

# Derrymount School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	122949
<b>Local Authority</b>	Nottinghamshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	359330
<b>Inspection dates</b>	22–23 September 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	David Muir HMI

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>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Community special
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	5–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	51
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Kay Clarke
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Kathy McIntyre
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	19 September 2007
<b>School address</b>	Churchmoor Lane Arnold, Nottingham NG5 8HN
<b>Telephone number</b>	0115 9534015
<b>Fax number</b>	01159534025
<b>Email address</b>	head@derrymount.notts.sch.uk

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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors. Nine lessons were observed and eight teachers seen. Meetings were held with a group of pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body and several members of staff. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at various documents, including the school improvement plan, policies and the school's analysis of data and other performance indicators. Questionnaires from 31 parents and carers were returned and analysed.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- The accuracy of the school's monitoring of pupil attainment and progress.
- How the school's management ensure that expectations are consistently high across all areas of the school?
- The robustness and accuracy of the records of the monitoring of teaching across the school.
- How the care, guidance and support contribute to improved outcomes for pupils?

## Information about the school

The school provides an education for pupils with a range of complex special educational needs and/or disabilities. Pupils at the school are from a range of social and economic backgrounds, with more than a third of pupils being eligible for free school meals. Nearly all pupils are from White British backgrounds. All have a statement of special educational needs. A large majority of the pupils have autistic spectrum disorders and some have moderate learning difficulties or social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. A very small minority are deaf and use British Sign Language to communicate. There have been no pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage or Key Stage 1 for more than ten years. A large majority of the pupils are boys.

The school has gained several awards including the Sportsmark, Activemark, Bronze Eco Award and Investors in People.

**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: how good is the school?**

**2**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**2**

## Main findings

Derrymount School is a good school which has made significant improvements since the previous inspection. It is at least good in all areas of its work and is outstanding in several. These include the extent to which pupils adopt a healthy lifestyle and the extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community. These areas have developed as a result of the school's relentless pursuit of an impressively wide array of activities, both within the timetable and through educational visits, sports clubs and activities and residential trips. These activities are often focused on and contribute to the local community, and the school is extremely well accepted by people who live in the area in which it is situated. The outstanding care, guidance and support enable pupils to settle well into the school and to plan effectively for their future. Relationships with parents and carers are very strong and well thought out, allowing parents and carers many opportunities to become increasingly involved in their children's schooling. The communication between the school and parents and carers was the subject of several comments in parental questionnaires and two typical comments were: 'communication between us and staff is excellent' and 'staff are always very professional and approachable which is very reassuring.' Outstanding partnerships promote increasingly effective learning and well-being and all pupils benefit from the school's work in this area. The school works hard to build strong links with the local community and businesses as well as with other providers of education such as schools and colleges. The school staff are proactive in making sure that all individuals and groups of pupils progress well, irrespective of their special educational needs and/or disabilities, gender or ethnicity. Due to this, allied to its inclusive ethos, the school is outstanding in the promotion of equal opportunities and tackling discrimination.

Pupils enjoy coming to school and attendance is good. This is particularly impressive as many of the pupils have had previously negative experiences of school and several were non-attenders at school prior to their transfer to this school. One reason for this is the mainly good, and sometimes outstanding teaching seen during the inspection. This agrees with the school's evidence of the quality of teaching over time. However, the school is also aware of the need to improve some satisfactory teaching to be more consistently good. The curriculum is also well adapted and individually tailored to engage pupils from the start of their schooling here. Staff know pupils well and, as a result, provide them with activities which capitalise on their interests and abilities, thus making attendance a more attractive prospect for them. The social and moral aspects of the school's work are good, and the behaviour, and pupils' understanding of the consequences of their behaviour, improve over the time that pupils are in the school. There are currently too few opportunities for pupils to interact with people from other cultures so that pupils develop an understanding of the diverse range of backgrounds that they will encounter in the wider world.

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The leadership's view of the school is accurate and it is aware of the strengths of the school and the areas which need improvement. Due to this, and the improvements evident since the previous inspection, the school has demonstrated that it has good capacity to make sustained improvement. The governing body has recently undergone some changes in personnel and, as a result, is reallocating some of its responsibilities. However, it has a clear understanding of its role, knows the school well and provides good support and challenge in all aspects of the school's work. Although the school has a good understanding of its context and works hard to measure the impact of its work on outcomes, community cohesion has not been formally assessed to ensure that it is as effective as it can be.

