

## **INSPECTION REPORT**

### **DERRYMOUNT SCHOOL**

Arnold, Nottingham

LEA area: Nottinghamshire

Unique reference number: 122949

Headteacher: Geoff Read

Lead inspector: Mike Kell

Dates of inspection: 12<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup> January 2004

Inspection number: 258891

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Special (moderate learning difficulties)
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 – 16 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	48
School address:	Churchmoor Lane Arnold Nottingham
Postcode:	NG5 8HN
Telephone number:	0115 953 4015
Fax number:	0115 953 4025
Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Jean Alton
Date of previous inspection:	18 <sup>th</sup> – 21 <sup>st</sup> February 2002

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Derrymount's designated roll is 85 pupils, which is smaller than average for a school of this type and age range. Although the school caters for children and pupils in the age range three to sixteen years, it has not had pupils under the age of seven years on roll for the past three years. Currently, 48 pupils attend the school; there are 9 in Years 3 to 6, 18 in Years 7 to 9 and 21 in Years 10 and 11. There are six classes. One class has all pupils of primary school age and there is one class for each year group in Years 7 to 11. There are just over twice as many boys as girls in the school and all pupils have a Statement of Special Educational Needs. Half of the pupils have autism, but the school has on roll significant numbers of pupils with other learning difficulties. These include moderate learning difficulties, severe learning difficulties, emotional and behavioural difficulties, and hearing and visual impairments. Therefore, pupils' levels of attainment on entry to the school are below national expectations. The school has a wide socio-economic mix as it takes pupils from a large geographical area. Most pupils live within the Nottinghamshire local education authority but seven live in Nottingham city and one comes from Derbyshire. The vast majority of pupils have a White British background. No pupils are learning English as an additional language. Over half the pupils benefit from the school's links with mainstream schools and colleges. They attend some classes at these other institutions in order to extend their learning and to encourage their personal development. The school does not provide a base for any regular outreach service to local mainstream schools to support teachers in their work with pupils who have significant special needs. This reflects the local education authority's policy of having centrally based support teams.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
13101	Mike Kell	Lead inspector	Mathematics Geography Personal, social and health education and citizenship Music English as an additional language
8941	John Fletcher	Lay inspector	
32055	Glan Davies		Science Art and design Physical education History Religious education Special educational needs
10678	Margaret Paull	Team inspector	English Information and communication technology Design and technology French

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

Derrymount is a **good** school that is very well led and well managed. Good teaching promotes pupils' learning and they achieve well. The very good school ethos results in pupils behaving very well and having good attitudes to their work. They make good gains in all aspects of their personal development. The school provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The very good quality leadership and good management provided by the headteacher have had a significant impact on raising the quality of education provided.
- Pupils make good gains in acquiring new skills, knowledge and understanding.
- The school is totally committed to inclusion opportunities for all pupils. Very good links with the community and strong links with local schools and colleges enhance pupils' learning.
- There are very good procedures for ensuring pupils' care, welfare, health and safety.
- At times lesson planning is too general and imprecise.
- Assessment systems are still at an early stage. There are inconsistencies in assessing and recording pupils' achievements.
- The role of subject leaders is insufficiently defined or developed
- The vast majority of parents are very supportive of the school but a small, but significant, minority continue to hold negative perceptions of the school and aspects of its work.

The school has made very good improvement since the previous inspection, when it was judged to have serious weaknesses in its leadership and management and in teaching. Significant improvements in leadership and management have driven forward many positive developments. More effective teaching means that pupils' learning and achievements have improved. There have also been improvements in pupils' attitudes and personal qualities, such as their attendance and behaviour. The quality of the curriculum has improved, as have additional curriculum experiences provided through links with other schools and colleges and community facilities.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Pupils' achievement at the end of:	In relation to individual targets in:	
	Subjects of the curriculum	Personal and social education
Year 6	Good	Good
Year 9	Good	Good
Year 11	Good	Good

*Inspectors make judgements in the range: excellent, very good, good, satisfactory, unsatisfactory, poor, very poor.*

Overall, in relation to their prior levels of attainment and capability, pupils of all ages **achieve well** and make good progress. Boys and girls make similarly good progress and those with additional learning needs achieve equally well. Pupils make good progress in their personal development.

Pupils' good progress in subjects of the curriculum is due to the overall good quality teaching and adult support that is available across the school. These have been significant improvements since the previous inspection in achievements in English, science, information and communication technology (ICT), art and design, and personal, social and health education (PSHE). The school now offers a General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) or Certificate of Educational Achievement (CoEA) Entry Level option in most subjects. These courses motivate pupils and provide appropriate degrees of challenge. Teaching assistants have a good understanding of pupils' needs and are an important factor in the progress that pupils make. Although pupils make good progress overall there are occasions when some pupils' learning, in some subjects, is limited by teachers' insecure subject knowledge when they are teaching subjects with which they are not fully familiar.

Attendance levels are good. Pupils enjoy school and show positive attitudes to their learning. Pupils' behaviour is very good and has improved significantly since the last inspection. Overall, they make good progress in all aspects of their personal development because provision for their **spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.**

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The school provides a good quality education** for its pupils. **Teaching and learning are good overall.** Classrooms are well organised. Teachers have high expectations of pupils and they manage them efficiently. Very high quality relationships, encouragement, and the inclusion of all pupils are characteristic features of lessons. Lesson planning sometimes lacks precision and there is no consistent format across the school. Specialist teachers teach their own subject well but some are much less effective when teaching other subjects with which they are much less familiar. Assessment procedures are satisfactory but require further refinement and development.

The school provides a good range of worthwhile curricular opportunities, with good improvements since the previous inspection in the curriculum provided in most subjects. Enrichment of the curriculum through extra curricular provision is good. Accommodation and resources are good. The recent refurbishment of teaching areas, notably in science, ICT, art, and food technology has allowed accredited courses in Years 10 and 11 to be taught much more effectively. Good links with other schools and colleges, and the use of alternative off-site education providers, enable the school to meet the curriculum needs of individual pupils. Provision for PSHE is satisfactory but long term planning is not yet complete.

There are very good procedures for ensuring pupils' care, welfare, health and safety. Well informed support, advice and guidance are made available to all pupils as they progress through the school. Pupils' views are encouraged. They are regularly asked for their opinions on day to day routines and have started to use the school council well to effect changes which improve the provision for them.

The school enjoys satisfactory links with parents and carers that contribute positively to pupils' learning and development. There are very good links with the community and good links with other schools and colleges. The school does not provide any formal, routine outreach support to teachers and pupils in mainstream schools.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

The headteacher provides **very good leadership** and **good management.** The leadership of other key staff is good, although curriculum management has shortcomings. Governance of the school is good. Governors ensure that all statutory requirements are met.

## **PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

Parents and carers overwhelmingly agree that their children like attending Derrymount. Inspectors do not share the concerns of a small minority of parents about the qualities of leadership and management and how the school responds to parents' views and encourages their involvement. Pupils are very positive about the school.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

The most important things the school should do to improve are to:

- Ensure that the assessment of pupils' achievements is consistent, recorded, and focuses on what they have learned. Incorporate assessment information into all lesson plans so that they state clearly what it is anticipated individuals and groups of pupils will learn.
- Clearly identify, and develop, the role of subject leaders.
- Further develop links with parents.
- Ensure teachers have the necessary knowledge of the subjects they are required to teach.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS**

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

#### **Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses**

Overall, in relation to their prior levels of attainment and capability, pupils of all ages achieve well and make good progress. Boys and girls make similarly good progress and those with additional learning needs achieve equally well.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There have been good and, in the case of some subjects very good, improvements since the last inspection. As a result, pupils achieve well overall.
- An increase in the number and range of accredited courses motivates pupils in Years 10 and 11 and provides appropriate degrees of challenge, but it is not yet possible to evaluate pupils' success in all subjects.
- Pupils in all years achieve well in their personal development.
- Teachers are skilled at promoting literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology in all subjects.
- On occasion the standard achieved by some pupils in some subjects is limited by teachers' insecure subject knowledge.
- Pupils' learning is extended very well through the use of community facilities, and well through its links with mainstream schools and colleges and alternative off site education providers.

