

Inspection of Mary Elton Primary School

Mary Elton Primary School, Holland Road, Clevedon, North Somerset, Somerset
BS21 7SX

Inspection dates: 4–5 March 2020

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Early years provision

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Not previously inspected under section 5
of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils behave well throughout the day, including in lessons. They like the school's 5Cs rules (curious, critical thinkers, collaborative, courageous and creative), which help them think about how to behave. As a result, pupils are keen to help each other. They are polite and kind. A highlight for many is having a hot chocolate on Fridays with Mr Hudd, as a reward for being a 5C champion.

Bullying is rare. Pupils told us that staff are quick to help if pupils are ever unhappy. Pupils like school and most want to achieve well, including in the Reception Year.

Nevertheless, weaknesses in the school's curriculum and how it is implemented prevent many pupils from reaching the standards they are capable of. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Too many pupils who have fallen behind do not receive the help they need to catch up quickly, including in reading and mathematics. This stops some pupils from being as well prepared for the next stage in their education as they should be.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Since joining the Clevedon Learning Trust (CLT) in April 2017, leaders have dealt with many challenges, including a staff restructure which took effect from September 2019. There are many leaders who are new in post, including the subject leaders for mathematics, English and phonics. Senior leaders and governors have been too slow to tackle weaknesses. This has led to a decline in the quality of education, including in the Reception Year. However, leaders now have an accurate understanding of the main areas for improvement. There is still much more to do to make sure that all pupils, particularly those who need to catch up or with SEND, can achieve consistently well.

Leaders have started to review what they expect pupils to know in each subject, and by when. In some subjects, such as in art and science, this is going well. Teachers sequence lessons effectively so that pupils gain knowledge well over time. Pupils apply prior knowledge to help them with their current learning. For example, in art, Year 5 pupils produce high-quality work based on printing techniques started in Year 4 (Roman mosaics). However, this is not a consistent picture. Other subjects, including mathematics and geography, are not designed coherently. As a result, pupils find it hard to recall knowledge or use this well. For example, pupils in Year 1 struggle to compare cities in polar regions to the United Kingdom because they do not have a deep enough understanding of either area. In mathematics, pupils do not practise previous knowledge or revisit what they know about numbers often enough. This means some pupils struggle to build their mathematical knowledge or apply it well enough.

Pupils enjoy reading. They like to read on many occasions during the day. Teachers read a high-quality book to the pupils in every class, such as 'Wolf Brother' in Year 6.

Teachers also link reading to topic work. However, leaders do not have an agreed approach for teaching daily reading. Teachers in different year groups do different things to teach reading. This means pupils' daily reading experiences are too variable, with much that is not good. Teachers do not check what pupils know, or need to learn next, well enough. This includes some pupils who need to catch up, or with SEND.

The school has an agreed daily phonics programme, starting with children in the Reception Year. However, some pupils are held back, or confused, when they are given books to read containing sounds or words they do not know. This leads to some pupils struggling to read too many words on a page. As a result, pupils' enjoyment, confidence and fluency to read well are affected.

The school's strategy for pupils with SEND is weak. Sometimes reviews for pupils with SEND take too long. Targets and ongoing support for pupils, particularly in reading, are not matched precisely enough to pupils' needs. As a result, some pupils with SEND do not achieve well. This affects how well pupils are prepared for the next stage in their education, including children in the Reception Year.

Leaders ensure that pupils have many experiences through educational trips, visits and clubs. Pupils enjoy having important jobs to help around school, such as working in the office or gate duty. These roles give pupils a sense of purpose and develop important personal and social skills for the future. Pupils have a keen interest in the world around them. Links with a partner school in Tanzania provide high-quality opportunities for pupils to learn about other people and cultures. The annual STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) project motivates pupils to take action for local, national and global issues. Pupils are taught to be thoughtful and caring citizens. For example, pupils have recently decided to purchase a plot of rainforest in response to this year's work on deforestation.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders take appropriate action to check staff, volunteers and visitors before they work with pupils. Staff are vigilant and aware. They are well trained and know what to do to keep pupils safe. Leaders work well with other organisations, including social care and health professionals, to care for pupils who need their support.

Pupils feel safe. They know what to do in different situations to stay safe, such as when they are using the internet. Pupils know how to take responsibility for their own safety in school.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- From Reception to Year 6, in many subjects the curriculum is not planned or designed sufficiently to enable pupils to acquire deep knowledge. As a result, pupils have gaps in their knowledge, including in reading and mathematics. Leaders need to ensure that pupils build knowledge and skills at the right time, so that all pupils can achieve well.
- There are too many weaknesses in the school's reading and phonics programme. These prevent pupils from reading fluently and confidently, particularly those who need to catch up. Leaders must ensure that a coherent reading and phonics programme is implemented, with accurate assessment to ensure that all pupils learn to read well, including in the Reception Year.
- The strategy to support pupils with SEND is not good enough. This means pupils do not achieve as well as might reasonably be expected. Leaders must ensure that a robust programme is implemented so that every pupil with SEND can achieve well.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	143991
Local authority	North Somerset
Inspection number	10133458
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	405
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Alister Christopher
Headteacher	Dean Hudd
Website	www.maryelton.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Mary Elton Primary Academy converted to become an academy school on 1 April 2017. When its predecessor school, Mary Elton Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good overall.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- We worked with many leaders during the course of the inspection. These included the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the English and phonics leaders, curriculum leaders (mathematics, science, art and geography) and the SENCo.
- We also met with representatives of the local governing board, including the chair of the governing board. The lead inspector also met with the chief executive officer (CEO), the chair of the trust board, the school's link trustee and the director for school improvement.
- We scrutinised the school's safeguarding records, including the single central record, and evaluated the effectiveness of the school's safeguarding procedures. This involved talking to staff and pupils about their understanding of safeguarding, bullying, and health and safety.
- We undertook deep dives in these subjects: reading and phonics, geography, art, mathematics and science. This involved visiting lessons, talking to pupils, looking at pupils' work and talking to teachers.
- We checked Parent View (Ofsted's online survey) and took account of these views during the inspection. We also considered any additional views provided through letters that we received. As a result, we scrutinised the school's handling of complaints and the implementation of the complaints policy.
- We also checked the staff and pupils' surveys and took full account of these during inspection activities.

Inspection team

Stewart Gale, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Jayne Keller

Ofsted Inspector

Jen Edwards

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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