

Manchester Academy Newsletter

Summer 09 Issue 8



How are we outstanding?

Welcome to Manchester Academy's newsletter, which we hope will give you a sense of why Manchester Academy has been judged by Ofsted to be outstanding.

Schools are judged on many things – with league tables and exam results being important factors. However, a school is much more than this.

To be judged outstanding is a significant achievement, with only a minority of all schools in this category. But for me, the acknowledgement that students at Manchester Academy feel safe and happy, have a strong sense of right and wrong, a commitment to the community and, above all, are respectful young people makes me very proud.

As a team of staff, students, governors, parents and carers, we have worked hard to achieve 'the best in everyone'. The Ofsted inspection is a testimony to all that has been achieved; however, there is still much more to do as we continue our journey, ensuring that all students succeed and become the bright young adults of the future.

Kathy August
Executive Director of Manchester Academy
and School Improvement

Inside this issue read:

- How the academy has been working in partnership with others
- What other innovative things we've been doing across the curriculum
- Where the students have been going to enhance their learning

Overall effectiveness

GRADE: 1 – OUTSTANDING

"Students benefit from an outstanding curriculum, very much tailored to their individual needs and learning styles... An 'enterprise for employability' theme permeates the curriculum. Through its exceptionally strong partnerships with other organisations and businesses, students are prepared exceptionally well for further study and work beyond school." Ofsted 2009

Partnership with university boosts enterprise for employability skills



There are so many things happening to provide outstanding opportunities for our students to develop their business and enterprise skills. Most recently, our Year 9

students have embarked on a two year business mentoring programme with the Human Resources Department at Manchester University. The students benefit from one-to-one mentoring, work shadowing and business placements.

On one of the visits to the university the students were lucky enough to be given a behind-the-scenes tour of the Manchester Museum. Students spoke to curators and were even given a special preview of the new Darwin exhibition!

Pinsent Masons partnership is given the big tick!

Another partnership to celebrate is the one we have with Pinsent Masons (an international law firm) as we have just received the 'Big Tick Award' from Business in the Community. The award is in recognition of the outstanding business opportunities that the partnership produces for the young people of Manchester Academy.

The award was presented at a black tie event at Gorton Monastery and the project has now



been put forward for a national award. On July 6, Jane Delfino and the Pinsent Masons team will attend a reception hosted by Prince Charles at Clarence House where the winner will be announced. Other companies competing are Coca Cola, Kraft and United Utilities. No stress then!



Achievement and standards

GRADE: 1 – OUTSTANDING

"No matter what their background, all groups of students make outstanding progress... Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language, progress as well as other students because they are supported extremely well." Ofsted 2009

Sector study visits ensure students with learning difficulties don't miss out!

The Curriculum Support Department at the academy work tirelessly to ensure all of the students in our care can achieve. What makes our support outstanding is the extra mile our staff and our partners go to in order to ensure our students do not miss out. One example of this is the fact that every half term, a group of Year 10 students take part in a week of sector study visits. One of the days is hosted by the Estates Team at the University of Manchester, where details of all the career paths on offer

in various areas such as Environmental or Maintenance Services, Security, Media and Health Services are explained and explored.

The students then have a fantastic lunch whilst competing in various competitions. After lunch it's the 'Academy Challenge', which is a filmed game show where the students take part as contestants or camera men. After the show we go to the 'Green Room' and watch the show, which really is like a television show! Trevor then presents all the students with a DVD of their show to take home.

At the end of the day Kenny awards a £20 book voucher to the lucky winner of the 'Academy Challenge' and every student receives a Manchester University bag packed with goodies!

We have a wonderful day out and the students get an excellent opportunity to learn about jobs they can access in the vicinity of their own homes.



Care, guidance and support

GRADE: 1 – OUTSTANDING

"The academy is relentless in the support and care provided for all students, whatever their particular needs." Ofsted 2009

'Top ups' get students on track

Rachel Taylor, Head of Year 7 said "The way in which the academy provides various 'top up' actions such as extending the school day for Year 11, to get underachievers for whatever reason, back on track has had a huge influence across the school. When our Year 7 students see how hard working the Year 11 students are the tone of the academy is clear to them and they take what they see and apply it to themselves."

"I watched the Year 11s as they left school last Friday and I saw so many of them going out of their way to thank their teachers and this is what makes the academy so outstanding – the teachers care and we students know it! I just hope I leave in four years time having worked as hard as those Year 11 students have!" [Year 7 student]



Curriculum and other activities

GRADE: 1 – OUTSTANDING

"For those who arrive at the academy from overseas and who speak English as an additional language...provision with language lessons enable them to access the curriculum fully and they are offered an outstanding balance of other courses to match their interests, aspirations and abilities." Ofsted 2009

Freedom to read with 'no excuses'!

The English team is making huge strides forward with a dedicated team of teachers, who ensure that learning to read is high on the agenda of all the planning and preparation we do.

For students whose first language is not English, or for those who have struggled to learn the necessary literacy skills for any reason before arriving at Manchester Academy we have a special programme of lessons designed to improve reading ability, vocabulary and pronunciation skills, as well as improve confidence in speaking aloud.

