

# Mellers Primary School

Norton Street, Radford, Nottingham, NG7 3HJ

**Inspection dates** 14–15 May 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- The rate of pupils' progress in recent years has not been good enough to enable pupils to reach average standards in English and mathematics.
- Teaching is not consistently good throughout the school. Teachers' explanations are sometimes too long. Teachers do not always check that pupils understand what they are meant to be doing, or that they act upon the marking and other advice they are given.
- Behaviour is not good because some pupils do not concentrate well enough in class and a minority are frequently late to school in the morning.
- Leaders have not done enough to ensure that teaching and achievement are consistently good in Key Stages 1 and 2.

### The school has the following strengths

- The school is a vibrant, multicultural community, where pupils from many different backgrounds get on very well together.
- Pupils are safe and their individual needs are well known to staff. The school offers a very high level of care and support to pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage is good. Pupils get off to a good start when they first join the school, including those who arrive speaking no English.
- Pupils have access to many clubs and activities in addition to normal lessons. Music-making is a particular strength. All pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 play a musical instrument.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in all classes. They observed 21 lessons, two of them jointly with the headteacher, and made brief visits to several more. They examined the work in pupils' books.
- Inspectors held discussions with pupils, parents and carers, staff, governors, and officers representing the local authority.
- Inspectors looked at a wide range of documents covering safeguarding and child protection, attendance, behaviour, pupils' progress and attainment, the work of the Governing Body, the school improvement plan, and the arrangements for monitoring teaching quality.
- Inspectors considered 24 questionnaires completed by staff. They also consulted the Parent View website, where 12 parents and carers had posted responses to the online questionnaire.

## Inspection team

Richard Marsden, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Diana Pearce

Additional Inspector

Rosemary Barnfield

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is an average-sized primary school. Its Early Years Foundation Stage unit includes children of both nursery and reception age.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is almost three times higher than the national average, as is the proportion who speaks English as an additional language. About 18 different languages are spoken by pupils at home. Some pupils join the school speaking no English at all.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is more than double the national average. The premium is additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, those in local authority care and pupils with a parent in the armed forces.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is twice the national average. The proportion supported at school action plus or who have a statement of special educational needs is also above average.
- In 2012 the school narrowly failed to meet the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The proportion of pupils who join or leave the school part way through a year is much higher than is usually found.

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

- Improve teaching in Key Stages 1 and 2, so that it is consistently good or better, by ensuring that:
  - all teachers question pupils effectively, making sure that they fully understand what they are learning and what they are meant to be doing
  - teachers do not talk for too long and they set pupils to work on activities more quickly so that they do not lose concentration
  - all pupils read, understand, and act upon the advice teachers give them when they mark their work.
- Raise achievement in English and mathematics in Key Stages 1 and 2, so that by the end of Year 6 standards are at least average, by:
  - giving greater emphasis to helping weaker pupils to work independently and master the skills of problem solving in mathematics
  - ensuring all pupils are given opportunities to practise the skills of extended writing, not only in literacy lessons but also in other subjects.
- Strengthen leadership and management by:
  - making sure that leaders and managers provide regular opportunities for less experienced teachers to observe and learn from their more experienced colleagues
  - working closely with those families who do not send their children to school regularly or on time, so that the children from these families can benefit fully from their education.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- Pupils join the school with knowledge and skills that are well below those expected for their age, especially in language and communication skills. They get off to a good start in the Nursery and Reception and make up some of the gap. However, progress is inconsistent in Key Stages 1 and 2. By the end of Year 6 attainment in English and mathematics is still below average.
- The school narrowly failed to meet the government's floor standards in English and mathematics in 2012. The achievement of current pupils shows improvement, particularly in mathematics. However, pupils' achievement in writing is not as consistent as it is in reading. Pupils practise the skill of writing extended passages in literacy lessons but, in some year groups, opportunities for them to write at length in other subjects are limited. As a result, achievement is not as good in these years.
- Achievement in mathematics is improving because teachers relate mathematics to the real world and allow pupils to practise skills in different ways. In one lesson on percentages, pupils pretended they were in charge of a television station and had the job of working out what percentage of time the station should devote to different kinds of programmes. This captured their interest. They worked enthusiastically and made good progress. Standards remain below average because some pupils rely too much on the teacher's help and have not yet developed the skill of solving problems on their own.
- In past years girls have outperformed boys in English and mathematics. The school has addressed this. The records for current pupils show that there is no longer any significant variation in achievement between boys and girls.
- The large proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs achieve in line with other pupils. Teachers identify their needs carefully and accurately, and generally provide effective support and guidance.
- The very large number of pupils eligible for the pupil premium benefit from the one-to-one support they receive, and the additional small-group activities the school has provided. In 2012 the standards attained by these pupils by the end of Year 6 were broadly in line with those of other pupils in reading and writing. However, in mathematics they were more than two terms behind.
- Pupils who have English as an additional language receive intensive support, which enables them to make progress at least at the same rate as others as they move up the school.
- Scores in the 2012 Year 1 national check on standards in phonics (the sounds that letters make) were close to the national average. The school has worked hard to promote a love of reading in current pupils, especially boys. All pupils now read regularly, on a one-to-one basis, with an adult in school and some, though by no means all, read regularly to an adult at home.
- In Years 2 and 6, the most able pupils read fluently and with good expression, showing above average skills. The less able pupils in these years sometimes rush and 'guess' words. They can, however, show how they have been taught to cope with unfamiliar words, using the 'sounding out' and 'blending' techniques which the school promotes.

