

Robert Mellors Primary and Nursery School

Bonington Drive, Arnold, Nottingham, NG5 7EX

Inspection dates 26–27 September 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Standards by Year 6 are above average in English, and have recently been exceptionally high in mathematics.
- Pupils make good progress due to good teaching that matches their differing needs and abilities well.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and in and around the school. They are polite and eager to learn, and show respect to their teachers and each other.
- More-able pupils and those who have special educational needs do particularly well.
- The school cares well for its pupils, who all feel safe in school.
- Leaders, managers and governors all work well together to make sure pupils make the progress they are capable of.
- Leaders at all levels are focused on pupils' achievement and well-being.
- The subjects that pupils learn in and beyond the normal school day contribute well to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Governors provide a good level of challenge and support to the headteacher and other leaders. They hold them well to account for the school's performance.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There is not enough outstanding teaching to enable pupils to make even greater progress.
- Attainment in reading in Key Stage 1 is not as high as in other subjects.
- Attendance, although now improving, has generally been below average over recent years.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in all classes. They observed 13 lessons (including three with the headteacher) in addition to small group sessions and two assemblies.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher and deputy headteacher, other leaders including those responsible for special educational needs, literacy and mathematics, and four members of the governing body. Telephone conversations were held with the school's local authority adviser and a parent.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils in classrooms as well as two groups of pupils from across the school. They observed pupils during play and lunch times and listened to them read. Pupils also completed a questionnaire and these views were taken into account.
- Inspectors looked at pupils' work on display and in their books.
- There were no responses to the online questionnaire Parent View, but inspectors were able to take account of the views and opinions of some parents through discussions with them at the start of both days during the inspection. The views of school staff were also taken into account, through discussion and returned questionnaires.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documents including: the school's self-evaluation; action plans within the school development plan, including those of senior and subject leaders; the headteacher's reports to governors; assessment records; school policies; and data relating to finance, attendance, safeguarding, behaviour and the performance management of teachers.

Inspection team

Lynn Brewster, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Mike Williams

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is an average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils come from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs at school action is above average. The proportion supported at school action plus or through a statement of special educational needs is broadly average.
- The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals or in the care of the local authority, for which the school receives the pupil premium, is higher than average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve achievement in reading, particularly in Key Stage 1, by making sure that:
 - the quality of phonics teaching is always at least good
 - younger pupils have more opportunities to read within lessons.
- Improve the impact of teaching on pupils' achievement by making sure that:
 - all teaching is at least good and more is outstanding
 - the feedback provided through teachers' marking helps pupils to know precisely how to improve their work, and time is given for pupils to respond.
- Further improve attendance so it is consistently at least average.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children join the school in Nursery with skills that are below the levels typical for their age. By the end of Key Stage 1, standards are broadly in line with those of pupils nationally except in reading where they are below. In Key Stage 2, pupils make good, and in some cases outstanding, progress. By the time they leave at the end of Year 6, standards are typically above those of all pupils nationally, and recently they have been exceptionally high in mathematics.
- Children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage, especially in communication, language and literacy. This is because there are lots of things to do that are interesting, exciting, fun and build on the skills children already have. Children enjoy school. They are cared for well in a safe and welcoming environment and settle quickly into positive routines.
- There has been a three-year upward trend in standards in mathematics. Over the past two years, pupils at the end of Year 6 have reached exceptionally high levels in mathematics. Attainment in English has also risen to above average.
- In 2013, almost a third of the pupils achieved the higher Level 5 in reading, over half reached this in writing and almost three out of five pupils achieved this in mathematics.
- The progress made by pupils in Key Stage 2 has risen steadily since the previous inspection and was above the national average in both English and mathematics in 2012. School data show that in 2013, pupils' progress by the end of Key Stage 2 was significantly above average in mathematics and below average in English. The progress of more-able pupils was above average, and significantly so in writing and mathematics.
- In 2013, there was a decline (compared to 2012) in the proportion of Year 1 pupils who met the required standard in the government's screening check for phonics (how letters and sounds combine to make words). This was partly due to several different teachers being responsible for the class. Pupils who did not meet the standard and are now in Year 2 are catching up through effective extra support designed to accelerate their rate of progress.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress overall in English and mathematics. This is because the good help and guidance provided through the school's academic, emotional and behavioural support programmes and tracking systems are effective.
- The pupils who are supported through the pupil premium make progress in English and mathematics that is broadly in line with the good progress made by other pupils throughout the school. In mathematics in Year 6 in 2013 these pupils were on average about six months ahead of this group nationally; in reading and writing they were ahead by about six weeks. The only exception to this pattern was in Year 1, where they attained as well as their classmates in writing but were nine months to almost a year behind in mathematics and reading.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers have high expectations of their pupils and plan work that is well matched to their needs and abilities. In the vast majority of lessons, pupils engage well in their learning and try hard to do their best because the work is interesting and challenging.

