

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234  
[www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)



23 January 2018

Ms Emma Baker  
Head of Academy  
Maltings Academy  
Spinks Lane  
Witham  
Essex  
CM8 1EP

Dear Ms Baker

### **No formal designation inspection of Maltings Academy**

Following my visit with Paul Copping, Ofsted Inspector, to your school on 10 January 2018, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings.

This monitoring inspection was conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 and in accordance with Ofsted's published procedures for inspecting schools with no formal designation. The inspection was carried out because Her Majesty's Chief Inspector was concerned about the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements, aspects of the effectiveness of leadership and management of the school (including governance), and the personal development, behaviour and welfare of pupils.

### **Evidence**

Inspectors scrutinised the single central record and other documents relating to safeguarding and child protection arrangements. Inspectors met with you, other leaders, groups of pupils and staff, the governor with responsibility for safeguarding and a representative from the local authority. They also held telephone conversations with parents and the regional director of the trust.

Inspectors also looked at a range of documentation provided by leaders, including external audits and reports from the local authority and Department for Education (DfE). Inspectors visited lessons to observe pupils' behaviour. They observed pupils' conduct during break and lunchtime, and as they departed at the end of the day.

Having considered the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time:

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders and governors manage pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare effectively.

## **Context**

The school is an average sized 11 to 19 academy, serving the town of Witham and its surrounding areas. Most pupils are White British; very few are from minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportions of pupils who are disadvantaged or who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities are broadly in line with the national average. However, a higher-than-average proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities have an education, health and care plan.

The school is sponsored by the Academies Enterprise Trust (AET). When the school was last inspected in 2015, it was judged to be outstanding. The headteacher at that time is now the executive headteacher of this school and another local school in Witham run by the AET. Both schools share a joint senior leadership team and local governing body. An existing vice-principal was appointed as the new head of academy in September 2015.

Over the past year, concerns were raised with Ofsted regarding the school's procedures for safeguarding pupils. Leaders have taken these concerns seriously and acted promptly to resolve them. They have investigated the concerns, reviewed their policy and procedures, commissioned external safeguarding audits, and implemented any recommendations made to secure best practice. One complaint highlighted that the incident was not reported immediately to the police. Leaders investigated, found this to be the case, and took appropriate action to tighten up procedures. Inspectors found that they have responded effectively to these concerns, and safeguarding remains a top priority throughout the school.

Leaders, governors and staff know and understand their safeguarding responsibilities well. Six senior leaders are trained to level 3 in safeguarding, and all staff have undergone level 2 child protection training. The single central record is extremely well maintained. The staff member responsible for this has a thorough understanding and ensures that all statutory safeguarding checks are undertaken and recorded. Procedures for safeguarding are regularly reviewed by the governor responsible for safeguarding.

During this unannounced visit, an inspector sampled some case files of safeguarding incidents. All contained a comprehensive chronology which accurately reflected the reasons for referral, actions taken, meetings attended, any other relevant risks and the wider-agency involvement. Files are orderly and the information is securely stored. Records showed that actions to safeguard pupils are done in a timely way. Links between school and a range of external support agencies are well established and are used effectively to protect the school's most vulnerable pupils.

Pupils' behaviour during this visit was very good. Neither inspector witnessed any

poor behaviour or incidents of low-level disruption in classes. Pupils settle down to work quickly, they respond promptly to instructions, and work well together. Inspectors noted the calm environment, with teachers modelling high expectations and pupils responding by listening intently and working hard. Where pupils fail to meet these expectations, there are clear systems in place to help them correct their behaviours. This includes an 'internal exclusion' room, which both inspectors visited to check records and speak with staff. Pupils told inspectors that this is used effectively, one pupil saying, 'It worked for me, because it is not somewhere you would like to go.'

Pupils spoken to were unequivocal; they feel safe at school. They understand how to keep themselves safe, including when online, and are aware of the various forms of bullying. All pupils receive training linked to the appropriate use of the internet and e-safety. Pupils know whom to speak to if they have any concerns, and highlighted the availability of staff to help.

