



Mellers Primary and Nursery School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 122481
Local Authority CITY OF NOTTINGHAM
Inspection number 292415
Inspection dates 13–14 December 2006
Reporting inspector Martin Newell

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

The inspection of the day care was carried out under Children Act 1989: Part XA (as introduced by the Care Standards Act 2000) and, where (funded) nursery education is provided, under Schedule 26 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

Type of school	Primary	School address	Norton Street
School category	Community		Radford, Radford
Age range of pupils	3–11		Nottingham, Nottinghamshire NG7 3HJ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0115 9151796
Number on roll (school)	213	Fax number	0115 9151795
Number on roll (day care)	11		
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr Adam Spencer
		Headteacher	Mr David Mellen
Date of previous school inspection	20 March 2001		
Date of previous day care inspection	1 January 1900		

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
3–11	13–14 December 2006	292415

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors over two days.

Description of the school

The school is average in size and serves the Radford area of the city centre of Nottingham. Eighty per cent of pupils are from ethnic minorities and almost fifty per cent of the school population has a language other than English as their first language. A high percentage of pupils are refugees and asylum seekers. Many pupils come from socially and economically deprived backgrounds and this is reflected in the well above average percentage of pupils that are eligible for free school meals. An above average proportion of pupils has learning difficulties and/or disabilities and there are high levels of pupil mobility in a number of year groups.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Mellers is an outstanding school because it meets the very diverse needs of all of its pupils in an impressive manner. It benefits from the overwhelming support and appreciation it gets from parents and pupils alike. As one parent said, 'The school goes from strength to strength because of the head, the staff and the excellent and varied education all children get.' At the centre of the school's many successes lie significant strengths in leadership and management, the quality of teaching, a vibrant curriculum and the exceptional care and support that are provided. All these features contribute to the good value for money the school provides.

The headteacher's excellent leadership has played a pivotal role in moving the school forward since the time of the last inspection. This school does not rest on past achievements but instead just sets the bar higher. All who work at the school share a fervent commitment to providing the best for all pupils and this is reflected in the way that test and assessment data is analysed very robustly and any weaknesses addressed rigorously. It is also evident in the way that teachers evaluate one another's performance and readily take onboard guidance to become even better. It is these factors that illustrate the school's strong capacity for continued improvement.

Children start school with exceptionally low levels of attainment and for many English is not their first language. A high percentage of pupils start school at various ages because they have arrived from different countries. The impressive feature, however, is the outcome and how well prepared pupils are for the next stage of their lives. Pupils leave the school with standards that are close to the national averages and standards are improving. Some pupils achieve well beyond the expected national standards. This represents exceptional progress for pupils of all abilities and ethnic backgrounds given their starting points.

The good provision in the Foundation Stage gets children off to a flying start and this is relentlessly built on through Years 1 to 6. Pupils' progress in key subjects is assessed and tracked in a highly effective manner and any dips are quickly identified and addressed. The challenging targets that are set for individual pupils are invariably met and pupils themselves are very clear about what they need to do to make even better progress. However, assessment information in subjects such as history and geography and other foundation subjects is not yet consistently collated and used to ensure that work set closely matches the differing abilities of pupils.

