

# Inspection of Maple Court Academy

Beverley Drive, Bentilee, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire ST2 0QD

---

Inspection dates: 23–24 June 2021

**Overall effectiveness** **Requires improvement**

---

The quality of education **Requires improvement**

Behaviour and attitudes **Requires improvement**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Early years provision **Requires improvement**

Previous inspection grade Inadequate

## What is it like to attend this school?

Good leadership and governance are improving this school. During the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic, staff have continued to press ahead with training and improvements to curriculum plans. The quality of learning is on the up and standards are beginning to rise. Lessons are purposeful, classrooms are calm places in which to learn and staff treat pupils fairly.

Reading and mathematics are taught regularly and work builds on what has gone before. In other subjects, pupils are also learning more than previously. However, in all subjects there are further improvements to make so that pupils are better prepared for secondary school.

Most pupils are polite and kind. Pupils who act as junior leaders, school councillors or prefects help out in different ways. Activities, like after-school clubs and residential trips, have started again. These help pupils to grow in confidence, develop new interests and broaden their outlooks.

Staff care for pupils' welfare. They quickly help with problems and do all they can to keep pupils safe. They stop bullying if it happens.

Pupils and staff are optimistic about the future and value being part of Maple Court. Nevertheless, too many pupils arrive late in the mornings and some poor attitudes to learning persist.

## **What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?**

Ambitious leadership from trust and school leaders is making its mark. Since the previous inspection, leaders have made expectations clear and lifted everyone's aspirations. They have injected new purpose to the school through a mix of challenge and support. Alongside this, they consider staff's workload and ring fence time for staff to plan learning and attend training. In their responses to Ofsted's staff survey, all reported that the school had improved and that they enjoyed their work.

From early years up to Year 6, the school has prioritised reading and mathematics. In both subjects, expectations for everyday lessons are crystal clear. Phonics is taught daily. Early reading books are matched to pupils' needs and leaders plan to invest in more resources. Staff promote books and encourage pupils to read through the many displays and incentives. In all classes and subjects, reading is a frequent activity and efforts to raise standards are beginning to pay off. Similarly, mathematics planning is in line with national curriculum expectations. Staff have completed training and pupils of all ages benefit from an increasingly consistent approach. Like reading, standards have improved but remain lower than they should be. In early years, work to improve children's early language and communication remains a priority.

Across the school, planning and the quality of classroom learning varies between subjects. In art, for example, leadership and planning show a clear understanding of how pupils' subject specific knowledge builds over time. Improvements to curriculum design in several other subjects also show the school is heading in the right direction. Nevertheless, in languages, computing and music, curriculum planning is not so far forward and improving staff subject knowledge is a key development area.

While improvements are evident, it is also clear that staff sometimes make assumptions about what pupils know and understand when reading a text. At times, teaching does not provide pupils with enough knowledge to make sense of written information or does not check that they have remembered the right things. In several subjects, pupils can read what is written but are not guided well enough to know what it means.

The school's work to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is an area of relative strength. These pupils benefit from tailored support and are included in all the school does. The school works closely with a range of expert agencies to support pupils and their families as needs be.

Staff are very attentive to pupils' welfare and personal development. While much extra-curricular work was halted by COVID-19 restrictions, the school has been quick to get going again. Already, Year 6 have attended a residential outdoor centre, sports clubs are back on and staff have arranged virtual visits from a range of speakers and organisations. From early years upwards, the school promotes worthy values that encourage pupils to be resilient, respectful and considerate. Most pupils

respond well to this and lessons run smoothly. However, some poor attitudes to school remain and lateness in the mornings is still a problem.

Governance is effective. Governors and trustees understand their roles and have systems in place to gather information and check the school's work. Through regular challenge and improvement meetings, school leaders keep them up to date with the progress made in school. In turn, governors and the trust use this information to set new goals for the school.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Regular training and updates keep everyone informed about risks, routines, and requirements. Leaders check that staff know what to do in different situations. Around the school there are signs that remind staff, pupils, and visitors about the importance of safeguarding.

Information about pupils is stored securely but shared with the right people at the right time, if necessary. Medicines are kept properly and any accidents are followed up appropriately.

The required staff employment checks are completed and recorded in the right way. Pupils say they feel safe in school and that adults pay attention to any worries that they have.

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

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- Curriculum plans and staff subject knowledge in some subjects require further improvement. Leaders should continue to support subject leaders in developing curriculum plans and staff subject knowledge in foundation subjects. In some curriculum areas, such as languages, music and computing, plans need to identify the crucial knowledge that pupils need to be taught as they move through the school.
- Currently, some teacher-led activities make assumptions about pupils' knowledge of vocabulary. Leaders and staff should ensure that the curriculum, from early years to Year 6, pays sufficient attention to improving pupils' knowledge of words and the concepts that sit behind them.
- Some poor attitudes to learning persist. Leaders should work with all in the school community to bring about further improvements to pupils' attitudes to education so that all are fully engaged in lessons and learning.

- Too many pupils are late for school. Staff should work with parents and other agencies to improve the punctuality of those pupils who regularly arrive late in the mornings.

## How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

## Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	139228
<b>Local authority</b>	Stoke-on-Trent
<b>Inspection number</b>	10184733
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	453
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Kate Townshend
<b>Executive principal</b>	Louise Brammer
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.maplecourt.stoke.sch.uk">www.maplecourt.stoke.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	25 February 2021, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school is part of Alpha Academies Trust.
- There is an on-site breakfast club managed by the school.
- The school uses an Ofsted-registered alternative provision called Inspire.

## Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We deemed the inspection a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

In accordance with section 13(5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

- Inspectors met with the executive principal, head of academy, other senior leaders and staff. The lead inspector met with three governors, a school improvement partner, the chief executive officer of Alpha Academies Trust, and the trust's safeguarding lead.
- Inspectors examined school documents. These included: leaders' self-evaluation, improvement plans, policies, curriculum plans, and records relating to

governance, pupils' attendance, behaviour and personal development. Inspectors also looked at information published on the school's website.

- Inspectors considered the 26 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including 25 free text responses. They considered the 28 responses to the staff survey.
- Inspectors looked carefully at reading, mathematics, history and personal, social and health education. They also considered evidence about science, music, art, languages, computing, religious education, geography and physical education. This included visiting lessons, looking at curriculum plans and pupils' work, meeting with subject leaders and discussions with teachers and pupils.
- Inspectors examined information about safeguarding and met with lead staff for safeguarding.

### **Inspection team**

Martin Pye, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Susan Hughes

Ofsted Inspector

Mike Onyon

Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/), write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk).

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)

© Crown copyright 2021