We have a Literacy Co-ordinator, who plans extra one-to-one classes for students who need to spend a bit more time on their reading and literacy skills. In fact, members of staff in every part of the school – from the office and support team to the teachers and Form Tutors take part in this process because everyone here knows the freedom you have when you read confidently. But more than that, all our staff in every department ensure they teach literacy skills through their own curriculum area, so all students are continually learning new vocabulary and developing new reading skills.

There are also several 'Buddy Reading' partnerships around the school, where older students work with younger ones to improve



reading skills and we plan to expand similar projects in the coming months. After all, learning to read is the most important skill we can give our students.

We have Mentors from businesses in Manchester city centre, who come in to read with our students regularly. More recently, students from William Hulme Grammar School (our sister academy) come in every Tuesday to work with our youngest students. Miss Langley, Head of English said "These are invaluable opportunities because they not only allow students to mix with the wider community, but the relationships which grow between our students and their older Mentors raises self-esteem."

We also run two extra-curricular clubs to encourage students to stretch their literacy skills even further: a talented writing club that devotes time to writing satire and comedy and a comics club which mixes illustrative and story-writing skills.

With so much on the go, there really are 'no excuses' for not improving reading here at the academy!



Leadership and management

GRADE: 1 – OUTSTANDING

"The leadership and management overall, including the local governance, is outstanding...they understand and rise admirably to the high level of accountability expected of them." Ofsted 2009

Ambition for our students

The reason why the inspectors judged the academy's leadership to be outstanding is to do with the way expectations are set. All of

the leadership team believe and expect that our students in Manchester Academy can achieve just as well as students from the best schools in the wealthiest parts of the country. It is this ambition for our students which led to the judgement of outstanding being attached to leadership and management. Two Year 7 students summed up the approach when they wrote:

"The academy, which is situated in Moss Side, never gave up on its promise to the students. Kathy August promised her

students that 'Hard work pays off. I promise you, work hard and you will achieve.' The students and staff knew that if they kept to Mrs August's belief in the academy going from being the worst school in the country to the very best that it would come true. Now Manchester Academy and the community of Moss Side are proud that Moss Side and young people are getting into the paper for good reasons. Manchester Academy has the last laugh!"

Curriculum and other activities

GRADE: 1 – OUTSTANDING

“The specialist areas of creative arts and business and enterprise make a significant impact in improving outcomes for the students. This is clearly seen, for example, in the benefit students derive from working with a local football club in their study for Business and Technology Educational Council qualification in physical education.” Ofsted 2009

From PE students to Manchester City coaches in just six weeks!



Manchester City Football Club have been instrumental in supporting The Sports Enterprise project, which was designed to meet some of the assessment criteria for the Btec 1st Certificate in Sport (including carrying out a risk assessment, demonstrating an awareness of career opportunities in the world of sport as well as fitness training for sports).

Working alongside the Business and Enterprise Department as part of the Enterprise for Employability project, students researched the ‘Blue Zone’ to explore and assess all the different departments and careers possible at Manchester City Football Club. The students were given a tour of the stadium and then interviewed members of staff from different departments. The aim was to raise awareness of the different educational pathways and career opportunities at a Premiership football club.

The students also had the opportunity to meet professional footballers who gave them an insight into their glamorous worlds, before alas, getting back to reality and the day-to-day running of the business! However much to the students’ surprise there were lots of exciting things in store!

Students were introduced to the Marketing and Advertising Department where they learnt how the club and its brand work and that football is big business. Afterwards, MCFC set them a marketing challenge, which involved students working in teams to choose items from the Megastore and devise an appropriate marketing and advertising strategy. “Working with the professionals was amazing. I understood completely the need to target market and to meet deadlines. For us to meet the challenge it was essential that we worked together and delegated tasks to each other carefully. I felt like Sir Alan’s apprentice!”

Next the students were off to ‘The Dome’, Manchester City’s training facility on Platt Lane, where the students carried out a risk assessment in the gym. They successfully observed, assessed and made relevant changes so much so even the professional risk assessors were impressed and as a reward the students were allowed to try out the equipment used by some of their heroes.

But that’s not all; the club ensured our students met the third criteria of fitness training for sport by giving the students tickets to watch a match at the City of Manchester Stadium. This enabled the students to evaluate the performance of a player and the team for real, using the football club’s own check list! It was great to see our students take on their roles so professionally even though they were so excited. They were in their element taking on the role of a coach and were very

proficient and fashionably direct when giving valuable feedback to the professionals on areas for improvement!

And if that’s not enough, Dave Coppin, from City in the Community delivered a programme of football coaching to meet part of the practical sport criteria. This programme provided students with specialist coaching so that students could develop skills at their own pace, at their own level, through a carefully structured programme designed to meet the assessment criteria for the unit. The practical approach helped to develop and broaden the students’ understanding of the rules and regulations and the roles and responsibilities of officials in football, which enabled them to access the coursework and achieve outstanding success.

“Working with City in the Community is priceless because it provides students with a hands-on approach to learning, which would not be possible in the classroom. Students are able to really put theory into practice and meet real people in real working situations. For many it sparked an interest in other careers within a sporting context that students hadn’t necessarily considered before. What is certain is that the students understood that MCFC is not just a football club but a vast business enterprise.” **Rachel Blackwell**



Manchester Academy

The best in everyone™

A member of United Learning Trust

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