

# Meir Heath Primary School

## Inspection report

---

<b>Unique reference number</b>	124145
<b>Local authority</b>	Staffordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	380814
<b>Inspection dates</b>	24–25 January 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	Gerald Griffin

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

---

<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 of pupils on the school roll</b>	367
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mike Powell
<b>Headteacher</b>	Julia Luke
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	2 December 2008
<b>School address</b>	Golborn Avenue Stoke-on-Trent ST3 7JQ
<b>Telephone number</b>	01782 393856
<b>Fax number</b>	01782 392755
<b>Email address</b>	office@meirheath.staffs.sch.uk

---

<b>Age group</b>	4–11
<b>Inspection date(s)</b>	24–25 January 2012
<b>Inspection number</b>	380814



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit [www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk), or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

[Piccadilly Gate](#)  
[Store St](#)  
[Manchester](#)  
[M1 2WD](#)

T: 0300 123 4234  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

© Crown copyright 2012



## Introduction

### Inspection team

Gerald Griffin	Additional inspector
Edgar Hastings	Additional inspector
Denise Dalton	Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed the teaching in 16 lessons, as well as visiting a further 16 lessons for shorter periods to further evaluate pupils' progress and the quality of marking. A total of 14 teachers were observed teaching, as well as a small number of teaching assistants. Inspectors held meetings with groups of pupils, a member of the governing body and staff. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at records of pupils' progress, safeguarding documentation, records of exclusions and poor behaviour, and results of the school's checks on the quality of teaching. There were no responses available to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) before the inspection, but inspectors took account of the views of the 150 parents and carers who responded to the inspection questionnaire.

## Information about the school

Meir Heath School is a larger than the average primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well below the national average. There are lower proportions of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs than found nationally. Nearly all pupils come from a White British background. The rest of the school population is made up of small numbers from a wide range of different minority ethnic groups. The headteacher and deputy headteacher were both appointed in the last two years. The school meets current floor targets (the government's expected minimum standard for pupils' attainment). The school has been awarded Science Mark.

The onsite childcare facility, Kids Aloud, is managed privately. It is inspected and reported upon separately.

## Inspection judgements

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Achievement of pupils</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety of pupils</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>2</b>

## Key findings

- This is a good school, in which pupils achieve well.
- Children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage and start Year 1 with levels of attainment that are above average for their age. While progress in reading is good, it is not as rapid as in other areas of learning. This is because children spend too much time learning phonics (how to link letters to the sounds they make) in class groups, which means, at times, some find the work too easy while others struggle because it is too hard.
- This is also the case in Years 1 and 2, where progress is good, but better in writing and mathematics than in reading. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 make good progress and their attainment is rising.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress because of the effective academic support they receive.
- Teaching provides pupils with a wide range of rich and engaging experiences. Relationships in lessons are very positive and pupils enjoy their learning. The typically rapid pace to learning slows occasionally when introductions last too long.
- Pupils' behaviour is good and they make a very positive contribution to the well-ordered school and the smooth flow of lessons. Attendance was above average last year and has risen this year. Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe.
- The headteacher's unrelenting drive to improve the school is shared enthusiastically by staff. Leaders' robust checks on teaching and learning are used well to plan successful actions to overcome weaknesses. This means that the school is getting better quickly.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that teaching secures a rapid pace of learning throughout lessons by

ensuring introductions do not last too long.

- Accelerate progress in reading for pupils in the younger classes by providing more time for them to learn phonics in groups that are at a similar stage of their reading development.

## **Main report**

### **Achievement of pupils**

Parents and carers are correct in their view that pupils achieve well at the school. Achievement is improving and this is seen particularly in the rising standards in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2 over the past three years.

Children join the Reception Year with knowledge, skills and understanding that are at the levels expected for their age. They make good progress in all areas of learning and start Year 1 with above-average attainment. Progress is especially good in emotional development and their knowledge and understanding of the world. This good start is built upon in Years 1 and 2 and pupils make good progress. However, the pace of progress in reading in both the Early Years Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2 is not as rapid as that in other areas. This is because children's skills in phonics are a relative weakness. Attainment in reading at the end of Year 2 is average, but it is rising.

Attainment in Year 6 is above average, as it has been in the previous three years, including in reading. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 make good progress from their starting points, which, for most, were average when they finished Year 2. The progress of boys has improved strongly because their work consistently challenges them and they are given extra help to catch up with work that they have missed in the past. The gap between the attainment of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and others has closed for the same reasons and they make good progress too. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs concentrate well in lessons. Their good progress is secured through them meeting small, but challenging next steps, from which they gain both satisfaction and confidence. Good achievement and positive attitudes mean that pupils are well prepared for secondary school.