#### **Commentary**

1. Pupils achieve very well in science and art and design and they make good progress in English, information and communication technology (ICT), food technology, history, physical education, religious education and personal, social and health education (PSHE). Achievements are satisfactory in mathematics and French. There was insufficient evidence to judge achievement in geography, music and design and technology. Overall, these standards represent significant improvements on the findings from the previous inspection when achievements were judged as no better than satisfactory, or worse, in all subjects except geography, French and physical education. The improvements in science, art and design and ICT have been particularly impressive.

2. Pupils achieve well overall, including those in Years 7 to 9 whose progress was judged as unsatisfactory at the time of the last inspection. Pupils with additional special educational needs in all year groups achieve well and teaching assistants are an important factor in ensuring that these pupils participate fully in lessons and are included in all activities. However, although pupils make good progress overall there are occasions when some pupils' learning, in some subjects, is limited by teachers' insecure subject knowledge when they are teaching subjects with which they are not fully familiar.

3. A key issue at the time of the last inspection was to provide additional opportunities for more able pupils to follow accredited courses in Years 10 and 11. The school has worked hard in this area and now offers a General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) or Certificate of Educational Achievement (CoEA) Entry Level option in most subjects although some of these, such as French and art and design, have only recently been introduced for the current Year 11 pupils. The Youth Award Scheme (YAS) is also well established. These courses motivate pupils and provide appropriate degrees of challenge and the most recent results show that over 80 per cent of pupils achieved five or more passes from the seven CoEA subjects that were available in 2003.

4. Strong links with other schools and colleges provide opportunities for pupils to succeed in subjects, or areas of learning, that are not available at Derrymount. As a result of these links some pupils have achieved very well, such as the recent grade 'B' pass in GCSE mathematics obtained at

a local college. Pupils achieve well when they go out into the community. Work experience placements, in organisations such as a local supermarket, attendance at community based work related projects like Stonebridge City Farm, and the input of off-site education providers, such as the ASCENT at The Mill project, all give pupils opportunities to develop specific skills and to practice personal qualities like collaborative working.

5. The promotion of pupils' personal development is a key feature of the school's aims. This is evident in its ethos and all the work that it does. Pupils are involved in setting their personal targets, which are recorded in clear and well written individual education plans (IEPs). Realistic and achievable improvement targets appear in IEPs and individual behaviour plans. Pupils make good progress in achieving these. The school's good provision for PSHE provides more formal, planned opportunities to promote all aspects of personal development. The school uses these opportunities well, particularly in terms of developing situations in which pupils feel confident and comfortable about expressing their views and feelings.

6. Skilled teachers ensure that pupils' language and literacy skills are promoted well through other subjects of the curriculum. They provide extensive opportunities for pupils to improve all elements of communication; to rehearse speaking and listening skills through well managed discussions; to encourage pupils to read and acquire key subject vocabulary through the use of dictionaries, reference books and the Internet; to write in different styles. Teachers are equally effective in supporting pupils' learning of mathematical skills through other subjects of the curriculum, such as reading scales and measuring capacity in food technology, and drawing graphs in PSHE. Pupils' good competence in ICT results not only from the way they develop new skills in discrete lessons but also from the effective ways in which teachers provide opportunities for pupils to develop, extend and consolidate these skills in other subjects of the curriculum.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities**

7. Attendance levels are good. Pupils enjoy school and show positive attitudes to their learning. Pupils' behaviour is very good and has improved significantly since the last inspection. Overall, they make good progress in all aspects of their personal development because provision for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The significant improvement in attendance owes much to effective monitoring systems and the successful implementation of strategies to promote attendance.
- The vast majority of pupils enjoy attending Derrymount, engage well in their learning and co-operate enthusiastically in the daily routines.
- The school is an orderly place with a positive learning ethos in which pupils respect the behaviour code and enjoy very good relationships with each other and staff.
- Pupils are very pleased to take responsibility for tasks around the school and they readily express their views and suggested improvements to day to day routines.
- In the context of the school, the vast majority of pupils have a very clear understanding of the differences between right and wrong and show very good social awareness.
- Pupils respond well to the good opportunities provided to enhance their own self awareness and their understanding of their own and different cultural traditions.

### **Commentary**

8. Attendance levels are good throughout the school and this is having a positive impact on pupils' achievements. The school is thorough in monitoring and following up absence. Parents who experience difficulty with their child's attendance are supported, sensitively and effectively, through the input of the teaching assistant with responsibility for home school liaison and by the use of flexible work-related timetables for older pupils. Other successful initiatives to encourage attendance are supported by local business and these include the 'horse race derby' and 'early bird week'.

Punctuality to school is satisfactory, but when school transport is late pupils miss out on personal and social development opportunities with their friends at the breakfast club and with tutors and classmates in the registration period.

**Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)**

Authorised absence	
School data	5.6%
National data	8.3%

Unauthorised absence	
School data	3.0%
National data	2.5%

*The table gives the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.*

9. The standard of behaviour in school is very good. Staff at the school provide very good, and consistent, role models for the pupils. Records show that there are instances of disturbed and unsatisfactory behaviour but these are dealt with quickly and effectively so that the learning of others is not disrupted. There have been no exclusions from school in the last year. Pupils are happy to follow the behaviour code, respond enthusiastically to rewards and incentives and show pride in their own and others' achievements. Break times are orderly occasions in which pupils interact with each other, and adults, in a friendly and polite manner. They show good regard for the rules governing play and movement around the school. In lessons, pupils often become engrossed in the activities provided. Older pupils behave very responsibly and try hard when they visit colleges or work related community schemes.

**Ethnic background of pupils**

**Exclusions in the last school year**

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
Mixed - White and Black Caribbean
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani
Black or Black British - African
Black or Black British – any other Black background
Parent / pupil preferred not to say
Information not obtained

No of pupils on roll
37
2
1
1
1
1
5

Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
0	0
0	0
0	0
0	0
0	0
0	0
0	0

*The table gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.*

10. Pupils like attending Derrymount. Discussions with pupils of all ages revealed enthusiastic young people enjoying their activities and making the most of what the school offers. Pupils highlighted a wide range of subjects as being their favourites, indicated keen interest in break and lunchtime activities and spoke excitedly about outings and residential visits. They value the opportunities to attend mainstream schools and older pupils adapt well to college courses, work experience placements and other work related community experiences. Pupils feel comfortable at the school and openly express their views and make suggestions to improve the daily routines.

11. Pupils' levels of confidence, and their personal and social skills, improve noticeably during their time at Derrymount. They show good levels of awareness and were regularly seen helping and supporting each other, regardless of physical disability or impairment. At the breakfast club it was very impressive to see a particularly troubled young man showing concern and being very helpful to a much younger girl with hearing difficulties. Pupils are very willing to take responsibility for tasks around the school and take part in school council proceedings very seriously. Improvements that the school has made following council suggestions include longer break times, horse riding opportunities

for older pupils, and more minority ethnic foods on the lunch menus. However, pupils would benefit from more opportunities to take responsibility and the school has begun to recognise this and is planning to involve them more in the breakfast arrangements and in the production of the regular newsletters.

