

# John Madejski Academy

Hartland Road, Reading RG2 8AF

**Inspection dates**

10–11 November 2015

**Overall effectiveness**

**Inadequate**

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Inadequate
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Inadequate
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Inadequate
16 to 19 study programmes	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

**This is an inadequate academy**

- Leadership is weak at all levels. Senior leaders do not evaluate the impact of their work sharply enough. As a result, initiatives to tackle underachievement and prevent decline have not been effective.
- The governing body has not acted quickly enough to challenge the lack of success in improving pupils’ outcomes.
- In many subjects and across year groups, pupils are underachieving with too few making expected progress in English, mathematics and science.
- Pupils’ achievement is inadequate. Not enough pupils attain good GCSE grades in English, mathematics and science.
- Too many pupils do not make enough progress from their starting points. This is the case for most-able pupils, disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs and those who benefit from extra government funding (the pupil premium).
- Teachers take too little account of the particular learning needs of pupils. They do not use the information they gather about pupils’ learning precisely enough.
- Pupils are not provided with sufficient challenge in lessons and this limits their ambition, motivation and progress.

**The academy has the following strengths**

- Pupils make better progress in physical education, history and geography because of better teaching.
- Recent initiatives to tackle poor attendance are starting to bear fruit and attendance is now improving quickly.
- There are good relationships in the academy. Pupils are cared for well.
- The elite sports programmes in the sixth form are a significant strength.

## Full report

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this academy requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the academy are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the academy.

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

- Rapidly improve the quality of leadership and management by:
  - making sure that all leaders and teachers have high expectations of all pupils
  - focusing relentlessly on improving outcomes for pupils, especially in English, mathematics, science, and design and technology
  - ensuring that leaders at all levels evaluate the impact of their work in a rigorous way, so that they know what is, or is not, working and why
  - ensuring that assessments are accurate and inform staff and pupils reliably about the progress pupils are making
  - ensuring that governors rigorously monitor and evaluate the academy's work and hold senior leaders to account for pupils' achievement
  - evaluating robustly the impact that pupil premium funding is having on pupils' learning.
- Rapidly improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment to accelerate pupils' progress by:
  - raising the expectations of all staff as to what different groups of pupils, including the most and least able, should achieve
  - developing the expertise of teachers so that they can reduce the gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding quickly
  - ensuring that pupils regularly receive feedback on their work, which gives them precise guidance on what to do to improve, in line with the academy's policy
  - ensuring that teachers make sharply focused interventions and use skilful questioning to ensure all pupils make rapid progress and catch up quickly.

An external review of the academy's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

It is recommended that the academy does not appoint newly qualified teachers.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management is inadequate

- Underachievement has become endemic in core areas of the curriculum. Leaders have not brought about necessary improvements since the previous inspection. Some important key aspects have declined. Consequently, leaders do not demonstrate the capacity to improve the academy.
- The academy has a detailed improvement plan but it is unwieldy and at times unclear. Actions are planned but lack a sharp focus on improving provision and outcomes for pupils. Leaders do not have effective mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating the plan. Consequently, it has limited impact.
- The academy has appropriate management systems in place for pay progression and managing staff performance but these are too focused on ensuring compliance rather than improvement.
- Leaders' self-evaluation is weak because they do not take sufficient account of the impact of their work or identify with sufficient clarity the key areas for development. Evaluation is largely based on the completion of activities rather than on judging how well these improve outcomes for all the academy's pupils.
- Middle leaders know their role should be focused on improving outcomes for pupils and they have good intentions. However, they too measure their impact by the completion of tasks rather than having a deep and clear understanding about how their work leads to improvement. They are rightly focused on improving the quality of teaching and learning but have not been given effective guidance on how to judge accurately that this is happening. As with senior leaders, their expectations of what pupils should achieve are too low.
- Staff have received training on ways of monitoring the academy's work but this has not brought about strong improvement in the quality of teaching. Monitoring is happening but is not making enough difference, particularly for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs.
- Although staffing is more stable at present, a historic failure to recruit and retain high-quality staff has had a disruptive effect. Staff, pupils and parents all pointed to this issue as a significant factor in inhibiting rapid improvement.
- Not all pupils are engaged in meaningful activity during tutorial time. For example, in a Year 8 class, pupils were working on percentages but all pupils, regardless of ability, were doing the same problems. Older pupils do not engage well during these sessions and frequently just talk to their friends without having any work to do.
- Some of the same management deficiencies apply in the sixth form but to a lesser degree. As a result, outcomes are stronger for sixth form learners than in the rest of the academy.
- The academy provides good-quality information, advice and guidance to help pupils choose appropriate courses which lead to further qualifications and employment opportunities. Pupils are positive about the advice and support they have received to help them plan their next steps.
- The academy's curriculum is broad and balanced. Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. The range of extra-curricular activities engages pupils well and makes a strong contribution to their well-being.
- Leaders have ensured that a culture of safety has been developed at the academy. Pupils feel cared for and valued. This is echoed by parents.
- **The governance of the academy**
  - While governors are aware of the key problems for the academy, they have not challenged leaders robustly to secure improvement.
  - Governors routinely question the Principal and other leaders about their actions but do not have sufficient oversight of, or impact on, the academy's effectiveness, particularly in relation to pupils' achievement.
  - Governors see their role as, mainly, one of validation and endorsement rather than providing insightful challenge to improve pupils' education. In the words of one governor, 'We validate, we don't evaluate.'
  - Governors have not checked well enough how the pupil premium is being used and whether it is having enough effect. Pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds do not benefit enough from this funding and are underachieving.
  - Governors are aware of the pay progression awards and are clear that these are linked to pupils' outcomes. However, this additional funding is not leading to demonstrable improvements in achievement.