**The quality of teaching** requires improvement

- Teaching quality is good in the Nursery and Reception groups but it requires improvement overall because it is inconsistent in Key Stages 1 and 2. This slows pupils' progress.
- Where teaching is not good, teachers are not sufficiently rigorous in ensuring that all pupils are fully involved in learning throughout the lesson. In some lessons the teachers do most of the talking while the pupils listen passively. Some teachers give explanations or instructions without waiting until every pupil is listening and looking. As a result, some pupils are unclear about what they are meant to be doing and their attention wanders.
- On occasions, teachers do not question pupils effectively to check their understanding. Sometimes, for example, they ask a question, and then, because no answers are forthcoming from the pupils, they answer it themselves, rather than reshaping the question so that pupils understand better and think for themselves.
- Where marking is good, teachers' comments show pupils clearly how well they are doing and what, precisely, they need to do next to improve. Pupils say they find these comments very helpful. However, not all marking is consistently of this quality, and teachers do not always check to see if pupils are acting on the advice they are given.
- Where teaching is good or outstanding, teachers' explanations are crystal clear and pupils listen attentively. These teachers are very skilful in asking probing questions and reshaping explanations so that pupils' understanding is developed.
- In the good and sometimes outstanding lessons, teachers make good use of computer technology, visual aids, group and pair work, and 'hands-on' tasks which involve the pupils fully in their learning. They set tasks 'against the clock' to keep pupils on their toes and ensure they learn at a good pace.
- Teachers give good support to disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, and those who speak English as an additional language. Teaching assistants are well informed about pupils' needs. Along with other adult volunteers, they provide help for individuals or small groups, either within classes or nearby. Pupils who join the school part way through a school year receive good support to help them settle in.
- In the Nursery and Reception classes, staff take every opportunity to develop children's social, observation and communication skills, talking and interacting with them constantly. A mathematics lesson in which the children handled real fruit in their work on counting and doubling, sustained their interest very well. Activities, both indoors and out, are purposeful and varied.

**The behaviour and safety of pupils** requires improvement

- The school is generally a calm and orderly environment, where teachers can teach, and most pupils learn, purposefully and effectively. Most pupils show an eagerness to learn. They are treated with respect and in turn they show respect for each other and for adults. However, some teaching is not organised well enough to hold pupils' interest and attention and so a few pupils 'switch off' and do not pay attention in these lessons. As a result, behaviour is not yet good.
- Although the school has worked hard to improve attendance and it is now average, too many pupils still arrive late to school and miss vital parts of lessons.

