

Mellor Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120073
Local Authority	Leicester City
Inspection number	313503
Inspection dates	27–28 February 2008
Reporting inspector	Gulshanbir Kayembe

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 on roll	
School	446
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Polly Henderson
Headteacher	Karen Hammond
Date of previous school inspection	6 October 2003
School address	Clarke Street Leicester LE4 7QN
Telephone number	01162 661377
Fax number	01162 611946

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school serves a multi-ethnic community in Leicester. The great majority of pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds, the largest proportion being of Indian origin. Most of these pupils begin in Nursery with little or no English. Hence, more of the younger pupils are at the early stages of learning English than older ones. Pupils tend to be reasonably fluent English speakers by the time they begin Year 3. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is above average. An above average number have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, though the number with a statement of special educational need is in line with national norms. Attainment on entry is below age-related expectations, especially in literacy. The proportion of pupils leaving or joining the school after the start of the Reception Year is higher than is usual. The school has experienced some turbulence in staffing, particularly in the Foundation Stage, over the last few years.

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 provides a satisfactory and improving education for its pupils. Consequently, they make satisfactory progress in their work and standards are close to average by the end of Year 6. Teaching is satisfactory. Teachers establish good working relationships with pupils. However, pace is sometimes slow and work is not always well matched to pupils' needs, leading to inconsistent progress in lessons, especially for lower attainers and more able pupils. Recent improvements to provision, including the use of data to identify pupils who are falling behind, are enabling better support outside lessons, particularly for less able pupils and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. This ensures that most pupils make adequate progress and that those at risk of underachieving receive the help they need to keep up with others. Pupils achieve particularly well in Year 6, and to some extent in Year 5, where many make up for gaps in previous learning. Children make satisfactory progress in Nursery and Reception. Given the satisfactory progress made in English and mathematics, pupils are satisfactorily prepared for future life.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are satisfactory. Whilst most get on with one another, their skills in working independently and showing initiative are underdeveloped. Lessons tend to be closely directed by teachers, hence restricting opportunities for pupils to develop such skills. Though pupils are aware of their targets, they are less sure about how to achieve them because they do not always get enough feedback and written guidance on how to improve their work.

The school provides a satisfactory curriculum. There is good provision for extra-curricular activities, which has a positive impact on pupils' learning and enjoyment. An effective programme for personal, social and health education ensures that pupils develop a good understanding of healthy lifestyles and personal safety.

Pupils are well looked after and feel safe at school. There are good procedures to support those with behaviour difficulties. Though the school works well, and with some success, with external agencies to improve the attendance of pupils who are often absent, attendance remains well below average. The school could do more to improve attendance. For example, there is no system to ring home on the first day for a pupil is absent or to show the impact of low attendance on progress.

The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. The headteacher provides dynamic leadership and her clear focus on learning has been a key in improving the school in recent years. She is well supported by her deputies, with whom she has a very effective working partnership. Though improving, the leadership roles of other managers are not fully developed. Systems for tracking progress and using data to set challenging targets are now robust. Governors provide satisfactory oversight of the school's work.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Standards are below average by the end of the Foundation Stage, largely due to low attainment in literacy and in calculation work. Nonetheless, children make satisfactory progress, and often their progress in personal and social development is good. The curriculum is geared well to supporting this area but has less emphasis on literacy and numeracy. The Nursery provides a sound foundation in English for those who speak it as an additional language and good use is

made of the home language in Nursery and Reception. Teaching is satisfactory across the Foundation Stage and children benefit from good quality accommodation which is visually stimulating and well resourced. Teachers form positive relationships with children. They provide activities that are practical in nature, which encourages good engagement from children. However, activities are not always challenging enough or allow children to explore topics in sufficient depth. Sometimes, children have too few opportunities to speak or respond to questions. With good support from the headteacher, the Foundation Stage is satisfactorily led and managed.

What the school should do to improve further

- Provide more challenging activities and opportunities to speak and respond to questions for children in the Foundation Stage to raise their standards.
- Improve teaching and learning in Years 3 to 6, so that more of it is good and enables pupils to make better progress in their learning.
- Ensure that pupils have enough feedback on the quality of their work so that they know how to improve it.
- Ensure that parents are called on the first day of absence and that attendance levels are checked against pupils' performance to help improve attendance.

