

Inspection of a good school: Meir Heath Academy

Golborn Avenue, Meir Heath, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire ST3 7JQ

Inspection dates:

16–17 October 2019

Outcome

Meir Heath Academy continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils love their school. They enjoy coming to Meir Heath and feel happy and well cared for. Leaders want all pupils to do well and be happy. Year 6 pupils told us that they do not want to leave their school at the end of the year. Pupils, parents and staff talk about the school as the 'Meir Heath family'. Interactions between adults and children are friendly, respectful and courteous. Pupils are safe at school and parents agree that their children are safe. Bullying is very rare. All pupils have confidence in adults to sort out any bullying that might occur.

Pupils' behaviour is excellent. They quickly follow staff's instructions. Lessons are free from any disruptions. Pupils are welcoming to visitors. Inspectors held many heart-warming conversations with children about their school. Pupils support and help one another in lessons. They work hard and do well.

Pupils have many opportunities to take on leadership responsibilities, for example roles on the school council or the trust-wide Pupil Parliament. Other pupils are volunteers at lunchtime, helping adults in the dinner hall. Pupils speak very fondly of their learning outside of the classroom. Learning is enriched with many trips, visits and excursions, including trips to the beach, museums, theatre and residential trips.

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

Leaders want every pupil to achieve their best. In order to meet these high aims, leaders have created an ambitious curriculum for all pupils. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and disadvantaged pupils. Leaders have carefully thought about what pupils need to learn over time in each subject.

The range of subjects covered is broad. It includes lessons in physical education, music and Spanish, for example. Pupils have many opportunities to enhance their learning in extra-curricular clubs, especially sporting activities. Many pupils attend these and enjoy the competitions with other schools.

Subject plans set out the skills and knowledge pupils need to gain to be successful. Teachers have good subject knowledge. They know what they need to do to support pupils with SEND. Teachers plan lessons carefully. They give pupils time to recap on their learning from previous lessons. Pupils confidently apply their previous learning and achieve well. As a result, pupils achieve very well across the curriculum.

When teachers know what they want pupils to remember and do at the end of a sequence of work, pupils often acquire the skills they need to do this. In some subject plans, especially in foundation subjects, assessments are not identified and defined as well as the skills and knowledge pupils should learn. This means that teachers and leaders cannot be sure if all pupils have learned what they should.

Leaders have made reading a high priority in their school. The plans in reading are sequenced well and focus on pupils' phonics abilities. This helps teachers to know what skills pupils should gain to become fluent readers. Staff quickly spot any pupils who may need extra help. These pupils then receive targeted support and catch up.

Disadvantaged pupils are supported well. This is because leaders know what each pupil needs to do to overcome their own barriers to learning, such as with weak phonics skills. Staff then work effectively with pupils to provide extra help. Staff choose suitable resources to support pupils' learning. This leads to disadvantaged pupils achieving well in different subjects.

Leaders plan well to support pupils' personal development. Pupils have many opportunities to discuss topical issues. These include how to keep themselves safe online and what it means to be a citizen in Britain. For instance, pupils talked about how they learned about democracy during the school council elections. This helps them to be well prepared for life in modern Britain.

Reception children settle very well in school. Children are happy and safe. Adults model language and behaviours extremely well. This ensures that children develop not only academic but interpersonal skills quickly. Children enjoy time to learn and play in their own classroom and in outside spaces. The range of activities provided encourages children to explore and be curious. Reception children begin to learn phonics as soon as they start school. Staff help children to have the skills they need to begin early reading.

Leaders are ably supported by the trust. Together they check that teaching is effective in every year group. They identify areas where staff could improve their performance. Leaders then put training in place with the help of the trust. Teachers say that the training they receive helps them to improve their practice.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have ensured that there is a strong culture of safeguarding at their school. They check that new staff are suitable to work with children, and they keep accurate records.

Staff are well trained to spot signs that a pupil may be at risk of harm. Teachers know what to do if they have any concerns about a pupil. All staff know their pupils well and use this information to ensure that all pupils are safe.

Leaders keep oversight of pupils they know to be vulnerable. They work well with external agencies to seek advice and make sure that these pupils receive the support they need.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Assessments in foundation subjects are not well developed. Therefore, leaders cannot be sure if pupils have learned more and can build on this knowledge in the future. Leaders need to ensure that assessments give them and teachers the information they need to determine whether pupils know more and can do more in all subjects.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good school or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the school could now be better than good or that standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the predecessor school, Meir Heath Primary School, to be good on 24–25 January 2012.

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 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	143350
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	10111720
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	356
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Johnny Anderson
Principal	Melanie Southern
Website	www.meirheathprimary.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected as an academy

Information about this school

- Meir Heath Academy converted to an academy in January 2017. When its predecessor school, Meir Heath Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good overall.
- The school is a member of the St Bart's Multi-Academy Trust. The trust consists of 19 primary schools.
- The principal took up her role in September 2017. She was previously the deputy headteacher at this school.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector held meetings with the principal, the trust's hub leader, senior and subject leaders, teachers, pupils, governors and the chief executive officer of the trust. She scrutinised school documents, including curriculum plans and school development plans.
- The inspector scrutinised the school's safeguarding arrangements and documentation, including the single central record. She met with the designated safeguarding lead and special educational needs coordinator. She spoke with teaching, kitchen and support staff about safeguarding.

- The inspector visited the school's early years provision.
- The inspector completed various inspection activities to gather evidence on the quality of education. These included lesson visits, looking at pupils' work and discussions with subject leaders, teachers and pupils about their learning.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and at breaktimes and lunchtimes. The inspector spoke to many pupils during the inspection, including three representatives from the trust's Pupil Parliament.
- The inspector considered 26 responses from staff to the Ofsted staff survey and 66 parent responses to Ofsted's Parent View questionnaire.
- The inspection focused on reading, mathematics and music. All other subjects were considered as part of the inspection.

Inspection team

Bianka Zemke, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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