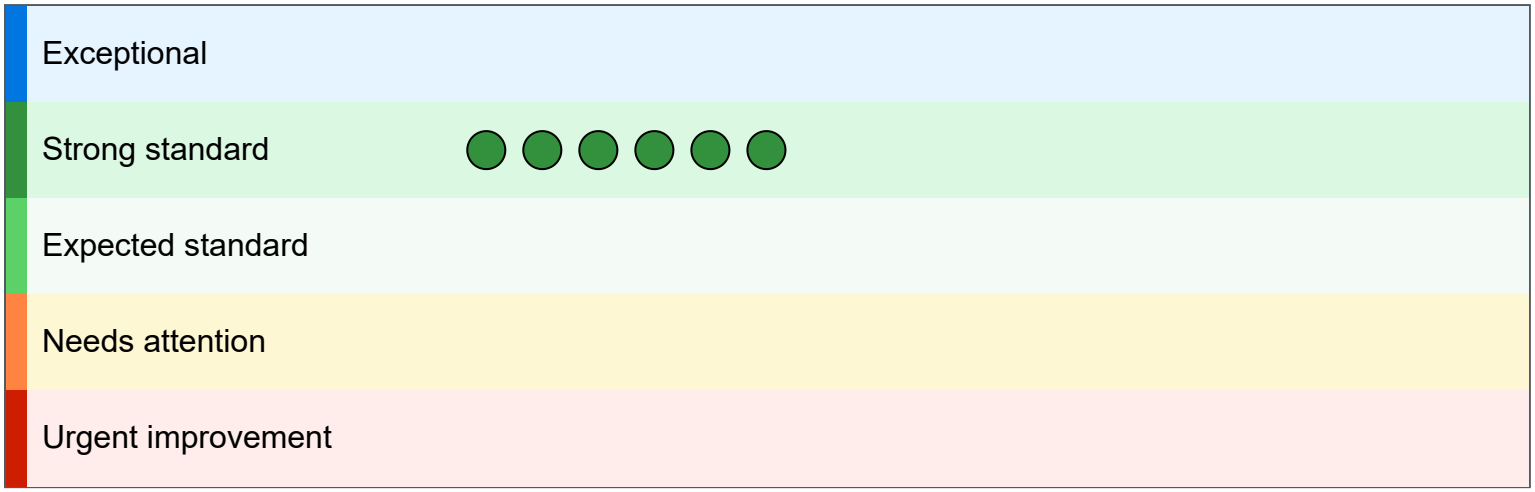
Manchester Academy

Address: Moss Lane East, Moss Side, Manchester, M14 4PX

Unique reference number (URN): 134224

Inspection report: 13 October 2026



Safeguarding standards met

The safeguarding standards are met. This means that leaders and/or those responsible for governance and oversight fulfil their specific responsibilities and have established an open culture in which safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and concerns are actively identified, acted upon and managed. As a result, pupils are made safer and feel safe.

How we evaluate safeguarding

When we inspect schools for safeguarding, they can have the following outcomes:

- Met: The school has an open and positive culture of safeguarding. All legal requirements are met.
- Not met: The school has not created an open and positive culture of safeguarding. Not all legal requirements are met.

Strong standard

Achievement

Strong standard

Leaders ensure that pupils develop secure reading comprehension, writing fluency and confident use of number skills through accurate assessment and timely intervention. Although pupils join the school with attainment below national averages, leaders identify their needs quickly and provide carefully designed provision through specialist reading, writing and numeracy programmes. Consequently, pupils strengthen their skills.

Pupils attain well. Attainment in national examinations at the end of key stage 4 is close to national averages in all subjects except mathematics, despite pupils' low starting points. Additionally, pupils' attainment is largely above that of their peers in similar schools. Disadvantaged pupils attain more highly than disadvantaged pupils nationally, reflecting leaders' high expectations and carefully planned provision.

Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who join during the academic year, make progress from their starting points. Pupils' work across subjects demonstrates that they deepen their knowledge and strengthen their skills over time. Pupils are well prepared for their next steps, be that in education, training or employment.

Attendance and behaviour

Strong standard

Leaders have established a culture in which attendance is everyone's responsibility. Robust approaches and teams, including attendance officers, community outreach work and support for pupils experiencing anxiety, ensure that barriers to regular attendance are recognised and addressed swiftly. Leaders analyse attendance information carefully and implement initiatives, including free breakfast provision to encourage regular participation in school life. As a result, attendance has improved over the last 3 years for all groups and is now above national figures for most pupils.