A small proportion of schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory, but which have areas of underperformance, will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next Section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Results in the 2007 national assessments were well below average in Year 2. This was due partly to the high proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities but also to staffing difficulties. Current standards in Year 2 indicate that pupils are on track to attain results that are in line with national averages and similar to results in previous years. Standards are improving in Year 6 and are on track to be close to national averages by the end of Year 6. Pupils make satisfactory progress and there are signs that their progress is beginning to accelerate. Achievement is better in Year 6 and often in Year 5 because of better teaching. There has been underachievement in the past but now most pupils achieve at least satisfactorily. Reading standards have tended to be low in the past due to pupils' weak comprehension skills. They are now beginning to improve as a result of recent improvements to the teaching of reading. In mathematics, pupils have difficulty with calculations and are not always good at number facts. A new calculation policy and daily sessions in mental mathematics are helping to reverse the trend. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress and more are now making at least the expected progress. However, the number reaching higher levels is not as high as is the case nationally. Pupils with English as an additional language become increasingly fluent as they move through the school.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Most pupils enjoy school but attendance for the last two years has been well below national averages. Pupils' behaviour is satisfactory. While many behave well, a minority go off task when pace is slow in lessons or the tasks not well matched to their needs. Older pupils, rightly, feel that the small amount of inappropriate behaviour is dealt with effectively. Younger pupils are

less convinced of this. On the whole, pupils feel safe and are happy at school. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They have a particularly strong understanding of cultural diversity. Pupils are keen to take on responsibility. Those in Years 3 to 6 make suggestions on how to improve the school through the school council and act as peer mentors. However, opportunities for taking responsibility are limited for younger pupils. The basic skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) that pupils develop prepare them satisfactorily for their next step in education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching is satisfactory and improving. Good relationships mean that pupils respond well to teachers. Learning objectives are clear and usually explained well so that pupils understand what they are going to learn. Teachers are starting to use methods which catch the imagination of the pupils, such as book reviews and challenges. These are starting to have a positive impact on learning. In most lessons, support staff make a positive contribution to pupils' learning. Teachers encourage pupils to talk in pairs to develop their learning but do not give pupils sufficient opportunities to use initiative or make decisions about their work. The use of assessment to support learning is not consistent across the school. As a result, work does not always accurately match the needs of individual pupils and pupils are not always clear about the progress they have made. Pupils' work is marked regularly but written comments do not provide enough guidance on how to improve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Provision for literacy, numeracy and ICT is satisfactory and is good for science. The school has recently introduced new initiatives to improve provision for reading. These are beginning to benefit pupils' progress. Provision for the arts is strong. Good use is made of the Cross Corners Community Arts Centre to develop pupils' creative skills. Opportunities for the more able are developing. Staff ensure that pupils whose first language is not English have access to the full curriculum. Pupils talk with enthusiasm about the wide range of extra-curricular activities, including a variety of sports, language sessions and study clubs. These, along with a good variety of visits and visitors to the school, have a positive effect on pupils' physical skills and spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The school provides a safe and caring environment and ensures that there is always a helpful adult for pupils to turn to. The school's procedures for improving attendance work well for those with very low attendance but are not as effective for others. Requirements for child protection and safeguarding children are met. The school works well with parents and external agencies in supporting pupils, especially the most vulnerable. Parents and carers support pupils well through the Study Buddy system. A wide range of family and adult learning opportunities are well attended by the community. Procedures for tracking pupils' progress over time are in place but the use of assessment to improve pupils' learning on a day-to-day basis is underdeveloped. Whilst pupils know their targets, they are not sure how to achieve them.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher and her deputies work well as a team and provide strong leadership and management for school improvement. Whilst there is regular monitoring of teaching and learning, most of this is done by the headteacher and other staff have limited involvement. Good systems to track and monitor pupils' progress are beginning to target support effectively for those at risk of underachievement. Information from this and monitoring of teaching is used well to enable the school to accurately assess its strengths and weaknesses. Improvements in the quality of provision and the progress pupils are making indicate that the capacity to improve further is sound. Governors engage well in meetings, but are not yet actively enough involved in the school's work.

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Annex A

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?	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	3
The attendance of learners	4
The behaviour of learners	3
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

The quality of provision

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

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.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

3 March 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Mellor Community Primary School, Leicester, LE3 7QN

We enjoyed visiting your school and particularly enjoyed our visits to lessons and talking to you about your work and views of the school. Thank you for making us feel welcome. The school provides you with a sound education so you make satisfactory progress during your time here. The school is improving because of the good leadership provided by your headteacher. Your personal development and well-being are satisfactory. Teaching is satisfactory and getting better. You are well cared for and looked after but could do with a bit more guidance on how to make your work better. We have listed below some of the good things we found

- you feel safe and happy at school
- many of you are beginning to make good progress because you are well supported in your learning
- the arts curriculum makes a good contribution to your creative development
- you enjoy the good range of visits and visitors and the opportunities for sporting activities and have a good understanding of healthy lifestyles
- your headteacher works well with her deputies to lead the school and improve the quality of education.

The school has agreed to focus on the following things to help it improve by

- giving children in the Foundation Stage better opportunities for developing their literacy skills and for speaking and responding to questions
- improving the quality of teaching so that you can make more consistently good progress
- ensuring that you understand how to improve your work
- improving your attendance.

You can help, too, by continuing to work hard, making sure you attend regularly and by asking your teachers how you can make your work even better.

We wish you all well for the future. Yours sincerely

Gulshan Kayembe Lead Inspector

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Lead Inspector