literacy.
- Pupils' progress has improved over the last 18 months and it is now good across the academy. Weaknesses in attainment and progress at the end of Year 6 in 2014, the first results as an academy, were a legacy of underachievement from the past, and pupils are now catching up quickly.

- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs achieve well because their specific needs are identified accurately and additional help is sharply focused. In lessons, extra resources are used to help explain concepts. For example, in mathematics in Years 1 and 2, pupils were encouraged to use special equipment to help them learn about multiplication.
- The most-able pupils do well over time and often work with older pupils so that they are given hard enough work. Occasionally, particularly in subjects other than literacy and numeracy, they are not challenged to deepen their knowledge and understanding fully.
- Disadvantaged pupils who are eligible for additional funding were a long way behind other pupils in 2014. They were about two terms behind their classmates and other pupils nationally in reading and about two years behind them in writing and mathematics. Progress is accelerating for disadvantaged pupils currently at the academy and they do well from their starting points. They now make as much if not more progress than the other pupils at the academy and nationally. Gaps in their attainment are closing rapidly and have already closed in several year groups.
- Pupils of Gypsy-Roma or Traveller heritage make good progress because they are given equal opportunities to succeed and they are keen to come to the academy and learn.

The early years provision **is good**

- Children of differing abilities achieve well in the early years provision and do especially well in reading and personal development. For example, children were keen to help the teacher read out sentences and practise their knowledge of the sounds letters make when reading captions for their challenges. They are prepared well for starting in Year 1 and have reached levels typical for their age.
- Children become confident because they are taught to be independent and are keen to learn. For example, when discussing the Easter story, children felt comfortable about asking the teacher questions about the meaning of certain words such as 'armour'.
- Teaching is good and a wide range of interesting tasks motivate the children to want to learn. Most tasks are purposeful and support the children's learning well. For example, children enjoyed searching for the 'sounds of the day' buried in the sand, and writing their own versions of the Easter story in their special books. Teachers use questions well to check up on the children's learning. For example, after making Easter cakes, the teacher asked the children 'How did we make the chocolate melt?'
- Teachers explain clearly what children are to learn and demonstrate new skills so that children understand what they are to do. Children are especially keen on taking part in the challenges they are set and enjoy their involvement in checking that these are completed properly.
- Relationships between members of staff and the children are strong. Adults use praise effectively to encourage the children to try new activities and to boost their confidence. Children are given good opportunities to develop their speaking and listening skills and are encouraged to use full sentences.
- Children's behaviour is good and they feel very safe at the academy. They respond quickly to behaviour management signals such as '1, 2, 3' and concentrate hard on what the teacher has to say.
- Good leadership and management ensure that the progress of the children is checked up on carefully and gaps in attainment are identified and work planned that will support learning. Provision has become more consistent this year, resulting in rapid progress across the areas of learning.
- Health and safety are promoted well and as a result children know that washing their hands is 'hygienic' and is important before handling food.

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	139574
Local authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	449866

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	92
Appropriate authority	Governing Body
Chair	Wendy Neale
Headteacher	Rosie Simmonds
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected as an academy
Telephone number	01945 700357
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