

Inspection of Maple Court Academy

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

Inspection dates: 28 and 29 November 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Requires Improvement

The head of this academy is Lucy Bourne. This school is part of Alpha Academies Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Simon French, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Kate Townshend. There is also an executive principal, Louise Brammer, who is responsible for this school and one other.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils thrive and learn well at Maple Court Academy. They are happy and enjoy coming to school regularly. Pupils learn a lot about how to keep themselves safe. The 'Maple Musts' provide a clear set of expectations for pupils and staff alike. The school has high expectations for all pupils. Pupils work hard in lessons and successfully rise to these expectations. Pupils achieve well.

In lessons, and around the school, pupils behave well. Pupils are polite and respectful of each other. They are articulate and express their views on current issues confidently. These include the importance of treating each other fairly, irrespective of differences in background or religion.

There are many opportunities for pupils to support charities, including the local food bank. These opportunities enable pupils to contribute meaningfully to society. The school organises a wide range of visits to places of worship. In addition, there are other trips that take pupils beyond their immediate area. These experiences help pupils to widen their horizons and further develop their character.

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

The school has carefully designed a curriculum to help pupils know more and remember more. There is a clear sequence of learning in all subjects. The curriculum sets out the essential knowledge that pupils must learn. It flows seamlessly from the early years to Year 6. In most subjects, teachers deliver the planned curriculum well and make effective checks on pupils' learning. They use information from these checks to inform next steps. However, this is not the case in all subjects.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are quickly identified. When required, they receive high-quality support so they can access the same learning as their peers.

The school has thoughtfully designed the reading curriculum to help pupils become successful and confident readers. In the early years, staff begin teaching phonics shortly after the children join the school. Adults keep a close eye on how well pupils are learning to read. If pupils begin to fall behind, they receive extra support that helps them to catch up speedily. In addition, the school promotes a love of reading well. Pupils enjoy reading books by authors ranging from David Walliams to C.S. Lewis. One pupil said: 'Reading is like dreaming with your eyes open. It opens up new worlds.' The school is now extending the successful approaches to reading from the early years and key stage 1 into key stage 2. This is already making a positive difference to older pupils.

Children in the early years get off to a sound start. Children learn through stories, singing, rhymes and much more. They are curious, independent, and happy

learners. Activities are purposeful, well planned and exciting. They help children to understand and practise many new skills and develop their vocabulary.

Pupils are keen to learn. They want to do well in their lessons and to please their teachers. Relationships between staff and pupils are strong. The school is working hard to improve attendance and punctuality. Parents value the help that the school provides to their families.

The school has constructed a comprehensive personal development curriculum. It includes key safety messages and big questions based on current news stories. The curriculum broadens pupils' horizons. Pupils enjoy a broad range of opportunities to extend their learning beyond the classroom. There is a wide range of sporting and non-sporting clubs on offer to pupils. Staff are keen to raise aspirations for all pupils. Recently, as part of the school's careers week, adults from different occupations spoke to pupils about the jobs they do. Pupils speak confidently about their future career ambitions.

Leaders at all levels have successfully improved the school. The trust, governors and school leaders work well together to ensure pupils receive a high-quality education. Rigorous checking processes ensure that extra funding is supporting pupils' achievement well.

Leaders support staff effectively. Teachers and teaching assistants receive high-quality training. This comes from experienced curriculum leaders in school and from within the trust. Teachers new to the profession speak highly about the support given to them since joining the school. Staff appreciate the steps leaders take to support their workload and well-being.

Leaders work closely with parents and the community to raise the profile of education. Parents appreciate the work of the school. One parent captured the views of many, saying: 'My children are thriving academically and emotionally. Their happiness reflects the positive learning environment provided by dedicated staff.'

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, teachers do not deliver the intended curriculum well enough. This means that some pupils cannot remember the key knowledge they need to use in later lessons and so do not achieve as well as they could. The school should provide extra support to ensure teachers deliver the curriculum consistently well in all subjects.

- In some instances, teachers are not using assessment well enough to check on how well pupils are learning the intended curriculum. As a result, some teachers do not match future learning activities to the learning needs of pupils. The school should ensure that assessment consistently informs future learning for all pupils so that their learning needs are better met.

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	139228
Local authority	Stoke-on-Trent
Inspection number	10290597
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	430
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Kate Townshend
CEO of the trust	Simon French
Executive Principal	Louise Brammer
Website	www.maple.alphaacademiestrust.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	23 and 24 June 2021, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This school is part of Alpha Academies Trust.
- The school uses two registered alternative providers.

Information about this inspection

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

- 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.
- During the inspection, the inspectors met with the executive principal, head of the academy, members of the senior leadership team and a range of staff.

- The lead inspector met with members of the board of trustees, including the chief executive officer, and members of the local governing body. In addition, the lead inspector also met with the school improvement leader for the trust and a school improvement partner, who is a national leader of education.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics, design and technology, computing and art. For each deep dive, the 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. The lead inspector observed pupils reading to a familiar adult.
- 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.
- The inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around school.
- The inspectors considered responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. Inspectors met with groups of staff and pupils and considered responses to Ofsted's staff and pupil survey. In addition, inspectors also considered recent school surveys.

Inspection team

Declan McCauley, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Susan Ray	Ofsted Inspector
Gill Turner	Ofsted Inspector

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