12. The consistently high level of expectations of staff, coupled with the wide interaction with other schools, colleges and the community, ensure very good levels of social and moral development. In the context of the school, pupils adjust very well to a range of social contexts, show respect for other people and listen politely to their views. The many opportunities provided to reflect and think about situations help pupils to develop their own set of values and to contrast these against a growing understanding of the community and world around them. Pupils show good levels of understanding of other cultural traditions and can talk knowledgeably about these, such as the group of girls who described Divali and their trip to Leicester to witness the celebrations.

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

### Teaching and learning

13. Teaching is good overall. Therefore, pupils learn well and make good progress in developing new skills, knowledge and understanding. Lessons also make a good contribution to pupils' personal development. Assessment procedures are satisfactory but require further refinement and development.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers manage pupils extremely well and involve all pupils in activities.
- Very high quality relationships and the appropriate use of praise and encouragement underpin teachers' very high expectations of pupils' attitudes and behaviour.
- Teaching assistants provide very effective support for pupils' learning, and ongoing professional training ensures that they continue to meet pupils' needs.
- Opportunities to develop pupils' communication skills are used well.
- Some detailed lesson planning enables pupils to be provided with activities that match their needs but at other times planning is too general and imprecise.
- Teachers are generally skilled at developing subject-specific vocabulary but at times their insecure subject knowledge and lack of experience of pupils with special needs results in over ambitious activities being attempted and over sophisticated language being used.
- Resources are often used well but sometimes they are inappropriate or ineffective.
- The recent reorganisation of classes into year groups has led to changes in assessment systems that are still at an early stage and so there are still some inconsistencies in assessing and recording pupils' achievements.

### Commentary

#### *Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 35 lessons*

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0 (0%)	12 (34%)	15 (43%)	8 (23%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

*The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons; figures in brackets show percentages where 30 or more lessons are seen.*

14. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good. Classrooms are well organised. Very high quality relationships, encouragement, and the inclusion of all pupils are characteristic features of lessons. This is because of the very high quality teamwork between teachers and very effective teaching assistants, who play a very important role in promoting pupils' learning. They contribute greatly in ensuring that pupils with additional special needs participate fully in lessons and are

included in all activities. All teaching assistants have attended training in areas such as autism and dyslexia, and therefore can support these pupils, and others have specialist skills like fluent sign language that assists communication with hearing-impaired pupils. All adults support pupils' communication skills and they are particularly adept at promoting speaking and listening. As a consequence, pupils show developing maturity in expressing their own views orally and listening to those of others. Teachers orchestrate discussions very well, using carefully worded questions to challenge individuals and to extend answers. There were many examples of confident pupils listening and expressing themselves articulately and maturely throughout the inspection.

15. Teachers have high expectations of pupils and they manage their behaviour efficiently and with minimum fuss. Therefore lessons are orderly and pupils follow well established routines. Pupils settle quickly, listen carefully to what they are asked to do and respond positively. As a result, time is generally used well as lessons are busy sessions during which pupils try very hard, approaching their work with interest and enthusiasm. Frequently, pupils are further motivated by teachers' choice and use of good quality learning resources, including materials that are adapted well to enhance the learning of pupils with additional needs. However, at other times resources are either inappropriate, like 16 year olds using plastic money, or inadequate, such as a list of rules that were displayed for whole class discussion but written so small that they could not be read.

16. All teachers have subject specialisms and so they are skilled at using appropriate vocabulary and terminology that encourages the acquisition of key ideas and language. However, many also teach other subjects with which they are much less familiar. Therefore, individual teachers teach their own subject particularly well but some are less effective when teaching other subjects. This becomes evident in a number of ways; expectations of learning are over optimistic; ideas and subject-specific language are too complex; there is uncertainty when explaining technical aspects of the subject, such as in mathematics. This variation in classroom practice has an impact on the standards pupils achieve.

17. Lesson planning is satisfactory but there is no consistent format across the school. The best plans use information about pupils' prior learning to plan activities that are appropriate to their age, interests and abilities. The plans identify what pupils are expected to learn and show clearly the activities that have been chosen to develop subject-specific skills, knowledge and understanding. At other times teachers' planning is much less effective. On these occasions lessons do not have a clear focus on what it is anticipated pupils will learn and the progressive activities that will develop this learning.

18. In addition to providing many opportunities for pupils to make academic progress, teachers are committed to developing their personal qualities too. They are able to do this because they have good understanding of their pupils' personal targets as shown in IEPs. They provide activities that require pupils to work independently, such as researching information on the Internet or working with an interactive CDROM, as well as in small groups. Pupils collaborate well at these times, whether they are developing short performances associated with role play in PSHE lessons or working together taking measurements in science investigations. They are also given opportunities to participate in larger group work, such as whole class discussions about the differences between peoples' 'needs' and their 'wants'.

19. Overall, assessment within the school is satisfactory. Marking is inconsistent and is not always as useful as it might be in helping pupils to understand how they can improve. The recording of pupils' achievements in their day-to-day work is thorough but not yet fully consistent across all subjects. Pupils are encouraged well to be involved in setting their targets in IEPs and they are frequently reminded of these targets by means of the desktop prompts, and by teachers in lessons. There is an interesting and innovative procedure for tracking pupils' progress towards these targets involving oversight by teaching assistants. Weekly meetings between teachers and teaching assistants provide opportunities for ongoing adjustment of these targets as appropriate.

## **The curriculum**

20. The school provides a good range of worthwhile curricular opportunities. Enrichment of the curriculum through extra curricular provision is good. Accommodation is good and meets the needs of a secondary curriculum, and good resources are well used. Provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is satisfactory.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There has been good improvement in provision for most subjects and the school continues to provide good opportunities for learning outside the school day.
- The use of specialists as teachers and subject leaders is improving the curriculum and the management of subjects. However, some subjects are taught and co-ordinated by teachers with limited expertise within the subject area across all the age groups.
- The curriculum needs of pupils with additional special needs are well met.
- Pupils aged 14 to 16 years are provided with a good careers and work related programme
- Specialist accommodation and resources are good and used well.
- Provision for personal, social and health education is satisfactory, but effective long term planning is at an early stage.

### **Commentary**

21. There have been good improvements in the quality of the curriculum provided in most subjects since the previous inspection. This is particularly noticeable in science, ICT and art and design, which were all noted as having weaknesses at that time. The national strategies for literacy and numeracy have been adopted appropriately across the school and are they are beginning to have a positive impact on pupils' achievement in English and mathematics. The school has on roll pupils with a range of additional special educational needs but it works hard to ensure that all pupils have equal opportunity to enjoy the wide range of curricular opportunities that are available and appropriate to their needs and interests.

22. Improvements in the quality of staffing, accommodation and resources have all helped to raise the curriculum provision provided by the school. The match of teachers to subjects has improved since the last inspection and is now satisfactory overall and, in some areas such as art and design, food technology, and science, it is good. However, not all subjects are taught by specialists so that at times pupils do not benefit from being taught by teachers with high quality subject knowledge. Similarly, not all subjects are led and managed by specialists and a number of subject leaders are relatively new to the school and special education generally. Consequently, these teachers are still trying to produce their own teaching programmes as well as managing subjects with which they are not familiar across the whole age range of seven to 16 years. Therefore, while satisfactory at the present time, subject leadership and management and the role of curriculum managers are still evolving.

23. Well qualified and experienced teaching assistants are important in curriculum planning and delivery. They play a key role in planning, alongside teachers, and are therefore able to ensure that pupils' individual targets are addressed consistently even though different subject teachers are involved. Their effectiveness is maintained very well through recent training in, for example, dyslexia and autism that enables them to provide very good support for pupils' learning.

