

# Mary Elton Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	109115
<b>Local Authority</b>	North Somerset
<b>Inspection number</b>	309884
<b>Inspection date</b>	1 October 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Christine Huard

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	410
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	59
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Naomi Sager
<b>Headteacher</b>	Owen R James
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	17 January 2005
<b>Date of previous funded early education inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Date of previous childcare inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Holland Road Clevedon BS21 7SX
<b>Telephone number</b>	01275 876432
<b>Fax number</b>	01275 343756

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors who evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues.

The impact of actions being taken to improve provision and raise standards for boys, higher attaining pupils and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

The effectiveness of actions to improve children's early writing skills in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and across the school.

The effectiveness of subject leaders in identifying and monitoring areas for improvement in their subject areas.

Evidence was gathered from examination of the school's documentation, parents' questionnaires and pupils' work, observations of pupils in classes, around the school and in the playground, as well as interviews with subject leaders, pupils, governors and parents.

Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, are not justified. These have been included where appropriate in this report.

## Description of the school

This large primary school had several buildings condemned a year ago which has severely restricted space both indoors and outside. There has been significant delay in starting the new building, which has put pressure on the staff, children and parents alike.

The school has achieved Healthy Schools Status and the Active Mark. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well above average.

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) are taught in two Reception classes.

## Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Mary Elton is a good school. It provides a good education for its pupils in a stimulating learning environment. The key reasons for the school's success are the skilled leadership of the headteacher and the commitment, dedication and teamwork of the staff. Their combined efforts drive the school forward so that it meets challenging targets. Parents are extremely supportive of the school. As one wrote, 'My son has grown in confidence each year he has been at Mary Elton and I am very happy with his progress.'

The school has had a very difficult year in trying to cope in severely restricted teaching space due to delays to the planned rebuilding. However, the staff have refused to be daunted by this. They have successfully introduced a new and vibrant curriculum which better meets the needs of all pupils. Although this is not yet fully established, it is particularly successful in ensuring that boys are inspired and excited by the tasks they are expected to perform. It also stimulates all pupils to write and so improve their basic skills. They relish the 'critical skills challenges' in particular. During the inspection, pupils were researching the life of John Lennon in order to produce a biography. They were learning the necessity to work as a team as well as covering essential elements of English, mathematics, information and communication technology (ICT) and history. These sorts of activities motivate the pupils well and involve them in independent research. 'The challenge helps us to learn, but it's fun as well' was the enthusiastic response of one pupil when asked why he enjoyed his work.

Children in the Reception classes receive an excellent start to their education. Teachers match activities very well to their needs in a lively and exciting learning atmosphere. Positive actions to raise standards, particularly in children's language and their problem solving, numeracy and reasoning skills, have been successful and they are making outstanding progress. Pupils throughout the school achieve well. By the end of Year 6, pupils reach above average standards in English, mathematics and science. Standards in writing have improved significantly because of the whole school focus on this area. Standards are also above average in a range of other subjects such as information and communication technology, history and design and technology. Whilst all pupils make good or better progress, the school acknowledges that the progress of higher and lower attaining pupils is not always as good as it could be. This is because some teachers do not always use the information from their ongoing assessments to plan tasks that are finely tuned to the needs of the pupils.

When visiting each classroom, it was evident from the excellent behaviour and enthusiastic responses that pupils greatly enjoy their education. Teachers ensure that pupils know what they are going to learn. Resources, such as interactive whiteboards, are used skilfully by teachers and pupils alike whenever possible. These help make explanations clearer and lessons more interesting. Classroom management and organisation are particularly strong. Teachers plan a wide range of activities that enable all pupils to be purposefully employed even when not directly supervised. Pupils respond to questions thoughtfully and are encouraged to explore and share ideas with their peers. They assess how well they have learned at the end of each lesson, and sometimes gauge how successful their friends and peers have been in their learning. Teachers mark work carefully and older pupils say the comments help them to understand what they need to do to improve further. Pupils learn and play together in a harmonious atmosphere. Pupils are thoughtful and responsive in class and reflect maturely on their learning and the experiences they have. They have an excellent understanding of the need to feel and stay safe. They chatter knowledgeably and excitedly about the importance and meaning of a healthy

lifestyle. They eagerly recount the additional opportunities that have been made available to them to compensate for the current restrictions of space in the playground; Maypole dancing deserves a special mention! Pupils are adamant that although there was bullying in the past, this is now rare and if it occurs, it is dealt with extremely quickly. They recognise that they have a responsibility to others and proudly relate their involvement in local and national fund raising activities. However, although pupils learn about a variety of faiths and have a developing link with a school in Tanzania, they have a limited awareness of the different faiths and cultures in Britain itself. Pupils' well developed skills in numeracy, literacy and ICT, as well as in teamwork and problem solving, ensure they are exceptionally well prepared for the next stage of their education.