Leaders have created a calm, purposeful and respectful environment, where pupils engage fully in learning. Expectations are communicated clearly through 'The MA Way' and are reinforced consistently well by staff. Pupils regulate their behaviour effectively, move between activities with minimal disruption and maximise learning time. Incidents of disruption are uncommon and pupils report that bullying occurs infrequently. The behaviour curriculum develops pupils' self-discipline, respect and tolerance. Where pupils require additional help to regulate their behaviour, leaders ensure that they have access to safe spaces, such as the 'ARC' and specialist staff. This enables pupils to manage anxieties, return to learning promptly and participate fully in school life.

Curriculum and teaching

Strong standard

Leaders secure strong foundations for pupils by pinpointing gaps in learning swiftly and providing timely help. Robust checks on learning ensure that pupils, including those who are new to the country or to the school, receive the assistance they require to build firm knowledge and skills in reading, writing and mathematics from their starting points.

Leaders have established a highly ambitious school curriculum that enables pupils to acquire knowledge and fluency effectively. They have tailored the trust curriculum carefully to meet pupils' needs and have strengthened provision in several subject areas. Thoughtful sequencing helps pupils build independence, when tackling extended tasks. Staff identify and address misconceptions promptly. Teachers routinely reinforce subject-specific vocabulary, helping pupils develop accurate understanding and technical proficiency across subjects.

Leaders promote an inclusive approach to curriculum delivery and teaching. Staff receive the information that they need to make appropriate adaptations to learning. For example, teachers use seating plans containing detailed information about pupils' specific needs, vocabulary support and regular recall activities to help pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those facing other barriers to learning. This enables these pupils to engage successfully with lessons and move through the curriculum alongside their peers.

Inclusion

Strong standard

Leaders identify pupils' learning and wellbeing needs quickly and remove barriers effectively. Staff use assessment information consistently well to ensure that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those facing other barriers to learning receive timely support. This helps pupils develop the knowledge and skills needed to succeed in their studies.

Leaders use pupil premium funding effectively to provide additional provision for disadvantaged pupils. For example, funding has secured support for those pupils who are at an early stage of learning English. Consequently, disadvantaged pupils with language barriers access the same ambitious curriculum as their peers, participate fully in learning and make sustained progress through the curriculum over time.

Pupils known or previously known to social care receive effective assistance that enables them to overcome barriers to learning and engage fully in school life. Leaders respond swiftly to the challenges faced by other groups, including the high number of international new arrivals. Robust checks for gaps in knowledge and skills and the school's induction procedures, help pupils settle quickly and engage successfully with learning.

The specialist staffing and resources in the school's autism provision and carefully selected alternative provision placements meet pupils' needs effectively. Leaders monitor provision closely and evaluate its impact carefully. As a result, pupils with additional needs benefit from a high-quality curriculum and make progress from their starting points.

Leadership and governance

Strong standard

Leaders provide strategic direction that maintains a clear focus on continual improvement. They have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and priorities and take decisive action to improve attainment and wellbeing for pupils. High expectations are underpinned by a deep commitment to inclusion. Leaders know their community well and respond swiftly to barriers that may affect learning, attendance and personal development. As a result, the school's culture is characterised by ambition, care and high aspirations for all pupils.

Governors and trustees fulfil their statutory responsibilities effectively through robust systems of support and challenge. They use a wide range of information, including trust reviews and performance data, to evaluate the impact of leaders' actions.

Staff wellbeing and workload are a clear priority for leaders. Staff value the assistance available to them and appreciate leaders' consideration of wellbeing alongside professional expectations. This contributes to high levels of staff morale and retention.

Professional learning is a notable strength. A carefully designed programme of instructional coaching and subject-specific learning enables staff to refine their practice continually. Teachers at all stages of their careers benefit from high-quality learning opportunities. Leaders also contribute extensively beyond the school through trust-wide improvement work, professional learning programmes and teacher training.

Engagement with parents and carers, professionals and the wider community is highly effective. Through English classes, parenting workshops and extensive liaison work, leaders build constructive relationships with families. As a result, the school is a trusted and valued part of the local community.

Personal development and wellbeing

Strong standard

Leaders have established an ambitious culture that places equal importance on pupils' academic success, personal growth and preparation for adult life. They review provision carefully and adapt it in response to local and emerging needs so that pupils receive relevant and timely assistance. The personal development curriculum contributes to pupils' resilience, wellbeing and readiness for the future.

