

Harpurhey Alternative Provision School

979–981 Rochdale Road, Manchester, Lancashire M9 8AE

Inspection dates

6–8 December 2016

Overall effectiveness	Inadequate
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Inadequate
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Inadequate
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Staff absences and unfilled vacancies have left the school with staffing shortages this term. This has limited the school's capacity to improve quickly enough.
- Between lessons and breaktimes, behaviour deteriorates. At these points, staff capacity to manage pupils' behaviour is stretched.
- Governors have not ensured that performance management is fully embedded and the roles and responsibilities of leaders and other staff are not clearly defined.
- Some of the school's policies, including those relating to behaviour, are not consistently applied.
- Most-able pupils are not sufficiently challenged. The questions the teachers ask do not always encourage pupils to think deeply and develop their reasoning skills.
- Pupils, including the most able, do not make consistently good progress, particularly in key stage 3. Too much of teachers' time is spent supporting pupils who are too easily distracted and this stops others from learning.

The school has the following strengths

- Leaders have accurately judged the school's performance. A robust evidence base supports this. They are aware of the school's strengths and recognise what needs to be improved.
- Leaders have secured improvements in the quality of teaching and learning and the progress pupils make, especially in English and mathematics.
- Impressive personal commitment from staff, strong teamwork and dedication ensure that the school continues to grow and the opportunities for pupils are improved.
- Leaders have developed useful tools to assess and track the progress of pupils. These allow leaders and teachers to analyse performance across the school.
- The teaching and learning of art is a strength. Pupils' enjoyment and growing confidence is demonstrated in the high-quality work that takes pride of place around the school.
- Staff are successful in helping pupils to improve their attendance and remain in school. Adults foster excellent relationships with very vulnerable pupils and help them to settle quickly and feel safe.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school must take action to meet the requirements of the schedule to The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 and associated requirements. The details are listed in the full report.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and governance by:
 - increasing the school's capacity to drive improvements in the management of pupils' behaviour
 - implementing a systematic review of the school's current policies, practices and procedures for the personal development, behaviour and welfare of pupils to ensure that they are consistently implemented and lead to improvements in pupil progress and attitudes to learning
 - clarifying the roles and responsibilities of leaders and other staff so that there is a collective understanding of what each is expected to do and an understanding of where there are gaps
 - improving performance management arrangements and ensuring that these are rigorous in monitoring the quality of teaching, learning and management of pupils' behaviour and lead to improved outcomes for pupils
 - ensuring that governors deploy staff effectively to provide appropriate support for individual pupils when they need it most.
- Improve pupils' behaviour, social skills and academic progress by:
 - ensuring that adults consistently apply the school's behaviour policy so that unacceptable behaviour is quickly and effectively challenged and pupils understand the consequences of their actions
 - supporting pupils to develop resilience and the skills to react positively to problems they may encounter socially or in their academic work.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by:
 - ensuring that staff have the support they need to teach without interruptions to learning
 - raising expectations of what pupils, including the most able, are capable of achieving and providing them with suitably challenging work.

The school must meet the following independent school standards

- Ensure that pupils are properly supervised through the appropriate deployment of school staff (paragraph 14).
- Ensure that the teaching at the school utilises effective strategies for managing behaviour and encouraging pupils to act responsibly (paragraph 3 (3)(h)).
- Ensure that persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role, and fulfil their responsibilities effectively, so that the independent school standards are met consistently, and actively promote the well-being of pupils (paragraphs 34(1), 34(1)(a), 34(1)(b), 34(1)(c)).

