

Mary Elton Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	109115
Local authority	North Somerset
Inspection number	377873
Inspection dates	25–26 January 2012
Lead inspector	Colin Lee

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	413
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Christine Perrett
Headteacher	Owen James
Date of previous school inspection	1 October 2008
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

Inspection team

Colin Lee

Additional inspector

Stephen Dennett

Additional inspector

Lindsay Gabriel

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed the teaching of 16 teachers, one teaching assistant and a visiting instructor in a total of 24 class lessons and three lessons with small groups. Meetings were held with members of the governing body, staff and groups of pupils. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work and looked at the school's data on pupils' attainment and progress, the school development plan, other planning documents and procedures for keeping pupils safe. Inspectors analysed 201 questionnaires completed by parents and carers, as well as speaking to a group of parents and carers.

Information about the school

The school is larger than an average-sized primary school. It meets the current floor standard. Ninety five per cent of pupils are of White British heritage. Pupils are taught in 14 classes, two in each year group. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below the national average. The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average but the proportion with a statement of special educational needs is average. The school has received awards for several aspects of its work, including the International Schools and Healthy Schools awards and Investors in People. A pre-school provision is based on the school site but this is not managed by the Governing Body.

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	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key findings

- This is a good school. Most pupils flourish in both their academic and personal development. There are several outstanding features, most notably the effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage and the management, delivery and impact of provision for pupils with a disability or special educational needs.
- Recent years have seen a steady rise in pupils’ attainment by the end of Year 6. It is now well above average in English and mathematics and this reflects good achievement over time for almost all pupils. Progress in reading is excellent throughout the school but is more variable in other subjects, both between year groups and between pupils of different abilities. Rates of overall progress are highest in Reception and Years 5 and 6. On a few occasions, more able pupils are held back in a small number of lessons by lack of challenge in their work, particularly in mathematics.
- Most teaching is good and some is outstanding but inconsistencies in a few aspects are causing the variations in pupils’ achievement. Teachers provide many opportunities for pupils to work collaboratively and this has good impact on pupils’ social skills. The curriculum is used very effectively to promote pupils’ cultural development and this is an area that has improved significantly since the last inspection.
- Pupils have excellent relationships with each other and with adults. Their good behaviour helps most lessons have a calm but busy working atmosphere, and makes playtimes enjoyable for all. Pupils say they feel very safe in school, bullying of any form is non-existent, and minor incidents of inappropriate behaviour are dealt with quickly.
- Effective leadership and management by senior leaders has a good impact on the school’s work through the rigorous checking of teaching and pupils’ progress in English, mathematics and science. In some other subjects, the leaders vary in their effectiveness because they are not monitoring achievement across the school thoroughly enough or planning the action necessary to improve achievement.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- In order to further raise all pupils' attainment and increase their progress:
 - ensure that there is always a good challenge in the work given to the more able pupils, particularly in mathematics.
- Ensure that all subject leaders monitor and evaluate the achievement of pupils throughout the school and plan the actions needed to increase achievement wherever necessary.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

The well-above-average attainment of Year 6 pupils indicates good progress because their skills on entry to the Early Years Foundation Stage were slightly below expected levels. The pattern of progress is not smooth. It is outstanding in the Early Years Foundation Stage and results in above average attainment in all areas of learning by the end of that year. Years 1 and 2 build successfully on this progress and attainment is well above average in reading and above average in writing and mathematics by the end of Key Stage 1. Pupils' progress slows in Years 3 and 4 before accelerating in Years 5 and 6. This overview of progress generally matches the views of those parents who added comments to questionnaires they returned.

All pupils make consistently good progress in reading. This reflects the focus placed on language development from the moment children start school. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, every opportunity is taken to develop children's speaking, listening, reading and writing skills. Many children were seen using clipboards and writing about the activities they had chosen to do, often using alphabet wall displays to check their letters and words. Children keenly showed an inspector their writing on the large outdoor chalkboard and accurately said the sounds of letters as they wrote. Linking of sounds and letters (phonics) is learned very successfully in all classes and this is a key reason for the high reading attainment by the end of Key Stage 1. Lower-attaining Year 2 pupils were heard reading and all were at or above the levels expected of their age. A very effective support programme for younger pupils falling behind in their reading helps them to quickly catch up. The continuing love of reading was evident in Year 6 pupils, whose impressive fluent, expressive reading was matched by excellent comprehension and a mature ability to discuss themes, characters and meaning in their books.

Where checking of progress in mathematics has revealed shortcomings in classes or aspects of the subject, prompt action has successfully removed many of the weaknesses. For example, there has been good improvement in Year 2 pupils' attainment. Nevertheless, in mathematics there remain a few examples of inconsistency in provision for the more able pupils and some of these pupils are

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spending too long on work they find easy before being moved on. In contrast, pupils with a disability or special educational needs are consistently making similar good progress to their peers. This good progress owes much to the skilful support provided by the learning mentor and teaching assistants working with these pupils and others whose circumstances make them vulnerable. A group of older pupils explained how they are being helped to improve not only their academic attainment but also their ability to concentrate in lessons. Some younger pupils demonstrated by their good relationships with each other just how much the extra support is helping their social skills.