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

- To raise the overall quality of teaching from good to outstanding by:
  - identifying and sharing the best practice available in the school
  - ensuring that activities in lessons meet the needs and interests of all pupils appropriately
- Provide more opportunities for pupils to meet people from different cultures and backgrounds to their own and promote awareness of different cultures.
- Promote more effective community cohesion by measuring the impact of the school's work in this area on the community served by the school.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils****2**

Due to the severity and complexity of the special educational needs and/or disabilities of the majority of pupils, it is inappropriate to judge pupils' attainment overall. Nevertheless, a minority of pupils are able to reach age appropriate levels and, where this is possible, the school provides increasing opportunities to do so. This has resulted in pupils achieving a range of qualifications, including GCSEs, Entry Level Certificates and other level one qualifications, such as NOCN (National Open College Network) Step-Up vocational accreditation towards a diploma, a City and Guilds qualification in animal care, ABC level one certificate in fabrication and welding and ALAN (adult literacy and numeracy) certificates. This range of qualifications is increasing and all pupils leave school with some form of externally recognised accreditation appropriate to their needs and abilities. During their time in the school, pupils make at least the progress expected of them, based on their abilities and previous levels of attainment. Many pupils exceed the progress expected of them. This shows that pupils' progress over time is good. The inspection evidence of the learning and progress seen in lessons agrees with this. Pupils enjoy school and there is no evidence of bullying. It is a very warm and welcoming community of which all members are rightly proud. Behaviour was good throughout the inspection and is a significant contributor to the good learning in lessons. This agrees with the school's own judgement of behaviour. Pupils increasingly learn to manage their own behaviour during the time that they are in the school. The school also supports this, by nipping in the bud any discriminatory comments based on ethnicity, gender or sexual orientation and by educating pupils about the appropriateness of their use of language. Pupils accept this, allowing the school to be a welcoming and tolerant community.

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Pupils are proud of their school. They have good attitudes to learning and are keen to do well. They make the best progress in lessons where the activities are tailored to meet their individual needs and interests. Pupils generally feel safe in the school and parents and carers agree. They feel valued and listened to and are able to suggest ideas to help develop the school's work, especially in the wider community. Pupils' work in the community is outstanding as they are involved in a wide range of activities, including the school's rock band and involvement in local arts events. The 'self-second' project has involved pupils in developing initiatives in the community based on ecological awareness. Some pupils have also received awards for the work they have done improving facilities in a local park. The quality of spiritual, social and moral work in the school is good and pupils take time to consider the impact of their actions on those around them, understand right and wrong, and learn to relate more positively to others during their time in the school. There is a high level of participation in sport and other physical activities and several pupils have represented their regions and country in sports' events. Pupils are well prepared for their future economic well-being due to the good standard of information, advice and guidance they receive and the strong links which the school has with local employers and colleges.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	*
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	2
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

\* In some special schools inspectors do not make a judgement about attainment in relation to expectations of the pupils' age.

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## How effective is the provision?

The quality of teaching seen during the inspection was good. This agrees with the school's judgment of teaching over time and the good progress that pupils make throughout their time in the school. The best teaching meets the pupils' needs and interests well and is very clear about what is being learnt. Pupils are also given opportunities to assess their own progress and develop skills which they are then expected to use in a meaningful way. In addition, the knowledge that teachers and teaching assistants have of the pupils' needs and interests make a significant contribution to the learning taking place in lessons and around the school. Some pupils know their targets, whilst others need prompts to remember them, which staff readily provide.

