

Mellers Primary and Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	122481
Local Authority	City of Nottingham
Inspection number	340156
Inspection dates	22–23 June 2010
Reporting inspector	Sue Hall

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	262
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Miss Judy Wood
Headteacher	Miss Amanda Dawson
Date of previous school inspection	13 December 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors who visited all eight classes and observed 17 lessons taught by ten teachers. The inspectors also held meetings with the headteacher, staff, pupils and members of the governing body. They observed the school's work, and looked at documentation including the tracking of pupils' progress, school development plans and records of meetings of the governing body. Samples of pupils' recent work and documents regarding safeguarding were evaluated. Questionnaires from 38 parents or carers, 100 pupils and 24 staff were scrutinised.

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

- whether all groups of pupils and particularly the boys, the White British pupils and those with additional needs make enough progress, especially in writing
- if care, guidance and support routines are outstanding and whether attendance is improving
- if assessment information is used effectively to provide appropriately challenging work for all groups of pupils
- whether leaders and managers monitor and evaluate the work of the school rigorously enough to identify areas for further improvement.

Information about the school

This school is a little above the average size. The proportion of pupils known to be entitled to free school meals is well above the national average. Almost 80% of pupils are from a range of minority ethnic groups, often of Pakistani descent. There is a high number at the early stages of learning English as an additional language when they start school. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is double that seen in most schools. These pupils have a range of learning, physical, communication and behavioural difficulties. Mobility in and out of the school other than at the usual time has been high. Following the closure of a local school, and transfer of some of its pupils here, there has been considerable remodelling of the site. There has been a change of headteacher since the previous inspection. There is a breakfast club available for pupils which is managed by the governing body and included within this report. The school holds Activemark, Eco Schools and Healthy Schools Gold awards.

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

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a good school. There are outstanding features in the way the staff care for, guide and support the pupils, and in the ways they keep them safe. There are also excellent elements in the partnerships the school has with other organisations to support learning and how the school promotes community cohesion. The large majority of pupils say they like school and enjoy practical activities but, most of all, they like the amount of play space they have and one noted with pride: 'Our field is like a park'. Staff say they are proud to work at Mellers. Parents are also pleased to be associated with the school and one rightly comments that staff go above and beyond what is expected of them'. Behaviour is good and pupils know how to keep themselves and others safe.

Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and knowledge that are well below the expectations for their age. Many initially speak little or no English and lack confidence. Most settle quickly and make good progress which is maintained in Key Stages 1 and 2. By the age of eleven, standards are close to national averages and pupils of all abilities and from all backgrounds achieve well. Pupils do best in mathematics and many have secure mental mathematics skills. Most are also quite competent readers and like using computers. However, quite a number lack confidence in speaking and this leads to writing which is inaccurate and often lacks imagination. While pupils behave well, many are passive learners and make little effort to offer their ideas in discussions, which limits their development of a wide and descriptive vocabulary.

Teaching and learning are good. Staff praise pupils' efforts and manage their behaviour well. The planning of lessons is detailed and there is a lot of additional support for pupils who need it, including for those learning English. However, occasionally teachers talk for too long and do not demand enough of pupils in discussions. At times, staff do too much for pupils and miss the opportunity to help them develop more independent learning styles. The curriculum is good with particular strengths in the enrichment of learning including through cross-curricular links. The pastoral care of pupils is excellent, with effective features in the work of the learning mentor and the Place2Be project that support particularly vulnerable pupils. The school works hard to improve attendance. However, the persistent absence of several pupils and extended holidays in term time affect the progress made by some pupils.

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher is justifiably well regarded in the school community and provides a calm and effective lead to the staff team. The school evaluates its effectiveness well and leaders and governors have a clear grasp of strengths and relative weaknesses. This ensures there is good capacity for further improvement. Resources are used well and the school is an attractive and stimulating

