

Manchester Academy

Moss Lane East, Moss Side, Manchester M14 4PX

Inspection dates

13–14 March 2019

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Pupils' progress in humanities and combined science is not good enough.
- Except in English and mathematics, disadvantaged pupils, particularly disadvantaged boys, do not make consistently good progress across the curriculum.
- Pupils in the autistic and hearing-impaired resource units make good progress. However, other pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), who attend mainstream classes, do not make consistently good progress from their starting points.
- Leaders' systems to check and improve the quality of teaching are increasingly effective. However, some weaker teaching persists.
- Some teachers do not routinely challenge pupils in day-to-day lessons.
- Some teachers do not develop pupils' subject-specific literacy and language skills as well as teachers do in English and mathematics.
- Leaders have overhauled the curriculum to ensure that it increasingly meets pupils' needs. However, it is too early to see the full effect on pupils' learning and progress.
- Leaders' new assessment system focuses effectively on the impact of the curriculum on pupils' learning and progress. However, it is not embedded across the school.
- A minority of pupils' behaviour during social times is not consistently good.
- Although the position is improving, too many pupils are excluded from school.
- In some lessons when teaching is weaker, low-level disruption persists.

The school has the following strengths

- Leaders, governors and trustees are on a transformational journey to improve the school. They undertake self-evaluation and improvement planning with pinpoint accuracy.
- The trust provides effective challenge and support to leaders. This gives leaders the confidence to take the difficult decisions required to improve the school.
- The proportion of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, who achieve a standard or strong pass in English and mathematics is good and improving.
- A significant number of pupils who arrive at the school speak English as an additional language. Overall, they make good progress.
- The promotion of equality and diversity is meritorious. Leaders capitalise on pupils' cultural differences to enrich their education.
- Most middle leaders have a strong focus on improving teaching and learning. They receive effective ongoing training from senior leaders.
- There is a strong culture of safeguarding in the school, coupled with effective pastoral support.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning by:
 - ensuring that teachers develop pupils’ subject-specific literacy and language skills equally well across the curriculum
 - building on the strong practice in English and mathematics, so that teachers challenge pupils consistently well across subjects
 - embedding the new assessment system, so that it better informs learning and progress
 - embedding and enhancing leaders’ systems to evaluate the effectiveness of teaching, to eradicate any remaining weaknesses.
- Improve outcomes by:
 - building on the improvements already made to ensure that the curriculum meets pupils’ needs and that it enables them to make the best possible progress
 - ensuring that disadvantaged pupils, particularly disadvantaged boys, make the same good rates of progress across subjects as they do in English and mathematics
 - improving pupils’ progress in humanities and combined science
 - further improving the progress made by pupils with SEND.
- Improve pupils’ personal development, behaviour and welfare by:
 - improving a minority of pupils’ ability to regulate their own behaviour at social times
 - reducing low-level disruption in some lessons, by ensuring consistently good-quality teaching and that the new behaviour strategy is applied consistently well across the school
 - reducing the proportion of pupils who are temporarily or permanently excluded from the school.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The new principal, his leadership team, the local governing body and the trustees have embarked on a transformational journey to improve this school. They have taken rapid and effective action to improve provision by focusing on developing a high-quality curriculum that is increasingly well planned and well taught. While the school is not yet good overall, sizeable improvements have been made to the quality of education that the school provides since the previous inspection.
- As part of this transformational journey, leaders ensure that their self-evaluation is honest, accurate and precise. It leads to well-thought-out, multi-layered improvement plans, pinpointing the key priorities that will make the biggest difference to school improvement. For example, leaders, governors and trustees have continued to improve outcomes in English and mathematics.
- Since the previous inspection, leaders have undertaken a full review of how effectively they use their pupil premium funding. It is now deployed with much more precision. Alongside regional directors and the local governing body, leaders evaluate the impact of spending regularly. Leaders have detailed plans in place to ensure that disadvantaged pupils, particularly disadvantaged boys, make the same strong progress across the wider curriculum as they do in English and mathematics. However, it is too early to see the full impact of these plans.
- Leaders apply the same rigour to ensure that the literacy and numeracy catch-up funding is spent effectively. For example, they have reviewed and evaluated the impact of a plethora of numeracy strategies to find what works best for the school's pupils. Due to pupils' low attainment on entry and the high proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language, it sometimes takes longer for pupils to catch up. However, by the end of key stage 4, pupils make strong progress and attain well in both English and mathematics.
- The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) also ensures that the additional funding for pupils with an education, health and care plan is spent increasingly well. The impact of this spending is reviewed regularly. The provision for pupils with SEND in the two specialist resource provisions is good. However, some pupils with SEND in mainstream lessons do not routinely have access to good-quality teaching. They do not make consistently good progress from their starting points in some subjects.
- The arrangements for admitting international arrivals into the school are effective. These pupils receive good-quality support and guidance. Their emotional well-being is considered carefully. Leadership in this area is very good and typically it secures good progress for these pupils.
- Leaders have a strong focus on improving teaching by providing a good-quality training programme. This programme links closely to the findings from leaders' ongoing monitoring and evaluation of teaching. While the quality of teaching is not consistently good, it is improving quickly across most subjects. That said, leaders have not fully eradicated weaker teaching, especially in science and humanities.

