

Manchester Young Lives

The Addy Young People's Centre, Woodhouse Lane, Manchester M22 9TF

Inspection dates

13–15 March 2018

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Leaders, managers and the trust members continue to ensure that they provide a good education for pupils.
- Pupils' attainment at the end of key stage 4 has continued to rise year on year, since the last inspection. Pupils are prepared well for their education, employment and training post-16.
- Leaders have ensured that the curriculum is very effective in helping to develop pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding.
- Most pupils make good progress from their low starting points across a range of subjects. However, a small proportion of pupils who have more complex special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities make slower progress than their peers.
- The proprietor and leaders ensure that the independent school standards are fully met.
- Pupils' attendance is improving quickly. However, a small minority of pupils' attendance at each site remains stubbornly low.
- All staff are highly attuned to pupils' welfare and safeguarding needs. However, leaders, staff and pupils recognise there is currently insufficient specialist support to help pupils understand and manage their mental health.
- Teaching is good because teachers know their subjects well and use a range of effective techniques to engage and motivate pupils. Teachers, however, do not always insist that pupils practise their extended writing skills sufficiently, especially at key stage 3.
- Staff manage pupils' behaviour well. Most pupils respond positively to teachers' instruction and guidance. Pupils who display challenging behaviour receive fair and proportionate sanctions. They modify their behaviour as a result.
- The charity trustees strongly govern the school. They are skilled, experienced and committed to the values, aims and ethos of the school.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- In conjunction with partners, strengthen existing strategies, to rapidly improve the attendance rates for the minority of pupils who do not attend school regularly.
- Accelerate pupils' progress further, especially for those who have more complex additional needs, by:
 - teachers encouraging pupils to practise writing at length and accurately, particularly at key stage 3, to prepare them even better for the challenges of the key stage 4 curriculum
 - leaders implementing an effective strategy, across all sites, to support targeted pupils' mental health to better help them engage with learning.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Leaders and managers have ensured that the school delivers its mission well. The proprietor and leaders ensure that the independent school standards are fully met.
- Leaders have provided vulnerable pupils with life chances by enabling them to gain a wide range of qualifications and skills by the end of key stage 4. For many pupils, the school has offered them a realistic chance to lead a happy, healthy and productive life.
- Leaders have devised a curriculum which is interesting and creative. As well as learning the core subjects of mathematics, English and science, pupils follow sports, arts and design and technology courses, leading to meaningful qualifications.
- The school's self-evaluation is accurate and realistic. Leaders monitor rigorously the school improvement plan and mainly successfully meet the targets set for improvement.
- The leadership of teaching is strong. Staff report they value the range and content of the training offered to them. The quality of teaching is consistently good across all three sites.
- Behaviour is managed effectively. There are clear and well-implemented policies to reward good conduct and sanction poor behaviour. Fixed-term exclusions are used appropriately and more often than not pupils' behaviour improves as a result. Leaders monitor the types of behaviour well. The decline of most types of poor behaviour over time is testament to the good leadership of this area of the school.
- Leaders have ensured that pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well. Assemblies, tutorials, visits from cultural groups and trips help pupils to know and understand the world and society in which they live and their responsibilities towards them.
- All staff engender respect for equalities very well. They challenge effectively stereotypes, derogatory and prejudiced-based language. Leaders encourage pupils to learn about and gain first-hand experience of the cultures and communities which make up modern Britain. In so doing, they prepare pupils well for life beyond school.
- The school reports to parents and carers half-termly about their children's behaviour and academic progress. The information is comprehensive and helpful. Improved partnerships with parents to help their children to make progress are proving more and more effective each year.
- The school's pastoral care for pupils is a significant reason why most pupils make the progress they should, both academically and behaviourally. One-to-one work with the pupils' key worker and sensitive responses to pupils' emotional needs are very effective approaches for many pupils. An increasing challenge to the school has been the range and complexity of some pupils' mental health and emotional needs. While the school engages with a specialist mental health organisation at one site, this provision is not available to all. Leaders, staff and pupils recognise a gap in the school's provision to help meet some pupils' additional needs.
- The school's partnership with the Manchester Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) is highly effective. For example, the school receives valuable specialist SEN support, the attendance team support and regular quality assurance of teaching, learning and assessment. The school's

work with other partners, such as the local university, for example, has brought about tangible benefits to the pupils' experiences and learning in science.

- The school's work to support pupils' career aspirations is effective and wide-ranging. Pupils, at all three sites, receive regular careers advice and guidance. At key stage 4, independent careers advisers support pupils with making good choices for their post-16 education and training. An increasing proportion of pupils are on track to undertake apprenticeships.
- The proprietor, leaders and managers know and understand well the requirements of the independent school standards and ensure that they are fully met.

