

# Robert Mellors Primary and Nursery School

## Inspection report

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Unique Reference Number	122521
Local Authority	Nottinghamshire
Inspection number	327749
Inspection dates	18–19 May 2009
Reporting inspector	Roderick Passant

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 under pilot arrangements; it was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

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Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	233
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Jim Glazzard
Headteacher	Mrs Susan Laplanche
Date of previous school inspection	23–24 May 2006
School address	Bonnington Drive Arnold Nottingham Nottinghamshire NG5 7EX
Telephone number	0115 8408068
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## Introduction

This pilot inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 10 parts of lessons, and held meetings with the headteacher, governors, members of the senior leadership team and other staff, groups of pupils and a parent. They observed the school's work and looked at a range of policies, the school improvement plan and school data on monitoring of pupils' progress. The inspectors also analysed 50 parent questionnaires that were received.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the underlying reasons why pupils' good progress is not leading to higher attainment and the actions that the school is taking
- the factors leading to girls apparently not doing as well as boys and the effectiveness of the school's leadership in tackling this
- how the school fosters pupils' skills and enjoyment of reading
- pupils' cultural development
- the current level of attendance.

## Information about the school

The school is broadly average in size. Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds. The percentage of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average although none have a statement of special educational needs. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is above average. A very small number of pupils learn English as an additional language. Attainment on entry to the Nursery varies but overall is below that typically seen. It is often lower in early literacy and communication skills. The school has been recognised as a Healthy School in recognition of its work in promoting a healthy lifestyle. The current headteacher took up post in January 2009. Prior to this the deputy headteacher was acting headteacher for one term.

## Inspection judgements

Grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Overall effectiveness

2

Capacity for sustained improvement

2

### Main findings

This is a good school. It has made significant improvements since the last inspection. Standards have improved and are now broadly average by the end of Year 6. Children get a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage and both boys and girls make good progress across the school. Progress in reading, although satisfactory is not as good as progress in writing because the school lacks a sustained focus on developing pupils' love of stories and enthusiasm for books, although staff are tackling this currently. Pupils have good attitudes to learning and enjoy school, and this is reflected in their improved attendance. The school is a friendly place and pupils get on well with one another. Pupils who arrive at the school at various points in the school term are welcomed by other pupils and quickly absorbed into the life of the school. Pupils feel safe, not only because of the good safeguarding procedures but also because of the warmth of the relationships that all adults have with the pupils.

Pupils emphasise that 'learning is fun' and teachers make lessons interesting. Teaching is good. Class management is effective and lessons are often planned with flair to ensure that they meet pupils' needs. All adults are skilled at managing behaviour in a positive way, fostering pupils' confidence and raising their self-esteem. As a result, behaviour is good and pupils learn to take responsibility for their actions. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils develop a good understanding of how to look after themselves and keep themselves safe. They make a sound contribution to the school community and take their various roles and responsibilities seriously. Preparation for future economic well-being is satisfactory.

Many people in discussion identified the school's unique ethos and what a special place it is mainly as a result of the deep and heartfelt commitment of all staff to the pupils. This is evidenced in a mosaic of formal and informal actions. The genuine smile of greeting, the brief comment to a parent wheeling a buggy into school, the extended phone call to another, the parent expressing thanks for the support given, or the quiet word with an upset pupil, all build to create a picture of a school working extremely hard to support the pupils in their care and support them in their achievement.

Leadership and management are good. The current headteacher has an accurate picture of the school and knows what needs to be done. She is effectively building on the existing strength and systems in place. The school has good capacity to improve because the senior leadership team has the skills to develop the provision further. Governance has improved since the last inspection and is now good. Governors are supportive, play an effective role in developing the school and are prepared to challenge and debate the best course of action. Overall, the school provides good value for money. It has effectively created a strong school community. The school's role in developing positive relationships within the wider community is satisfactory. Whilst links with individual parents are often extremely good, the partnership with parents and carers overall is not yet sufficiently developed in order to support children's academic and personal development.

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

The school should do the following to raise standards further:

- Consult extensively with parents and carers on how best to:
  - foster effective liaison and partnerships
  - find ways to make it easier for parents and carers to feel part of the education of their children in order that parents, carers and the school work closer together to support their child's achievement and personal development.
  