- Leaders collaborate well across the multi-academy trust and the local cluster of United Learning Trust schools to improve the quality of education that the school provides. The executive principal provides strong support to the principal.
- The principal has effectively realigned the roles and responsibilities of the senior leadership team to ensure that there is strong capacity for further improvement. For example, more recently, there has been a much sharper focus on improving the quality of teaching and learning.
- The principal and executive principal have overhauled the curriculum, which until more recently did not fully meet pupils' needs. They have undertaken a root-and-branch review of what is taught and when. For example, they have introduced in-depth curriculum plans for each unit of work across subjects. These allow middle leaders to support and check teachers' planning with increasing success.
- The school's assessment system links closely to the impact of the teaching of the curriculum on pupils' learning and progress. Middle leaders are becoming confident in talking about how well staff teach the curriculum in their subject areas. They now hold teachers more fully to account for the impact of teaching on pupils' learning and progress. That said, these changes are relatively new and are not fully embedded across some subject areas.
- Pupils appreciate the wide range of extra-curricular activities that staff provide. They have a positive effect on their wider development. Pupils have access to a wide range of subject-specific support and guidance after school.
- Leaders' work to promote equality and diversity is good. There is a very strong focus on British values. Leaders seek every opportunity to celebrate the richness of the cultural diversity found within the school.
- Leaders have established strong links with parents, carers and the local community. For example, there is a parents' group, which focuses on helping their children to make good progress. Leaders ensure that pupils accept people's differences, for example lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people. Additionally, leaders work hard to promote gender equality. Teachers across the school support pupils and their families to understand British society and social norms.
- Pupils have a well-planned programme to promote their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For example, key stage 4 pupils had the opportunity to explore a wide range of different religions in a session led by local faith leaders. Also, pupils can join the Manchester Academy detachment of army and RAF cadets to develop leadership, communication and teamwork skills. Alongside this, pupils enjoy learning about national events, for example British science week, Black history month and LGBT month.
- Most of the staff who replied to Ofsted's staff survey think that the school has improved significantly since the previous inspection and under the new leadership team. Staff are proud to work at Manchester Academy. They think that pupils are safe, and that pupils' behaviour is improving. Staff are appreciative of the strong support that they get from senior leaders. They acknowledge that leaders are mindful of reducing staff workload when they implement key changes to policy and procedures.

Governance of the school

- Trustees, regional directors and the local governing body are passionate about securing the best possible education for the pupils at Manchester Academy. They are well on their way to realising their vision for 'The best in everyone' at Manchester Academy. They recognise, however, that pupils' learning and progress are currently not good enough.
- The local governing body is very experienced and knows the community well. The scheme of delegation provides it with clear roles and responsibilities to ensure the smooth running of the school. The local governing body has been effective in overseeing improvements since the previous inspection. Added to this, it supports leaders effectively to improve behaviour and attendance. That said, the number of exclusions remains too high.
- The chair of the local governing body meets with the principal and regional director each half term to evaluate the effectiveness of their work to improve the school. This system provides an effective bridge between the layers of governance across the trust.
- Regional and deputy directors hold the principal and senior leaders to account for school improvement. They coach leaders and direct them to best practice across the trust. They deploy extra support where needed, for example subject advisers. Alongside the executive principal and principal, they have been pivotal in improving the overall quality of leadership and management in the school.
- The trust gives leaders the confidence and support to take the difficult decisions required to improve the school, for example by restructuring the senior leadership team. That said, until recently, the trustees have been far too slow to address long-standing concerns in humanities.
- Regional and deputy directors provide effective training to the local governing body. For example, the local governing body has received training in evaluating the impact of pupil premium spending and how to hold leaders more fully to account for pupils' outcomes. That said, the progress made by disadvantaged pupils is not good enough in some subjects.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are highly effective.
- There is a strong culture of safeguarding across this school. All statutory requirements are met. There is excellent evidence that safeguarding arrangements include procedures to support and educate pupils about potential issues within the local area. Staff training is frequent.
- The school has extremely strong links with external agencies and the local authority safeguarding team. This enables leaders to access the right level of support for pupils when required. For example, leaders work closely and effectively with the local authority where there are concerns about children missing education.
- Leaders are proactive in supporting pupils' well-being through the community liaison officer, pastoral support workers, the school nurse, school counsellors and the school police officer. There is also a wealth of guidance and support about internet safety and