24. Both accommodation and resources are now good. The recent refurbishment of teaching areas, notably in science, ICT, art and design, and food technology has enabled accredited courses in Years 10 and 11 to be taught much more effectively. The library is well stocked and well used, and there are other areas for collections of books relating to particular topics or learning needs.

25. The school gives many of its support staff additional responsibilities and these include careers, work experience and the alternative education programme. These are strong parts of the curriculum. Work experience placements in organisations such as a local supermarket and garage and participation in community based work related projects, such as that at Stonebridge City Farm, prepare pupils well for leaving school and making informed decisions about what to do next. Other

off-site education providers, such as the ASCENT at The Mill project, give pupils experiences of outdoor pursuits and, at the same time, help to develop personal qualities like collaborative working.

26. Good links with other schools and further education colleges enable the school to meet the curriculum needs of individual pupils. Many pupils benefit from these links. Some pupils are on detailed, planned inclusion programmes and attend mainstream schools for significant proportions of the week. Others, in Years 10 and 11, have the opportunity to attend mainstream schools to take GCSE courses that are not available at Derrymount, while some take similar courses at further education colleges as well as 'taster' vocational courses and sessions like adult literacy classes.

27. A good and comprehensive range of extra-curricular activities, including sports and the arts, enriches the curriculum. A breakfast club offers a good preparation for many pupils before they start their lessons for the day, and pupils are able to opt to attend a variety of lunchtime clubs, such as computing and art. They can also attend the after school sports club. The library is also well used at these times for reading or quiet games. Participation in sport is particularly strong, including activities as varied as athletics and horse riding, and pupils also have opportunities to participate in arts events, such as the Gedling Dance Festival last year.

28. A varied and informative programme of visits supports classroom based learning well and pupils go on trips to a wide variety of museums, galleries and places of local interest. These visits contribute well to the school's PSHE provision, which is satisfactory overall. The school is committed to promoting pupils' personal development and, therefore, it places great emphasis on developing these skills. Many lessons and activities help to do this but lessons in PSHE do this well as they encourage pupils' personal development in a formal way. However, long term planning that ensures that all topics, including all elements of citizenship, are covered in a progressive way as pupils move through the school is not yet complete.

### **Care, guidance and support**

29. There are very good procedures for ensuring pupils' care, welfare, health and safety. Well informed support, advice and guidance are made available to all pupils as they progress through the school. Pupils' views are encouraged and the school acts on suggestions wherever practicable.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Child protection and health and safety procedures are consistently followed and the school is vigilant in meeting its statutory responsibilities.
- All staff demonstrate high levels of care and concern for pupils and they work hard to enable all pupils to achieve to the best of their ability.
- Good quality, impartial advice and guidance helps pupils towards appropriate further education and job opportunities.
- Very effective monitoring of behaviour and social development ensures good quality individual support for all pupils.
- Pupils are fully involved in the formal process of setting and reviewing their own development targets and are now being encouraged to review their progress themselves, following individual lessons and activities.

### **Commentary**

30. Daily routines of care and welfare are well established and respected by pupils and staff, and the school is both vigilant and sensitive in exercising its responsibilities. Staff have pupils' well being in mind at all times and pupils enjoy very positive and trusting relationships with teachers and teaching assistants. An appropriate level of supervision is always provided and pupils attending off site activities are extremely well supported. Adults in the school are very good role models and there is a consistency of expectation of how pupils will work and behave.

31. Very good systems are in place to ensure that identified hazards or safety concerns around the site are quickly eliminated. There are clear procedures relating to medicines, which are carefully followed, and first aiders hold up to date qualifications. Comprehensive records of incidents and accidents are maintained and the school ensures that parents are quickly informed of any illness or injury.

32. Systematic and well managed recording and monitoring systems ensure that pupils' behaviour and personal development are closely tracked. Realistic and achievable improvement targets are set. Any pupils experiencing difficulties are quickly identified and tailored support is effectively provided. The use of academic assessment data to support pupil progress is satisfactory overall but does vary from subject to subject. In science, for example, assessment data is used very well to develop future teaching plans whereas in mathematics assessment systems are still at an early stage of being developed.

33. The induction arrangements for new pupils are good and effectively enable pupils to make a smooth transition to the school. As pupils progress through the school they receive good quality advice and guidance on the world of work and future career and education opportunities. All pupils have closely supported job experience placements and all benefit from opportunities to experience courses at many further education colleges. Many have the opportunity to participate in community based work related projects, such as that at Stonebridge City Farm

34. Pupils are regularly asked to express their views on day to day routines and have started to use the school council well to effect changes which improve the provision for them. All pupils attend and contribute at the formal review meetings where development targets are agreed. Pupils are now being regularly encouraged to self evaluate their performance in individual lessons and activities as well as to express their views on how enjoyable and relevant the activities were.

### **Partnership with parents, other schools and the community**

35. The school enjoys satisfactory links with parents and carers that contribute positively to pupils' learning and development. There are very good links with the community and good links with other schools and colleges. The school does not provide any formal, routine outreach support to teachers and pupils in mainstream schools.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The vast majority of parents are very supportive of the school and very satisfied with the quality of education that their children are receiving. A small, but significant, minority of parents continue to hold negative perceptions of the school and aspects of its work.
- The school uses its links with the community very effectively to extend pupils' learning.
- There are good links with other schools and colleges in the area.
- Parents receive good quality information about pupils' progress and effective home school liaison initiatives are strengthening the partnership.
- There are no regular support services provided by the school for assisting pupils with special needs in mainstream schools and their teachers.

### **Commentary**

36. Parents and carers overwhelmingly agree that their children like attending Derrymount, that the teaching is good and that the school expects their children to work hard. However, a small minority of parents raised concerns about behaviour in the school, the qualities of leadership and management, and how the school responded to parents' views and encouraged parental involvement. Although inspectors do not share these concerns, the school is very aware of these negative perceptions held by a few parents and is, rightly, planning urgently to address the situation.

37. Communication between the school and home has improved over the last two years. Good quality information on pupil progress is made available formally through termly reviews, at the Annual

Review of pupils' Statements of Special Educational Needs, and through the annual report to parents. Effective day to day contact is maintained through home school diaries, 'good news' telephone calls and the very successful home visit programme. Staff are quick to involve parents if they have any concerns and they are always happy to discuss parental worries. Initiatives to involve parents in the life of the school are starting to attract more attention, with coffee mornings and governor clinics proving increasingly popular. It is notable that two parents are attending a major training course on autism, which was arranged primarily for teachers at the school.

38. Links with the community are very good and they support the work teachers do in the classroom. Staff are enthusiastic about using these opportunities to extend pupils' learning and their personal development. Opportunities are taken whenever possible to utilise the area. Primary aged pupils have been on trips to a local zoo, farm and Brewhouse Yard Museum to 'bring alive' what they have been learning in the classroom. Secondary aged pupils have made bird boxes and feeders at Bestwood Park and been to a residential outdoor activity centre in the Lake District. A few older students also have work experience placements in the community, for example in a supermarket and local garage, and others attend community based work related projects, like that at Stonebridge City Farm. Participation in events such as the Gedling Dance Festival promotes pupils' cultural awareness, and visits to different places of worship and to the Divali celebrations in Leicester contribute to their developing awareness of multi-cultural and multi-faith issues. The school also helps national and international communities through its support of charities such as Red Nose Day and the 'Send a Cow' charity for African aid.