- In the best lessons, teachers' effective questioning skills encourage and motivate pupils to think for themselves and progress quickly. In an outstanding mathematics lesson seen in Year 5, following a well-paced introduction promoting real challenge and excitement, the teacher quickly adapted and reorganised plans so that more-able pupils could work independently to find the areas of regular and irregular shapes, while pupils who had difficulty were assisted successfully in their learning by the well-briefed teaching assistant.
- Teaching assistants are deployed well and make a good contribution to pupils' learning.
- Teachers' marking in books is up to date and consistent across the school, but the comments made do not always point to pupils' next steps in learning. Even when they do, opportunities for pupils to respond are not often taken up. This means that some opportunities for learning are missed.
- Children are able to choose from exciting and enjoyable activities in the outdoor area of the Early Years Foundation Stage. However, it is not as good as the indoor area where children have good opportunities to develop their skills, knowledge and confidence across the areas of learning. In one lesson seen indoors, the teacher was particularly adept at skilful and subtle intervention to move children's understanding forward while they were taking part in chosen activities around the theme of a 'Bear Hunt'.
- The teaching of reading in Key Stage 1 is now beginning to improve since the appointment of a specialist teacher, and some better phonics teaching was seen during the inspection.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils have good attitudes to learning and behave well in almost all lessons. Most are aware of their learning targets in English and mathematics and are ambitious to do well.
- Pupils respect their teachers and trust them to talk to if they have a problem they cannot sort for themselves.
- Pupils' behaviour is good outdoors on the playground and indoors, for example during lunchtimes and when moving about the school.
- Pupils say that there is no bullying, and that behaviour issues are generally dealt with well. They do not like it when learning is very occasionally interrupted by inappropriate behaviour. They know how to keep safe, including when using computers or mobile phones.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage settle very quickly into the clear and well-established routines. There is a calm and purposeful learning climate in the new facility and children in Nursery and Reception play and learn together harmoniously.
- Attendance has fluctuated over recent years, but overall it has been below average. There was some improvement, for example in the attendance of Key Stage 1 pupils in 2013, and in the first few weeks of the autumn term their attendance has been above average. It is important for the school to ensure that this improvement continues.

The leadership and management are good

- Attainment in English (particularly writing) and leadership and management at all levels were

identified as areas for improvement in the last inspection report. Both have shown rapid and sustained improvement.

- The school has an accurate awareness of its own strengths and weaknesses. Leaders and managers at all levels contribute professionally and ambitiously to school development planning that is focused on the right priorities for the school. Since the last inspection, leaders have been effective in improving achievement and teaching, especially for more-able pupils in English and mathematics, as well as for those pupils supported by the pupil premium.
- Staff show a strong commitment to tackling discrimination and promoting equal opportunities for all pupils in the school, and this is reflected in the good achievement of most groups. Accurate tracking systems are now established, and they are used well to enable leaders to promote more rapid progress.
- Through discussions and analysis of staff questionnaires inspectors found that all staff, including senior and subject leaders and support staff, overwhelmingly support the headteacher's drive to raise standards. This makes a strong team with good capacity to improve even further.
- The local authority sees the school as one that requires only 'light touch' support and is not causing concern. Staff and governors participate regularly in training provided by the local authority to enhance their practice.
- No parents took part in the online Parent View questionnaire but those spoken to during the two days of the inspection had mixed views, from overwhelmingly positive to negative due to particular concerns. Parental perceptions is an area that the school is working on, and beginning to have some success with.
- The curriculum contributes well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The good range of work displayed contributes well to learning across the school. Pupils have good opportunities to participate in a range of clubs and extra-curricular activities in sport, art, music and drama as well as school visits. Assemblies promote and celebrate effort, positive attitudes and achievement particularly well. Pupils have an appropriate understanding of diversity, faiths and other cultures within 21st century Britain.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are experienced and very effective in supporting and challenging the school, and holding its leaders to account for pupils' achievement and well-being. They are knowledgeable about the school's strengths and areas it needs to develop, and take part in a range of training opportunities throughout the year to ensure they can effectively support school improvement. They know their teachers and support staff well, visit school often and are clear about what needs to be done to ensure every pupil is successful. They manage the headteacher's appraisal process, supporting improvements in achievement and pupils' progress, and are knowledgeable about the performance management of staff. The governing body ensures that the school's finances are in good order and are clear about the use and impact of the pupil premium funding and the recent national funding for sport. They make sure safeguarding policies and practices comply with current government requirements.

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

Unique reference number	122521
Local authority	Nottinghamshire
Inspection number	425023

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	215
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Yvonne Simmons
Headteacher	Susan Laplanche
Date of previous school inspection	22 November 2011
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