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Inadequate

- Leaders' time is often absorbed dealing with the challenging behaviour of some pupils. In addition, leaders have taken on extra responsibilities due to staffing shortages. This means they do not always have sufficient time to enable them to carry out other leadership roles effectively and this slows down the progress that they are trying to make. For example, the introduction of more rigorous performance management procedures has been delayed.
- The school opened in 2015 and a new headteacher and deputy headteacher were appointed in September 2016. They quickly recognised that significant changes were needed to the school's curriculum, teaching and learning policies and assessment procedures. They have successfully focused their attention on making significant improvements in these areas. Though not yet embedded, teachers' planning and the tracking of pupils' progress show that these systems are beginning to have a positive impact on pupils' learning.
- Leaders are able to make the changes needed to improve behaviour. They know what needs to be done and plans for improvement show how this will be achieved.
- The headteacher engenders good relations and teamwork among the staff. Both he and the newly appointed deputy headteacher have a vision for the school but have not yet had sufficient time to implement this. Leaders have ambitions for what they want to achieve. Recent developments to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment are showing early signs of moving the school forward.
- Leaders have gathered evidence to evaluate the school's effectiveness accurately. They show a strong commitment to learn from their own self-evaluation and feedback from others. This honest view of the school's current position means that leaders' ambitious plans for improvement are sharply focused.
- Leaders recognise that the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and the progress that pupils make is better in key stage 4 than in key stage 3.
- The curriculum provides pupils with a wide range of experiences and supports them to achieve at least five GCSEs at the end of key stage 4.
- Pupils learn about British values, democracy and the rule of law through many areas of the curriculum. An artistic exhibition of poetry and sculpture relating to Armistice Day helps pupils to develop empathy and understanding of the cost of freedom today.
- The school actively promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding. For example in art, an exhibition of creative work relating to female artists such as Keren Benetti and Keli Sim DeRitis celebrates the cultural contribution of women across the world.
- Leaders take preventative steps to make sure that pupils are well informed about potential risks from harm. External professionals are engaged to teach pupils the dangers of drug- and gang-related involvement as well as health awareness and fire safety.
- Regular outages in internet and phone access and the support available to the school in managing the information and communication technology (ICT) infrastructure is a

constant source of frustration to staff in using new technologies to support learning. The school have limited control over this service which is supplied by an external provider.

Governance

- Governors have not ensured that performance management is used routinely to hold staff to account. Some roles and responsibilities are not clearly defined. For example, many staff still defer to the proprietor to make decisions rather than the headteacher. The roles of the special educational needs coordinator and subject leaders for mathematics and English are not clear.
- Governors have not responded quickly enough to the impact that staffing shortages are having on the school's ability to manage pupils' behaviour and on the well-being of staff. On occasions, insufficient flexibility within the staffing structure means behaviour deteriorates outside of the classroom.
- Governors are deeply committed to the school. They are very involved in the day-to-day life of school and are keen to seek continuous improvements. Governors give up their time and feel honoured to be part of the school community.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The leadership team has ensured that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed. The safeguarding policy is appropriate. Vetting and appointment procedures for new staff are rigorous and all staff are required to take part in safeguarding training frequently. This ensures that staff are well prepared to keep pupils safe.
- All staff demonstrate a strong commitment to keeping pupils safe by listening to them and taking steps to ensure that concerns are addressed. The staff work with many other agencies and services to provide the help needed by some vulnerable pupils and their families. For example, the child and adolescent mental health services help pupils suffering with depression and the youth offending service help to prevent youth reoffending. Consequently, pupils feel well supported.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Sometimes, teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are too low. In science, pupils who readily grasp an idea or concept do not have sufficient opportunities to deepen or extend their knowledge and understanding through discussion or to carry out practical investigations.
- In some lessons, teachers' questions do not always encourage deeper thinking. Work in pupils' books, especially in key stage 3, shows an over reliance on worksheets, reducing pupils' opportunities to develop handwriting skills or to write at length.
- Occasionally, when pupils lose concentration they can distract others and impact upon their learning. This takes teachers' time away from the class to focus on an individual and the pace of the lesson slows.
- Pupils' speaking and listening skills are not developed well enough. Some pupils are

reluctant to engage in discussions and debate ideas while others can dominate the classroom.

