

CfBT Inspection Services  
Suite 22  
West Lancs Investment  
Centre  
Maple View  
Skelmersdale  
WN8 9TG

**Direct T** 01695 566932  
**Direct F** 01695 729320  
**Direct email:** hcarnall@cfbt.com



24 October 2014

Mr Jonathan Baddeley  
Principal  
Maple Court Academy  
Beverley Drive  
Stoke-on-Trent  
Staffordshire  
ST2 0QD

Dear Mr Baddeley

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Maple Court Academy, Stoke-On-Trent**

Following my visit to your academy on 23 October 2014, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave me and for the time you made available to discuss the actions you are taking to improve the academy since the most recent section 5 inspection.

The visit was the second monitoring inspection since the academy was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in July 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Senior leaders and the academy sponsor are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection. The academy should take further action to:

- eradicate the remaining inadequate teaching and increase the proportion that is good or better, as demonstrated by the quality of work in pupils' books and data about their achievement over time.

### **Evidence**

During the inspection, meetings were held with the Principal, other senior leaders, a group of pupils, and a governor to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. The academy improvement plan was evaluated. Other documents were scrutinised, including information about pupils' current achievement. A series of short visits was made to classrooms to talk to pupils and look at their behaviour and learning. Pupils' behaviour was observed as they walked around the school and at lunchtime.

## **Context**

You, your vice Principal and an assistant Principal took up your posts the academy at the beginning of this term. In addition, four teachers also joined the school at the same time as you. The College Academy Trust has begun a significant programme of refurbishment.

## **Main findings**

Since taking up your posts, you and your new senior leaders have injected a relentless drive for improvement. The team communicates a shared passion for the school to become a place where pupils can achieve well. You have, rightly, focused initially on establishing a highly structured system for managing pupils' behaviour. In a short time, this approach has brought about notable improvement in pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to learning. It has been particularly successful because senior leaders have worked as a cohesive team, ensuring all staff implement the system rigorously.

Pupils appreciate the changes you have made. They like the refurbishments to the building and the new, attractive furniture. Pupils reported feeling safer in school, partly due to the improved security of the site, but largely because behaviour has improved so dramatically. They explained that behaviour has improved so much because the rules are now clear and everyone has to follow them. They value the rewards on offer for doing so and are motivated to 'Be Green' every day. Pupils told the inspector that teachers treat them fairly and are more welcoming and friendly now. One said this has made him feel more confident. Pupils are proud of their uniform and try hard to keep it looking smart.

Senior leaders now have sharply defined roles and responsibilities. This has led to clearer lines of accountability and more effective working patterns. Teachers report increased confidence in the leadership and that they feel empowered to their job. Leaders share an accurate view of the school and are realistic about the scale of improvement needed. A well-thought-out action plan demonstrates how leaders will build on the impressive track record of turning around pupils' behaviour in order to rapidly improve the quality of teaching. Planned actions are sensibly prioritised.

You have commissioned a substantial programme of training and support to ensure teachers develop the skills needed to understand what pupils can do, identify what they need to learn next, and then teach those skills systematically in an interesting way to help pupils make rapid progress to catch up from starting points that are very low. You and other leaders are checking closely whether this programme is making a difference. So far, you have focused your checks on whether teachers are following agreed practices. This has ensured consistency in some key elements of teaching, such as marking pupils' work. As a result, the quality of teaching overall is improving. You plan to re-focus your checks in the second half of this term to

judging the impact these practices are having on the progress pupils make. In this way, you plan to target further support to those teachers who need it most.

The academy trust has supported you by providing the resources needed to improve the academy's premises and to implement the behaviour strategy. They challenge you to use finance effectively and to demonstrate their investment is leading to an improved experience and quality of education for the pupils. The early signs are positive. Nevertheless, you and the trust understand there is still a long way to go.

Ofsted may carry out further visits and, where necessary, provide further support and challenge to the academy until its next section 5 inspection.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body and as below.

Yours sincerely

Sandy Hayes  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

The letter should be copied to the following:

- Appropriate authority - Chair of the Governing Body/Interim Executive Board
- Local authority – including where the academy is an academy
- DfE - Academies Advisers Unit [[open.FREEACADEMYS@education.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:open.FREEACADEMYS@education.gsi.gov.uk)] - for academies, free academies, UTCs and studio academies