

# Derwent Community School

## Inspection report

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|--------------------------------|---------------------|
| <b>Unique Reference Number</b> | 112782              |
| <b>Local Authority</b>         | City of Derby LA    |
| <b>Inspection number</b>       | 311003              |
| <b>Inspection dates</b>        | 12–13 February 2008 |
| <b>Reporting inspector</b>     | Sue Hall            |

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

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|---|---|
| <b>Type of school</b>                     | Primary   |
| <b>School category</b>                    | Community   |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                | 3–11  |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                   | Mixed   |
| <b>Number on roll</b>                     |   |
| School                                    | 261   |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>              | The governing body                                |
| <b>Chair</b>                              | Mr Richard Massey                                 |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                        | Mrs Frances Glaze                                 |
| <b>Date of previous school inspection</b> | 7 December 2006                                   |
| <b>School address</b>                     | St Mark's Road<br>Derby<br>Derbyshire<br>DE21 6AL |
| <b>Telephone number</b>                   | 01332 346222                                      |
| <b>Fax number</b>                         | 01332 342701                                      |

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|--------------------------|---------------------|
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| <b>Inspection dates</b>  | 12–13 February 2008 |
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This is a larger than average size primary school serving an area of Derby where there is considerable disadvantage. A much greater proportion of pupils is eligible for free school meals than is found nationally. The number with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is low and almost all speak English as their first language. At the last full inspection, the school was issued with a 'Notice to Improve', as standards were so low. In the subsequent visit by one of Her Majesty's Inspector's it was noted that the school was making inadequate progress in addressing the issue of improvement and in raising pupil's achievements. The school has recently had several new staff appointed, including a deputy headteacher starting this term.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools (HMCI) is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement. The school now provides a satisfactory quality of education. This is largely because learning is improving as teaching meets the needs of more pupils. As many of the recent changes become more fully embedded in day-to-day practice, there is satisfactory capacity for further improvement.

In the Foundation Stage, most children make considerable gains in their learning from a low start. Standards are below national expectations when they enter Year 1. In Years 1 to 6, pupils make satisfactory overall progress. However, progress is limited by pupils' modest speaking and writing skills. In recent years gaps occurred in pupils' learning, which the staff are working hard to overcome. The rate of progress is improving and all abilities now achieve satisfactorily. Pupils generally attain slightly higher standards in reading than they do in speaking, writing and mathematics. However, at the ages of seven and eleven standards are below average and few pupils reach higher standards.

The personal development of pupils is satisfactory. The behaviour of the large majority is good, although a small minority can be challenging. While most enjoy their time at school, many are quiet and do not contribute much to discussions. Many lack the confidence to work independently and struggle in investigative and problem solving activities. Pupils have a satisfactory understanding of healthy lifestyles and how to keep themselves and others safe, including in active playtimes, though some pupils do not always make well-balanced food choices.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory, and the proportion of good teaching is increasing. Staff manage pupils well and have improved the planning of lessons so that different tasks match the range of abilities. However, there is still some variability in teaching and not enough is expected of some pupils, including in speaking activities. Curriculum planning is satisfactory and staff have improved the way they link subjects together in topics and theme weeks. The care, guidance and support of pupils is satisfactory. Pastoral care is good because all staff know and support pupils well. The work of the learning mentor is particularly effective in supporting pupils and their families. Academic guidance for pupils is satisfactory. There have been improvements in the way staff check and track the progress made, although at times such information is not used effectively to provide sufficient challenge for all pupils.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. With many recent changes to personnel and procedures, staff are beginning to develop a shared sense of purpose and direction although more remains to be done to ensure that key decisions are understood and fully supported by all. Few parents responded to the parent questionnaire, those who did are largely pleased with the quality of education and care provided.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

When children enter the Foundation Stage their speaking and general communication skills are often very limited. Many have little experience beyond their immediate area although most are compliant and want to learn. They settle well and make rapid gains in their learning. Because curriculum planning, teaching and learning are effective most children make good progress.

They achieve particularly well in their first year in school because the learning environment is bright and lively and activities are interesting and practically based. There are well-established systems to check and track children's progress, and information is shared with parents to encourage them to support their children at home. Good use is made of the well resourced outdoor learning area, which helps children develop a range of skills. However, at times staff miss opportunities to encourage children to become more familiar with key vocabulary to help develop their communication skills further.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Improve the achievement of all pupils by raising standards, particularly in speaking and writing.
- Make full use of assessment information to ensure that teaching is consistently challenging.
- Improve the leadership of the school by developing a shared direction and sense of purpose in the key decisions made.
- Enable pupils to develop confidence in problem solving skills and independence in their learning.

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

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

Assessments made at children's entry to school show that their knowledge and skills are well below expectations for their age in speaking, reading, writing and other key areas. With good teaching in the Foundation Stage, they make considerable progress in their learning. Nevertheless, when children enter Year 1 most have not reached the targets expected for their age. In Years 1 to 6, pupils limited speaking skills are a major challenge and affect progress in all areas. This, coupled with gaps in their learning, has affected progress over several years. This is now being addressed and more is expected of pupils'. Progress is now satisfactory overall. Pupils of all abilities achieve satisfactorily in literacy, numeracy and science. Boys and girls, including those who find learning difficult and the small number speaking English as an additional language are well supported and achieve at least satisfactorily with some making considerable progress. Nevertheless, standards at the end of both key stages are below average.