39. The school has good links with local schools and colleges, which reflects its inclusion policy and commitment to promoting the development of individuals. Where possible, it extends pupils' experiences by seeking suitable integration links, such as pupils attending lessons at local schools or schools near their home. A particularly interesting link is the one with a Nottingham city special school during which five Year 10 pupils attend one morning each week in order to collaborate with the host school's pupils as, together, they work towards a GCSE in Performing Arts. There are strong links with a number of further education colleges and these provide older pupils with GCSE opportunities, 'taster' vocational courses, and adult literacy sessions.

40. There has been little impetus from the local education authority for the school to develop an outreach support service to local schools. Therefore, there is no regular, formal extended service currently provided.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

41. Governance of the school is good and governors ensure that all statutory requirements are met. The leadership of the headteacher is very good. The leadership of other key staff and the effectiveness of management within the school are good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The governing body has supported the school very well over the last two years and ensured that the issues raised at the last inspection have been addressed very effectively.
- Leadership and management of the school have improved significantly.
- The leadership of the headteacher is very good, showing clear vision and high aspirations for the school and its pupils.
- Senior managers share the drive and commitment of the headteacher and work as an effective team, dedicated to running a school in which each individual matters.
- Systems for self evaluation and review are good and have improved significantly since the last inspection.
- A very effective performance management system includes all staff and there is innovative and effective deployment of teaching assistants.
- The role of curriculum manager is insufficiently developed.

- Day to day financial management and control are good. Best value principles are embedded in all purchase decisions and the school is starting to review effectiveness of resources as part of the planning and budgeting process.

## Commentary

42. Membership of the governing body has changed significantly since the last inspection. During a period of considerable change for the school, governors have ensured that statutory duties have been fulfilled while being very helpful and supportive to the new headteacher. The chair and vice chair of governors have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They have been fully involved in helping to shape the vision and future direction of the school in addition to providing effective support and back-up for day to day issues. A good committee structure ensures that new initiatives and proposals from the headteacher receive constructive challenge and that appropriate monitoring and review systems are always incorporated. Up until now, the governing body has, sensibly, focused its work on items connected with the specific school improvement agenda relating to the identified serious weaknesses. Now that the school is no longer considered to have serious weaknesses governors already have plans to spend more time in school observing practice, and to have more opportunity to develop their own review agenda.

43. Leadership of the school has improved greatly since the last inspection. The headteacher has a clear vision for the school which is understood and subscribed to by all senior managers. Staff in senior management positions understand their roles well, and work effectively as a team, committed to running an inclusive school that enables all pupils to achieve to the best of their abilities. The new headteacher has successfully established a new management structure which allocates significant areas of responsibility to teaching assistants, thereby enabling classroom teachers and curriculum managers to focus on pupil learning and achievement. Both teachers and teaching assistants have embraced the changes enthusiastically and are highly motivated by the new challenges. The staff as a whole respect and support each other and work happily together with a common purpose.

44. The school development agenda in the last two years has been driven mainly by externally identified points for improvement, with just a few areas of concern being derived from internal senior management reviews. With the critical issues now attended to, the process of regular review and self evaluation of all aspects of provision is starting to be built into the annual planning cycle. Curriculum managers contribute to the determination of the school improvement plan through annual budget plans. However, they do not yet take full responsibility for the planned development in their areas of responsibility, such as building in review procedures and planning development over a three year period. Performance management of staff is well embedded, taken seriously by everyone and is effective in bringing about change and improvement. The school is committed to staff development and ensures that the training undertaken matches the needs of individuals as well as the requirements of the school.

### **Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003**

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	721345
Total expenditure	775421
Expenditure per pupil	12308

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	63648
Balance carried forward to the next year	9572

45. Day to day financial management and control are good and administration staff are efficient, flexible and important members of the team. The principles of best value are effectively built in to all purchase decisions and governors undertake best value reviews on a sample of purchases each term. There are plans to install a formal review system for major purchases to ensure that benefits and improvements are being delivered as anticipated.

# PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES

## SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 2 – 4

### ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

#### English

46. Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good and pupils learn well in lessons.
- Overall, pupils achieve well in developing skills in speaking and listening, reading, and writing.
- Pupils' behaviour in class is good and their motivation for learning is high.
- Good resources support learning well.
- Assessment is satisfactory but needs further development.
- Leadership and management are currently satisfactory although there is the capacity and potential for improvement.

#### Commentary

47. Pupils now achieve well and make good progress, and this represents good improvement on the previous inspection.

48. The development of speaking and listening skills is particularly strong. Many pupils have difficulty in expressing themselves verbally but their efforts are always carefully nurtured in English lessons. For example, a class of Year 7 pupils was studying *Robin Hood* and there was a noticeable increase in their confidence in acting out the roles of different characters. Oral skills and verbal expression, as well as the reading of key words developed well in all pupils.

49. Pupils' reading skills are developed in increasingly diverse ways as they get older. Teacher-directed reading, with repetitive practice, in the primary aged class is replaced by high self-motivation for reading as a natural means of getting information. Pupils research information from books and the Internet as well getting information from wall displays. An accessible library is well used during lessons and is freely available during break times. It is well stocked with a variety of interesting and attractively arranged shelves of books. Other displays of easily accessible books encourage pupils to read as they move around the school and this gives them a sense of independence and control over their own reading.

50. There is a very wide range of writing skills within the school. Pupils make good progress generally when recording information, describing situations and writing freely. Primary aged pupils make very good progress in their handwriting skills.

51. Elements of the National Literacy Strategy for pupils aged 11 to 14 years have been incorporated into lessons. Lessons are generally well structured in three parts, an introduction followed by the main teaching activity and a final plenary session, and the use of time is well planned. This has made them more stimulating for pupils and this interest is maintained because English lessons are taught in interesting and diverse ways. Teachers make great efforts to use props, drama, multi media, and many other ideas to inspire and stimulate pupils' imagination. The teamwork and communication between teachers and teaching assistants is very impressive and this helps to maintain pupils' involvement in the activities provided. They try hard in their lessons and there is a very busy atmosphere evident in classrooms.

52. Learning is supported by good quality resources. New ones have recently been acquired for pupils in Years 7 to 9, including novels that reflect those being studied in mainstream schools. This

has been done consciously in order to keep open the possibility of continuing this work in conjunction with main stream schools. Further language resources, such as 'big' books, have also been acquired to support teaching in line with the principles of the National Literacy Strategy.

53. The subject leader for English is new to the school and is, therefore, at an early stage in developing her role. Leadership and management are currently satisfactory although there is the capacity and potential for improvement. For instance, an early audit has identified a number of initiatives to be undertaken this term and developed through the year. Assessment is one area that requires further development. Ongoing assessment and feedback during lessons is very good, although marking is not always as focussed or helpful as it might be. However, achievements are not recorded consistently and reading and spelling are not evaluated regularly. Therefore, pupil progress in these areas cannot be charted as progress through the school.

### **Language and literacy across the curriculum**

54. Pupils' language and literacy skills are promoted well through other subjects (of the curriculum) as teachers provide extensive opportunities for pupils to improve all elements of communication. They are particularly skilled at encouraging pupils to rehearse their speaking and listening skills through well managed discussions and activities such as small drama sessions involving role play. The promotion of key subject vocabulary and the use of dictionaries, reference books and the Internet to research information encourage pupils to read. Most subjects also encourage pupils to write in different styles, like recording information in science investigations to producing posters to encourage recycling and writing freely in PSHE lessons to describe something that is precious to them.

### **French**

55. Provision in French is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching is satisfactory but there are missed opportunities to extend pupils' communication skills.
- Pupils' respond satisfactorily although they are restless at times.
- The curriculum manager has produced a programme of work that encourages pupils' acquisition of basic French words and phrases in a progressive way as they move through the school.

