

# John Madejski Academy

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique reference number</b>	130247
<b>Local authority</b>	N/A
<b>Inspection number</b>	381255
<b>Inspection dates</b>	25–26 January 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	Maria Dawes HMI

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Academy
<b>School category</b>	Maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1006
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	149
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Alex Bayliss
<b>Headteacher</b>	Nicola Maytum
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	8 October 2008
<b>School address</b>	Hartland Road Reading RG2 8AF
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<b>Age group</b>	11–18
<b>Inspection date(s)</b>	25–26 January 2012
<b>Inspection number</b>	381255



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## Introduction

Inspection team

Maria Dawes	Her Majesty's Inspector
John Mason	Additional inspector
Andrew Phillips	Additional inspector
Christopher Crouch	Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed 44 lessons, of which four were joint observations with members of the senior and middle leadership team. In addition, the inspection team made a number of other short visits to lessons. Meetings were held with three groups of students, the Chair of the Governing Body and academy staff, including senior and middle managers. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection. They observed the academy's work, and looked at a number of documents, including data on current students' progress, planning and monitoring documentation, records relating to behaviour and attendance and the single central record of safeguarding checks on staff. They analysed 140 parental and carers' questionnaires and others completed by staff and students.

## Information about the school

The John Madejski Academy has been increasing in size since it opened in September 2006 and is now just slightly larger than the average-sized secondary school. The very large majority of students have been in the academy since it opened. There are significantly more boys than girls. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. About one quarter of students are from a minority ethnic group, mainly of mixed, Black or Black British backgrounds. Very few are at an early stage of learning to speak English. Over half of all students, a proportion much higher than that found nationally, are identified as disabled or with special educational needs. These needs relate mainly to moderate learning difficulties including speech, language and communication difficulties and behavioural, emotional and social difficulties.

A small number of students in Years 10 and 11 are following courses at Reading College. The academy has a specialism in sport and has recently achieved Gold Investors in People status. The current principal took up her post three weeks before the beginning of the inspection.

The academy's effectiveness was judged to be good at its last inspection. It is currently below the government's floor standard for expected performance.

**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

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Achievement of pupils</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety of pupils</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>4</b>

## Key findings

- In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its students an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement.
- Despite some small improvements since the last inspection, the proportion of students achieving five or more GCSE passes at grades A\* to C including English and mathematics remains well below average. This is because there is too much teaching that is inadequate and not enough that is good. The quality of teaching does not enable students to make the necessary progress to reach higher standards.
- Many students start at the academy with difficulties in literacy. Some support is put in place, but this is not adequate or consistent enough to enable students to develop the skills in speaking, reading and writing that they need to make good progress in their learning and to equip them for later life.
- Students' attitudes to learning are variable and students, staff and parents consider that the poor behaviour of a small minority frequently has a negative impact on the learning of a larger proportion of students. This is generally where there is uninteresting teaching and inconsistent approaches to managing inappropriate behaviour. Despite this, the academy is a cohesive community that students enjoy attending. Students from different backgrounds generally get on well together and are supportive of each other. The academy provides a range of opportunities, particularly through its sports specialism, which develop students' self-esteem and confidence.
- The sixth form is inadequate. This is because a combination of an inappropriate curriculum and weak teaching mean that too many students leave with no qualifications.
- The new principal has quickly started to gain the confidence of the staff and

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students and is committed to raising attainment and tackling weak teaching and poor behaviour. Until recently the academy has had an overly generous view of its performance. Leaders and managers have not demonstrated the capacity to implement changes to bring about sustained improvement, particularly in teaching and learning.

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

- Improve the capacity to sustain improvement by:
  - ensuring that provision, particularly teaching, is rigorously monitored, robustly analysed and evaluated against improvements in students' progress and attainment
  - developing a focused and co-ordinated approach to improving teaching and learning including through sharing of good practice, coaching and mentoring
  - ensuring that improvement plans include rigorous success criteria that are used to check on how well strategies are working
  - extending the capacity of leaders at all levels to manage their areas of responsibility effectively
  - developing the curriculum at all key stages including the sixth form, so it better meets the needs of students
  - ensuring that the governing body, using accurate information and evaluation, holds all leaders and managers to account and is actively involved in setting the strategic direction of the academy.
  
- Improve the achievement of all students, across all key stages, particularly in English and mathematics, by eradicating inadequate teaching and significantly improving the proportion of good or better teaching ensuring that:
  - teachers plan lessons that are tailored to meet the different needs and abilities of all students, and monitor students' progress closely to ensure they are fully challenged throughout lessons
  - lessons actively engage and interest students
  - the support in lessons is improved for all lower-attaining students, disabled students and those with special educational needs
  - students' behaviour in lessons is managed consistently.
  