The personal, social and health education curriculum is comprehensive and thoughtfully sequenced. Pupils revisit key themes within relationships and health and wellbeing, enabling them to gain a secure understanding over time. Relationships and sex education and health education are particularly effective. Pupils speak knowledgeably about healthy relationships, peer-on-peer abuse, forced marriage and online safety. They explain how this learning helps them to make well-informed decisions, manage risk and keep themselves safe. Leaders promote pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development particularly effectively through assemblies, form-time activities and opportunities beyond the academic curriculum. Fundamental British values are embedded consistently well throughout school life. The 'Make Manchester Magic' values and 'The MA Way' provide a clear framework that promotes respect, tolerance, aspiration and responsible citizenship. Initiatives such as Black History Month, Hate Awareness Week and Culture Days deepen pupils' understanding of diversity and belonging.

Leaders ensure that provision is fully inclusive. Pupils benefit considerably from pastoral and inclusion teams, who support disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities to benefit from the same rich experiences as their peers. Staff remove barriers to participation, for example, through subsidised transport and fully funded educational visits.

Careers education is a particular strength. Through work experience, guidance and support with future pathways, pupils are extremely well prepared for their next steps in education,

employment or training. Consequently, pupils develop into articulate, considerate and responsible young people, who contribute meaningfully to their communities.

What it's like to be a pupil at this school

Pupils embrace learning and speak with genuine pride about being part of the school community. They listen carefully to teachers' instructions and are motivated to succeed academically, approaching challenges with determination and perseverance. Pupils value the welcoming culture that leaders have established. They appreciate learning alongside peers from a wide range of backgrounds and experiences. Respectful relationships between staff and pupils are a defining feature of the school. Pupils feel safe and valued. When concerns arise, including bullying, they are dealt with promptly and effectively.

Pupils achieve well and attend school regularly. Although many pupils join the school at different stages of their education and with low prior attainment, the vast majority attain standards in line with pupils nationally. In many cases, pupils attain more highly than their peers in similar schools. Pupils respond well to leaders' high expectations of behaviour and learning. They engage purposefully in their lessons. Consequently, they develop the knowledge, skills and self-belief needed for future education, training and employment.

Pupils benefit from a rich programme of learning and personal development that broadens their experiences beyond the classroom and prepares them well for adulthood. Leadership roles, community projects and initiatives, such as the 'Queen Bees Group', 'Creative Leadership' and 'Taking Flight', help pupils develop resilience, teamwork, leadership and communication skills. These opportunities enable pupils to contribute meaningfully to the life of the school while preparing them well for examinations, future pathways and adult life.

The environment is calm, purposeful and supportive. Staff communicate expectations clearly and provide effective guidance that helps pupils regulate their behaviour and engage fully in learning. Leaders reduce barriers to learning and wellbeing through a highly supportive culture that promotes belonging and inclusion. As a result, pupils make sustained progress through the curriculum and develop into respectful, responsible and well-rounded young people, who contribute meaningfully to their school and wider community.

Next steps

- Leaders should strengthen their actions to raise attainment in mathematics and increase the number of subject areas in which disadvantaged pupils attain above their peers in similar schools.
- Leaders should sustain the effectiveness of their work to further refine the quality of teaching across all subject areas and phases to continue enhancing the impact that this has on pupils' learning.

About this inspection

This school is part of United Learning Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Sir Jon Coles, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Christian Brodie.

Inspectors carried out this full inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

This inspection took place on 13 and 14 October 2026.

Following our renewed inspection framework, all inspections are now led by His Majesty's Inspectors (HMIs) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMIs.

Inspectors spoke with school leaders, trustees, governors, staff and pupils during the inspection.

The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

The inspector confirmed the following information about the school:

The school includes a specially resourced provision for 17 pupils with autism.

The school currently makes use of four alternative provisions, including one that is unregistered.

Executive Principal: James Eldon

Lead inspector:
Lisa Corrigan, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:
Alison Stott, Ofsted Inspector
Gil Bourgade, Ofsted Inspector
Shane Richardson, Ofsted Inspector
Sue Gill-Daintith, Ofsted Inspector

Facts and figures used on inspection

This was the data available at the time of the full inspection, taken from different sources. More recent data may have been published since the full inspection took place.