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

### **Grade: 3**

Pupils' personal development is satisfactory. Most enjoy learning, are well behaved and are positive about school. Their efforts and achievements are valued and rewarded, including through the 'Roll of Honour' display. However, many pupils do not show enough independence and lack confidence. The school council makes a growing contribution to the school's work. Bullying and racism are rare but when they occur they are dealt with swiftly and effectively. Attendance is satisfactory. Pupils' moral and social development is good. They know right from wrong and most work well together. Their spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory although, pupils do not have enough opportunities to learn about different cultures to help prepare them for life in a multicultural world. Pupils support a range of charities and have a satisfactory involvement with the wider community. They understand the importance of keeping safe and having a healthy lifestyle. Initiatives such as 'money week' and the 'Five Pounds Club'

help prepare pupils for the world of work. Overall, pupils' understanding of basic skills and mostly good attitudes to school prepare them adequately for the next phase of their education.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Secure relationships, effective management of pupils and improved planning of lessons are positive features of the steadily improving teaching and learning. Teaching is most successful when resources are used well to extend learning, pupils are given much encouragement to succeed and demanding tasks bring learning to life. In these instances, pupils find their learning experiences interesting and challenging and make good progress. Teaching assistants are used very effectively to help pupils learn. However, the pace of lessons is not always brisk enough and not all work matches pupils' needs to enable them to make good progress. Pupils sometimes have too little opportunity to practise new learning or consider what they have learnt. As a result of these inconsistencies, learning is uneven as pupils move through the school.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 3**

The school's satisfactory curriculum provides enjoyment through its variety. It meets statutory requirements, and in the main, pupils steadily develop knowledge, skills and understanding as they move through the school. However, the development of speaking skills and investigative approaches such as in mathematics, is too low profile. Information and communication technology is not used widely enough to support learning, although its use is developing. However, there are some good links, such as those providing pupils with opportunities to write at length to extend their historical understanding. Pupils' enjoyment is enhanced through a variety of after school clubs, for example, wildlife, drama, computers and country dancing. Increasingly visits, such as to London, and a wide range of visitors, are helping broaden pupils' horizons.

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

#### **Grade: 3**

Procedures for child protection are robust and comply with statutory requirements. Good health and safety systems ensure that pupils are able to work and play in a safe environment. Pupils say that adults are easily approachable if they need help and the learning mentor is always available to give advice to both parents and pupils. The school has a successful behaviour policy. The pastoral support given to pupils, including for those with learning or behavioural difficulties and their families, is a strength. Concerted efforts to improve attendance and punctuality have begun to bear fruit. A comprehensive programme of personal, social and health education, enhanced by visiting experts, ensures that pupils' are aware of the need to adopt healthy lifestyles. Systems for tracking progress are secure and pupils' get sound guidance on how to improve their work. Assessment is satisfactory. Marking does not always allow pupils to understand the next steps in their learning, as well as acknowledge what they have achieved.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 3

There is growing confidence that the school is equipped to move forward amongst the new staff team. School self-evaluation is accurate and there is a clear understanding of strengths and weaknesses. The headteacher has provided determined leadership but has found it difficult to take all staff along with some difficult decisions. The new deputy headteacher has made a good start in developing her role, including in liaising with all of the staff team. There are good links with a wide range of external agencies that help support pupils' and their families. Subject leadership is satisfactory overall and through the monitoring and evaluation of standards across the school is effectively addressing gaps in pupils' knowledge. The leadership of English and the Foundation Stage is good. The staff have been well supported by governors who are very well led and have a good understanding of their role in acting as a 'critical friend' of the school.

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## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

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

### Overall effectiveness

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

### Achievement and standards

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

### 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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles   | 3 |
| The extent to which learners adopt safe practices   | 3 |
| How well learners enjoy their education   | 3 |
| The attendance of learners  | 3 |
| The behaviour of learners   | 2 |
| The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community                                    | 3 |
| How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being | 3 |

### The quality of provision

|  |   |
|--|---|
| How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of 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 |

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

**Annex A****Leadership and management**

|  |          |
|--|----------|
| <b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>                                       | <b>3</b> |
| How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education | 3        |
| How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards  | 3        |
| The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation  | 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  | 3        |
| The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities  | 2        |
| Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?  | Yes      |
| Does this school require special measures?   | No       |
| Does this school require a notice to improve?  | No       |

## Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

14 February 2008

Inspection of Derwent Community School, Derby, DE21 6 AL

Dear Children

Thank you very much for looking after us when we visited your school recently. We really enjoyed meeting you in lessons, at lunchtime and when we spoke to the school council. We think your school is improving and is now satisfactory

These are some of the best things about your school.

- You make satisfactory progress with your work.
- Most of you behave well and get on happily together.
- Staff care for you and make sure you are safe and well looked after.
- Most of you like coming to school and try hard with your work.
- The school has good links with a wide range of people that help to look after you and your families.
- Children in the Foundation Stage really enjoy school and learn lots of new things.

These are some of the things your school could do to improve

- You could make even more progress, especially in speaking and writing.
- Teachers could provide you with work that is a bit harder.
- The staff could work more closely as a team to decide what else needs to be improved.
- There could be more opportunities for you to make choices in what you do so that you become more independent.

We would like to wish you every success in the future and please remember to come to school regularly and eat healthily!

Yours sincerely

Sue Hall

Lead inspector