- Promote a culture where pupils enjoy books and reading by:
  - enhancing the library and other book areas in the school
  - promoting reading for pleasure
  - review the effectiveness and use of the home school reading diary
  - ensuring that pupils experience a rich range of stories and literature over their time in school
  - planning topics to ensure that they are supported by an extensive range of texts and pupils make extensive use of these for research, pleasure and home learning.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2
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Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are making good progress and early indications are that current standards are a little above average. Similarly, Year 6 pupils are making good progress and on track to meet their targets and attain overall standards around the national average. There is an improving trend. Over their time in school, pupils make good progress particularly in mathematics and science. Many pupils use a narrow range of vocabulary and ideas in their writing. The school has undertaken a lot of effective work to enhance pupils' writing skills. There is a focus across the school in developing, for example, 'premiership vocabulary' and because of this work progress in writing is better than reading. Pupils find it difficult to progress beyond the expected levels in writing because they do not have opportunities to draw on a rich language experience of stories as enthusiastic readers. Reading does not have a high enough profile in the school. Because the school monitors the performance of boys

and girls carefully it has responded quickly and effectively to ensure that girls, particularly those capable of higher attainment, are challenged. As a result girls and boys achieve equally well in class. Pupils who have difficulties in aspects of learning and the few pupils with English as an additional language make good progress because of the high quality of support that they receive.

Pupils say that there is little, if any, bullying in school. Racist incidents are very rare and reported appropriately. Pupils are confident to approach an adult if they are worried about something. They are also confident that the adult will do something to solve their problem. The school is very inclusive and pupils have mature understanding of other pupils' difficulties. Year 6 pupils are confident youngsters who work well with each other and make a good contribution to the school. Older pupils keep an eye out for the younger ones. Pupils talk about the school being 'one big team'. They have a good knowledge of different faiths and an understanding of the diversity of society. They also have a good understanding of right and wrong. Pupils have a good awareness of how to keep themselves safe, for example on the internet. They also have a good understanding of the elements that go to make up a healthy lifestyle although that is not always reflected in their snacks or lunchboxes. Attendance has improved to match the national average since the last inspection, reflecting pupils' enjoyment of school.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and their progress	2
How well do pupils achieve and enjoy their learning?	2
To what extent do pupils feel safe?	2
How well do pupils behave?	2
To what extent do pupils adopt healthy lifestyles?	2
To what extent do pupils contribute to the school and wider community?	3
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	3
How well do pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	3
What is the extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development?	2

## How effective is the provision?

Teaching is lively, enthusiastic, captures pupils' interest and promotes pupils' positive attitudes to learning. Lessons are planned effectively and there is strong teamwork with skilled teaching assistants. Classroom management of learning and behaviour is also skilled. Attention to a small detail, such as stress on key vocabulary, better use of time, more precise objectives to the lesson, insistence on pupils taking even more pride in the presentation of their work are areas to focus upon further. Occasionally,

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

even in the good lessons, a few individual pupils coast because they are often quiet and well behaved but do not participate fully. Teachers are reflective and think carefully about how they might improve their practice. The headteacher has an accurate view of the strengths in teaching. Assessment is used well to check on learning in lessons and there is often good dialogue with pupils so that they are clear on how to improve their work and know their targets. The school has a detailed system to monitor pupils' progress so that it can identify those pupils who are not making the progress that they should and put in place appropriate and targeted support.

The school links subjects together in a meaningful way to provide a range of contexts to develop basic skills. Currently the library is not a natural focus for learning although the school has made a significant investment in books. Pupils also use computers and the internet for research purposes. There are good enrichment opportunities such as the residential trip and the clubs and sporting opportunities. Assemblies are effective in reinforcing key elements of the school's ethos. Above all, the rich curriculum provides many opportunities for pupils to gain success and this is reflected in their growing confidence and enjoyment of learning.