### **Commentary**

56. The very high standards identified in the last inspection have not been maintained. Pupils now make satisfactory progress. Staff are well qualified and confident in their knowledge of the subject and there is good teamwork between teachers and teaching assistants.

57. Lesson organisation is efficient, and there are some good attempts to make the subject interesting and fun for the pupils through games and physical activities. For instance, Year 7 pupils identified different sports that were spoken to them in French by jumping to face the correct sports card on different walls of the classroom.

58. Pupils frequently respond well to these activities, although they have a tendency to be rather excited and noisy at the start of lessons. However, lesson planning does not provide for activities that meet individual pupils' specific learning needs. Consequently, at times opportunities to extend pupils' communication skills are missed, such as expecting the more able pupils to respond in short sentences rather than just single words, and therefore some pupils lose interest towards the end of lessons.

59. The subject is led and managed satisfactorily. The subject leader has developed effective programmes of work and assessment and recording checklists, including a map of France checklist grid for each pupil to colour in their learning targets.

## **MATHEMATICS**

60. Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils have the opportunity to take accredited examinations at the end of Year 11 and this motivates them well.
- Pupils' achievements are good in Years 3 to 6 and satisfactory overall across the school.
- The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory but some teachers have insecure subject knowledge.
- Some classes are taught by too many teachers and this reduces the effectiveness of planning and assessment.
- Mathematical skills are promoted well in other subjects of the curriculum.

### **Commentary**

61. Overall, pupils are taught mathematics satisfactorily although they are taught well in Years 3 to 6. Their learning in lessons is satisfactory and they make steady progress as they move through the school. Pupils make progress in all areas of mathematics but it is particularly evident in practical number work. For lower attaining pupils this means ordering and sequencing numbers. For pupils with more developed mathematical skills it is using and applying mathematics in activities such as handling money in everyday "shopping" activities and handling data, like producing tally charts of how pupils travel to school and then drawing bar charts. These activities are appropriate to pupils' ages, interest and abilities and promote the use of mathematical knowledge in everyday situations.

62. Pupils' achievements in Years 3 to 6 are good and they are satisfactory overall across the school. This represents satisfactory improvement since the last inspection when there was wider variation in the standards pupils achieved, ranging from good in Years 3 to 6 to unsatisfactory in Years 7 to 9. In addition, at that time there were no externally accredited courses available but pupils are now able to follow accredited courses in Year 10 and 11 either at Derrymount or at a local college.

63. Some teaching is good and, at times, very good. These lessons are very well managed and structured sessions. They have a three part format in line with the guidance of the National Numeracy Strategy; an introduction followed by the main teaching activity and a final plenary session. Rigorous planning identifies the intended learning outcomes for individual pupils, and groups of pupils, and the identified activities are well chosen to build on, and extend, prior learning. Skilled teaching assistants and simple, but effective, resources ensure that all pupils are included in the activities. Therefore, hearing impaired pupils' understanding of 'place value' and 'number bonds' was developed because teaching assistants' skill in using sign language ensured their participation. Similarly, correctly coloured paper and appropriately sized fonts enabled a pupil with visual impairment to record his findings as different items were measured. On these occasions teachers are confident in their knowledge of what they are teaching and competent in the way they develop pupils' understanding of mathematical ideas.

64. At other times, pupils' learning is reduced by teachers' uncertain subject knowledge. This insecurity is evident in a number of ways. For instance, providing teenage pupils with plastic money to help them work out problems is demotivating. At other times, teachers' insecure subject knowledge has potentially more serious consequences; pupils are given inaccurate information and, on occasion, explanations are unclear and misleading. Other factors that sometimes limit pupil progress relate to the lack of pace in lessons and the fact that too many teachers teach some

classes. For instance, Year 11 pupils have four mathematics lessons each week but these are taught by three different teachers and this has implications for planning and assessment.

65. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. An enthusiastic subject leader has good understanding of the National Numeracy Strategy in primary schools but has no experience of secondary aged pupils. Preliminary audits have been carried out and staff training and assessment procedures have been correctly identified as areas that need further development. Assessment systems are satisfactory but as yet there is no routine, managed mechanism for evaluating pupils' work and giving it a 'p' level or National Curriculum level, which can then be moderated by other teachers. Too much responsibility for planning is placed on the subject leader, including the planning of sequences of lessons for pupils following Entry Level courses in Years 10 and 11. This reflects the lack of real subject expertise in the school.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

66. Teachers are effective in supporting pupils' learning of mathematical skills through other subjects of the curriculum. A number of examples were observed of teachers seizing opportunities to allow pupils to rehearse their mathematical understanding and knowledge. For example, in food technology pupils read scales and measure capacity, they draw bar charts in YAS when comparing the taste and appearance of healthy and unhealthy foods, and in PSHE they plot line graphs of changes over time in boys' and girls' height and weight.

## **SCIENCE**

67. Provision in science is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils are taught very well overall and make very good progress.
- Lessons encourage pupils to experiment and find things out for themselves.
- Science lessons make a significant contribution to developing pupils' personal and social skills.
- Very good use is made of the assessment information to influence future planning.
- The role of the science curriculum manager is fully developed. She provides strong leadership and is developing the subject very effectively.

### **Commentary**

68. The school has responded positively to the shortcomings in science that were identified during the previous inspection. At that time, overall provision was considered unsatisfactory. Since then, improvement has been very good. A small laboratory has been developed and resources have improved. Much of the improvement is due to the highly effective leadership and management provided by the curriculum manager for science. She has a long term vision for developing the subject and this is supported by effective management systems for monitoring teaching, learning and pupil achievements. As a result, pupils' learning opportunities have been greatly enhanced and many achieve very well at the end of Year 11 in their CoEA Entry Level course, with a number achieving the highest grade.

69. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 are taught by their class teacher while a specialist subject teacher takes all classes in Years 7 to 11. Overall, pupils are taught very well and lessons have many strengths that encourage pupils' learning extremely well. Teachers use time and resources effectively, and they plan interesting activities that encourage all pupils to participate because constructive assessment systems provide them with detailed information about individuals' capabilities. This ensures that planning builds well on earlier learning. The strong and trusting relationships in lessons, and the contributions made by teaching assistants, give pupils with behaviour and communication difficulties the confidence to take part.

70. A feature of science lessons is the way in which staff develop pupils' knowledge of scientific ideas and their understanding of a scientific approach to investigations through practical activities. They do so through a consistent approach in using appropriate scientific vocabulary combined with a 'hands on' approach to learning. For instance, a group of pupils in Years 3 to 6 made very good progress in their knowledge of different groups of food, such as fats and proteins, as they made sandwiches for themselves. A class of Year 11 pupils learnt equally well as they acquired new understanding of how energy is measured and transferred through a practical activity associated with counting and measuring steps and then applying an equation. Activities such as this, when pupils have to work collaboratively in groups, also contribute well to promoting pupils' personal development.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

71. Provision in information and communication technology is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils' achievements are good overall and in some cases very good.
- Good teaching means that pupils are steadily acquiring new computer skills and developing confidence in using new technology.
- Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good, and they enjoy their time working on computers.
- Resources are greatly improved since the last inspection and are now supporting learning effectively across the curriculum.
- Management and leadership of the subject are very good.

### **Commentary**

72. There has been a very big improvement in ICT provision since the last inspection. This is partly because of the very good leadership and management shown by the curriculum manager for the subject. She has a very good grasp of the implications of ICT as a way of extending pupils' learning opportunities. The other factor has been the significant improvement in the quality of resources and the newly refurbished computer room, which is now well equipped for use by classes of pupils.