Teaching makes learning fun but challenging, and lessons motivate and capture the interest and imagination of pupils. Pupil management skills are at times outstanding. Learning is brought springing to life through a rich and varied curriculum that is full of exciting enrichment activities and the pupils themselves contribute much to the school's success through their good behaviour, their high levels of enthusiasm and their good work ethic. Pupils' awareness of how to keep safe and healthy is good as is their contribution to the school and wider community but some pupils miss out on all that the school offers because parents do not ensure that their child attends school as often as they should.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure assessment information in the foundation subjects is used consistently to match work to pupils' abilities.
- Explore further strategies aimed at ensuring that all parents send their child to school as often as they should.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Many children start school with very limited key skills. A considerable number of children speak little or no English when they start school, either in the Foundation Stage or in later years. All pupils make good and at times very good progress in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2 because of consistently good teaching, although standards remain low by the end of the Reception year and Year 2, particularly in writing. However, the foundations of success have been laid and these are built on very effectively in Years 3 to 6. Challenging targets, demanding teaching and high expectations result in pupils of all abilities and ethnicities making outstanding progress. The provisional data for 2006 places the school in the top 5% of schools nationally and sees standards close to national averages in all subjects. The school's assessment information and inspection evidence indicate that standards in Year 6 are set to rise further in 2007 and that pupils continue to make outstanding progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils say they love their time at school but despite the concerted efforts of the school to promote good attendance, a few parents do not ensure their children attend school as often as they should. Most pupils behave well and work hard in lessons. A calm, harmonious and productive atmosphere pervades the school and pupils take a real pride in what they achieve. They are keen to work together and through, for example, their work as school councillors or peer mediators they make a telling contribution to their school community. Through their fundraising and involvement in the Radford Carnival and other events they contribute much to the wider community. Pupils' confidence, the skills they learn in literacy and numeracy and their ability to work cooperatively prepare them extremely well for the next stage of their education and later life. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils have a strong sense of right and wrong and an appreciation of each other's cultures. Pupils have a good understanding of what they should do to ensure they lead a healthy lifestyle. As a consequence of the exceptional support they receive for their social and emotional development pupils have a good awareness of how to keep themselves safe.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good with some outstanding features. Relationships are excellent and pupil management is often outstanding for the older pupils in school. Many lessons proceed at pace and with high expectations with hardly a moment wasted, and pupils are left under no illusion as to what is expected of them in terms of their behaviour and quality of work. Pupils respond well to the boundaries and expectations set. Even though pupils make exceptional progress, just occasionally teaching does not insist on the full attention of pupils when making pertinent teaching points. Across the school support staff play an influential role in enhancing pupils' learning. Marking of pupils' work is good because it gives clear pointers for improvement. Assessment and tracking in key subjects such as English and mathematics are excellent and information is used very well to ensure work is well matched to the abilities of all pupils. This exemplary practice is not yet fully embedded in other subjects of the curriculum, such as history and geography.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is vibrant and adds significantly to pupils' personal and academic development. From the Foundation Stage to Year 6, pupils gain literacy and numeracy skills swiftly and opportunities to use computers to enhance learning are regularly seized upon. An outstanding range of additional activities extend pupils' learning extremely well. Experiences are diverse and include visits to Chatsworth House, the Albert Hall Nottingham, the theatre, art galleries, museums and opportunities to work with sports coaches and artists. Links between subjects are exploited well by teachers so that pupils have many opportunities to practise what they have learned in one subject by using it in another. A very good range of after school clubs which includes sport, music, dance and foreign languages are available to pupils and these broaden their experiences as well as contributing to the school's drive to encourage healthy lifestyles.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Procedures for safeguarding pupils and child protection are very good and are consistently applied. As a result pupils are cared for extremely well and are nurtured as individuals. Staff know pupils very well and work non stop to meet their learning and personal needs. Pupils of all abilities and ethnic backgrounds receive high quality adult support in lessons to help them with their learning. Pupils also receive support in solving difficulties in their personal lives through the excellent work of the learning mentor and the school's extremely productive links with outside agencies. Systems to check how well pupils are doing are outstanding in key subjects. Information is collected

and evaluated to provide a very accurate picture of the progress of individual pupils. Teachers share this information with pupils who are very clear about what they need to do to improve their work. Pupils are involved in setting their own personal targets.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The leadership and management of the headteacher are outstanding and he is the driving force behind the school's many successes, particularly the high achievement of all pupils. He receives great support from a highly effective deputy headteacher and a strong senior management team. A real strength is the exceptional team spirit which lies at the core of all that the school does. Teaching and learning are monitored regularly and effectively. Data analysis is rigorous and robust and leads to the setting of challenging targets. Any weaknesses are quickly identified and tackled, and improvements are sustained over time. The school's self evaluation is honest and generally accurate and fully reflects the school's commitment of striving for excellence. Governance of the school is good because governors are very supportive yet play a strategic role in monitoring the school's work and performance.

Effectiveness of registered day care

Grade: 3

Care in the Early Start is satisfactory with good features. In the breakfast club, children thoroughly enjoy their play. There are strong and good routines for the children which helps them to feel secure and safe. On arrival, for example, they register and eat breakfast. They then move to a separate part of the school hall where a good range of activities that capture their interest is provided. Children of all ages are occupied well throughout the session and show high levels of interest and concentration in what they do. The staff support care for the children well and show a good understanding of how children play and learn. Children are able to make choices from the stimulating activities such as puzzles and creative activities. Breakfast club invariably ends with a quiet time in which children are then quietly and effectively released from the care into the classrooms to commence school.