- Improve students' levels of literacy across the academy by ensuring that:
  - all teachers take responsibility for systematically developing confident and accurate speaking, reading and writing skills in the subjects they teach
  - teachers' marking and assessment pay particular attention to vocabulary, sentence construction, spelling, grammar and punctuation
  - students are given opportunities outside lessons and in tutor time to systematically improve their reading skills and develop an enjoyment of reading.
  - intervention programmes are accurately matched to students' needs.

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## **Main report**

### **Achievement of pupils**

Although standards by the end of Year 11 are rising, they are too low and the rate of improvement is too slow. The academy has been unable to reduce the attainment gap of students compared to students nationally. Students start at the academy with standards that are well below average and many have a range of additional learning, emotional and social needs, some of which are complex. From these low starting points, all groups of students, despite individual successes, make inadequate progress because of a combination of too little good teaching, inconsistent approaches to managing behaviour and insufficient support in developing literacy and numeracy.

Signs of improvement are evident for some groups of students. Judicious changes to the curriculum and deployment of staff in science and mathematics, for example, are leading to improved rates of progress for more-able students at Key Stage 4. However, these improvements are not evident for all groups of students consistently across all subjects. The large majority of students identified with special educational needs do not make enough progress, primarily because work is not sufficiently adapted to meet their needs in lessons. The progress of many students with the most complex learning and behavioural needs is severely hampered by a poor curriculum and weak teaching.

Students make sound and occasionally outstanding progress in some subjects. For example in history, students at Key Stage 4 make exceptional progress to reach challenging targets and achieve very well. In the best lessons, teachers challenge students to do well; students enjoy the variety of learning activities and teachers consistently apply behaviour policies, ensuring the class is an orderly yet exciting place of learning. However, too frequently students are not engaged, restless and making at best satisfactory progress. This view was also expressed by a number of parents and students. This rate of progress is not fast enough to raise attainment.

A very large proportion of students enter the school in Year 7 with weaknesses in oracy, reading and writing. The academy has systems for screening and early intervention, but programmes are not always closely enough matched to students' needs. Very few teachers plan for regular opportunities in their lessons or tutor sessions to develop or reinforce students' speaking, reading and writing skills and so many students continue to struggle throughout their time in the academy.

Many students take unsuitable courses in the sixth form and teaching and support are often inadequate. As a result, too many students fail to achieve a pass grade.

### **Quality of teaching**

The overall quality of teaching over time is inadequate. Too few lessons are good or better and some are inadequate. A minority of responses from parents to the

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inspection questionnaires reflect some concerns about the quality of teaching. In the small minority of lessons where students make good progress, assessment is used well to ensure work is carefully matched to the different abilities and there is a range of interesting activities that excite and motivate them. Teachers use a range of activities that promote students' social skills. For example, in an outstanding history lesson judicious choice of activities, skilful questioning and independent group work challenged students to think carefully and develop their ideas. The engagement of all students was exemplary.

However, more generally, lesson planning lacks enough rigour and detail to be effective in ensuring that activities meet the needs of all learners; teachers provide all students with the same work regardless of ability. Expectations of students are frequently too low, and students do not always know what is expected of them. Teachers do not check sufficiently on progress during lessons, so seldom adapt activities to meet students' needs. Frequently teachers' explanations are too long and the pace of learning is slow. Consequently, students lose interest and chat to one another or disengage from the lesson. When teachers do not manage this successfully, learning is further restricted.

Teachers generally have a good knowledge of their own subjects, but their understanding of how the subject might be used to develop students' basic skills, particularly in literacy, is underdeveloped. At times, the lack of appropriate materials and support in a lesson mean that students' difficulties in literacy severely hamper their learning in that subject. Marking, in subjects other than English, rarely focuses on developing students' writing skills.

Rarely are adaptations made to lesson plans for the very large number of students identified with special educational needs. Teaching assistants are often not managed effectively; for example, they are not always given something to do when teachers are interacting with the whole class.

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

Most students behave well, but they and their parents and carers comment that the poor behaviour of some students frequently interferes with their learning and enjoyment. This takes place particularly when teaching is not enjoyable or staff do not follow the systems for managing behaviour. The majority of staff also express concern about the behaviour of some students and the support they are offered to deal with this. Many students have behavioural difficulties and not all staff working with these students are adequately trained or supported to manage their learning effectively. There are clear systems in place for tracking poor behaviour but these systems are not adequately used to identify and address the root causes of the problem. Consequently, all too often, undesirable behaviour is repeated.