- Staff are highly committed and eager to learn but some are inexperienced in dealing with pupils with challenging behaviour. Leaders say that staff absence due to stress is not uncommon.
- Staff work extremely hard to develop positive relationships with pupils. When this is most effective, it enables pupils to feel comfortable and confident discussing difficult issues. As a result, pupils begin to develop self-esteem.
- Pupils' behaviour in lessons is mostly managed well because pupils enjoy what they are learning. Adults work very hard to prepare and plan lessons to suit pupils' different needs and abilities.
- Well-thought-out assessment criteria help pupils understand how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. The school's 'flight path' assessment and tracking system provides pupils with ambitious goals and useful information as to how to achieve these.
- When teaching is strong, teachers talk with pupils about their work and how to improve it as well as marking their books and giving them challenges to do better. This is particularly productive in mathematics and English. Work in lessons and in books shows that pupils are beginning to concentrate for longer periods, take pride in the presentation of their work and are making rapid progress from their often low starting points.
- The teaching of art is a strength of the school. The teachers' plans and practice reflect a deep understanding of and familiarity with how to develop pupils' appreciation and enjoyment of art. Work on display around the school and in the art room shows that pupils make very good progress in this area. Levels of engagement in lessons are high and pupils are beginning to develop resilience as learners. Pupils are not afraid to 'have a go' at using unfamiliar media and equipment.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Inadequate

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- Pupils' attitudes to their learning are improving but for a small minority they are not consistent. The unpredictable behaviour of this group means that their learning is disrupted at times and this impacts upon the progress of others.
- In discussions, pupils show that they understand the difference between right and wrong. They know and appreciate that the school helps them to understand this better. However, in practice, pupils' behaviour can deteriorate when they are not closely supervised and demonstrates that this is not fully embedded.
- Staff are successful in helping pupils develop an understanding of social and moral issues. In an English lesson, pupils learned that social class systems in this country and others generally have an impact upon the opportunities people have in life. Using themes from the film 'Billy Elliot', they are also taught to understand that perseverance can help

overcome social barriers.