The pupils are extremely well nurtured, and the care and concern provided for them on a day-to-day basis are outstanding. Parents particularly appreciate this. As one said, 'The school is good at turning difficult pupils into successful pupils.' Pupils' personal and academic development is very carefully monitored from the time they enter the school. Targets set for individual pupils and the school as a whole are exceptionally challenging and regularly reviewed. Pupils are confident that there is always someone they can talk to about problems; and they do get sorted out. This is supported by parents in the comments they made: 'Any concerns I have had have always been listened to by staff and have always been sorted out'.

The headteacher provides strong, supportive leadership. He has a clear vision for the direction of the school and this is shared by staff and governors alike. Members of the senior management team have clearly defined roles and fulfil these extremely conscientiously. The role of subject leaders is developing and they are beginning to monitor their subjects effectively. Staff and governors know how well the school is doing, and their self-evaluation is accurate. There is a clear understanding of what the school needs to do to improve further. The improvement of standards, particularly in writing, demonstrates that the school has a good capacity to bring about further improvements.

## **Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 1**

When children join Reception standards in all areas are considerably below those expected of children of a similar age. They make excellent progress and they join Year 1 having reached broadly average standards in all areas. Children are eager to learn because teaching is vibrant and lively. There is an excellent balance between those activities led by the teacher and those that children choose for themselves. Children respond enthusiastically to the teachers' use of puppets, especially Crispin the Crow, which enlivens and enriches their learning. Particularly attention has been paid to developing early speaking and mark making skills. Children relish the opportunity to talk through ideas in inspiring role-play areas and then move on to write or mark make. Children have happily settled into school. One parent wrote, 'When I leave my son he has a big smile on his face; when I come to pick him up it is still there.' Activities promote children's personal development extremely well. They learn to share and take turns and develop independence and the ability to choose for themselves. Visits and visitors, interesting themes, and the excellent utilisation of the exciting outside area make the curriculum and learning relevant and exciting. The care and attention given to children's welfare are outstanding. Concerns are transmitted to all staff so that all are aware and can react to transitory as well as longer-term problems. The leadership and management are excellent. Staff demonstrate an excellent understanding of the needs of young children. Ongoing monitoring of the progress children are making ensures that activities are carefully matched to their needs.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Use information from day-to-day assessments to finely tune tasks for both higher and lower attaining pupils to ensure they are provided with sufficient challenge or support.
- Develop appropriate links to ensure that pupils are aware of the cultural diversity of the society in which they are growing up.

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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?	2
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?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

### Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	1
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	1
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	1

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	2

<sup>1</sup>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.



## Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

## The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
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

**Annex B****Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

2 October 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Mary Elton Primary School, Clevedon BS21 7SX

Thank you for the very warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school. You all seemed to be very happy and it was good to hear that you really enjoy your work and all the extra activities in which you are involved. We particularly relished your enthusiasm in carrying out the critical skills challenge whilst we were there. Your school gives you a good education, and is working hard to make it even better.

These are the things that are particularly good.

- Your behaviour is excellent and you are really keen and enthusiastic about your learning.
- You are all doing well in your learning, particularly in English, mathematics and science but also in other subjects such as ICT.
- You take very seriously the importance of eating healthily and taking physical exercise.
- Teachers make learning interesting and fun and you know how to improve your work by concentrating on your targets.
- You have an exciting curriculum and you seem to appreciate the extra opportunities that have been provided for you.
- The teachers and staff take excellent care of you while you are in school.
- Your headteacher leads the school extremely well and all the staff are very keen to make it even better.

We have asked the school to work at two things.

- Your teachers need to use the information they get from marking your work to plan tasks that are just right for those of you who find learning a bit difficult or easy.
- We think you need to learn more about all the different faiths and cultures in the society in which you are growing up.

I am glad you enjoy your school and hope you will continue to work hard to ensure that it stays as successful as it is now.

Very best wishes

Christine Huard Lead inspector