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learning environment that is recognised as an 'oasis' for the community.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise levels of attendance to at least the national average and help pupils with high absence to attend more regularly and so raise their attainment.
- Improve pupils' skills in speaking and writing by:
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to discuss their ideas in order to develop a wider vocabulary and become more independent learners
 - providing more opportunities for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage to develop speaking skills through structured activities
 - helping pupils develop the skills to produce better pieces of accurate and imaginative writing.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Children make good and often rapid progress in the Early Years and enter Year 1 with skills that are close to the expectations for their age except in communication, language and literacy which, while much improved, remain below expectations. In Years 1 to 6, pupils make good progress and from low starting points achievement is good. Pupils make good progress in mathematics and several say this is their favourite subject. Some also read quite well because the additional work the school does to raise interest in reading is particularly effective. However, many pupils, including some girls of Asian heritage, remain quiet and 'sit back' in discussions. This limits their development of a wide and descriptive vocabulary. This was well illustrated in a joint Year 5 and 6 'hot seating' activity where the staff played the roles of soldiers involved in the First World War story where troops met at Christmas. The limited involvement of some pupils in such discussions, in turn, has a negative impact on their writing and so few achieve well in this area. This does not help them prepare for their future as well as it might. Data indicate that White British boys do not do as well as other groups. Several of these pupils have identified behavioural difficulties and they, and other pupils with additional needs, are very well supported in school. Therefore, girls and boys from all ethnic groups make good overall progress towards their targets. Attendance was a key area for improvement in the previous inspection; it has fallen even further and is low. The school tracks the progress of all pupils and this clearly shows that those with high levels of absence do not do as well as other groups.

Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves and others safe and the staff do a lot to help them understand how to keep protected out of school. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good which has a positive impact on relationships. Therefore the large majority of pupils behave well, although there is a small minority with identified emotional and behavioural difficulties. There is little evidence of bullying because pupils know the school will not tolerate this. The school has done a lot to encourage active lifestyles through sport and active play and holds

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awards for such work. However, some pupils do not always make the wisest choices in eating healthily which affects their level of fitness. There are good opportunities for pupils to contribute to the school and wider community, including as playground buddies and the Eco group, and in supporting community activities.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	4
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teachers have high expectations of behaviour which most pupils live up to and which have a positive impact on learning. Staff manage boys exhibiting challenging behaviour well, using praise and rewards to encourage their efforts. The use of assessment information to inform planning is good, and particularly successful in meeting the needs of the lower-attaining pupils and those with additional needs. Teachers plan lessons very carefully but, at times, miss the opportunity to really challenge groups of different abilities with more demanding tasks. Staff have done a lot to make the curriculum of interest and relevance to the pupils and this is good overall. Strengths are in the range of enrichment activities that bring learning to life. There is a good range of visits and visitors and extra-curricular clubs that pupils enjoy. The day-to-day curriculum in English

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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is satisfactory. Pupils are taught the basic skills of writing but, at times, there is not enough emphasis on recording what they do. There is not always a high enough regard for neat handwriting, correct spelling and grammatical accuracy.

The care, guidance and support for pupils and their families are strengths of the school. Those who are most vulnerable are particularly well supported. The 'Place2Be' and learning mentor provide outstanding support which ensures pupils do not 'fall through the net'. The headteacher and staff know and care for their pupils in an exemplary manner and provide a calm and welcoming environment. There are very effective arrangements when pupils change class and school. The records of some particularly vulnerable children show how the school liaises very carefully with other groups and does all it can to support the whole family. The school's involvement in extended services has culminated in activities such as an outstanding breakfast club providing pupils with high-quality cooked breakfasts at a low price. This results in a large number of pupils having an enjoyable start to their day. A lot of work has been put in to encouraging regular attendance, including a 'walking bus' around the area. However, there still remain a high number of late arrivals, persistent absentees and extended holidays in term time.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: 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 leadership and management of the headteacher are very effective and key reasons why what was already a successful school has continued to move forward. Her calm and purposeful lead encourages staff, pupils and their families to make the most of their abilities. She is well supported by subject leaders who produce good action plans to identify what else needs to be improved in areas for which they hold responsibility. School self-evaluation is carefully considered and accurate. The monitoring and evaluation of the quality of teaching and learning is well established although at times a little more generous than inspection observations, data and the sample of recent work would indicate. Governors are developing their role in the school and are keen to extend their range of focussed visits even further. While they only have a standard range of full meetings, committees are becoming more effective in strategic planning and development. Overall the school provides good value for money.