The school knows the pupils very well and supports them extremely carefully. Staff are very alert and vigilant to any potential challenges pupils may face in their personal lives and they guide and support them most effectively whenever these may arise. Consequently, pupils have the utmost trust in them.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

The quality of teaching	2
The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

## How effective are leadership and management?

The school has a sustained focus on raising standards and pupils' achievement, and this is reflected in the improvements since the last inspection. The headteacher leads the school well, building on its successes. She has quickly gained an accurate picture of the school's strengths and, where further development is required, she works closely with the effective senior leadership team so that the school maintains its momentum for improvement. Staff are more aware of data and the questions that it can raise and the headteacher is effectively developing their roles and skills. There is a very strong professional ethos, which is based on genuine teamwork, where each member feels accountable to each other and for pupils' progress. The school is very inclusive and there are strong links with specialist support and other agencies to help individual pupils. The school has established an international link and knows its community and is part of many networks within it. Currently, it lacks a coherent strategy to engage consistently with these groups so that they have a greater impact within the school. Arrangements for safeguarding of pupils are good and child protection arrangements are secure.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

The effectiveness of leadership and management in communicating ambition and driving improvement	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

## Early Years Foundation Stage

The overall provision is good in all key areas with some strong elements such as the good work of support staff in accommodating children's learning and welfare needs. The indoor and outdoor areas provide vibrant and imaginative learning environments. There is a good focus on practical learning and balance of child- and adult-initiated activities. Staff are skilled at promoting speaking and listening skills although, given their importance for these children, early reading and writing skills could have a sharper focus to ensure even more progress in these elements. The quality of teaching is good with several strong elements related to the good quality of support and challenge provided for children. The outcomes are good both in terms of standards and the progress children make in basic skills and their personal development. Children enjoy their time in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The effectiveness of the leadership and management in the Nursery and Reception classes is good, evidenced in the ongoing refinement of the provision.

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2



## Views of parents and carers

Most parents were supportive of the school in their questionnaires and many wrote favourable comments about it. Parents praised the qualities of the teaching staff; how happy their children were and their enjoyment of school; how pleased they were with the progress their children were making; the approachability of the headteacher and staff; and the caring nature of the school. There were a small number of negative comments: for example, some parents queried the effectiveness of the reading record and its possible use as an aid to communication, which they felt was patchy. Inspectors upheld their concerns and have addressed them in the key issues. Other points raised by parents were investigated and informed the inspectors' judgements.

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Robert Mellors Primary and Nursery School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school. If a parent has more than one child at the school, we ask them to record an answer against all the questions, for each of their children.

The inspection team received 50 completed questionnaires. In total, there are 80 parents and carers registered at the school.

	Always	Most of the time	Occasionally	Never
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	28	21	0	1

## What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. In 2007-8, 15% of schools were judged to be outstanding.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well. In 2007-8, 49% of schools were judged good.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils. In 2007-8, 32% of schools were judged satisfactory.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves. In 2007-8, 5% of schools were judged inadequate.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, training or development. This may refer to the acquisition of skills, knowledge, understanding or desired attributes. Attributes include qualities or personal competencies which are important to the development of the pupil; for example personal, social, cultural, emotional or health.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.



20 May 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Robert Mellors Primary and Nursery School, Arnold, NG5 7EX

Thank you for making us so welcome in your school. We enjoyed our brief stay very much and were impressed by many aspects of the school. I enjoyed your singing in assembly very much. I still have the tune 'Lean on Me' buzzing round in my head. My particular thanks go to those pupils who gave up part of their lunchtime to talk to us. I was impressed by your confidence and how thoughtful you were.

This is a good school. It is helping you to progress in your work and develop well as young people. You reach standards which are similar to those seen in many schools, and you do particularly well in mathematics and science. The school is helping you to become even better writers and I have asked the school to encourage you in your reading. I agree with you that teachers make learning fun. You have skilled teachers and all staff care about you a great deal. They keep a close eye on your progress. I was impressed by how friendly the school is. You clearly get on well with each other. You behave well and are extremely polite. It was very reassuring that you feel confident to approach an adult if you are troubled about something. It was also good to hear that you are confident that they would help you solve any problems.

You clearly have a good understanding of what makes a healthy lifestyle and how to take care of yourselves. You take your responsibilities in school very seriously and I know that your headteacher has ideas to extend these so that you can play an even greater part in the school community. You clearly enjoy school a great deal and what it provides for you, and this means you work hard in lessons. The school provides you with a sound foundation for your future school careers and the world of work.

All staff in the school work together very well and take excellent care of you. The headteacher leads the team well and everyone wants you to succeed. I have asked her if she would consult with everyone connected with the school to find ways to strengthen the partnership between home and school, and find ways to make it easier for adults to support you at home so that you can achieve even better standards. You can help by continuing to do your best.

Sincere good wishes to you all

Roderick Passant  
Lead inspector

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