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The training for safeguarding is up to date and this aspect of the academy's work is appropriately monitored.

## **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment** is inadequate

- Teachers' expectations of pupils are too low in both Key Stages 3 and 4. Teachers do not have a high enough ambition for what each pupil can achieve. The work that pupils are asked to complete is too easy. For example, in a Year 8 lesson in mathematics, most-able pupils were completing work at a level usually expected in primary schools. These low expectations are typical and are reflected in the work seen in pupils' books.
- Teachers do not meet the learning needs of most groups, including most-able pupils, disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs and those supported through the pupil premium. Pupils with special educational needs make inadequate progress because teachers do not sufficiently develop their knowledge and understanding, or build firmly enough on what they can already do.
- Weak assessment practice in a range of subjects and across year groups means that pupils' needs are not swiftly identified by teachers. As a result, lessons are not planned well enough to provide what pupils need to learn successfully.
- Pupils do not take a pride in the work in their books. Their work is often messy and teachers do not enforce high expectations of presentation. Too often, work is allowed to be left incomplete or unfinished.
- The academy's preferred approach to giving pupils feedback is not consistently applied by teachers. Where pupils are given opportunities to respond to teachers' advice, such as in art, geography and history, they make better progress. However, pupils' books show that effective feedback is patchy, which means that they are not getting timely information on how to improve their work.
- While there are examples of stronger teaching in the academy, pupils' books show that they do not benefit from good teaching on a consistent basis.
- Pupils are given too few opportunities to practise their core literacy skills. This is one reason why their progress is held back. Pupils make better progress where teaching is more closely targeted to their needs and makes higher demands of them, typically in history, geography and physical education.
- Teachers do not encourage pupils to develop greater resilience or to think for themselves. Too often, pupils are reliant on their teachers; they ask rather than having a go themselves and do not readily take on more difficult challenges. Teachers do not use questions well enough. They do not check pupils' understanding or deepen their knowledge.

## **Personal development, behaviour and welfare** requires improvement

### **Personal development and welfare**

- The academy's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- Pupils are loyal to their academy and express pride in attending it.
- Pupils feel safe. Bullying is rare, but when it does occur pupils are confident it will be dealt with swiftly and effectively by staff.
- Pupils are clear how to stay safe and keep safe online.
- Pupils learn about fundamental British values. For example, pupils are involved in elections for an academy council.
- Pupils' attendance is improving, with more pupils attending lessons regularly.
- Pupils have opportunities to work with the community which helps their personal development well.
- A wide range of extra-curricular clubs and activities are appreciated and enjoyed by pupils.
- The planned programme of activities in personal, social, health and economic education lessons is too newly established to judge its impact. Leaders are not entirely clear about how its effectiveness is to be evaluated.
- Staff are aware of the 'Prevent' agenda and know how to reduce potential risks of radicalisation to pupils so that they feel secure.
- The few pupils who attend alternative provision are closely monitored by the academy to ensure that they are cared for well, which is resulting in positive outcomes.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. In some lessons, low-level disruption occurs with pupils calling out and this distracts others from their learning. This is because the behaviour policy, although recently renewed, is not consistently applied. However, pupils say that the system of internal exclusion is being used to good effect to address poor behaviour quickly.
- Where teaching fails to engage pupils, they drift off task and do not achieve all they could in the lesson.
- Pupils are compliant in class but not positively engaged in their learning. They do not exhibit a love of learning.
- Attendance is broadly average and improving because of a more rigorous system of monitoring and clear sanctions for poor attenders.
- Pupils generally conduct themselves well around the site, although on occasions they are boisterous and this leads to slightly more physical behaviour.
- Pupils are respectful to staff and to each other.
- Some unpleasant name calling occurs occasionally in Key Stage 3. Older pupils say this does not happen in their year groups.