Pupils feel that the school's behaviour policy, 'discipline with dignity', works well. One said that, 'behaviour has improved since last year because there are much better systems in place this year and they are respected by the pupils.' Pupils all said that bullying was extremely rare and, on the few occasions it does happen, staff deal with incidents swiftly and effectively. An inspector scrutinised the school's records; these were comprehensive, and included appropriate follow-up actions by staff. Records show that very few incidents of bullying occur.

The curriculum to promote anti-bullying is strong. Leaders have recently reviewed and updated the topics to include 'relationships' and 'living in the wider world' alongside keynote speakers to highlight bullying issues still further. Sixth-form students receive sessions from external speakers on age-appropriate topics, such as driving with an unsafe driver, internet dangers and sexual exploitation.

Leaders have developed a coherent strategy to meet the needs of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. The 'rapid progress group' acts as a gateway to mainstream classes by providing pupils with focused interventions in literacy and numeracy, alongside additional adult support. The special educational needs coordinator liaises extensively with local primary schools to aid transition and ensure that pupils' needs are met. The school has a higher proportion of pupils with education, health and care plans than found nationally. However, the provision mapping for pupils, and the evidence seen during observations, indicates that pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are well integrated into learning.

Leaders have used strategies to good effect to improve pupils' attendance, which currently is above average. Different groups of pupils are showing improved rates of attendance compared with last year. Leaders' use of exclusion is in line with national averages. There were only two permanent exclusions last year, and the number of fixed-term exclusions has reduced over time. However, the number of fixed-term exclusions for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is much higher

than other pupils. Inspectors noted an incorrect use of attendance codes when checking the records of pupils who have been excluded. Leaders acknowledge that, in the past, school practice had breached statutory guidance. To improve this, leaders, together with governors, have reviewed their processes and have taken appropriate actions as a result. Current practice is compliant with DfE regulations.

All governors receive regular training on their statutory duties relating to safeguarding. They undertake their statutory duties well. The safeguarding governor is well informed and appropriately trained. A full safeguarding report is now produced for governors on a termly basis. Additionally, the joint leadership team meets every three weeks to review any safeguarding concerns raised and discuss the actions taken.

Governors have acted quickly and effectively in response to the recent concerns raised. They have investigated them openly and fully. Where practice has not been good enough, they have taken appropriate action. Governors' monitoring discovered that in the past, attendance codes had been used incorrectly, and that one incident was not reported to the police immediately. In both cases, they have reviewed their processes in light of their findings.

Your records show that not all complaints made by parents follow the school's complaints procedure. You feel that, in some cases, this means you are unable to deal with issues as quickly as you would like. You and your governors have recognised that when dealing with issues raised, you cannot over-communicate with parents or carers. You have already established additional forums where matters can be discussed informally, such as the SEN and/or disabilities coffee morning. You have also set up regular meetings with other parents who have voiced concerns.

### **External support**

The local authority has been instrumental in providing the necessary expertise and guidance to support the school. In light of the complaints, it has checked that leaders and governors are safeguarding pupils effectively. Reports show that the school safeguards pupils effectively, and has taken the necessary action against issues highlighted by the complaints. Additionally, leaders have commissioned two external audits of safeguarding which have found that processes are fully effective. Representatives from the DfE have visited the school to assess safeguarding and SEN and/or disabilities provision. They are satisfied that the school's safeguarding arrangements are secure.

### **Priorities for further improvement**

- Ensure that new processes regarding staffs' use of attendance codes remain compliant with DfE guidance.

- Monitor provision for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities to ensure that pupils' needs are met and to reduce the number of FTEs for this group.
- Update safeguarding practices, in line with new procedures, to ensure that pupils continue to remain safe.
- Keep providing more formal and informal opportunities for parents to discuss matters, to ensure that they are satisfied.
- Provide further guidance for parents about the school's complaints procedure and what they should do in the first instance if they have concerns.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the director of the academy trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Essex. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

John Randall  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**