73. Teaching and learning are good in all year groups. Teachers show a good and confident manner in their demonstrations and in the ways in which they are able to advise and support pupils and resolve problems which they come across. Teachers provide tasks that challenge pupils who are at both higher and lower stages of competence and their work is ably supported by teaching assistants, who work very effectively with pupils and make activities accessible to everyone. As a result, pupils' attitudes towards computer work are generally high. There is an impressive working atmosphere in lessons, with high levels of application and concentration, with pupils experimenting with solutions or waiting patiently until someone is able to come and help them. Adults provide good ongoing support and assessment of computer skills during lessons, but these achievements are not yet recorded routinely.

74. As a result of their motivation to learn, and the good quality of teaching, pupils achieve well. They follow a comprehensive programme of work that equips them with a variety of skills. Consequently, at the end of Year 11 pupils are successful in CoEA Entry Level examinations and the most able pupils are now being entered for GCSE examinations. The enthusiasm among pupils of all ages for computers is reflected in the popularity of the computer club during lunch breaks. This is overseen by a lunchtime supervisor who has both an interest in computers and has received some introductory training by the curriculum manager.

75. Pupils' enthusiasm for developing their ICT competence is shared by all staff and they are equally keen to increase their own skills. Training is in hand and shortly staff will be going on the government funded European Computer Driving Licence Scheme which will further enhance

computer confidence among class teachers and teaching assistants. Such ongoing training helps to reinforce the school's philosophy of maintaining a controlled balance between pupils' use of new technology and other learning tools and resources. Therefore, there is a good understanding among staff that, while developed ICT skills can increase pupils' initiative, new technology should not be used to the extent that it adversely affects other aspects of their behaviour or learning.

## **Information and communication technology across the curriculum**

76. During the inspection there were many instances of new technology being used in different subjects of the curriculum. Teachers use this technology well to improve the quality of their demonstrations, to produce records of events through the use of digital cameras, and to produce specialist resources for pupils with additional special needs such as visual impairment. They are also effective in providing opportunities for pupils to develop, extend and consolidate their ICT skills in more subjects of the curriculum. These include visiting named websites in a PSHE lesson to research information on topics such as bullying, using interactive CD ROMs in subjects like mathematics, and exploring a program in art that enabled them to examine patterns and match colours.

## **HUMANITIES**

### **History**

77. Provision in history is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils develop good knowledge and understanding in lessons because they are well taught.
- Pupils in Years 10 and 11 are motivated well as they follow an externally accredited course.
- The subject is well led and managed.
- Assessment procedures are satisfactory but not sufficiently routine and systematic to provide information for future planning.
- Trips and visits into the community make a significant contribution to pupils' learning.

### **Commentary**

78. Pupils' achievements in history are good. Standards identified at the time of the previous inspection have been maintained. Teachers orchestrate effective discussions with pupils and the skilful use of questioning ensures they all participate in lessons. Key words are reinforced well so that pupils begin to develop an understanding of historical vocabulary. Teaching assistants play an important role in this. As a consequence, pupils enjoy the subject and are enthusiastic contributors to discussions. Therefore they learn well in lessons and develop knowledge about times in the past and understanding of historical ideas. For the youngest pupils, in Years 3 to 6, this means learning about previous civilisations, such as the Vikings, and this helps them to develop an idea of the passage of time.

79. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 begin to develop more advanced historical skills and these are refined even more in Years 10 and 11 as they work towards their CoEA Entry Level examination. By this age the highest attaining pupils understand how things change over time and they have the ability to make comparisons between the past and the present day. This may mean comparing household items and equipment from the 1940s with those used today, or it may mean comparing aspects of the locality, such as life in Arnold past and present. Activities such as this present opportunities to use the local community to support pupils' learning and to develop their personal skills. Teachers use these opportunities well, such as taking pupils to the local park in order to compare what they can see now with photographs from the past, although the detail in the photographs was of limited value as a learning resource.

80. A good and effective subject leader has produced a clear policy and plan of work. Therefore pupils follow a comprehensive programme as they move through the school. However, at the present time pupils' achievements are not assessed routinely or in ways which enable teachers to use this information to plan future lessons. Consequently, what it is anticipated that individual pupils and groups of pupils will learn in lessons is not always clear from the lessons plans.

## **Geography**

81. It is not possible to make an overall judgement on the quality of teaching and learning as only one lesson was observed during the inspection. However, pupils' work and informative wall displays show that pupils learn geographical skills, develop understanding about other countries as well as their own, and know about physical features of the landscape.

82. In the lesson that was observed it was clear that pupils thoroughly enjoy the subject. The teacher and teaching assistant worked hard to develop pupils' knowledge about Brazil, such as its location and physical geography, and appropriate vocabulary associated with population, like 'sparse', 'dense' and 'distribution' were introduced and explained well.

## **Religious education**

83. Provision in religious education is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Good resources are accessible and well organised.
- The local community is used well to enhance pupils' understanding of different faiths.
- The subject contributes well to pupils' personal development.
- Currently, the subject does not have a curriculum manager.
- Assessment records of pupils' achievement are limited in detail.

### **Commentary**

84. Pupils' achievements in religious education are good, which represents satisfactory improvement since the last inspection. Pupils are given a wide range of learning experiences through their exposure to features of religions such as Islam and Judaism as well as Christianity. These include visits to different places of worship in the community that help to make the subject 'come alive'. Activities such as this make a significant contribution to developing pupils' knowledge of religious diversity and their understanding of living in multi-cultural Britain.

85. A lesson with Year 10 pupils provided a good example of how these different aspects come together. The teacher provided a variety of activities and resources, including the use of the Internet, that enabled pupils to research information about mosques. Independent learning was strongly encouraged and pupils were successful in beginning to produce a leaflet about mosques for non-Moslems. Although limited lessons were seen during the inspection, the quality of teaching and learning that was observed was good. Pupils are now able to receive recognition for their work through a CoEA award at the end of Year 11.

86. The previous subject leader had collected a good range of high quality learning resources including artefacts, books, videos, posters and pictures. These are stored methodically and are easily accessible to all teachers. Although leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory, there is currently no subject leader and therefore some shortcomings remain unresolved. Pupils' achievements are not systematically assessed and recorded, and therefore pupil reports often merely describe topics that pupils have covered rather than what they have learnt. In addition, there is limited monitoring and evaluation of classroom practice and therefore there is no ongoing evaluation of the quality of teaching and learning.

## **TECHNOLOGY**

### **Food technology**

87. Provision in food technology is **good**.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching and learning are good.
- Pupils are well motivated and interested.
- The curriculum manager is new to the role but brings skills and expertise from her experience in mainstream teaching.
- Systems for assessment are at an early stage.
- Resources and accommodation are good.

#### **Commentary**

88. There has been good improvement in provision since the last inspection. In particular, the quality of teaching and learning has improved and are now good overall. Resources have also improved and food technology has its own accommodation. This helps to increase the focus for the subject, which is especially important at secondary level, and increases pupils' opportunities for achievement in the subject. By drawing on her subject expertise and mainstream experience, the good and effective curriculum manager has produced a comprehensive programme of work that meets pupils' interests and is appropriate to their ages. The assessment of pupils' work is satisfactory, with systems for recording achievement and progress being developed.

89. Lesson plans and preparation are good and the kitchen is well organised. A specialist subject teacher provides activities that are suitably challenging for all pupils. The teacher maintains high expectations of work and behaviour. As a result, pupils are well motivated, work hard and achieve well. Consequently, Year 7 pupils were able to prepare interesting lunch boxes with healthy foods, while Year 11 pupils had graduated to preparing and cooking their own meat-free cottage pies.

