



Derwent Community School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 112782
Local Authority City of Derby
Inspection number 289409
Inspection dates 7–8 December 2006
Reporting inspector Lynne Blakelock

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	St Mark's Road
School category	Community		Derby
Age range of pupils	3–11		Derbyshire DE21 6AL
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01332 346222
Number on roll (school)	281	Fax number	01332 342701
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr Richard Massey
		Headteacher	Mrs Frances Glaze
Date of previous school inspection	10 September 2001		

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
3–11	7–8 December 2006	289409

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is larger than average. It draws most of its pupils from the Derwent ward, where there are high levels of socio-economic deprivation. Children enter with levels of knowledge and skills which are well below those expected nationally, particularly in speech and language. The proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties and disabilities is above average, as is the proportion entitled to a free school meal. Most pupils are White British. Movement of pupils in and out of the area is significantly high.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 4

The school's own view is that it is effective. Inspectors found it to be inadequate. In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a notice to improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to pupils' progress, which for the last two years has been inadequate. This is despite a good start in the Foundation Stage, where good teaching enables children to achieve well.

Standards in 2005 were exceptionally low, due in part to staffing problems. As a result of the headteacher's initiatives, including sharper assessment procedures, standards rose in 2006 but remained below average. Key Stage 1 results rose significantly in reading and especially in writing. More pupils reached the expected levels at both key stages, but very few reached the higher levels. Results were weaker in Key Stage 2 than Key Stage 1. Despite the rise in standards, pupils' progress remains inadequate. Improvement since the last inspection is inadequate because standards are lower now than they were.

The teaching seen during the inspection was satisfactory overall, and good in the Foundation Stage. Where teaching is good, pupils are stimulated by interesting, challenging activities. However, there is not enough good teaching in Years 1 to 6 to make up for gaps in pupils' learning caused by previous staffing difficulties and, as a result, their long-term progress is inadequate. Progress in lessons is satisfactory, but teaching is not challenging enough to ensure that pupils make the extra effort needed to achieve their best.

The curriculum is satisfactory. In the Foundation Stage it is good, offering exciting and unusual experiences. Throughout the school the personal development programme provides relevant guidance on important life style issues. As a result, pupils make good healthy eating choices. Pupils enjoy school and their personal development is satisfactory. They have good relationships with teachers. However, attendance is below average despite good procedures, and this hampers progress. Behaviour is generally good because it is managed well. Good pastoral care is a strength of the school and, as a result, pupils feel safe. Parents appreciate this, one commenting, 'I now have a confident little girl due to the patience and care of the staff.' The school nurtures a high number of troubled and disadvantaged pupils, thus freeing them to learn. Academic guidance is less well developed than pastoral care and, as a result, information about pupils' attainment is not used consistently in planning work for pupils of different abilities.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher has, with dogged determination, laid the foundations that have begun to improve performance. This is strengthened by staff development that is well focused on the school's priorities and satisfactory support from governors. However, improvement is slowed because there is not enough urgency in evaluating the impact that new initiatives have on pupils'

achievement. The school currently gives inadequate value for money but has satisfactory capacity to improve.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards at Key Stage 1 and 2 by increasing the number of lessons in which teaching and learning are at least good.
- Use the improved knowledge the school has about the levels at which pupils are working to provide good challenge to all pupils in every lesson.
- Evaluate the effect of new initiatives on pupils' achievement with greater urgency.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 4