- Teachers place a strong emphasis on developing pupils' confidence and self-esteem. Pupils are known well as individuals. They and their parents confirm that pupils are safe in school. The school covers bullying and safety issues carefully and sensitively. Pupils say they have confidence in the staff to deal with any bullying if it should arise. Older pupils understand about different types of bullying, including internet bullying, and how to avoid it.
- Pupils are proud and willing to take on jobs and responsibilities within school. These include, for example, serving food at lunch time, being on the school council or eco-team, or acting as buddies for other pupils. Pupils respond well to opportunities to help people less fortunate than themselves through charity fundraising.
- The school provides strong support to pupils whose circumstances may make them particularly vulnerable, drawing effectively on a range of outside agencies as it does so. The inspectors saw examples of how this support has enabled such pupils to play a full part in the life of the school and to achieve in line with other pupils, despite their sometimes difficult circumstances.
- A major strength of the school is its rich cultural diversity. Pupils enjoy the fact that they come from a wide variety of different backgrounds and get on well together. They enjoy exploring different cultures and traditions. There are links with schools overseas and in Derbyshire. This prepares pupils well for their future in modern society.

### **The leadership and management** requires improvement

- Leadership and management are not yet good because they have not yet brought about consistently good teaching, achievement or behaviour. Although leaders and managers share high ambitions for the school and have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses, they have not managed to secure consistency in teaching quality. Opportunities for less experienced teachers to improve their skills by observing and learning from more experienced colleagues in this school or elsewhere are underdeveloped.
- The school works well with most parents and carers. It is a focal point for a number of community activities, such as the annual seaside trip, and parents come in large numbers to special events along with their children. Some information is provided in foreign languages for those who need it. However, the school has not managed to gain the support of the families of pupils who are persistently absent or who regularly arrive at school late.
- The areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection have, in general, been addressed effectively. The school has valued the support it has received from the local authority in bringing about improvements. For example, there is better teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage, where achievement is now good. Attendance has also risen and now matches the national average.
- The targets in the school improvement plan are ambitious but realistic. The performance of staff is monitored closely. Teachers' pay rises are carefully managed, and promotions are only given when the impact on pupils' achievement shows that these are deserved. Good staff training, much of it provided by the local authority, has brought about improvements in the teaching of reading and mathematics.
- Pupils learn a broad and balanced range of subjects, and enjoy a variety of extra activities. Their opportunities to develop their music skills are particularly impressive. Trumpets and trombones are played with vigour and gusto by all pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6. Special events, such as the 'Victorian Day', bring learning to life. Frequent visits to places of historical or cultural interest

broaden pupils' horizons. Pupils have the opportunity to go on three residential visits during their time at the school. Here, they enjoy adventurous and team-building activities, which develop their confidence and resilience.

- Leaders make very sure that there is no discrimination of any kind. All pupils, regardless of background or need, have full access to everything the school offers. Child protection and safeguarding arrangements are kept under stringent review and have high priority. Leaders make sure that all legal requirements are met and that good practice, particularly in regard to safeguarding, prevails.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The Governing Body is improving. It has recognised the need to secure improvements and is now better organised and informed. Governors make good use of opportunities provided by the local authority to help them to sharpen their skills and understanding. They understand the school's strengths and weaknesses. They are not afraid to ask searching questions in order to secure improvement for pupils. They scrutinise pupils' performance data closely, and rigorously challenge the areas of underperformance they find. Some governors make regular, formal visits to the school, where they hold discussions with staff, produce written feedback and make recommendations for improvement. They understand where the inconsistencies in teaching lie and how the school is tackling weaker areas. Governors have a good grasp of how finances are used. They understand clearly how the pupil premium funding is used and the impact this is having. They now make sure that any staff pay rises or extra responsibilities relate closely to pupils' achievement and are fully justified. They ensure that the school's arrangements for safeguarding children fully meet the current national requirements. Governors make sure that all adults who work with pupils are checked for suitability, and that pupils are kept safe.

## What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>



## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	122481
<b>Local authority</b>	Nottingham
<b>Inspection number</b>	412733

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

<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 of pupils on the school roll</b>	264
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Judy Wood
<b>Headteacher</b>	Amanda Dawson
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	22 June 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	0115 9151796
<b>Fax number</b>	0115 9151795
<b>Email address</b>	headteacher@mellers.nottingham.sch.uk

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