Students say that they feel safe in the academy and are confident that they can get support if they have any concerns. They enjoy being part of a mixed-year tutor group and the school community is generally cohesive. The academy's sports

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specialism contributes positively to this. There are effective processes for securing the well-being of students whose circumstances may make them vulnerable. The academy's leaders have worked well to increase attendance and there has been a steady improvement. However, there is still a small proportion of students that are persistently absent.

Students have a good understanding of different types of bullying and say that although there are some occurrences it is dealt with well. They consider a strength of the academy to be the way all students are accepted for who they are. Older students are trained as peer mentors that younger students can and do turn to. However, there is a degree of homophobic 'name-calling' that is not being consistently addressed.

### **Leadership and management**

The new principal has vision and drive and is quickly raising the morale of staff. She has an astute understanding of the problems of the academy and in the very short time she has been in post has rapidly started to make changes. However, it is very early days and until this point, leaders and managers have been unrealistic about the academy's current performance. The monitoring and evaluation of the work of the academy have lacked rigour and accuracy, particularly with regard to the quality of teaching. Self-evaluation has been overgenerous and has not focused sufficiently on raising attainment. The issues identified at the last inspection have not been addressed, standards have not risen significantly and the quality of teaching has declined. The academy therefore does not demonstrate sufficient capacity to improve.

Staff have a clear understanding of the context of the academy and the challenges facing many of the students. There is good identification of the additional needs of students and many students whose circumstances have made them vulnerable are well supported through secure links with other agencies including social services and educational psychologists. There are some notable successes. However, many leaders and managers do not have high enough aspirations for students, particularly with regard to their achievement. Support for students with particular needs varies in quality from lesson to lesson and is not monitored. The result is that students receive a mixed experience of support and guidance over the school day.

Leaders and managers have not focused sufficiently on improving the quality of teaching across the academy. Performance management is not sufficiently rigorous. Many staff are inexperienced and frequently are teaching the most challenging classes. Leaders have not been effective in disseminating good practice, and professional development has not had sufficient impact. Improvement planning varies in quality across the academy and although it generally identifies the right priorities, it is not sharp enough to bring about rapid change. It does not include rigorous success criteria or interim reviews, by which senior and middle leaders and governors can judge the success of their actions.



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Despite some strengths in the curriculum, it is not meeting the needs of many of the students because it does not promote high levels of achievement and basic skills well enough. Students do not have enough opportunities outside lessons to develop an enjoyment of reading. The partnership with the local college is good and having a positive impact on the small number of students that attend. All of those that attended in the last academic year have continued to employment or further study.

The number of students choosing to stay in the academy's sixth form has significantly grown. However, the guidance on entry to the sixth form is not always in the students' best interest because many students are recruited to courses to which they are unsuited. This is leading to a low, though improving, retention rate from Year 12 to Year 13.

The academy promotes a wide range of curriculum enrichment and leadership opportunities particularly through its specialism. The inclusive approach gives all students good opportunities to participate; uptake is good. The daily tutor programme raises students' self-esteem and enables them to explore values, beliefs and moral issues as well as successfully promoting their personal qualities. Discrimination is generally tackled effectively.

The governing body has not been effective in challenging the school's leaders and until very recently has not had sufficient awareness of the school's strengths and weaknesses. All statutory requirements relating to safeguarding are met.

## 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.**

27 January 2012

Dear Students



**Inspection of John Madejski Academy, Reading, RG2 8AF**

Thank you for the welcome you gave us when we visited your academy recently. We enjoyed meeting you and would like to thank you for helping us with our work, and for your honest and open replies to our questions. Thank you too to those who completed our questionnaire. You told us that most of you enjoy attending the academy and it is clear that you value the support that your teachers and other staff give you. We were impressed with the mutual support you give to each other in lessons, in sporting activities and through your tutor group system.

There are some strengths to your academy there are also some shortcomings. Too many of you do not make enough progress. We have, therefore, placed the school in 'special measures' as it needs more external help to improve. Other inspectors will be making regular visits to see how well the school is improving.

Some teaching is good, but too much is weak and this means that many of you do not achieve the examination results you could. The large majority of students are polite and behave well but you told us that this is not the case with a minority of students who can disrupt learning. We observed some negative attitudes and poor behaviour in a few lessons. Leaders and managers have not done enough to improve the school since the last inspection.

In order to speed up your progress, raise attainment and ensure good behaviour, we have asked your senior leaders to improve leadership and management across all sections of the school, to eradicate inadequate teaching, to make sure much more is good and to support you to improve your skills in reading and writing.

I hope you all play your part in raising standards by attending and behaving well and taking an active part in all your lessons.

Yours sincerely

Maria Dawes  
Her Majesty's Inspector

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