health and well-being. Consequently, pupils feel safe in the school and they know who to go to if they have any concerns.

- The school is actively involved in raising awareness about female genital mutilation. This is a strong element of leaders' work to keep pupils safe. Leaders also work hard to prevent and detect any potential radicalisation and/or extremism.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching in English, mathematics and computing is particularly strong. Teaching is also very effective across key stage 4 in modern foreign languages. However, leaders have not eradicated the weaker teaching that remains in some curriculum areas.
- The school's new assessment system is increasingly effective in measuring the progress that different groups of pupils make in their subject areas. It is enabling middle leaders and senior leaders to see which topics of each curriculum area have been taught effectively and where pupils require more teaching and support to improve their knowledge. However, it is not fully embedded across the school so that it routinely informs teachers' day-to-day planning.
- Teachers' subject knowledge is good, especially in English and mathematics. However, some teachers do not use their subject knowledge effectively to challenge and inspire pupils to make consistently good progress from their starting points.
- The quality of teaching in the induction and transition classes is good. These classes support international arrivals to the school and pupils who need additional support before they can access mainstream classes. The curriculum is well planned and sequenced in these lessons. The induction and transition classes enable new arrivals to the school and pupils with SEND who are not ready for mainstream classes to catch up quickly with other pupils.
- Teaching assistants and other adults who support pupils from the specialist resource bases make a positive contribution to pupils' learning and progress in most lessons. They are particularly good at supporting pupils with SEND. Conversely, some teachers do not think deeply enough about how to support pupils with SEND in mainstream classes so that they make consistently good progress from their starting points.
- Teachers develop pupils' reading, writing and speaking skills successfully in English lessons. Pupils who speak English as an additional language are also supported well so that they can access the curriculum. However, some teachers do not develop subject-specific literacy and language skills with enough precision in their curriculum areas. The principal has appropriate plans in place to help teachers address this area for improvement. However, more time is needed to see the impact on pupils' outcomes.
- Low-level disruption remains in a few lessons. Where this occurs, it is typically where teachers do not prepare activities that sustain the interest and engagement of pupils and/or where teachers do not apply the new behaviour policy consistently well.
- Teachers set homework regularly and it contributes well to pupils' ongoing development. Those pupils who have difficulty in completing homework have access to additional help and support in the school.

- Teachers often ask questions that deepen pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding. This is particularly the case in the effective teaching of mathematics. Teachers challenge pupils to explain their calculations. In contrast, some teachers do not ensure that pupils actively listen to the information that they give to pupils.
- The school's developing teacher programme is having a positive impact on improving the teaching skills of new entrants to the profession.
- Most teachers provide good-quality feedback in line with the school's policy. Pupils take the time to respond to this. However, on occasions feedback does not challenge pupils as effectively as it could to enable pupils to take the next steps in their learning.
- Pupils value their teachers and the commitment that they show to improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- Although leaders have secured significant improvements to pupils' behaviour across the school, there is still a small minority of pupils who engage in boisterous behaviour during social times. These pupils do not regulate their own behaviour sufficiently well.
- Leaders work hard to improve pupils' behaviour in the community. They take this responsibility very seriously, so that issues do not find their way into the school. Nevertheless, there is still a minority of pupils who make negative choices about their behaviour in the local area. Leaders are grateful for the increasing support that they receive from local community leaders.
- Leaders have engaged in a long-term programme to raise pupils' aspirations of what they can achieve at the school. The impact of this programme is clearly visible in the school, and pupils' attitudes to learning are improving. For example, most pupils are now punctual to lessons; they are gaining in self-confidence and developing greater resilience. This is particularly noticeable for pupils with SEND in the autistic and hearing impairment resource-based units.
- There is a strong programme of support to help pupils stay safe. It includes a focus on national priorities, including gangs, the effect of knife crime and issues relating to pupils' mental health and well-being. Pupils also receive a wealth of information about how to stay safe online.
- A wide range of evidence, including Ofsted's pupil survey, confirms leaders' views that bullying is not a major concern in this academy. Pupils say that, when it does occur, it is dealt with effectively by school staff. The school's own records confirm that incidents of racist, sexist and homophobic bullying are very low. What is striking is the way that a wide range of diverse ethnic groups work closely together.
- Careers education, information, advice and guidance are good and improving. There is a strong focus on all options available to pupils post 16, including apprenticeships. There is a well-valued careers fair for key stage 4 pupils which is attended by local

