



Robert Mellors Primary and Nursery School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 122521
LEA NOTTINGHAMSHIRE LEA
Inspection number 281289
Inspection dates 23 May 2006 to 24 May 2006
Reporting inspector Ms. Susan Aldridge LI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Bonington Drive
School category	Community		NG5 7EX
Age range of pupils	3 to 11		
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0115 8408068
Number on roll	242	Fax number	0115 8408708
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Dr. Barry Bowker
Date of previous inspection	3 July 2000	Headteacher	Miss. Donna Jordan

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Robert Mellors school currently has 242 pupils on roll. Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds and a few are of Asian origin. A small number of pupils are from homes where English is a second language, although none is at an early stage of acquiring English. There is a larger than average proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities, although none has a statement of special educational need. A very small number is in the care of the local authority. The majority of pupils have deprived socio-economic circumstances, and the standard of attainment on entry to the Nursery is below average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school's effectiveness is satisfactory, and it is rapidly improving. The inspection agrees with the school's self-evaluation of its effectiveness and almost all other areas of its work. Provision and standards in the Foundation Stage are good. Following a sharp decline from 2001 to 2003, standards in Years 1 to 6 are rising rapidly; they are now average by Year 2 and Year 6. However, not enough pupils reach the higher levels, and overall, pupils' progress is only satisfactory. Pupils' personal development is good. Attendance is satisfactory and improving as targets set by the school are being reached. However, the school does not contact parents on the first day of an unexplained absence and so an opportunity is lost to check on pupils' whereabouts and reinforce the message that regular attendance is an important factor in raising standards. While satisfactory overall, the teaching has many good features but teachers are not equally good at making sure that pupils know what they have learned in lessons. The curriculum is good, and so are the care and support that pupils receive. The school is well led and managed. The headteacher provides very good leadership. Since her arrival in September 2004, she has led the school very well through a period of sustained development that has underpinned the rise in standards. Staff are committed and enthusiastic about planned developments. The development plan identifies all the right priorities and the school's capacity for improvement is good. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- raise standards in Years 1 to 6, particularly for higher attainers
- ensure that pupils know what they have learned and achieved by the end of a lesson
- contact parents on the first day of a pupil's unexplained absence.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

By the end of the Foundation Stage, standards are average, which represents good progress given the low starting point on entry, particularly in language and literacy. In Years 1 to 6, standards have risen since 2004. In 2003, standards were exceptionally low. Since then, there has been good improvement, and pupils now reach standards that are average by Year 2 and Year 6, reflecting satisfactory progress. The number of pupils that reach the higher levels in Year 2 and Year 6 is rising steadily, although it is still low. A range of successful strategies has been put in place since the current headteacher took over in September 2004. In 2005, the challenging targets set for pupils to reach national expectations were met, but the school was not successful in achieving the target for pupils reaching Level 5 in English and mathematics. This year, the school's tracking records indicate that a greater proportion of pupils will reach Level 5, but that the target will not quite be met.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy school life and lessons, and this helps them to achieve. The vast majority of pupils are punctual. There are several strategies for encouraging good attendance and although attendance is improving, a few parents still take their children on holiday during term time. Behaviour is good and pupils are able to form good relationships with each other and adults. Pupils have a clear sense of right and wrong, accept responsibility and show initiative. The school council plays a big part in the life of the school, taking on shared responsibilities, such as researching play equipment and making decisions about what to buy. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils develop self-esteem and grow to understand their own feelings, culture and beliefs as well as those of others. Pupils work and play well together. There is very little bullying and any problems are quickly solved with the help of 'playground peacemakers'. Pupils are sensible and know well how to keep safe. They are actively encouraged to lead happy and healthy lifestyles, and are often involved in the local community events, such as fund raising. Pupils develop satisfactorily those skills that will help them to achieve economic well-being in the future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall, although examples of good, very good and outstanding teaching were seen. Assessment is satisfactory. Teaching is consistently good or better in the Foundation Stage. Children are very well supported in the Foundation Stage classes, where there is meticulous planning, preparation and organisation of resources. In the Reception year, children are particularly well involved in assessing their learning in lessons. In Years 1 to 6, teaching captures the pupils' interests. Teachers have worked hard on making sure that planning meets the needs of all pupils, particularly higher attainers, and they use secure assessment to plan tasks that are well matched to pupils' different abilities. Learning outcomes are usually shared with pupils at the start and reviewed by the end of the lesson. However, this is not yet consistent across all classes. Occasionally, pupils are unsure about their targets, or what they are learning when they work in groups. Activities appeal to pupils, who say that they enjoy lessons. For instance, Year 1 pupils in a numeracy lesson were well motivated by having a real problem to solve. They had to find out what 'symmetry' meant for a man who wrote to them saying he needed to pack his produce in 'symmetrical' boxes but did not know what this meant. Teachers make good use of their interactive whiteboards, which greatly appeal to pupils too. The use of information and communication technology (ICT) in teaching has improved greatly since the last inspection.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school provides a good, broad, balanced curriculum that meets the national requirements as well as incorporating aspects of local interest. For example, the Year 6 work on Victorians draws extensively on local history and gives meaning to learning. Staff are currently working on making the curriculum personal to their school. For instance, there is an early morning aerobics session for all pupils in Years 1 to 6, and French is also taught to all. Good use is made of teachers' strengths in subject knowledge as well as the skills of support staff; the school's accommodation and resources are both good. There is a good range of activities that add richness to the curriculum. Staff make good use of external expertise such as Nottingham Forest Football Club, and bring in the skills of specialist artists to inspire pupils' work. There are several school clubs, which are fairly well attended. Pupils particularly enjoy opportunities for creativity, working in groups or independently and making their own decisions. These features support pupils' personal development well. Provision for pupils who have particular gifts or talents is at an early stage of development, but there are suitable plans to expand this.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

