

Serco Inspections  
Cedar House  
21 William Street  
Edgbaston  
Birmingham  
B15 1LH

T 0300 123 1231  
Text Phone: 0161 6188524  
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk  
[www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

**Serco**  
Direct T 0121 683 3888



6 December 2012

Ms N Maytum  
Principal  
John Madejski Academy  
Hartland Road  
Reading  
RG2 8AF

Dear Ms Maytum

**Special measures: monitoring inspection of John Madejski Academy**

Following my visit with Heather Housden, Additional Inspector, to your school on 4–5 December 2012, I write on behalf of Her Majesty’s Chief Inspector of Education, Children’s Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings.

The inspection was the second monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in January 2012. The full list of the areas for improvement which were identified during that inspection is set out in the annex to this letter. The monitoring inspection report is attached and the main judgements are set out below.

Progress since being subject to special measures – satisfactory.

Progress since previous monitoring inspection – satisfactory.

Newly qualified teachers may be appointed, at the discretion of the academy.

This letter and monitoring inspection report will be posted on the Ofsted website. I am copying this letter and the monitoring inspection report to the Secretary of State, the Chair of the Governing Body, and the Department for Education Academies Advisers’ Unit.

Yours sincerely

Ian Hodgkinson  
**Her Majesty’s Inspector**

## Annex

### **The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in January 2012**

- 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 coordinated 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.

## **Special measures: monitoring of John Madejski Academy**

### **Report from the second monitoring inspection on 4–5 December 2012**

#### **Evidence**

Inspectors observed the academy's work, looked carefully at documents and met with the Principal, academy leaders, members of staff, groups of students, the Chair and representatives of the Governing Body, and external consultants who provide improvement services to the academy.

#### **Context**

Since the last monitoring inspection in June 2012, 16 teachers have left or will have left by the end of the current school term. Twenty-eight new teachers have been appointed, thereby raising staffing levels in the academy. Four new members of the senior leadership team took up post at vice-principal or assistant vice-principal level at the start of the current term. The new director of human resources began work shortly after the last monitoring inspection.

#### **Achievement of pupils at the school**

GCSE results in 2012 rose slightly, although they still did not meet the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress. Many groups of students underachieved at GCSE, particularly girls and students known to be eligible for free school meals, reflecting the weaknesses which led the school to be placed in special measures earlier in the year. The small number of students who speak English as an additional language, however, did well. In the sixth form, there was a marked improvement in A-level results, and students made satisfactory progress. Results in AS levels, however, were weak, as a result of students following courses that were not matched well enough to their abilities and interests. The advice and guidance students receive about their sixth form course choices are now much better, and support more consistently good learning and progress in sixth-form lessons. An increasing number of students are now applying for and gaining university places.

The proportion of lessons where students' learning and progress are good is increasing, although there are still variations across the school. Students' progress is generally weakest at Key Stage 3, where assessment information has not been reliable enough in a number of subjects, including English and mathematics, to help leaders identify underachievement and take remedial action. At Key Stage 4, much work has been done across subjects to ensure that students are following courses which are better matched to their abilities and aptitudes. As a result of better teaching and the effective additional support provided beyond lessons, the

proportion of students making expected progress in the current Year 11 is predicted to rise significantly in 2013 to broadly average.

The academy's focus on literacy has been intense. It features well-managed programmes in tutorial periods, special intervention programmes for students with specific weaknesses, and a high priority given to literacy objectives across subjects and lessons. Substantial gains have been made in students' reading ages. Their confidence in speaking and reading aloud, for example in lessons and assemblies, has developed well. Writing, however, including the use of basic grammar and presentational skills, is still weak for many students. Students need more opportunities to practise, develop and correct these skills, and to see examples of good writing on display.

Progress since the last monitoring inspection on the areas for improvement:

- improve students' levels of literacy across the academy – satisfactory.