post-16 providers from both the education and training sectors. Leaders continue to raise pupils' aspirations about what they can achieve in their future lives.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- The proportion of pupils who are temporarily or permanently excluded from the school is declining, due to the change in culture and ethos at the school. Nonetheless, the number of exclusions from the school remains too high.
- Those pupils who access the internal exclusion room due to behavioural incidents in the school or in lessons continue with their curriculum studies. They also receive effective support for the issues that caused them to be removed from class. The improvements to the quality of teaching and to behaviour management have reduced significantly the number of pupils who are temporarily excluded from lessons.
- Despite improvements to teaching, a small minority of pupils continue to engage in low-level disruption. This hinders the learning and progress of other pupils in the class. This is typically when teachers do not prepare learning activities that meet pupils' needs and/or when the behaviour policy is not applied consistently well.
- The principal has formed strong relationships within the local community as part of his mission to transform pupils' behaviour. He engages effectively with different faith groups and different communities to foster their support with pupils' behaviour, both in the school and in the local community. Staff and pupils comment favourably on the work that has been done to promote community cohesion. Leaders also work equally well with parents of vulnerable pupils.
- Pupils' rates of attendance are good. Leaders continue to reduce the proportion of pupils who are regularly absent from the school. There is a very strong focus on ensuring that any cases of pupils who may be at risk of missing education are followed through to conclusion.
- Pupils who are educated at alternative providers behave well and are well supported to make good progress in their learning. Providers say that the school's work to safeguard pupils at off-site provision is exemplary and that communication is extremely strong. The school shares its curriculum resources with providers, and staff visit the providers to undertake reviews of pupils' learning in lessons.

Outcomes for pupils

Require improvement

- Most pupils enter the school with prior attainment that is well below that of other pupils nationally. Nevertheless, over time, pupils' attainment in English and mathematics is improving. The results of national assessments in 2018 showed that pupils make consistently good progress in English and very good progress in mathematics. In 2018, boys' attainment in English and mathematics was broadly average.
- Current pupils across both key stages 3 and 4 continue to make good progress in English and mathematics, because of effective teaching and a well-planned curriculum.

- Conversely, in recent years, pupils' progress in combined science has not been good enough. Pupils' progress in humanities is poor, and attainment has been low. Due to the legacy from the previous curriculum, pupils also underachieved in vocational subjects. Leaders are taking strong action to address the issues in science; however, humanities remain a concern.
- Historical data shows that, by the end of key stage 4, pupils make excellent progress in modern foreign languages. Current pupils in key stage 4 are making very strong progress in French and Spanish.
- Each year, around 70 pupils enter the school as international new arrivals. They often speak little or no English and there is often no information about their prior attainment. These pupils are well supported to make good progress, because of effective teaching in the school's induction and transition classes.
- In the specialist resource provision, pupils with autism and those with hearing impairments make good progress from their starting points. Pupils' pastoral and academic progress is tracked meticulously. These pupils access a range of high-quality specialist support and attend a wide range of mainstream lessons. Pupils with hearing impairments are particularly well supported by additional adults, enabling them to access the full curriculum and make good progress.
- In contrast, over time, those pupils with SEND who are not part of the school's specialist resource provision do not make consistently good progress from their starting points. This is because some teachers do not plan lessons that take account of the barriers to learning affecting these pupils. The SENCo is acutely aware of this and is acting to improve provision further. However, the impact of those actions is not evident in pupils' progress.
- Disadvantaged pupils make good progress in English and mathematics. However, disadvantaged pupils, especially disadvantaged boys, do not make the same good progress across the wider curriculum.
- Across key stages 3 and 4, the progress of current pupils is not good enough. This is because in some subjects teachers do not routinely plan lessons that challenge pupils to make good progress from their starting points. This is particularly the case in key stage 3 music.
- There has been a strong focus on improving pupils' reading skills for those pupils who enter the school with reading ages below expectation. This includes international arrivals. Pupils' progress in reading has improved dramatically due to the high-quality literacy catch-up programme.
- The small number of pupils who access alternative provision make good progress on their chosen courses.
- Between 2014 and 2017, the proportion of pupils who progressed to education, employment and training was much lower than the national average. The school's own information shows that this trend has now reversed for the 2018 cohort of leavers.

