

# De Aston team's in the saddle

PUPILS at Market Rasen's De Aston School are mounting up for a new venture.

Year 10 pupils Darbi Murphy and Effie Warwick-John are putting together a school equestrian team to compete in the National Schools Equestrian Association (NSEA) show-jumping and dressage competitions.

It is the first time equestrianism has featured on the school's sports curriculum, but as many pupils come from rural villages, there is a wealth of talented, dedicated horse riders.

Headteacher Ellenor Beighton was very impressed with Darbi's enthusiasm in setting up the school equestrian team and did not hesitate to authorise the application to the NSEA.

Team captain Darbi and vice-captain Effie have already found ten riders, ranging from 11 to 15 years of age, ready to compete and have had some



The new De Aston equestrian team pictured at the first meeting: (mounted) Charlotte Emmerson, Darbi Murphy, Kurt Roddy, Africa Walker, Beth Sharpe and Sara Colgan; (standing) Effie Warwick-John, Kate Emmerson, Sandra Murphy, Hannah Boylan and Jasmine Sherer.

assistance from a handful of sponsors - The Aston Arms, Jacks Tack and the Uniform Shop - who have provided the team with some essential equipment they need to get started.

The team has also enlisted the help of 2nd year BSc (hons) equine student and parent Sandra Murphy as team manager.

They recently held an assessment evening at Faldingworth Equestrian Centre, whose owner has allowed the team to use the facilities to help with their training and has recruited the

help of international showjumper and trainer Lionel Dunning and List 1 British dressage judge and Grand Prix dressage rider and trainer Steph Cooper.

Other trainers who are helping with the team are Sarah Raw BHSI and current Paralympic dressage rider Kate Hunter, a former pupil of De Aston School.

"The school has been really supportive, but it is now up to us" said Darbi.

"We have to start fundraising to help us to finance our sport."

The team's first fundraising venture is to take part in The Market Rasen Lions 'Only Fools No Horses Fun Run' this Sunday, October 2.

Local business sponsorship is also essential for this team to get to competitions and to have the opportunity to do well.

The team manager said: "I realise times are hard for everyone, however we need to invest in our children for the future, especially when events such as the 2012 Olympics are being held in London."