## Outcomes for pupils

### are inadequate

- Pupils enter the academy with attainment that is significantly below average. In 2015, the proportion of Year 11 pupils gaining at least five A\* to C grades, including English and mathematics, was very low. It was significantly below the national standard and represented inadequate progress for these pupils.
- The proportion of Year 11 pupils gaining five A\* to C grades at GCSE has declined over the last three years.
- Outcomes for English, mathematics and science are inadequate. Pupils do not make strong or rapid enough progress.
- Very few of the most-able pupils make the progress of which they are capable. Leaders' and teachers' expectations are not high enough. Consequently, these pupils do not gain enough A\* and A grades at GCSE.
- Underachievement is widespread but disadvantaged pupils, who comprise the majority at this academy, make slower progress than they should.
- The outcomes for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are inadequate. The current arrangements are not sufficient to support their learning. The provision does not help them to make enough progress.
- The academy's information indicates that pupils in Key Stage 3 make inadequate progress in science. It also indicates stronger progress in mathematics but inspectors found this was not the case when scrutinising pupils' books. Too few pupils make secure progress in mathematics as well as in science. This is hampered, in part, by too few opportunities to tackle more demanding work.
- Fundamental weaknesses in numeracy and literacy have been identified by leaders but not tackled robustly enough to ensure that lower-ability pupils catch up with their peers.
- Pupils do not read independently frequently enough. Younger pupils have a reading lesson once a week in their English lessons and some spoke of their pleasure in reading from, for example, the horror genre. The reading scheme helps ensure that pupils choose books that are appropriate for their reading age but it does not promote a wider enjoyment of reading for many.
- Pupils attending vocational courses are making progress in line with what is expected.

## 16 to 19 study programmes

### require improvement

- Leaders in the sixth form have a clear idea of what needs to be done to make improvements but have not taken all the necessary steps to implement them. As a result, the sixth form has some strengths on which to build but is yet not fully developed and requires improvement.

- Sixth form learners are positive about their experiences but are diffident in sharing their views. Relationships are strong and learners are clear about what they have to do to complete their learning activities. Learners work well independently. However, the work set is not consistently challenging and not firmly linked to an assessment of their progress or learning. This is because it is carried out in an imprecise and sometimes inconsistent way.
- The quality of teaching in the sixth form is better than in the rest of the academy but requires improvement. Lessons are purposeful and learners feel confident in their teachers. However, feedback about how well learners are learning is not sharp enough to help them know what they have to do to improve.
- The sixth form provision has a clear purpose and coherence. The range of courses offered suits the needs of learners and the entry criteria for the courses are appropriate.
- Personal tutors offer learners useful careers guidance alongside an effective work experience programme. Learners are offered opportunities for wider service, for example working in classes to mentor younger learners.
- The provision for elite sports learners is impressive. Learners come from both the local area and further afield to attend. These learners' physical prowess is exceptional and their skills in football are highly developed.
- Learners' English and mathematical skills are developed through suitable courses. Learners are prepared well to take the next steps into employment or education, with 20 learners gaining places at university last year.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	130247
<b>Local authority</b>	Reading
<b>Inspection number</b>	10002326

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Academy sponsor-led
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	925
<b>Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes</b>	140
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Steve Kirk
<b>Principal</b>	Nicola Maytum
<b>Telephone number</b>	0118 937 0200
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:contact@johnmadejskiacademy.co.uk">contact@johnmadejskiacademy.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	11–12 December 2013

## Information about this academy

- The academy is a secondary school of average size.
- The numbers of pupils eligible for support from the pupil premium (additional funding provided by the government) is much higher than the national average.
- Boys outnumber girls in all year groups.
- The majority of pupils are White British. At just over one third, the percentage of pupils from minority ethnic groups is above average. The proportion who speak English as an additional language is below average.
- A very small number of pupils attend off-site vocational provision at Reading College.
- The academy has a specialism in sport. This includes an elite basketball programme and an elite football programme for girls and boys.
- The academy met the government floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress at the end of Year 11, in 2014.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in 29 lessons, 11 undertaken jointly with senior leaders.
- Inspectors held discussions with the Principal, senior and middle leaders, staff, pupils, parents and governors.
- The work of pupils was checked to establish what they know, understand and can do.
- Inspectors reviewed the minutes of the governing body's meetings.
- The inspection team observed the academy's work, scrutinised information about pupils' achievement and progress, and examined records relating to behaviour, attendance and performance management. Inspectors also looked at documents used by leaders to monitor and evaluate the academy's work.
- The inspection took into account the views of 10 responses to the online Parent View survey received during the inspection.
- Inspectors reviewed the 19 staff questionnaires returned during the inspection.

## Inspection team

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Her Majesty's Inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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