Governance

- The school is governed by the board of trustees, whose membership is made up of experienced, skilled and committed professionals. Most have a long history with the Manchester Young Lives charitable organisation prior to the formation of the independent school.
- Governors use their skills well to challenge and support leaders to good effect. Their regular visits to the school prompt leaders to reflect on the current provision and make necessary changes. For example, as a result of trustee visits there was a recommendation to provide more one-to-one spaces, in order to manage pupils' emotional needs more effectively. As a result, these spaces are now in the process of being created.
- Governors keep close oversight of the school's welfare and safety provision. They ensure that all aspects of the independent school standards are monitored well.
- Governors draw on the strengths from other sectors of the charity to support the school. For example, the youth and engagement division supports pupils with their personal, social and health education. They provide careers advice and opportunities to undertake apprenticeships.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The designated safeguarding leader is highly trained and works well with partners to ensure that pupils' welfare and safety is given the highest priority across the school.
- Staff are all trained well and are vigilant to signs of abuse. They listen to pupils and take their concerns seriously.
- The curriculum is responsive to pupils' needs and helps to protect them from local risks, for example extremism and gang violence. Pupils understand these risks and know how to keep themselves safe, including online.
- Pupils say they feel safe in the school and trust the adults in the school to help them if they were worried or concerned.
- The independent school standards for pupils' welfare, health and safety are met well. The safeguarding policy is available on the school's website.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The quality of teaching across the three sites is consistently good. Teachers are supported well to understand how to cater for pupils' wide-ranging needs and abilities.
- Teachers are knowledgeable about their subject and skilfully break down key learning points to help pupils of different abilities understand. They use a range of stimulating resources to engage pupils.
- The most effective aspect of teachers' skills is the ability to 'bring round' disengaged pupils. They do this because they know the pupils' strengths and weaknesses well and plan appropriate tasks to manage the range of possible situations.
- Teaching assistants are very effective. They know the curriculum objectives well and also know how to motivate and engage pupils. They ask questions to help pupils think and make progress. They are firm but fair. They de-escalate incidents of poor behaviour and help pupils to get back on track, be positive and reflect on the impact of their behaviour.
- Teachers develop pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding well. For example, they help pupils to discuss and debate key issues in current affairs, such as gun crime in America and racism in society.
- Teachers promote British values effectively. They use tutor time to promote pupils' rights and responsibilities in a democratic society. Pupils' 'log books' demonstrate that a wide range of topics is used to develop their wider responsibilities in society. For example, pupils planned a campaign to protest about an issue about which they felt strongly. They wrote letters to local councillors and MPs. By so doing, they learned essential democratic and peaceful protesting skills.
- Teachers teach basic skills effectively. They make learning interesting and, consequently, pupils achieve well. In some lessons, especially at key stage 3, pupils do not practise their extended writing skills often enough. For some pupils, their written responses to questions are often short and staff do not encourage them sufficiently to respond at greater length or to practise their writing skills more frequently in subjects other than English. This limits the progress these pupils make in developing their writing skills.
- Teachers' use of assessments is effective. They review previous learning and use assessment tasks well to plan the next steps for pupils' learning. Pupils' individual learning plans, which are completed by teachers each half term, are helpful for pupils and parents. The school's data tracker allows teachers to provide extra support when pupils are in danger of not meeting their targets.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are taught a range of skills to support their personal development. These include learning how to keep safe on the internet, understanding the risks around child sexual exploitation, and how to avoid being drawn into extremist groups and gangs. Pupils' interviews during the inspection and testimonials from agencies, who delivered workshops

for the pupils, show that pupils know and understand these issues well and that they respond maturely.