A review of planning shows that a good range of activities is provided in the after school, holiday and breakfast club provision. Taken together, the activities meet the children's needs well. They are suitably varied in nature, covering a wide range of opportunities and interests with a good balance of indoor and outdoor play being provided. Children in the after school care enjoy climbing, riding bikes and using the very good range of apparatus which is under cover outside. In the breakfast club, relationships with the children are good and staff promote both their welfare and well-being effectively. They listen and respond to the children's needs with sensitivity and encourage them to focus well on what they are doing. Children respond very well to the attention they receive for their efforts as they explore and play happily. They are confident and secure because the staff ensure that there is a very positive

atmosphere of calm and purpose which helps the children to thrive when playing both individually and in small groups. Behaviour is excellent.

Levels of care are good and the Foundation Unit and school hall where the breakfast care is provided provides a safe and secure environment protecting children from harm appropriately. However, there are shortcomings in organisation. On occasion the number of children, particularly 9 - 11 year olds, attending the breakfast club becomes high. These older children support the play and development of younger children very well and they delight in helping younger children in their play. For example, two 11 year old girls helped a very young child to colour her snowman and showed good levels of support for other children. However, there is no formalised arrangement to bring in additional staff from other areas of the school in order to maintain appropriate adult to child ratios. In addition, there is no programme of meetings timetabled to aid communication between the headteacher and the managers of the different strands of the childcare provision. Almost all required documentation is in place and effectively contributes to the children's enjoyment and well-being. However, the Early Start has not improved since the last inspection. This is because parental permission for managers to seek emergency medical advice or assistance for children, which was a recommendation in the previous inspection, has not been gained. Overall Early Start meets the needs of the range of children who attend.

Recommendations or actions to improve the registered day care

- Ensure that written parental permission is requested, at the time of placement, for any emergency medical advice or treatment children may need in the future.
- Timetable regular meetings between the headteacher and managers of the Early Start childcare provision in order to improve communication.
- Ensure adequate staffing ratios are maintained for the breakfast club, to reflect the numbers of children attending on a day to day basis.

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Inspection judgements

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

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

¹ 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.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
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

The effectiveness of the registered day care

The quality and standards of the registered day care	3
How effective is the day care in helping children to be healthy?	2
How effective is the day care in protecting children and helping them to stay safe?	2
How effective is the day care in helping children to achieve and enjoy their learning?	2
How effective is the day care in helping children to make a positive contribution?	2
How effectively is the day care organised?	3
Does the day care meet the needs of the range of children for whom it provides?	Yes
Has the day care improved since the last inspection?	No
Does the day care require enforcement action?	No
Does the day care require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

16 December 2006

Dear Children

Mellers Primary and Nursery School, Norton Street, Radford, Nottingham, Nottinghamshire, NG7 3HJ

You will probably remember that we visited your school not too long ago and I am now writing to let you know what we found out. Before I do, I would first of all like to say thank you for making us feel so welcome and making our visit one that we will remember for a long time. We have told your teachers how you were all so helpful and polite, and, through our discussions with you, it was good to hear how much you enjoy school, the after school clubs and all the other activities that are on offer. It was also good to hear that if bullying does happen you know it will be dealt with immediately.

We found so many impressive things about Mellers School that we have decided it is an outstanding school! Teachers and other staff make learning challenging but fun and help you to achieve exceptionally well. The school is really good in the way that it helps you to learn about the importance of keeping fit and staying healthy and safe, and it works very hard at making sure you are cared for and looked after very well. Another strength is the way in which your headteacher runs the school and helps to make it such a great place to learn. But you the children are also key players in the school's success. The way you behave, how hard you work, how you know the targets you are working towards and how you contribute to the life of the school and the wider community are just some examples.

We have talked to your teachers about how they can help make the school even better. They are going to make sure that work in subjects such as history and geography is always matched to your individual abilities and that attendance at the school gets even better so that no child misses all the wonderful things that are happening!

The headteacher and all the staff and governors want the school to carry on getting better and better. Having met you we know you will continue to play your part as well. We wish you every success in your futures. It was a pleasure and privilege to meet you.

Martin Newell

Lead Inspector