### **The quality of teaching**

Teaching has improved since the last monitoring inspection. The lessons seen and the academy's own monitoring suggest that about half the teaching is now good or outstanding, and that the proportion of inadequate lessons has reduced considerably. Some features of teaching are consistent and improving strengths. Teachers continue to make the objectives of lessons clear to their classes at the start of lessons, and often review students' learning against these objectives at the end. Teachers often make good use of high-quality resources, including information and communication technology, to plan stimulating activities. Lessons are planned with a focus on literacy, especially the development of relevant vocabulary and increasingly adapting writing to suit different purposes. Students' work is generally marked regularly and with helpful comments, but there is little sign that students are in the habit of responding directly to these comments by correcting or improving grammar and presentation. Students are generally aware of their target levels of attainment in each subject, and are encouraged to identify what knowledge or skills they need to improve to reach them.

Despite these improvements, the quality of teaching remains inconsistent and still requires improvement in too many lessons. The quality of lesson planning varies markedly, and too often tasks are still not adapted to suit the range of abilities in the class. The academy has introduced a lesson planning format to help teachers improve this area, but it is not followed by all teachers. This means that in some lessons the less-able students, including disabled students and those who have special educational needs, find work too challenging and get left behind, while in others more-able students are not stretched sufficiently. Where teaching assistants are present, however, they often work well with the teacher to support learning for all groups of students. The new system for managing students' behaviour in class is unevenly applied. In lessons where learning was persistently disrupted by the poor

behaviour of individual students, some teachers were reluctant, or not confident enough, to apply the new system.

Progress since the last monitoring inspection on the areas for improvement:

- 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 – satisfactory.

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

Students' behaviour in lessons is variable and this constrains the overall quality of learning. The new behaviour policy takes a firm line on all aspects of students' conduct, and this has won favour with many students and parents. Exclusions rose sharply at first but are now reducing as expectations are more widely understood. Around the school site, students conduct themselves well and many show great pride in their new uniforms and tracksuits. The academy gives students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development a high priority. An outstanding Year 9 assembly, led by the head of year and community chaplain, promoted deep thinking and animated contributions from students on the subject of graffiti. Students continue to be widely and successfully involved in sports teams and other activities relating to the academy's specialism. Attendance is now above average.

### **The quality of leadership in and management of the school**

The Principal has shown highly astute leadership in extensively reforming the academy's staffing structure, systems and procedures. She has assembled an able senior leadership team to bring in these changes, which are already improving the quality of teaching and students' achievement. The action they have taken to reduce inadequate teaching has been thorough, fair and successful. Coaching and support for staff are helping more teachers to meet the criteria for 'good' teaching. Support and induction for newly qualified teachers are good. The new system for managing staff performance links the targets for individuals to the academy's main priorities for improvement exceptionally well. The quality of self-evaluation of performance and action planning for improvement has improved very substantially across the academy, from individual members of staff through to whole departments and faculties. The criteria for measuring the success of actions taken are not always detailed enough or easily measurable, but all staff are now thinking critically about how to improve.

New leaders of key departments and faculties, including English and mathematics, are increasingly improving teaching and the curriculum, with the help of external consultants, to enable students to make better progress. They are helping teachers to assess students' attainment and progress more accurately, although the remaining weaknesses at Key Stage 3 still limit the ability of staff and leaders to identify and tackle underachievement.

The reorganised governing body is holding the academy much more sharply to account for its performance. It has been strengthened by new governors with expertise in education and financial management. The three key committees of standards, curriculum and resources enable governors to give more detailed scrutiny of the academy's work. The Chair of Governors has a particularly well-developed understanding of the academy's strengths and weaknesses. Governors are more actively linked with departments, and visit classes to get first-hand information about specific aspects of the academy's work. The governing body is now rightly setting up a progress review committee to regularly evaluate the academy's progress out of special measures. Sharpening up the development plan should help them to measure the success expected at key points in the future.

Progress since the last monitoring inspection on the areas for improvement:

- improve the capacity to sustain improvement – good.

### **External support**

The academy has continued to use external consultants well to support the areas of teaching and middle leadership where it has identified the greatest need. Their expertise has helped leaders to diagnose and rectify specific problems with course structures and teaching programmes. As an immediate result, the proportion of students who make the progress expected of them is on course to increase markedly this year. Individual teachers speak favourably of the support they have received from consultants in developing and improving their practice.