

Tribal Group  
1-4 Portland  
Square  
Bristol  
BS2 8RR  
T 0845 123 6001  
F 0845 123 6002

T 08456 40 40 40  
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk  
[www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)



7 January 2008

Mr Vic Maher  
The Headteacher  
Madeley Academy  
Court Street  
Madeley  
TF7 5DZ

Dear Mr Maher

Academies initiative: monitoring visit to Madeley Academy

### Introduction

Following my visit with Julie Winyard HMI to your academy on 9 and 10 December 2008, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector to confirm the inspection findings.

The visit was a first monitoring visit in connection with the academies initiative.

This letter will be posted on the Ofsted website. Please inform the Regional Inspection Service Provider of any factual inaccuracies within 24 hours of the receipt of this letter.

### Evidence

Inspectors observed the academy's work, scrutinised documents, and met with the headteacher, senior and middle leadership teams, groups of students, governors, representatives of the sponsors and the DCSF.

### Context

The academy was opened on the site of its predecessor school in April 2007. It will be moving into a new purpose built academy, for students aged 11 to 16 years, in September 2009. It is a rapidly growing academy.

The area that the academy serves displays a significant range of social and economic disadvantage. Attainment on entry is below average in mathematics and well below in English. The proportion of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational needs, is well above the average. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is also well above the national average. The proportion of students from

minority ethnic groups and those for whom English is an additional language is below the national average.

A third of the students who left the predecessor school in 2006 at the age of 16 did not progress to full time education, employment or training. The academy plans to develop sixth form opportunities for the current Year 10 after their GCSE examinations. The academy has specialism in physical education.

### Achievement and standards

Students enter the academy with standards that are well below national expectations in English and below expectations in mathematics and science. National unvalidated data for 2008 shows that students make good progress, leaving the academy with standards above national expectations in mathematics and science but below national expectations in English. However, standards dipped in English at the end of Key Stage 3 and a significant minority of boys underachieved at Key Stage 4. The academy's data indicates that current Year 11 students are on track to meet the challenging targets set and that standards for 2009 are projected to be above average in all subjects including English and mathematics. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make outstanding progress because of the excellent curriculum and support they receive.

### Personal development and well-being

The students are extremely positive about the academy and the opportunities it offers them to develop as young, enterprising citizens. Their attitudes and behaviour in lessons are good and many are prepared to take greater responsibility when it is afforded them. The academy has done well to maintain a low rate of exclusions. The inclusion unit helps to support those students who are at risk of exclusion. Attendance is just above the national average which is a significant improvement when compared to attendance in the last two years. Senior staff now have a greater focus on punctuality. On the first day of the monitoring visit 18 students arrived at the academy after 08.30, this is significantly below the figures recorded in previous years. Movement around the academy is generally calm and orderly. The staff and the Year 11 prefects on duty ensure that agreed procedures regarding movement are maintained at all times.

The younger students are pleased with the lunch time provision and enjoy the healthy eating options available. They are also pleased that they do not have to queue for long as the lunch time varies for them and the older students. Members of the council are rightly proud of having recently achieved the Healthy Eating quality mark as they had been instrumental in getting the healthy options on the lunch time menu.

Senior staff have worked tirelessly to ensure that the academy meets the personal, social and emotional needs of individual students. Community cohesion is seen as

key in helping to raise aspiration for all students. This is supported by the governing body, parents and the local primary schools.

### Quality of provision

All the teaching seen during the monitoring inspection was good or outstanding. This agrees with the academy's own self-evaluation and is further supported by the judgements made in joint lesson observations with the senior leadership team. Key features of outstanding lessons include excellent use of the objectives boards so that students are crystal clear about the level they are working at and how to achieve that level; teachers' aspirational expectations, for example in a lower science set where students were clearly able to achieve some GCSE Grade C criteria. The high level of student participation and enjoyment is encouraged through the excellent use of talk partners, dialogue and collaborative problem solving. Behaviour management by teachers focuses on positive comments so that students take greater responsibility for their behaviour. The academy has undertaken a thorough analysis of where these outstanding features are consistently used and is determined that all teaching will be outstanding.