The inspector(s) used this data during the full inspection on 13 October 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

1,025
Close to average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils currently at this school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 1,063

School capacity

1,170
Close to average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils who can attend the school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 1,154

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

62.63%
Well above average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals at any point in the last 6 years.

National average: 30.4%

Pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan

3.32%
Close to average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan. This covers pupils with more support than is available through special educational needs support.

National average: 3.53%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

13.85%

Close to average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with reported special educational needs support at the school.

National average: 14.0%

Location deprivation

Well above average

What does this mean?

Based on the English indices of deprivation (2019) and the school's location, we have calculated whether the school is located in a more or less deprived area.

Resourced provision or SEND Unit (if applicable)

Resourced provision and SEN unit

What does this mean?

Whether school has Resourced provision or SEND unit (if applicable).

All pupils' performance

English and maths GCSE

Percentage of pupils who achieved grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (final)	38.0%	45.4%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	30.9%	45.9%	Below
2022/23 (final)	37.5%	45.3%	Close to average

Attainment 8

A measure of pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (final)	45.4	46.1	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	43.2	45.9	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	44.6	46.3	Close to average

Progress 8

How much progress pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	0.30	-0.03	Above
2022/23 (final)	0.16	-0.03	Close to average
2021/22 (final)	-0.01	-0.03	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils' performance

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after.

Disadvantaged pupils' English and maths GCSE grade 5 or above

Percentage of disadvantaged pupils achieving grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (final)	28.1%	25.8%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	21.0%	25.8%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	33.6%	25.2%	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils' Attainment 8

A measure of disadvantaged pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (final)	40.3	34.9	Above
2023/24 (final)	39.0	34.6	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	41.4	35.0	Above

Disadvantaged pupils' Progress 8

How much progress disadvantaged pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	0.17	-0.57	Above
2022/23 (final)	0.02	-0.57	Above
2021/22 (final)	-0.20	-0.55	Above

Disadvantaged pupils' performance gap

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after. The school disadvantage gap is the difference between the performance of the school's disadvantaged pupils compared to the performance of all non-disadvantaged pupils nationally.

Disadvantaged pupils' English and maths GCSE grade 5 or above

Percentage of disadvantaged pupils who achieved grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2024/25 (final)	28.1%	53.1%	-25.0 pp
2023/24 (final)	21.0%	53.1%	-32.1 pp
2022/23 (final)	33.6%	52.4%	-18.8 pp

Disadvantaged pupils' Attainment 8

A measure of disadvantaged pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2024/25 (final)	40.3	50.4	-10.1
2023/24 (final)	39.0	50.0	-11.0
2022/23 (final)	41.4	50.3	-8.9

Disadvantaged pupils' Progress 8

How much progress disadvantaged pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2023/24 (final)	0.17	0.16	0.00
2022/23 (final)	0.02	0.17	-0.14
2021/22 (final)	-0.20	0.15	-0.35

Destinations after 16

Destinations after 16

Percentage of pupils staying in education or employment for at least 2 terms after the end of secondary school (key stage 4).

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023 leavers (revised)	90%	92%	Average
2022 leavers (revised)	80%	93%	Below
2021 leavers (revised)	87%	94%	Below

Absence

Overall absence

The percentage of all possible mornings and afternoons missed due to absence from school (for whatever reason, whether authorised or unauthorised) across all pupils.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2025/26 (1 term)	7.0%	7.8%	Close to average
2024/25 (3 term)	7.8%	8.4%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	9.2%	8.9%	Close to average

Persistent absence

The percentage of pupils missing 10% or more of their possible mornings and afternoons.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2025/26 (1 term)	19.5%	21.5%	Close to average
2024/25 (3 term)	21.6%	23.4%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	27.2%	25.6%	Close to average

Our grades explained

Exceptional

Practice is exceptional: of the highest standard nationally. Other schools can learn from it.

Strong standard

The school reaches a strong standard. Leaders are working above the standard expected of them.

Expected standard

The school is fulfilling the expected standard of education and/or care. This means they are following the standard set out in statutory and non-statutory legislation and the professional standards expected of them.

Needs attention

The expected standards are not met but leaders are likely able to make the necessary improvements.

Urgent improvement

The school needs to make urgent improvements to provide the expected standard of education and/or care.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) inspects services providing education and skills for children and learners of all ages, and inspects and regulates services that care for children and young people.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: http://eepurl.com/iTrDn.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted
© Crown copyright 2026

© Crown copyright