- Within school, pupils have a voice that is heard and this demonstrates to them how democracy works. They appreciate the ability to influence change. The school council has been successful in reintroducing mobile phones under strict guidelines and making changes to the timetable to improve punctuality.
- Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe. For example, in sexual health and relationships education they are taught about the legal issues relating to sexual health and practice. This helps develop an appreciation of the rule of law and how individual citizens can take responsibility for their own well-being and safety.
- Pupils speak very positively about the support they receive. When asked what the best thing about their school was, they unanimously agreed that it was the staff. Pupils' growing confidence and increasing self-esteem is tribute to the dedication and hard work of the committed staff team.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is inadequate.
- The vast majority of pupils arrive at school with significant weaknesses in their ability to manage their own emotions and behaviour. Their social skills are also weak. Behaviour changes outside of the classroom and pupils routinely shout at each other and occasionally at staff. At times of transition in the school day behaviour declines with swearing commonplace. Pupils understand that this is wrong and some will apologise but many do not yet have the skills to regulate this behaviour. Levels of supervision are insufficient to ensure that staff can tackle all of these incidents consistently and promptly.
- Some pupils do not yet understand the impact of their behaviour. An example featured at the time of the inspection was during a fire drill. Pupils did not respond to adult instructions quickly enough.
- Procedures to manage unacceptable behaviour are not clear enough. Too often pupils leave the classrooms and wander in school corridors at will. When this happens, staff keep pupils safe but have little impact on them modifying their behaviour.
- The school successfully gathers a wide range of information when pupils enter the school. However, they do not always use it well enough to develop personalised plans and programmes to help pupils understand what they need to do to improve.
- Many pupils have significant emotional and mental health problems. There are too few opportunities for pupils to have the time and attention to help learn more appropriate ways to regulate their own behaviour.
- Although overall attendance is well below what is expected, the school is very successful in making rapid improvements in the attendance rates of many pupils. On average, attendance increases by 10%, and for individual pupils this can be much higher. It is not unusual for pupils who had refused to attend at all in their previous school to have an attendance rate of 95%. This success is due to the effective pastoral arrangements that school leaders make to support pupils. Staff ensure that everything possible is done to support pupils into school. This can include visiting the family home to transport pupils directly or changing timetables to suit individual pupils.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Outcomes for pupils are not yet consistently good. Progress for some pupils is hampered by their inability to manage their behaviour. However, many pupils do grow in confidence, improve their attendance and learn to regulate their behaviour. The frequency of some pupils' emotional outbursts reduces over time and this enables them to be ready to learn and not to distract others from their learning.
- Most pupils make appropriate progress in their studies, but often they have a lot of catching up to do. Pupils generally join the school with big gaps in their education resulting in mathematical and English knowledge, skills and understanding below those expected for their age. Many of the pupils have previously been out of education for long periods of up to 18 months and some have been excluded from other schools.
- Since September, leaders have concentrated on establishing important assessment principles and systems. Pupils are thoroughly assessed in all areas of academic learning when they arrive. This information is used to target the amount of progress each pupil is expected to make so that they can catch up. Systems are in place to support teachers to use this information to help pupils make the rapid progress they need. Leaders track this information every half term and extra support is provided.
- However, the same rigour has not yet been applied to assessing pupils' behavioural needs and their attitudes to learning. This means that the support is not as carefully targeted at improving those behaviours that will help pupils make better progress. School leaders intend to introduce individual behaviour plans imminently.
- Harpurhey School is starting to have a positive impact on pupils' academic outcomes and to increase the rate of progress that pupils make. Results in examinations show that GCSE pass rates improved by almost six percentage points from the previous year and the percentage of pupils achieving a grade A* to C in GCSE increased by over 11 percentage points. The number of pupils achieving five or more GCSEs, or equivalent examinations, increased by 40 percentage points from 2015. This means that 85% of pupils achieved five or more GCSEs at the end of key stage 4.
- Pupils are offered careers advice from the behaviour manager who also brings in staff from local colleges to talk to them. For the vast majority of pupils the destinations they choose after Harpurhey School are positive next steps. All but two pupils went on to further education colleges in 2016.
- The introduction of a compulsory GCSE in preparation for working life is providing additional support for pupils this academic year. As a result, pupils' aspirations are rising. In 2016 no pupils went on to do A levels. At the end of this school year three pupils are expected to take A-level courses.
- For some pupils, one outcome they want to achieve is to get back to mainstream school. Pupils know the school works hard with them to achieve this, but some pupils do not want to risk going back to mainstream school because they are enjoying success for the first time.

School details

Unique reference number	141680
DfE registration number	352/6010
Inspection number	10006309

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	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	55
Number of part-time pupils	1
Proprietor	Manchester Collegiate Educational Trust
Chair	Mr T McDonough
Headteacher	Mr G Stringman
Annual fees (day pupils)	£11,000
Telephone number	0161 920 3399
Website	Under construction
Email address	g.stringman@haps.manchester.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Harpurhey Alternative Provision School opened in 2015.
- The proprietor was previously the headteacher and is still employed by the school in a part-time leadership role. He was also principal of the predecessor school (Manchester Alternative Provision Academy) which closed in August 2014. He then became the proprietor and principal of the current school.
- A new headteacher and deputy headteacher were appointed in September 2016.
- The provision draws its pupils from seven neighbouring schools.

- Harpurhey Alternative Provision School is an active participant in the North Manchester Behaviour and Attendance Partnership.

Information about this inspection

- Meetings were held with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the executive headteacher and the chair of governors.
- Discussions were held with the pastoral and behaviour managers as well as the school's administrator.
- The inspector observed learning in lessons and around the school.
- The inspector analysed pupils' work in books and files.
- The inspector spoke with pupils and staff to gather their view of the school.
- The inspector observed the school's work and scrutinised information about achievement, behaviour and attendance. The inspector also looked at a wide range of documents and records relating to safeguarding, self-evaluation and the monitoring of teaching and learning.
- The inspector took account of feedback from staff surveys and from records kept by the school.
- Two parents responded to Parent View.

Inspection team

Cathy Parkinson, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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