

Murrayfield Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124649
Local Authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	315004
Inspection dates	25–26 November 2008
Reporting inspector	Nick Butt

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	329
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Teresa Marrable
Headteacher	Mrs Wendy James
Date of previous school inspection	3 May 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Nacton Road Ipswich Suffolk IP3 9JL

Age group	3–11
Inspection dates	25–26 November 2008
Inspection number	315004

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a larger than average size school which makes provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) in a Nursery and a Reception class. Four out of ten pupils come from a variety of minority ethnic backgrounds, the largest group being Bangladeshi. A quarter of pupils speak English as an additional language. A third of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is well above average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. Many of these have moderate learning difficulties. A large number of pupils join and leave the school outside normal times. The headteacher has been in post since September 2006 and the deputy headteacher since September 2007.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Murrayfield is a satisfactory and improving school. Good leadership from the headteacher has enabled gains to be made in driving up standards and achievement, particularly in the past year. Standards by the end of Year 6 are still too low, but are much better than they were. From very low starting points in the Nursery, children get off to a good start in the EYFS and continue to achieve well in Years 1 and 2. Pupils make satisfactory progress overall in Years 3 to 6, and the proportion making better than expected improvement is rising. Teaching and learning are satisfactory, but a greater number of lessons are good or better than was the case 18 months ago. The school recognises the need to share this good practice with all staff so that the quality of provision continues to rise. The school has a satisfactory capacity to improve.

A parent said, 'The school has come on so well in two years', reflecting the views of a good majority, who welcome recent changes. Pupils behave well and are considerate towards one another, working and playing together harmoniously. Their personal development and well-being are satisfactory overall, as they do not yet take enough responsibility for their own learning or play a sufficiently active part in improving the school. Pupils have a satisfactory understanding of how to live a healthy lifestyle and benefit from regular swimming lessons at the school's own pool. They say they feel safe in school, and have an adult to go to if they have a problem. They support one another as play leaders and do jobs around the school. While many pupils do not yet gain the expected basic skills by the time they leave Year 6, there are some good arrangements to help them get ready for the move to secondary school. Overall they are prepared satisfactorily to become lifelong learners and have a growing awareness of the world of work.

The satisfactory curriculum enables pupils to make sound progress in their learning, taking account in particular of the needs of those who are learning English as an additional language. Recently, the school has been giving pupils more opportunities to undertake investigations in science and mathematics and to apply their skills in practical ways. This is because pupils struggle in these subjects more than in English, where a focus on reading has been successful in raising standards. The pastoral care of pupils is good, but academic guidance is satisfactory because it is inconsistent across the school. All pupils have targets for improvement, but not all of them are sure what they are, or understand their sometimes complicated wording.

The impact of leadership and management is satisfactory, with an increasing momentum of improvement as changes begin to take effect. There has been particular progress in the EYFS and in reading throughout the school, as these were the areas that the headteacher focused on first. The senior leadership team is relatively recent, and is growing in confidence and effectiveness. Senior leaders monitor the work of the school well, so that they have a good understanding of what works, and where improvement is needed. The governing body has made good progress since the last inspection, when it was judged to be inadequate, and now fulfils its roles satisfactorily. However, there are still vacancies for two parent governors that are proving difficult to fill.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Attainment when children start at the school is far below national expectations, with their communication and personal development skills being particularly low. By the time they leave Reception, many children are still not reaching the expected early learning goals, especially in

writing. Nonetheless, children achieve well because of the good quality of teaching and provision. All staff work together well in providing a stimulating and vibrant learning environment where children thrive. A strong emphasis is put on developing children's early language skills through careful questioning and role-play. Many opportunities are on offer for children to explore and investigate both in the classroom and in the well-used and resourced outside play area. This is balanced by an equal number of adult-led activities, where key skills are taught well. Just occasionally, the challenge on offer for some of the more able children is not high enough. Children behave well and show an enthusiasm for their learning, factors which contribute much to their good personal development. The care and welfare of children is given a high priority resulting in children feeling safe and quickly settling into school routines. Leadership and management are good because the EYFS leader has established a strong sense of team spirit, forged a strong partnership with parents and monitors teaching well. Assessment procedures are effective and give staff a good understanding of how each child is progressing and what steps they need to take next to improve.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in English, mathematics and science further through establishing the more practical curriculum and promoting pupils' independence.
- Improve teaching so that more is good or better by sharing more extensively the existing good practice within the school.
- Make marking and target-setting more consistent and clear so that all pupils know exactly what they have to do to improve.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory, but which have areas of underperformance, will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Standards are exceptionally low by the end of Year 6, but pupils make satisfactory progress from their very low starting points. In the 2008 Year 6 tests, standards rose considerably in English and mathematics, even though they remained low overall. The rate of improvement was much greater than is found nationally. Standards in science remained static, and this is an area of particular focus for the school. Standards also rose significantly in the Year 2 teacher assessed tasks so that they are now below average rather than low. Pupils make good progress in Years 1 and 2 because the teaching is more consistently good, though too few pupils reach the higher levels in writing. Pupils with moderate learning difficulties make satisfactory progress towards meeting their individual targets. Pupils learning English as an additional language are helped to play a full part in lessons so their achievement is also satisfactory. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) have risen well since the last inspection and are now at expected levels.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils are keen to please and show respect for adults and one another. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory, with a growing appreciation of other cultures. Special events such as a Caribbean day, give pupils insight into the customs and traditions of different peoples. Pupils have a fair understanding of how to make healthy choices, and what