90. A feature of food technology lessons is the ways in which aspects of pupils' personal development are promoted. There are high expectations of independent work and so pupils engage in all culinary tasks themselves, learning how to cope independently with heat, blades, and other potential hazards in the kitchen. Pupils are provided with self evaluation sheets to complete about the quality of their work. This develops recording and writing skills as well as encouraging a self-critical approach by giving pupils knowledge of their own performance. There is attention to developing sensory skills in this respect too, with pupils being required to make judgements about taste, smell, touch and texture as well as colour and appearance. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are also enhanced well through the teacher's skilled use of dialogue and discussion.

#### **Design and technology**

91. Although the school teaches both food technology and resistant materials, only food technology was being taught during the inspection. Therefore, it is not possible to evaluate the qualities of teaching and learning in resistant materials. There was very limited evidence of work to examine and so a secure judgement on pupils' achievements is not possible. The work that was available shows that pupils are competent in using a variety of materials such as wood, plastic, and card, as they make items such as clock faces.

## **VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS**

### **Art and design**

92. Provision in art and design is **very good**.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching and learning is very good and so pupils achieve very well.
- Art is taught by a subject specialist and her enthusiasm stimulates pupils' interest and enjoyment in the subject.
- The subject leader provides clear direction and strong leadership.
- Art makes a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual and cultural development.

#### **Commentary**

93. The school has responded extremely positively to the comments of the previous inspection. At that time the judgement was that overall provision was unsatisfactory. There has been very good improvement since then and the subject is now a strength of the school. A newly appointed subject leader has been innovative, particularly in developing the curriculum. Leadership and management of the subject are very good. The subject leader has a clear view of how she wishes the subject to evolve and this is based on an effective subject policy and curriculum that provides pupils with a variety of rich and rewarding experiences. A subject development plan articulates these aims clearly.

94. Pupils achieve very well in art and design. The range of very high quality displays around the school is evidence of the stimulating teaching that pupils experience and the very high standard of work they produce. It is evident from these displays that pupils use a variety of different materials and techniques in their paintings, collage and three dimensional work. A display about the Moslem celebration *Eid*, with *Diva* lamps made from clay and *Rangoli* patterns drawn with chalk, showed how pupils had explored how shape, form, space, colour and texture could be used to create different designs. This was a collaborative effort by a number of pupils, and activities such as this help to develop pupils' social skills, as they had to work as a team, as well as promoting their awareness of another faith and culture. Pupils clearly enjoy challenges such as this that are presented to them and as a result they respond with enthusiasm and interest. Many develop this interest further through attendance at a lunchtime art club and the optional art club that runs on Friday afternoons.

95. Pupils are very well taught by a knowledgeable subject specialist and time is used very efficiently. Lessons begin promptly and pupils follow clearly established routines. Consequently, they learn very well and make very good progress. Appropriate technical vocabulary, such as 'texture' and 'pigment', is used to extend pupils' knowledge and they put this new learning into practice very effectively. For example, a Year 9 class were investigating how art has changed over time and between different cultures and this included a consideration of earth colours, which pupils later mixed before painting their own 'cave wall'.

### **Music**

96. Music is taught to pupils in Years 3 to 9 but no lessons could be observed during the inspection. Therefore it is not possible to judge the quality of teaching and learning or the standards pupils achieve.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

### Physical education

97. Only one lesson was observed during the inspection and therefore it is not possible to make secure overall judgements on the qualities of teaching and learning. In addition, assessment systems have some limitations and therefore it is not possible to gain a secure judgement about pupils' achievements.

98. The previous subject leader had produced a comprehensive programme of studies that provides pupils with a range of interesting and relevant activities. This includes the good use of alternative, off-site education providers such as the ASCENT at The Mill project. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 attend this site on a regular basis. Pupils work on a variety of outdoor activities but the provision also makes a strong contribution to their personal development as they have the opportunity to gain qualifications in courses such as first aid. Residential visits to the Lake District provide additional opportunities for outdoor pursuits as well as social development.

99. The subject does not currently have a subject leader and therefore if this situation continues it is likely to have an adverse effect on the quality of teaching and learning. However, the school's overall provision for physical education is being maintained very effectively by three teacher assistants with specialist skills in particular sports. They ensure that the school curriculum continues to be complemented very well by an extensive range of activities that take place outside the school day. These include a gymnasium club one evening each week and other activities such as 7-a-side football, cross-country events, dance festival, athletics, cricket, swimming and horse riding.

## PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

### Personal, social and health education

100. Provision in pupils' personal, social and health education is **satisfactory**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are well taught and they achieve well.
- Pupils study a range of topics that are appropriate to their age and interest.
- Strong links with community facilities support learning.
- Long term planning of a broad and balanced curriculum is not yet complete.

#### Commentary

101. Overall, pupils make good progress and achieve well. The school is committed to promoting pupils' personal development and, therefore, it places great emphasis on developing these skills. Many lessons and activities help to do this but lessons in PSHE do this well as they encourage pupils' personal development in a formal and planned way. This is a very good improvement on the situation at the time of the last inspection.

102. The most striking feature of lessons is the way in which teachers develop situations in which pupils feel confident and comfortable about expressing their views and feelings. This is because of the strength of relationships, which are trusting, positive and respectful. Learning is further enhanced by adults' encouragement of pupils' communication skills, particularly speaking and listening, because discussions and question and answer sessions are orchestrated extremely well. When these features of teaching are combined with strong pupil management, classroom organisation and interesting activities then pupils learn well.

103. Teachers place a particularly strong emphasis on ensuring that activities are appropriate to pupils' age and interests. Topics such as 'rules', 'bullying' in the context of rights and responsibilities, and 'belonging to different groups' were all skilfully and sensitively taught. These topics motivate pupils to participate, and they do so enthusiastically. Some members of a class of Year 8 pupils articulated their views about rules associated with different groups to which they belong extremely eloquently and maturely, and Year 9 pupils acted out short scenes linked to bullying scenarios in schools sensibly and with interest.

104. However, lesson planning is inconsistent. The best lessons identify clearly what it is intended that pupils will learn and which new skills they will acquire and their learning is supported well by appropriate resources, such as enlarged print and yellow paper for pupils with visual impairment. At these times new technology is also used appropriately to extend learning, such as exploring the Internet to examine websites dedicated to bullying issues. In other lessons, planning is much too vague and therefore teachers are not able to teach towards clear learning outcomes or evaluate the success of their teaching. On occasion resources are inadequate, such as the sheet of rules that had been prepared for discussion but the writing was much too small for pupils to read from a distance and yellow highlighting could not be seen.

105. The subject leader is enthusiastic but new to the role and new to special education. Long term planning, that ensures that all topics, including citizenship, are covered in a progressive way as pupils move through the school is not yet complete. Resources have not yet been fully audited and so subject development planning is at an early stage. Statutory requirements are met as sex and relationships and drugs education are addressed. The community is used well to provide a practical dimension to what pupils have studied and to encourage pupils' personal development. Trips to the Galleries of Justice in Nottingham, senior girls' 'night out' at a local restaurant and visits to museums all provide stimulating triggers for learning. In particular, the residential visit that a group of Year 10 and 11 pupils made to an outdoor activity centre in the Lake District provided many opportunities for social development.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>3</b>
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	2
Value for money provided by the school	3
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>3</b>
Pupils' achievement	3
<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>3</b>
Attendance	3
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>3</b>
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	4
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>3</b>
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	3

*Inspectors make judgements on a scale: excellent (1); very good (2); good (3); satisfactory (4); unsatisfactory (5); poor (6); very poor (7); the judgement statement does not apply to the school (8).*

*In a special school such as this, **standards achieved** are judged against individual targets and not national standards.*