School details

Unique reference number	134224
Local authority	Manchester
Inspection number	10057937

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1076
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Ms Margaret Woodhouse
Principal	Mr James Eldon
Executive Principal	Mr Frank McCarron
Telephone number	0161 232 1639
Website	http://www.manchester-academy.org/
Email address	office@manchester-academy.org
Date of previous inspection	20–21 September 2016

Information about this school

- Manchester Academy is an average-sized secondary school that is part of the United Learning Trust.
- The United Learning Trust comprises 59 state sector academies and 13 independent schools operated within the United Church Schools Trust. At Manchester Academy, the board of trustees is accountable for the school. As part of the governance structure, the regional director and senior director also hold leaders to account. The scheme of delegation sets out clearly what powers have been delegated to the local governing body.
- A new principal was appointed in 2018.
- There is a higher proportion of boys on roll than girls.

- A large majority of pupils speak English as an additional language. A significant number of pupils each year are international new arrivals.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is more than twice the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan is above the national average.
- The school has two specialist local-authority funded resource provisions. One is for pupils with autism who have an education, health and care plan. The other is for hearing-impaired pupils who either have an education, health and care plan or who meet the threshold for admission. In each separate resource provision, there are 14 pupils on roll from ages 11 to 16.
- A small number of pupils are educated at alternative providers. The school makes use of Brighter Futures, EdStart, the Manchester Vocational and Learning Academy and Ashcroft School.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors formally observed teaching in a wide range of lessons across key stages 3 and 4, undertaking some observations jointly with senior leaders. Shorter learning walks across a series of lessons were undertaken jointly with leaders.
- Inspectors undertook an in-depth analysis of pupils' work in several subjects across the school and across key stages. Inspectors also focused on disadvantaged pupils' work and scrutinised the work of pupils who speak English as an additional language. Scrutinies of work were jointly conducted with leaders. In addition, inspectors looked at a wide range of pupils' work in lessons. Inspectors also reviewed the work of pupils with SEND. An inspector spoke with pupils in the school's specialist resource units.
- Meetings were held with a range of staff including: senior leaders; members of the local governing body; the regional director and deputy regional director; middle leaders and subject leaders; the transition coordinator; the SENCo and deputy SENCo; lead teachers from the specialist resource bases; the coordinators for pupils who speak English an additional language; teachers and teaching assistants; newly qualified and recently qualified teachers; pastoral leaders and year directors; the community liaison officer; and the school police officer.
- A range of documentation was scrutinised by the inspection team, including: safeguarding documentation; the school's own self-evaluation; the school improvement plans; pupil premium and literacy and numeracy catch-up documents; documentation relating to pupils with SEND; information about the quality of teaching, learning and assessment; information about ongoing teacher training; minutes of the meetings of the local governing body; information about how well current pupils are progressing in their learning; analyses of past pupils' performance; and behaviour and attendance records.
- Observations of pupils' behaviour were undertaken at the start of the school day, during the school day, between lessons, during breaktimes and at lunchtimes. Inspectors met formally with a range of pupils from key stages 3 and 4.
- The inspection team considered eight responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire Parent View, as well as three responses to Ofsted's free-text service. Inspectors also took account of 17 responses to Ofsted's pupil survey and 52 responses to Ofsted's staff survey.

Inspection team

Jonathan Smart, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
David Woodhouse	Ofsted Inspector
Craig Yates	Ofsted Inspector
Paul Buckland	Ofsted Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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