Much good and some outstanding learning was seen in lessons during the inspection. In the Reception classes, children are curious and keenly use the good resources in the setting to investigate and experiment. As a result, they gain a good level of independence. They are keen to work indoors and out, which develops their knowledge and understanding of the world well. In one of the lessons seen, children were improving their manual dexterity rapidly by using chopsticks to pick up objects as part of a topic on the Chinese New Year. Elsewhere, in a Year 6 English lesson, pupils made rapid gains in their reasoning skills when writing arguments for and against school trips. They discussed and checked their work in small groups, which helped to develop their ideas and improve their writing. Pupils worked with a good level of independence; they were not over-reliant on adult help to write their well-structured accounts. Pupils are developing their basic skills of reading, writing,

communication and mathematics well in all subjects. For example, in a lively Year 4 topic lesson, pupils were using their mathematics skills to calculate the relative costs of each stage of making a chocolate bar. Nearly all pupils listen well, speak confidently and articulate their ideas very clearly

### **Quality of teaching**

Throughout the school, teachers have high expectations of their classes and set challenging tasks that secure good progress. Teachers' questions are probing and make pupils think deeply. Teachers use well the many exciting and varied learning opportunities provided by the curriculum to interest and engage pupils. They make good use of small group and class discussions to extend pupils' knowledge and understanding. Good use is made of resources, such as games and computers, to engage pupils and develop their learning. In the Reception classes, teachers plan an appropriate balance of adult-led and child-chosen activities. Occasionally, tasks that children choose do not challenge them as well as the work led by adults. In Years 1 to 6, homework is set regularly, which extends their class work well. Teachers' regular checks during lessons on pupils' knowledge and understanding are used skilfully to plan the next steps in learning. Occasionally, the pace of work slows when pupils spend too long listening passively to an over-long introduction. Teachers plan many opportunities for pupils to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural skills, for example by reflecting on the actions of fictional characters in books they are reading.

Teaching assistants provide valuable support for pupils, especially for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. For example, they help them with their contributions to class debates. They keep notes on their progress, which are shared with the teacher to help with future planning. Marking and feedback are consistently good and provide pupils with a clear understanding of how they can improve their work. Older pupils are well informed about the levels they are expected to attain and their progress towards them. This they find very motivating and it ensures that they take a good measure of responsibility for their own progress. Parents and carers are correct when they write that teaching is good.

### **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

Pupils feel very safe in school. They told inspectors that bullying is very rare and that they were confident that the school would deal with any incidences effectively. Pupils have a well-developed understanding of how to keep themselves safe, for example when crossing the road and on the internet.

A small minority of parents and carers wrote that they had concerns about behaviour. Inspectors found that behaviour was always good and often outstanding in lessons and around the school. Pupils told inspectors that lessons were very rarely interrupted by inappropriate behaviour and that teachers managed these occasions well. The school's records of incidences of poor behaviour confirm these views. Pupils find lessons interesting and relevant and demonstrate positive attitudes to learning. The occasionally boisterous behaviour on the playground is managed well by supervisors.

Pupils are curious, reflect maturely on their feeling and have a well-founded understanding of right and wrong. They are keen to help each other in class and to share resources. They respect people from backgrounds different to themselves and enjoy learning about different cultures. They are keen to participate in the many clubs and sports on offer and pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils’ enjoyment of school is reflected on the year-on-year rise in attendance and their punctuality.

### Leadership and management

Key leaders, including the governing body, set challenging targets for the school. Their drive has successfully raised attainment and improved progress and achievement strongly over the past three years. This record shows the school has the capacity for sustained improvement. Leaders are successful at sharpening teachers’ skills. For example, the improvements in marking are having a significant impact on pupils’ good progress and motivation. Teachers’ skills at teaching children to read and spell by learning to link letters to the sound they make have improved rapidly under the new headteacher. While younger pupils make good gains in these areas, progress still has shortcomings because the work is often taught to the whole class, which means activities are not matched to individual need.

Leaders check the progress of each pupil regularly. If progress slows, they provide effective interventions to help pupils catch up missed work. The needs of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are assessed accurately and the knowledge used to provide them with appropriate learning programmes. The success of these programmes and interventions is checked and revised regularly to ensure they are effective. The targeted support for pupils whose circumstances have the potential to make them vulnerable is very effective. Parents and carers’ questionnaires show that they feel the school is led well and that they are very happy with the way the school advises them on helping their children learn at home.

The curriculum is good and meets pupils’ needs, widens their horizons and raises ambition. Its promotion of pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils talked enthusiastically about their science lessons, especially those at the local high school, reflecting the school’s national award in the subject.

The school shows a clear commitment to combating discrimination and to equal opportunities and the improvement in the progress of boys’ progress in Years 3 to 6, and that of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals throughout the school shows that its policies are effective. The school’s arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet statutory requirements.

## 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](http://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.**



26 January 2012

Dear Pupils

### **Inspection of Meir Heath Primary School, Stoke-on-Trent, ST3 7JQ**

Thank you for being so polite and friendly when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed our visit and the opportunity to talk with some of you and to see you in lessons and at play. I enjoyed joining you for an assembly especially. You are rightly proud of the school's happy atmosphere in which you all get on so well together. Meir Heath is a good school.

You told us that you enjoy school and feel extremely safe and secure. You try hard in lessons and your progress is good. Your behaviour is good in class and around the school. You have good relationships with your teachers. You told us that you valued the feedback from them about the quality of your work and how you can make it better. You attend school well and are very punctual. The curriculum provides plenty of exciting clubs and visits, which you enjoy. It provides you also with plenty of opportunities to think about your feelings, right and wrong, to work together and appreciate a wide range of cultures. The headteacher and staff are working together to make the school get better and we have asked them to do two things to help you do even better in your learning. These are to:

- help you to make rapid progress always by making sure lesson introductions do not last too long
- improve the progress of younger pupils by putting them in groups who are at the same level of linking letters to the sound they make (phonics), so that they do not find learning to read too easy or too hard.

All of you can help the school by continuing to try your best in lessons and behaving and attending well. We wish you all the best in the future.

Yours sincerely

Gerald Griffin  
Lead inspector (on behalf of the inspection team)

**Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk). If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone **0300 123 4234**, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).**