This aspect of the school's work is well supported by the high quality of relationships between pupils and staff, who provide good role models. Pupils say that the school provides a safe environment largely free from bullying, racism and undesirable behaviour. Supervision in lessons and at break times is unobtrusive but effective and pupils respond well to adults' instructions. All statutory procedures required to ensure pupils' safety are in place regarding child protection and the appointment of staff. The site and buildings are very well maintained, and risks are assessed adequately. Comprehensive assessment information is available and is used well to plan additional support for those that need it. Targets are established in literacy and numeracy but are not used consistently and in some cases not understood fully by pupils. Pupils with special learning needs are well supported and make the same progress as others. Individual education plans are of good quality and benefit from the involvement of parents and pupils. The school taps into a wide range of support from external agencies, for example, pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities have suitable programmes, such as speech therapy, that meet well the needs described in their statements.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher provides very good leadership; giving clear direction for staff and providing them with the additional skills and confidence needed to take on management responsibilities. As a result, staff morale is high, teamwork is well developed, and staff approach change with enthusiasm. The previously large surplus in the budget has been converted to a sensible contingency,

staffing has been increased and resources for ICT improved greatly. Much has had to be achieved in a short time, and the school improvement plan, which covers a period of one year, is supplemented by a list of issues to be addressed over a three-year period. Work on several of these has begun. Staff are closely involved in improvement planning, and subject leaders and others with whole-school responsibilities carry these out well. Self-evaluation is good. It results in the school correctly identifying what needs to be done to raise standards. The process involves all stakeholders, including parents, whose views of the school are largely positive. Monitoring of teaching is rigorous and results in an individual improvement plan for each teacher. Governance is satisfactory. Governors are most supportive of the school, but have only recently developed a committee structure through which they keep the work of the school under review.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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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?	3	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	NA

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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you for making us so welcome in your school, especially to those that spoke to inspectors about their work and school life. We all enjoyed our visit. We came to see how well you are all getting on and whether there is anything that could be done better. We found that children in the Nursery and Reception class are learning well. Older pupils make satisfactory progress but not enough of you reach the levels that you are capable of. You all behave well and work hard in your lessons. Your attendance is improving and you can all help to make it even better. If you are not at school and staff do not know why, they should contact your parents. We saw some really good lessons, and you showed how much you enjoy these. Teachers will help you to do even better by making sure that you know what your lesson targets are and whether you have reached these by the end of a lesson. There are lots of interesting activities that help you learn, including visits, visitors to school and clubs. Everyone gets on really well together, and you say that you are happy and feel safe in the school. Since the headteacher came to your school, there have been lots of improvements. You now have a pupils' council that takes responsibility for certain jobs, like choosing the best playground equipment. Staff help the headteacher to run the school, especially checking that things are being done as they should be. There are more staff and better resources; you all have interactive whiteboards in your classes now. Staff keep track of your progress and work well together to make sure that you all get the extra help that you need. All these things have helped you to make better progress than you did before. We hope that you will keep up the good work.