Pupils' achievement and standards are inadequate despite a rise in standards between 2005 and 2006. In 2005, results in national tests were exceptionally low. This was due in part to staffing issues and mobility of pupils. Results improved in 2006 in reading, writing and mathematics at both key stages, reversing a downward trend. The school achieved this through a better knowledge of the levels at which pupils were working. At Key Stage 1, reading and writing results improved significantly. However, standards remain below average, and are weaker in Key Stage 2 than in Key Stage 1. In particular, the progress that pupils made from Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 2 was inadequate. Pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities also made inadequate progress. Pupils did not meet their targets in English or mathematics. Progress remains inadequate because there is not enough good teaching at Key Stage 1 and 2 to raise standards sufficiently. In contrast, children in the Foundation Stage make good progress. They start school with knowledge and skills that are well below national expectations but many achieve well due to well planned learning experiences.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Most pupils enjoy school. However, their attendance is below average despite the school's good procedures to support it. Most pupils work calmly and behave well. The relatively few instances of bullying are dealt with promptly by staff. Pupils make a reasonable contribution to school life through, for example, being peacemakers who help to 'sort problems out'. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. They develop a respect for other cultures, so that in the main pupils from different backgrounds get on with each other. Pupils learn how to stay safe. They are successfully encouraged to adopt healthy lifestyles through initiatives such as 'healthy living day'. Pupils develop personal qualities that provide a satisfactory basis for the next stage of their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory, but are not good enough to overcome pupils' previous lack of achievement and ensure that their long-term progress is satisfactory. Teachers have good relationships with pupils and manage their behaviour well. Lessons have clear aims, and often have good links to other subjects, including information and communication technology (ICT). However, teaching often lacks the drive and pace needed to motivate pupils to stretch themselves and put in the effort necessary to do better. Work is generally planned at the right level, but sometimes tasks are too easy, and teachers are not able to involve all pupils actively in discussion. However, through working in pairs, pupils are improving their speaking and listening skills and learning to evaluate their own work. Support staff are generally used well to teach individuals and small groups. Teaching is best in the Foundation Stage, where staff plan and run activities consistently well.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory. It has an appropriate emphasis on literacy and numeracy given the school's drive to raise standards. The personal development programme forms a prominent part of the curriculum and is effective in teaching pupils how to stay safe and healthy. The school is developing links between subjects to make learning more interesting and meaningful. Pupils who have learning difficulties and disabilities are supported well, but do not make the progress that they should because class work does not always provide the right level of challenge. Pupils with particular gifts and talents are identified at an early stage. Music tuition is a regular feature of their curriculum, but they are mainly supported through additional work in class, which is not enough to stretch them to any great degree. A vibrant and, at times, innovative curriculum in the Foundation Stage provides well for children's social and academic development. Pupils' learning is enriched by a reasonable number of clubs and a good range of visits.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. There are good procedures to ensure pupils' health and safety, helping to create a secure and comfortable learning environment. The school has a significant proportion of pupils with personal or behavioural difficulties, who are well cared for by experienced, dedicated staff. This enables many to settle down to learning who would otherwise not be able to. Teachers collect good information about pupils' progress, but do not use it consistently enough when setting learning targets or planning lesson activities.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The inspection team agrees with the school that leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher is determined and capable. She is changing the culture of the school to one of greater expectations. Her evaluation of the school's work is accurate in most respects. Although pupils' progress remains inadequate, standards are improving because planning is well focused on pupils' learning. However, improvement is not fast or widespread enough because the school does not evaluate how much effect its initiatives are having with sufficient urgency. All staff are involved in planning, and this leads to good team work. The role of subject leaders is developing. Professional development is well focused on the school's priorities. Governors are extremely supportive; they challenge the school but do not always ask the right questions. The improvements already made and the quality of planning show that the school has satisfactory capacity to improve.

Inspection judgements

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

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	4
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	No

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

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

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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	4
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	Yes

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

9 December 2006

Dear Pupils

Derwent Community School, St Mark's Road, Derby, Derbyshire, DE21 6AL

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed listening to everything you had to tell us about your school. This letter will tell you what we found.

You enjoy school and feel safe here. You and your parents know that the school cares very well for you. We were pleased to see that you generally behave well and try hard to get on with each other. You eat healthily in school and we saw how much you enjoyed your cooked lunches. Most of you work reasonably hard in lessons. You work well with your learning partners. You enjoy raising money to help other people. We do hope that those of you who do not come to school as often as you should will try harder to attend every day. This will mean you can make more progress in your learning.

There are ways in which your school can be better. At the moment you are not making as much progress as you should be in your lessons and the standards you are reaching are not high enough. For those reasons your school has been given a notice to improve. We have asked Mrs Glaze and the teachers to make sure that teaching is always at least good so that you can make more progress. In some lessons your work is too easy or too hard for you. Mrs Glaze is going to check even more carefully that all of your work is at the right level for you. You can help your teachers to make these improvements by trying your very best in all of your lessons. We know that you will want to help your school to be as good as it can be.

We wish you all the best for the future.

Lynne Blakelock

Lead inspector