

Inspection of John Madejski Academy

125 Hartland Road, Reading, Berkshire RG2 8AF

Inspection dates: 10 and 11 October 2023

Overall effectiveness

Inadequate

The quality of education

Inadequate

Behaviour and attitudes

Inadequate

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Good

Sixth-form provision

Good

Previous inspection grade

Requires improvement

The principal of this school is Michael Milner. This school is part of The White Horse Federation multi-academy trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Paul Smith, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Ninna Gibson.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils know that their learning and progress through the curriculum are being hindered by poor behaviour. Lessons are characterised by pupils showing a lack of respect to staff and to each other. Recent staffing changes have added to this situation; the many new staff do not know pupils' needs well enough. They do not adapt learning activities to meet these needs. Pupils, especially pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), do not learn well enough.

There are strengths in the school. Where staffing has been more stable, and in the sixth form, standards are higher. Respectful routines are followed, and pupils do well. Those who participate in the varied sporting and extra-curricular activities benefit from a rich set of experiences.

Despite their frustrations, pupils and staff are positive about the new leadership team which, they recognise, is already making a difference. They appreciate the practical support from the multi-academy trust (MAT) and know these additional staff are helping to establish calm routines. Pupils know that many adults at the school will listen to and act on their worries. However, pupils know that the current overall culture in the school is not acceptable.

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

Pupils in Years 7 to 11 experience a fragmented curriculum overall with lessons that lack coherence and ambition. Expectations for the quality of pupils' work are low. Unfinished and poor-quality work from pupils is accepted. The school has provided high-quality support and resources from partners in the MAT. Where this strong curriculum thinking is adopted, pupils are doing better. However, too often, these plans are not followed.

To compound these issues, a large proportion of staff are new and have not yet built positive working relationships with pupils. Information about pupils with SEND has not been shared effectively and learning is not adapted to meet these pupils' needs. Where intervention programmes have been tried, there have been early signs of success, but the programmes have not continued. This is the case for pupils who need help to become fluent and confident readers; early gains with this have not been embedded. Overall, pupils are not achieving as well as they should.

Alongside the poor curriculum quality is poor behaviour in many lessons and around the school. A lack of engagement where pupils talk over the teacher and each other can be seen in most lessons. Where staff try to follow the new behaviour support approach to address this lack of respect and self-discipline, groups of pupils can be dismissive. Lateness to lessons is typical and leaders move around the school, encouraging pupils to go to their classrooms.

There are a few areas, including the sixth form, where it is very different. Here, relationships are calm and positive, and pupils make good progress through their

planned curriculums. Sixth-form lessons, in particular, are characterised by determined focus and engaged discussions. Typically, these are the areas with more established relationships and curriculums. Here, staff expertise can be seen in the level of work and the selection of tasks. Sixth-form students do well overall, gaining the qualifications to achieve their destinations of choice. They are supported well to identify and plan for these through the tutoring programme and work-related learning.

Through the school, careers information, education, advice and guidance is provided at an appropriate level. For pupils in Years 7 to 11, other opportunities for wider development are mixed and too often ad hoc. Few make the most of the activities available and take-up of extra-curricular activities by disadvantaged pupils is low. Personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) lessons contain useful information, but the school has changed what pupils learn about due to the lack of suitably trained staff. Consequently, pupils have missed opportunities to revisit and consider ideas in detail. They know about important topics, such as democracy and protected characteristics, but do not know how to discuss their knowledge in a meaningful way.

Attendance has fallen. This is particularly the case for pupils who were attending alternative provisions and are now expected to attend school every day. The school has analysed the possible causes for the drop in attendance carefully and is working with pupils and families to address this. It is too soon to see the impact of this work.

Leaders and trustees are under no illusions about the work required to address these significant weaknesses. The actions already in place demonstrate their ambition and capacity to secure the required improvements. Support from the trust is well considered and comprehensive. Staff welcome the additional training and resources. They recognise the expertise and determination of the new leadership team and understand the reasons for the changes they are making.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Pupils regularly misbehave in lessons. This takes up teachers' time and prevents other pupils from hearing instructions or getting on with their learning. The school needs to continue to implement their agreed routines and approach to improving behaviour across the school.
- Too often, curriculum plans and resources are not delivered as intended and too many pupils experience lessons that do not build their knowledge well. The school should ensure that all staff know what is expected of them and how to use the resources consistently well.

- The provision for pupils with SEND is weak and they do not benefit from a high-quality education overall. The school should ensure that all staff know how to adapt activities to meet the needs of all pupils in all lessons.
- In many subject areas, expectations of pupils are too low. Many pupils produce work of poor quality and are not challenged to complete or improve it. The school should ensure that all understand the standards that are expected and provide support for all to achieve those standards.
- The planning for the PSHE curriculum is weak. Pupils do not routinely revisit or reflect on their learning about the wider world. The school should ensure that this important learning is structured appropriately.

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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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.

Further information

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

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	130247
Local authority	Reading
Inspection number	10287979
Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	891
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	194
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Linda Gibson (known as Ninna Gibson)
CEO of trust	Paul Smith
Principal	Michael Milner
Website	www.johnmadejskiacademy.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	7 and 8 January 2020, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the White Horse Federation MAT.
- There has been significant staff turbulence in recent months. The principal and leadership team joined the school in September 2023. They are currently supported in the school by directors of education from the MAT. The MAT provided interim leadership for summer 2023 when there was no substantive leadership team in post.
- The school uses one registered and three unregistered alternative provisions.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

In accordance with section 44(2) of the Education Act 2005, His Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than it might in all the circumstances reasonably be expected to perform.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors spoke with the principal and members of the school leadership team. They also spoke with a trustee and the CEO, along with members of the trust's executive team. The lead inspector met with members of the local governing body and spoke by telephone with the chair of that body.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, physical education, history, design technology and modern foreign languages. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also visited other sixth-form lessons and looked at a wider sample of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also looked at a wide range of evidence and documentation, including the school's self-evaluation and action plans; behaviour and attendance information; and steps to support staff development. An inspector also telephoned alternative provisions.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- A range of staff were involved in the inspection. Their views have been added to those expressed through the online staff survey.
- The views and experiences of pupils were taken into account through meetings with different groups formally and informally around the school and in lessons. The responses to the online pupil survey were also considered.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents through Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View.

Inspection team

Lucy English, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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His Majesty's Inspector

Mark Enser

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His Majesty's Inspector

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