Quality of teaching

The vast majority of parents judge teaching to be good and inspection evidence supports this view. At its best, teaching promotes a high quality of learning and excites the pupils, developing an obvious love of learning. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage were observed to be fascinated by learning activities related to the Chinese New Year, talking animatedly about artefacts they handled and explaining to an inspector how these differed from things they use at home. These experiences, and others, such as deciding which variety of tea they preferred during their Chinese banquet, contribute significantly to cultural development. The teaching of many subjects effectively supports the development of pupils' literacy skills. A Year 1 physical education lesson on the effects of exercise provided excellent opportunities for pupils to explain to partners what exercise felt like. They were encouraged to use vocabulary such as 'aerobic' that the teacher had introduced to them. Emphasis on pupils using specific vocabulary was also seen in an outstanding Year 5 geography lesson when pupils discussed waves in both geographical and scientific terms and thereby showed attainment levels well above those expected for their age.

The curriculum is planned around progression in learning the skills of each subject and more general critical skills such as communication, thinking skills and decision making. Teachers' good planning for development of these general skills alongside the specific skills in reading, writing and mathematics has a positive impact on the pupils' progress. In other subjects, a few teachers fail to identify how learning activities will promote either type of skill, and so pupils have no success criteria against which to judge how well they have progressed in their learning. There is good practice in the provision for pupils' personal, social, and health education (PSHE). Here, all pupils benefit from well-planned opportunities, clear targets and teachers' constant checking of progress that have a positive impact on pupils' spiritual, moral and social development. Opportunities to extend cultural development are also well planned and have good impact. The high quality of teaching and learning in French, and learning activities arising from the school's links with a Tanzanian community, enable pupils to gain a good understanding of similarities and differences between their own and other cultures.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Behaviour over time is good. Behaviour in lessons during the inspection was at least

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good. Pupils and parents confirm that this is the norm and this matches records maintained by the school. Consistently good behaviour is generated by the guidance pupils receive on what is acceptable behaviour, the involvement of the pupils themselves in decisions about how they all should behave, and the good effectiveness and consistency of behaviour management by all adults.

Pupils not only say that they feel completely safe in school but they also explain what they have learned from the wide-ranging safety education they receive. They show vigilance in tasks, such as using equipment in science lessons or moving apparatus in physical education. Pupils say there is almost no bullying in school and they show a good understanding of different types of bullying. Talking about internet safety, some Year 3 pupils explained the importance of them not revealing names or location details in e-mails. Others reinforced that gender or racial discrimination is non-existent. Pupils show respect for others in many situations, for example through the harmonious relationships evident at playtimes and the daily reading sessions when Year 6 and Year 1 pupils work together.

The vast majority of parents and carers are confident that their children are safe in school and that behaviour is good. The school has seen a steady rise in recent years in the number of pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties. Strategies for helping these pupils to overcome their difficulties are clearly defined and, in most cases, working well. Incidents of disruption are very rare and any that do occur are handled promptly and effectively.

Leadership and management

The headteacher and senior leadership team, through thorough self-evaluation of strengths and weaknesses, identify priorities for school development planning. Clear targets are set and progress towards meeting these is monitored regularly. There has been a focus on improving pupils' achievement in literacy and numeracy and this has successfully raised attainment. The quality of teaching has been raised by professional development matched to individual and whole-school needs. Good support by the Governing Body has contributed to these improvements. Good use is made of the expertise of individual governors, for example to improve financial management and promote greater understanding of equality legislation and its practical implications. The latter's impact is seen in the way that equal opportunities and tackling discrimination are at the heart of the school's ethos. The good range of improvements is firm evidence of the school's good capacity for further improvement. Senior staff and the Governing Body are vigilant in ensuring that important responsibilities, such as safeguarding, are secure and effective.

The curriculum is good overall. It successfully promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development (SMSC). In subjects other than English, mathematics, science and PSHE, not all subject leaders are monitoring pupils' achievement thoroughly enough. As a consequence, their subject development plans do not always clearly show how achievement will be improved. The curriculum is outstanding in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Children experience a wealth of

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stimulating learning opportunities, both indoors and outdoors, and constant assessment of each child's learning is used to plan their next stage. The impact was summed up by the child who told an inspector towards the end of the day 'I'm a bit tired today, I've been doing a lot of learning.'

Glossary

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.
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	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development, taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and 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 governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



27 January 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Mary Elton Primary School, Clevedon BS21 7SX

I am writing to thank you for helping us during the inspection of your school. We especially enjoyed talking to you and listening to your views. We have taken these views into account in writing this report. Mary Elton Primary School is a good school, with some things that are outstanding. Here are some of the main findings from the report.

- You all work hard and many of you are making good progress in your work. By Year 6, standards are well above average in English and mathematics. We think that those of you in Reception and Years 5 and 6 are making excellent progress.
- Those of you who find learning difficult are getting very good extra help and you are all making good progress.
- We want teachers to give harder work to some of you who find learning easy, particularly in mathematics.
- You are taught well and teachers check your progress carefully. We want the teachers in charge of different subjects to check how well all of you are progressing and decide how they can help you to do even better.
- Your behaviour is good and we were very impressed by the way older pupils look out for and help the younger ones.
- You say you feel very safe in school. This is because all the adults do an excellent job in looking after you.
- All the staff and governors work well together to help the school to improve.

All of you can help your teachers to make Mary Elton Primary School an even better school by continuing to work hard and enjoying your learning. Thank you once again for your help during our visit, and best wishes for your work in the future.

Yours sincerely

Colin Lee
Lead inspector

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