- There are few incidents of bullying. This is testament to the effectiveness of the school's work around this issue.
- Pupils develop a sound understanding of cultures and communities other than their own. Pupils engaged well in a recent workshop delivered by the Refugee Council. The school is successful in helping to break down barriers, and staff challenge pupils' sometimes inaccurate perceptions of those different to themselves. Incidents of prejudice-based behaviour are declining.
- Pupils become increasingly self-confident and assume more responsibility for their behaviour, as a result of the staff's effective work to understand each pupil's personal and behavioural needs.
- Pupils also learn about how to lead healthy lives, physically and nutritionally. Pupils partake in sport and physical activity regularly. During sport lessons at key stage 4, they learn about the important components of a healthy body. During food technology lessons, pupils develop a good understanding of the essential requirements of a healthy diet.
- Pupils are encouraged to engage with the local businesses and the community. Each year they participate in a citizenship advocacy project, Macmillan charity fundraising days and a local nursing home activities day. As a result, pupils learn about the importance of their contribution and responsibilities towards society.
- The school's work to improve pupils' mental health is not well embedded across the school. Leaders have drawn on the support of specialists locally, but some pupils' mental health needs have not been met consistently at all three sites. Pupils' understanding of how to strengthen their mental health and staff's confidence to help them are variable.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils improve their behaviour quickly after starting at the school, as a result of the school's skilled work to prevent incidents escalating and helping pupils to recognise the triggers for poor behaviour.
- Previous high rates of exclusions have not been repeated. Teachers use praise effectively to re-engage pupils and build their confidence. Pupils appreciate the firm boundaries. They are respectful of the adults around them. When there are occasional lapses in behaviour, pupils often apologise and reflect on how they can improve. Pupils respond positively to their teachers and key workers. The vast majority are respectful and cooperative.
- Pupils' attendance is improving quickly. A small proportion of pupils do not attend school regularly enough. While the attendance team at Manchester PRU is well aware of these pupils and circumstances, current work to improve their attendance has not always been effective. Plans to develop better relationships with families and increased incentives for pupils are currently being implemented. There are early signs that, for some pupils, attendance to school is improving.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils' attainment by the end of key stage 4, across all subjects, has improved significantly since the last inspection. In Year 9, most pupils acquire basic skills in line with their age, stage and ability.
- Pupils arrive at the school with low starting points. This is because they have often not attended school regularly due to a range of issues, usually related to their behaviour. Most pupils make good progress, especially in mathematics, English and science. Those who do not make rapid progress are often hampered by weak writing skills, especially at key stage 3.
- All pupils have some level of SEN and/or disabilities. Most pupils who have higher levels of additional needs make good progress once they have settled and receive the support they need. A small minority, particularly those who have more complex SEN and/or disabilities, do not make the progress they should because they require more specialist and long-term support, including for their mental health.
- The school's work to improve pupils' reading skills is making a difference. Creative writing workshops and innovative ranges of reading materials in English and other subjects have all contributed to pupils' good progress in reading and spelling. The current strategy to encourage the love of reading, including the creation at each site of a reading corner and book exchanges, is helping pupils to read more confidently and enjoy books.
- All pupils are entered for a range of qualifications other than English, mathematics and science. Most pupils perform well, in relation to their ability, in these non-exam-based courses in art, information technology, food technology and sport.
- A high proportion of pupils leave the school with qualifications which enable them to undertake meaningful post-16 courses or pathways. The majority of pupils last year went on to training, employment or education placements. The school also provides all pupils with one-to-one support from the charity's youth engagement workers after they leave the school.

School details

Unique reference number	136264
DfE registration number	352/6071
Inspection number	10043784

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Type of school	Other Independent School
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	13 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	49
Number of part-time pupils	3
Proprietor	Manchester Young Lives
Chair	Christopher Duncan
Headteacher	Paul Fletcher
Annual fees (day pupils)	£11,330
Telephone number	0161 437 5923
Website	www.manchesteryounglives.org.uk
Email address	schooloffice@manchesteryounglives.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	17 March 2015

Information about this school

- The school is part of Manchester Young Lives, a charitable organisation and company limited by guarantee. It was registered as an independent special day school in December 2010 for pupils between 13 and 16 years of age.
- The school is registered for 65 pupils. Currently, there are 48 pupils on roll.
- The school comprises three sites, which are several miles apart.
- There are 18 pupils at the Addy Centre in Wythenshawe, 13 at Moss Side and 18 at the Ardwick centre.

- Most pupils are from White British heritages.
- The school provides for pupils who are at risk of exclusion from their home school or who have been permanently excluded. All pupils have behavioural, emotional and/or social difficulties, often with associated learning difficulties.
- All pupils are referred via the Manchester Secondary Pupil Referral Unit.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision for its pupils.
- At the time of the inspection, there was one pupil on roll with an education, health and care plan. All pupils have SEN and/or disabilities. Nearly half the pupils have more complex SEN.
- The school aims to 'support young people in the completion of their secondary education, and in taking the next steps to further learning and employment'. In addition, it aims to offer 'support and guidance for non-attenders and vulnerable pupils, who are the subject of multi-agency concern...; an open and focused pastoral environment for young people'.
- The school was last inspected in March 2015.

Information about this inspection

- Provision was observed at each of the school's three sites. The inspector observed pupils' learning in six lessons and scrutinised samples of pupils' work in different subjects.
- Meetings were held with representatives from the trust, the headteacher, deputy headteacher, and leaders responsible for behaviour management and the curriculum, and the finance manager. Discussions were also held with other staff, including centre managers. Pupils at each site were interviewed. The inspector spoke by telephone with the head of secondary provision at the Manchester Pupil Referral Unit.
- School documents were examined in order to check compliance with the independent school standards. These included the school's policies and information about pupils' progress and the curriculum. Records relating to welfare, health, safety, safeguarding, behaviour and attendance were also checked. The inspector took account of testimonials from agencies working with the school. The inspector also looked at the school's website.
- There were not enough responses to the online Parent View survey for these to be analysed. Parents were invited to speak with the inspector but none took up the offer. The inspector also took account of 17 staff questionnaires and the school's own surveys and 25 responses from the online survey from pupils.

Inspection team

Zarina Connolly, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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