foods are good for you, but still look forward to fish and chips on Fridays! They generally enjoy their education. One pupil said, 'Everyone is friendly at this school'. Attendance has been rising to a little below average levels, as the school takes a firm line on absence, and rewards the best class each week in assembly. Pupils do not yet have sufficient opportunities to develop their independence through taking on greater responsibility in the school community and in their work. The school council is developing its role as an influence for change, but still relies heavily on adult input. Pupils are active locally, raising money for charity and taking part in tournaments with other schools. There are good links with the local high school, and pupils visit on a regular basis to take part in workshops. The annual 'Jobs Week' enables pupils to raise their aspirations and find out about successful former pupils.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Across the school, relationships are good and teachers manage pupils well, so learning proceeds smoothly. When teaching is at its best, lessons move along at a vigorous pace, teaching is full of energy and drive and there is a high level of challenge for all pupils, particularly the more able. It is in these lessons that pupils are encouraged to develop their skills as independent learners and to take a greater responsibility for their own learning. For example, Year 4 pupils were working with partners to devise a maze on a grid, writing coordinates and directions for another pair to follow. This followed on from practical work making mazes in the playground. The weakness is that these notable strengths are not consistent in enough lessons and at times introductions to lessons are overlong and some pupils lose interest. There are also some inconsistencies in the level of involvement of teaching assistants at the start of lessons, but support levels improve once pupils are working in groups.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum meets pupils' needs in an appropriate manner. The development of pupils' basic skills is satisfactory and there is a strong and determined push to raise standards further. The school has accurately identified the need to improve how pupils' writing and other key skills are developed in different subjects of the curriculum. There are some good examples in history, when pupils described how they felt spending an air raid in a shelter. However, this work is still at an early stage. There have been good improvements in ICT since the last inspection, which is now a more integral and effective part of pupils' learning. A good range of enrichment activities, including after school clubs, visits and visitors help to bring learning more to life and are much appreciated by the pupils. Visits have included the War Museum and the Tutankhamun exhibition. The curriculum is also used suitably as a vehicle for recognising and celebrating the wide range of different cultures that are a feature of this school, contributing to pupils' understanding and strengthening community cohesion both in and outside of school.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The school provides well for pupils' pastoral needs, employing its own part-time speech therapist and family support worker. The learning mentor also has a valuable role to play in supporting vulnerable pupils. There are good links with other agencies that contribute well to the good

pastoral care. Provision for pupils with moderate learning difficulties is satisfactory as pupils make sound progress in meeting their individual targets. Staff know all the school's pupils well and good tracking systems ensure their progress is measured carefully. Appropriate intervention takes place to support any pupils in danger of falling behind. The arrangements for child protection and safeguarding pupils meet legal requirements. Pupils often have group rather than individual targets for improvement, and there is some variability in how much importance is attached to these in different classes. While there are some good examples of marking that seek to open a dialogue about learning with pupils, time is not always created for them to respond to these comments.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher has taken a strategic approach to school improvement, investing time and energy in improving provision in the EYFS and Years 1 and 2, with the result that standards in these areas are now rising rapidly and pupils are achieving well. There still remains much to do, however, particularly in raising attainment by the end of Year 6 in mathematics and science, where standards are very low. Regular and rigorous monitoring means self-evaluation is realistic and effective, and that initiatives are bedded in well to give lasting improvement. Senior leaders have successfully established a positive culture of reflection amongst staff with a clear focus on improving pupils' learning. Middle managers are taking increasing responsibility for monitoring their areas, although not all have opportunities to observe teaching yet. The school makes a satisfactory contribution towards uniting its local community and in helping pupils to become aware of other faiths and cultures outside their own. The governing body draws expertise from the local community and further afield and fulfils its roles appropriately, much improved since the time of the last inspection. A parents' council is giving parents a voice, and raising up potential parent governors for the future.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	3

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	3
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
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

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

27 November 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Murrayfield Community Primary School, Ipswich, IP3 9JL

Thank you for making us welcome at your school, which provides you with a satisfactory level of education. These are some of its strengths.

- Children get off to a good start in the Nursery and Reception classes.
- Those of you in Years 1 and 2 achieve well.
- Standards are rising and are much better than they were, especially in ICT.
- Your behaviour is good and you look after one another.
- There are plenty of clubs and visits for you to enjoy.
- There are good links with the local high school.
- The swimming pool means you are able to take plenty of exercise.
- The school is led and managed well by Mrs. James.

Standards are still too low by the time you leave the school, so we have asked your teachers to help you improve by making learning hands-on and helping you to become more independent. There are some really good examples of teaching in the school and we think it would be good if staff were able to share this and learn from one another. You all have targets for improvement, but not all of you understand them or know what they are. We have asked your teachers to make them easier to read. We also think it would be helpful if you had time to reply to the comments in your books to show your teachers that you have taken on board their advice.

Thank you once again for your help. Our very best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Mr N Butt

Lead inspector