

# Murston Junior School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	118353
<b>Local Authority</b>	Kent
<b>Inspection number</b>	291104
<b>Inspection dates</b>	15–16 March 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Jacqueline Marshall

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>	Junior
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	170
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Barry Wiles
<b>Headteacher</b>	Margaret C Laming
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	17 September 2001
<b>School address</b>	Sunny Bank Sittingbourne ME10 3QN
<b>Telephone number</b>	01795 473891
<b>Fax number</b>	01795 478820

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This is a smaller than average-sized junior school. The school has a greater than average proportion of pupils joining at times other than when they first start at school, including a small number of Traveller pupils. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is above the national average. Most pupils are of White British heritage. The very small number of pupils for whom English is an additional language are fluent English speakers. An above average proportion of pupils is entitled to free school meals. Staffing is currently stable following a period of significant turbulence over the last 12 months.

## Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

This is a good school which provides an effective education for all its pupils. Both pupils and parents appreciate the good level of care the school provides and the fact that this is a school where every child, regardless of their backgrounds or abilities, really does matter. Good relationships with all staff and the wide range of interesting activities provided mean children enjoy school and develop well as individuals. As a result, their behaviour and attitudes to learning are good. These factors, alongside the school's good procedures for supporting pupils' care and guidance, contribute significantly to their achievements and their good personal development.

Throughout the school, all groups of pupils achieve well. Whilst standards by the time pupils leave school at the end of Year 6 remain below average, progress over time has been improving at a steady rate and consequently, pupils are now making good progress. This is because teaching is good overall and is better focused on using the information from assessment effectively to set high expectations of what pupils can achieve. This is most evident in English and mathematics where teachers use this information well to plan lessons and give pupils targets. However, at times opportunities are missed to use marking to help pupils see how to improve their work to achieve their best. Although the curriculum is good and supports learning well, science has been rightly identified as an area to develop further by the school. This is because, whilst pupils carry out lots of investigations, teachers do not always plan enough opportunities to teach pupils how to develop their investigative skills and, as a result, progress could be even greater. Pupils make satisfactory progress in their use of information and communication technology (ICT). They have yet to achieve well because opportunities for them to use and reinforce their skills in other subjects have yet to be developed sufficiently.

As a result of good leadership and management, all leaders, including governors, have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. This, coupled with the improvements made in the school since the last inspection, demonstrates clearly that the school has a good capacity to make further progress. All leaders and governors contribute to the school's success.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Raise achievement in science by developing pupils' knowledge and understanding of the skills they use in investigations.
- Further develop pupils' ICT skills by providing greater opportunities for pupils to practise them across all subjects.
- Ensure that teachers' marking always helps pupils understand what to do next to improve their work.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

The school's priority on setting high expectations for pupils' progress means that, overall, pupils achieve well in their work towards challenging targets. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities and Traveller learners also achieve well, due partly to the effective support they receive from teaching assistants, both in lessons and small groups. The school's action to raise overall standards by the end of Year 6 has not yet had sufficient impact and, as a result, standards remain below average. However, pupils are now making better progress and their achievements are good. The rise in pupils' achievement was reflected in 2006 in the improving

trend in progress pupils made from Year 3 to 6. Whilst standards in science and ICT are also below average, their progress is satisfactory.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is good. This is reflected in pupils' enjoyment, positive attitudes and good behaviour. Consequently, they get along well and help one another, as is demonstrated by their readiness to welcome new pupils to the school. They have a good understanding of the importance of staying safe and the need to have a healthy lifestyle. Pupils make a good contribution to the community, with those on the school and health and safety councils enjoying taking responsibility and proud to have an impact on school life. A good foundation for pupils' future economic well-being is provided by ensuring pupils achieve well overall in their basic skills as well as encouraging a range of fundraising activities. Cultural development is satisfactory because pupils' understanding of other cultures and living within multicultural Britain is still developing. Attendance is below the national average, though improving due to the school's systems and the headteacher's work with parents and other agencies.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Good relationships with all staff and the effective way adults manage pupils' behaviour help pupils to learn well. Teachers use information on how well pupils are doing successfully when planning lessons and to set high expectations. Consequently, pupils achieve well. Teaching assistants support learning effectively, whether it is within the classrooms or in small groups, because they are well skilled and work closely with teachers to plan their work. In lessons, teachers are effective in making sure pupils know exactly what they are learning and use individual targets increasingly well to help pupils know what to do to improve. The quality of marking is good overall. However, it is not yet consistently successful in showing pupils the next step by making clear links to their learning and targets.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum is good because it is continually being developed and adapted to meet all pupils' needs. The school is currently targeting the science provision in order that investigative skills are taught even more effectively and the most able are stretched further. Throughout the school, the curriculum is enriched well, not only supporting pupils' learning but also helping to foster positive attitudes, such as the early morning 'Fizzy Sessions' for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities. The provision for French and the links with local secondary schools enrich the curriculum further. Whilst the provision for literacy and numeracy is good, it is less effective in information and communication technology (ICT). Opportunities for pupils to improve their ICT skills by extending their use in other subjects are often missed and, as a result, pupils' achievement remains satisfactory. The recently improved ICT facilities are beginning to enable the school to address this.

## Care, guidance and support

### Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. Child protection and health and safety procedures are well understood by all, and pupils say that they feel safe and know who to turn to, if necessary. Support for groups of pupils, including those with learning difficulties and disabilities and Traveller learners, is good with outside agencies and parents effectively involved.

The school has developed good procedures which enable it to track pupils' progress carefully and set high expectations for their achievement. The information gained is being used effectively by all teachers in order to set targets and when planning lessons. Whilst teachers provide pupils with targets for what to do next to improve their work, these are not always specific enough to help pupils know exactly what they need to do to get better and raise achievement further.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 2

The headteacher has successfully fostered a culture of teamwork. Together with the senior leadership team she has a clear vision, which is shared by staff and governors, of a school that is striving to improve. Leaders effectively analyse data and monitor teaching to see where it is best and what needs to be improved, taking actions to address any weaknesses. This is evident in the quick action to raise achievement in science, including effectively involving local secondary schools. Consequently, whilst cautious in their judgements of the school's overall effectiveness, leaders have a good understanding of just what is needed to take the school forward and demonstrate good capacity to improve. While governors are satisfactory and know the school well, they are aware of the need to develop their role in the checks the school makes to see how well it is doing. The school takes into account the views of parents and other stakeholders, resulting in the majority responding positively when asked about the effectiveness of their school.



## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	<b>School Overall</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	2
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	2
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	2

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.



## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

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**Annex B****Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Thank you for talking to us and showing us your work when we visited your school. We are pleased to hear that you like school and that the grown-ups are kind and look after you well. We think that they are particularly good at helping you to know what you have to do to keep safe and healthy. They also encourage you to take part in the decisions that help make your school a better place.

We were pleased that there are plenty of things for you to take part in, such as the Health and Safety and school councils and all your clubs. Your teachers plan lots of exciting things for you which mean you enjoy school. We think you are polite to adults and to each other and behave well around school. You make everyone in your school feel very welcome.

Murston Junior School is a good school. It is well led and the adults know what needs to be done to make your school even better. In order to make your learning even better, we have asked the adults at your school to make sure:

- Teachers always help you to know what you need to do to improve your work.
- You are always encouraged to develop your investigative skills in science.
- You are given lots of opportunities to use the laptops and computers in all your lessons.

You can help by always using the advice teachers give you in your improvement and feedback sessions in your work. Thank you again for helping us with our work.