The academy has specialism in physical education (PE). The percentage of students gaining A\* to C at GCSE in PE is well above the national average. The extensive range of PE related activities offered during and after school are regularly attended by over 400 students. The academy has conducted an audit of the PE based skills to see how these impact on other subject areas. Skills such as group work, social interaction, confidence building and greater awareness of being healthy have been identified by senior staff as contributing significantly to other subjects.

The academy is continually refining the curriculum on offer to its students at both Keys Stage 3 and 4 to ensure that the needs and interests of all students are fully met. The option system is designed to meet the different needs of students in the context of the local area through a range of academic and vocational courses. The on site learning centre provides a safe and secure learning environment for its vulnerable students to access the full curriculum. Similarly, an extended work experience based curriculum is offered to a small number of Year 11 students in order to meet their specific needs. The curriculum is broadened even further through an increasing number of vocational studies, for example in science, information and communication technology (ICT) and performing arts being offered.

The care and support for students is remarkable. The academy truly goes more than 'the extra mile' to remove barriers to learning. It works extremely hard to address the many and varied needs of the students. A range of adults work closely together to support different aspects of this area. This work is carried out in partnership with external agencies, pinpointed to give the best support for all the academy's students. All the adults work in partnership with parents who say that this academy is 'the best thing that could happen in this area and for their children'. Students at

risk of exclusion are provided with one to one programmes, some of which take place off site. Students' progress in both learning and personal targets is monitored closely and regularly. Safeguarding is rigorous and meets government requirements.

Students receive detailed feedback in lessons. In some of the outstanding lessons seen, teachers often gave students time to reflect and talk with a partner about their progress. A common written feedback system in students' books is used effectively. However, teachers' written comments are not always sufficiently clear on exactly what students need to do to improve their work. Sometimes, students are not given the opportunity to respond to teachers' comments as they cannot always read nor understand what has been written. The academy has started to address this and knows that further developments are needed.

### Leadership and management

The academy has been on an extraordinary journey. As one Year 11 student put it, 'I have been here since Year 7. The academy does not resemble anything that I experienced when I first came; it is a totally different place. I only wish that I could stay and move into the new building next year, everyone works so much harder and are so much happier.' It has established a safe and yet stimulating environment in which students can learn. The academy maintains extensive and sustained support for students and their families through its excellent links and relationships with external agencies. Students recognise the strong support and dedication of the entire staff in meeting their personal and academic needs. The headteacher has worked tirelessly to drive improvements at all levels winning the hearts and minds of staff, students and parents. He provides strong and decisive leadership. The senior leaders are equally committed and work together to provide outstanding leadership. Through a programme of rigorous selection and development, they have effectively built an equally dedicated staff who are committed to improving their practice at all levels. Performance management is linked to the assessment systems set up to track the progress students make. Staff are highly aware of their responsibilities for the progress of students. The middle management team is developing as the academy grows in size and given appropriate support and guidance to ensure consistency of practice. Through self-evaluation, senior leaders know the strengths of the academy and the key areas for development and are highly effective in prioritising these areas. They are rightly challenged, but also well supported, by the strong governing body who are equally committed to students receiving the best education and preparation for their future lives.

In all these aspects, the academy demonstrates outstanding capacity to improve.

### External support

Partnership working is a key strength of the academy and it takes full benefit from the range of very effective support provided by numerous organisations, including its sponsor and the School Improvement Partner. It has evaluated the range of support,

particularly from Thomas Telford, as being outstanding. Bearing in mind the complexity of issues that emanated from the predecessor schools this is a significant achievement.

#### Main Judgements

The academy has made good progress towards raising overall achievement and standards.

#### Priorities for further improvement

- Raise the quality of teaching and learning from good to being consistently outstanding.
- Improve the quality of academic guidance and ensure that marking in books gives students effective advice on how to improve.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the chair of governors and the Academies Group at the DCSF.

Yours sincerely

Rashida Sharif  
Her Majesty's Inspector

Cc chair of governors  
the Academies Group, DCSF