The school has developed an outstanding range of partnerships that support the personal development and learning of the pupils and their safety exceptionally well. For

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instance, the involvement of the school in an Education Improvement Partnership has included initiatives that are now recognised as effective practice. The involvement in creative partnerships has also been very effective and there are opportunities for pupils to take part in additional activities and learn a range of musical instruments. The safeguarding of pupils is central to the school's ethos with regular safeguarding team meetings ensuring responsibilities are shared and high priority. The school takes extremely seriously its responsibility to protect children and their families and has exemplary practices to ensure school procedures are continuously reviewed and updated according to current 'best practice'. The school has exceptional links with local, wider and international communities and values the work with a hugely diverse group of partner organisations. During the inspection, a link school visited Mellers and enjoyed a day including tasting a huge range of ethnic foods. The school has organised 'Pakistan week'. Staff have exchanges with a school in France and pupils speak to their counterparts on video links. There are well advanced plans for a similar link in Jamaica. The school does a lot to promote equality of opportunity although occasionally does not focus sufficiently on the needs of the higher-ability pupils. Links with parents are good although some families whose circumstances make it hard for them to participate do not involve themselves much with the life of the school, despite the efforts of staff to encourage this.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	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	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with mixed early learning experiences. A high proportion of children have limited understanding of life beyond their immediate

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family and community, and some are very quiet and timid. They make good overall progress and, at times in the Foundation 1 (nursery) group progress is outstanding in aspects of their personal development so that they become much more confident young learners. Recent end-of-year assessments match inspection judgements that, while there is much progress in all areas, skills in early writing remain exceptionally low. Teaching and learning are good, as is the curriculum. The staff ensure there is a good balance between adult-led and child-chosen activities but occasionally miss the opportunity to focus on the development of language skills because speaking, listening and writing are not prioritised enough. The outdoor area is used well for free-flow activities and there is good awareness of personal care and safety issues, for example when staff insist children wear hats on sunny days. Leadership and management of the provision are good and the leader is an effective practitioner who is working well to develop the roles of other members of the team to a similar level.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
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 of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

While only a relatively small number of parents and carers responded to the inspection questionnaire, almost all who did think well of the school and what it provides for their families. One parent is so enthusiastic in her support she says 'Go Mellers'. While a very small number indicate their disagreement with areas of provision, they provided no further information, with the only negative comment being to express disappointment that the school did not enable the pupils to take part in recent national tests. A small number would like more information about the progress their children make. Inspection evidence shows that information to parents is good.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Mellers Primary and Nursery School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 38 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 262 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	26	68	11	29	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	24	63	13	34	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	23	61	11	29	3	8	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	22	58	14	37	1	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	24	63	13	34	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	20	53	16	42	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	17	45	17	45	2	5	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	15	39	19	50	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	18	47	16	42	1	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	22	58	14	37	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	18	47	17	45	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	21	55	13	34	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	28	74	9	24	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
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.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
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.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



24 June 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Mellers Primary and Nursery School, Nottingham, NG7 3HJ

Thank you very much for making the inspection team welcome when we visited your school recently. We really enjoyed chatting to you, including groups who were good at explaining what you all do. We also liked meeting you in lessons, at break and lunchtimes and when we attended assemblies. I particularly enjoyed seeing the Year 5 and 6 pupils trying to make a tall tower using dry spaghetti and soft sweets - that was fun and interesting! Thank you also for the questionnaire returns that you filled in for the inspection. These are some of the findings from the visit.

Your school is providing you with a good quality of education and there are some outstanding things about Mellers. The school is particularly good at doing all it can to keep you safe and working with lots of other groups and organisations so that you get extra help and can grow in confidence. The school also works very well to help unite groups in your local community and beyond. We were pleased to see that most of you behave well and that you make good progress, especially in mathematics.

To improve your school further, we have asked the headteacher and staff to:

- work with your families to make sure you all come to school regularly
- help raise standards in writing by giving you more opportunities to discuss your ideas and to develop more independence and confidence.

To help your school even further, can you make sure you always try to join in discussions and don't wait for someone else to do things for you? Can some of you also try and think a bit more carefully about what you eat so that you enjoy a healthier diet? Could you also try to persuade your parents to make sure you come to school regularly? You cannot make much progress if you are not there.

Yours sincerely

Sue Hall

Lead inspector

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