In all key stages, the curriculum meets the needs of all learners increasingly well. The range of qualifications available is increasing each year and the school is quick to match pupils' interests and aspirations with appropriate courses and qualifications, whether they be in the school or provided in partnership with an external provider. There is a good range of trips and visitors and very regular opportunities for residential visits. These are well planned and evaluated so that they make a positive impact on pupils' learning and well-being. The outstanding care, guidance and support are a significant strength of the school. Pupils are offered a wide range of pathways, which are individualised to meet their specific needs. Pupils are made aware of the possible routes through impressive links and partnerships with local agencies, colleges and employers and good joint working with the Connexions service. Transition is built on these strong partnerships and pupils are confident that they are given the information they need to make secure choices about their futures.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>1</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

Most aspects of leadership and management are good and several areas are outstanding. The headteacher, with very effective support from the senior leadership team, provides a clear vision and model for high expectations throughout the school. This is keenly followed by staff who understand their roles in developing and maintaining high expectations in all areas of the school's work. Everyone is clear that the ethos of the school demands that pupils should be placed at the centre of its work. The areas for improvement identified in the previous inspection have been tackled well and the school has identified its strengths and further areas for development well. The performance of all aspects of the school's work is monitored accurately. The systems for tracking pupil progress are strong and the information collected is used to develop targets for further progress.

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Safeguarding procedures, including child protection, are good and show that all adults working with pupils are appropriately recruited and thoroughly vetted upon appointment. The work of the governing body is good and they provide appropriate support and challenge to the work of the school. The school's work on community cohesion is good, as the school has a good knowledge of its context. However, it is not fully assessing the impact of its work in this area on the school and the wider community. The school's work in promoting equality of opportunities and tackling discrimination is outstanding.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

## Views of parents and carers

A high proportion of parents and carers responded to the questionnaire and the responses were overwhelmingly positive. The responses and comments generally reflected the inspectors' findings. However, a small number of parents and carers expressed concerns that school did not help them to support their children's learning. The inspectors looked closely at this area and were satisfied that the school's work in supporting parents and carers is outstanding as there are many systems and procedures through which the school works hard with parents and carers so that they can work effectively with their children. A view from a parent about her son, which summarises the large majority of opinions expressed in the questionnaires, said: 'From the moment he started at Derrymount, things improved with the skill in behaviour management and dedication of the teachers and staff. We now find ourselves with a very different child, well balanced, mature and a good future ahead of him - a change we didn't think possible and are very grateful for.'



## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Derrymount 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 13 statements about the school. The inspector received 31 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 51 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	12	41	17	59	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	21	72	8	28	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	23	79	5	17	1	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	17	59	10	34	0	0	1	3
The teaching is good at this school	18	62	9	31	0	0	1	3
The school helps me to support my child's learning	19	66	7	24	1	3	1	3
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	16	55	13	45	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	16	55	10	34	1	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	20	69	7	24	1	3	1	3
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	19	66	9	31	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	19	66	10	34	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	19	66	10	34	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	21	72	8	28	0	0	0	0

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	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

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 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 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. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

## 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"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
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.**



24 September 2010

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Derrymount School, Nottingham, NG5 8HN**

I am writing to you on behalf of the three inspectors who visited your school recently to say thank you very much for making our visit so interesting and enjoyable. It was a real pleasure to meet you and to hear your views about Derrymount School.

We found your school to be good overall with several areas which are outstanding. The headteacher, staff and governing body all work hard to make your time in school very happy and successful. Although many of you have had difficult times previously, you now enjoy school and make good and sometimes outstanding progress while you are there.

Your parents and carers are extremely pleased with the way that the school educates and looks after you all. Your personal development is a very positive strength of the school and we were particularly impressed by our meetings and discussions with you over the two days. It is good to see that you are willing to share your views of the school and what it does for you. You work very hard to improve your personal skills and you clearly enjoy your lessons. We were also impressed by your attitudes and how those of you who have had some difficulty controlling your behaviour in the past are increasingly able to manage it on your own. You have good attitudes to learning and you should all be very proud of yourselves. I know that everybody involved in the school is proud of you.

I have asked the school to improve three things to make the school even better than it is now:

- improve the overall quality of teaching, so that more of the good lessons improve to become outstanding
- allow you to experience a wider range of cultures so that you can understand how other people live
- to assess the work the school does in promoting community cohesion and measure its effectiveness.

You can all help with this, by telling the staff teachers what would make your school even better than it is already. I am sure that they would be very happy to hear your views.

Yours sincerely

David Muir

Her Majesty's Inspector

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