



**MARCUS SHEPHARD,
BME Head Teacher
MERRILL ACADEMY**

“ I am Marcus Shephard a 28 year old BME Head teacher at Merrill Academy. I have just completed my first year of headship having been trained as a teacher through Teach First in 2011. I was brought up by my mum in a single parent family in a council house in Coalville, Leicstershire. I was eligible FSM and pupil premium as a child and my mum was on benefits for much of my school life.

I studied Engineering at Bristol University, graduating in 2011. From there I decided that I wanted to give back to young people in communities similar to those which I grew up in and be the strong role model for them that my mother had been for me. I started teaching Math's at a school in Mansfield and in my NQT year was promoted to leader of Math's. In 2014, I moved to Merrill Academy where I became the director of Math's at the academy taking the Math's results from 39% 3LP to 60% 3LP in 15 months.

In 2015 I became Assistant Head for STEM where I led rapid improvements across a number of departments resulting in a record results and strong progress 8 scores across all the subjects I was responsible for. In April 2016 I was given the opportunity to apply for the headship of the academy and was successful. I have led the academy through both a section 5 and a section 8 inspection and I am very proud of what we have achieved so far.

Your school situation, the challenges you face and ofsted:

Merrill Academy serves some of the most deprived wards in Derby namely Allenton, Alvaston and Normanton. The academy has 65% of students eligible for pupil premium and has 21 different languages spoken. The academy has never reached the attainment floor target in its history and achieved the progress floor target for the first time ever last year. It became an academy in 2011 and has been graded as inadequate twice. In its previous guises it has only ever been graded satisfactory once and inadequate several times. It has been in and out of special measures and is currently in special measures. The reputation of the academy has been poor for a number of years and community perception is very poor. What behaviour used to be like.

Prior to September 2016 and the launch of Class Charts behaviour was extremely poor with several students displaying extremely poor attitudes towards learning and behaviour which could not be managed effectively. A number of students would display extreme behaviour and this would result in several incidents and issues occurring throughout the day. Students would regularly be out of lessons and running around corridors causing disruption to lessons. In lessons and around the academy students displayed constant defiance and extremely poor engagement in their learning. Disruption was so bad that OFSTED stated that it was not possible to teach learners effectively in the current state of behaviour. The culture of behaviour management was extremely negative with very few positives being awarded and pupils rarely being rewarded for their good attitudes and behaviour. On top of this sanctions were meaningless with nothing being followed up as students would refuse to do any sanctions and staff were overwhelmed with the sheer volume of what they had to deal with.

WHAT YOU HAVE DONE TO IMPROVE BEHAVIOUR IN YOUR SCHOOL IN TERMS OF STAFF, POLICY, SOFTWARE:

The first thing we have done is implement a new behaviour policy with both a consequence and reward system. The C and R points are driven by class charts and are used every lesson, every day. Students are aware of what the sanctions are for consequences but also what the rewards are for displaying positive behaviour towards their teacher and their learning. The data created by class charts is analysed daily by mentors and teachers to allow for fantastic attitudes to be praised and poor behaving students to be picked up and dealt with. This is also shared with parents through regular phone calls and post-cards. We have set up a rewards badge system where students are rewarded for reviving a certain amount of positive points. The award is a high quality lapel badge which is worn at all times as a sign of their fantastic achievement. These awards are given out in house and whole school assemblies and parents are invited in to see their child receiving the award.

We have then implemented a brand-new tutor system which we call a mentor system. Almost every member of staff in the academy (all but 4) is a mentor who have a group of 8- 12 students who they are responsible for. This mentor group is vertical and contains students from years 7-14. Mentor groups meet at the end of the day for 25 minutes and all mentors go through the positive and negative points which have been received on that day. The mentor is also there to support the welfare of their mentees and ensure that their mentees are behaving in the best possible way. Mentors range from the Headteacher to the dinner ladies and all in between (I mean everyone!). As well as this we have introduced a house system which is used to drive competition in the academy. The foundation of this competition is all driven from the positive and negative points used on class charts. Houses are regularly informed about how many positives and negatives they received as a house and this is something which is a big deal in the academy.

Which parts of class charts have helped the most And the impact it has made:

We have utilised so much of class charts to support us with behaviour. The live activity feed has allowed us to be proactive with dealing with negative behaviour and ensured that our student engagement team respond to low level disruption quickly and effectively to ensure that it does not escalate to more difficult and challenging behaviour. We have also used the AI function which allows for staff to see which students are not a good combination and split up any negative partnerships whilst encouraging those which are positive.

The ease with which you can award positive points has also dramatically increased the number given out and allows for students to be praised by other members of staff who can see how many positive they have received that day.

The analytics has also allowed us to highlight key hot spot areas and teachers who need support with certain classes and reduce the number of events which have occurred. This also allows for mentor to spot patterns with their mentees and enables staff to be proactive with solutions to the problems.

Your ambitions for the school:

My ambitions are to take the school out of special measures and become an “outstanding” school whilst creating a school that can provide an amazing education and both a supportive and nurturing environment for all its pupils. I want the school to be at the heart of the local community and provide fantastic opportunities for generations to come. At the academy we all work to the vision that one day people will call Merrill Academy the best school to be at in the country.

Recent Successes:

We have just had our first OFSTED monitoring visit (see attached) which was the first positive praise we have received as an academy (ever). The inspector was EXTREMELY pleased and delighted with the rapid and sustained improvements and progress we have made since the last inspection. They talked about the development of our culture which is something we are extremely proud of!