

# Harpurhey Alternative Provision School

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

## Inspection dates

13–15 November 2018

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
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	Inadequate

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- The school improvement plans lack precision. They do not state clearly enough what the school needs to do to improve.
- The good practice in the school, and in partner schools, is not consistently shared.
- The performance of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is not closely monitored.
- Some teachers do not routinely follow the school's policy to use information on pupils' progress to plan teaching activities.
- Too few opportunities are available for pupils to carry out independent research.
- Pupils rarely read for pleasure and have a limited knowledge of the work of different authors.
- Although senior leaders check the performance of all staff, they do not ensure that staff are held to account enough for the progress and attainment of the pupils that they teach.
- Senior leaders' advice to teachers on how to improve is not precise enough to ensure consistently good teaching practice.

### The school has the following strengths

- Harpurhey is a rapidly improving school, which is well led by the new headteacher and the proprietor. Governors are increasingly holding leaders to account. Staff morale and commitment to helping pupils achieve is high.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school; their attendance and behaviour are improving. Pupils say they feel safe and there is no bullying at school.
- Pupils' GCSE grades in English, mathematics, art and science are improving.
- Teachers have secure subject knowledge. They make learning interesting and have good relationships with pupils.
- Parents and carers are very complimentary about the school, which they say keeps their children safe and engaged in learning. Pastoral support and community links are strong.
- Partners, including local schools and pupil referral unit, say the school is responsive to pupils' needs and provides good value for money.

### 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?

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning, by:
  - enhancing pupils' ability to engage in research, use technology and find things out for themselves
  - encouraging pupils to read for pleasure and develop an appreciation of the work of different authors
  - ensuring that teachers routinely use information on pupils' progress to plan and teach activities in line with school policy.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management, by:
  - sharpening improvement plans, clearly identifying what the school needs to do to further improve
  - providing more opportunities for staff to learn from good practice across the school and from other schools and education partnerships
  - reviewing and monitoring the performance of pupils with SEND, including those with education, health and care (EHC) plans
  - providing clear guidance to teachers on how they can improve their practice
  - ensuring that teachers are held to account for the progress and attainment of pupils.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Requires improvement

- The leadership and management of the school require improvement because procedures for monitoring the quality of teaching and holding staff to account for pupils' personal, social and academic development are not as precise as they should be. In addition, school improvement plans, including senior leaders' evaluation of the school's strengths and weaknesses, lack clarity.
- The new headteacher, supported and mentored by the proprietor, also the chair of the governing body, is highly determined and committed to moving the school forward. Together with the capable senior leadership team and governors, he has addressed almost all areas for improvement identified at the time of the previous inspection.
- Senior leaders know that teaching is improving. They also know teachers' strengths. However, advice to teachers on how they can improve their practice is not precise enough to move teachers on at the rate necessary to ensure that all teaching is consistently good.
- Procedures are in place to check the performance of staff, including teachers, teaching assistants and senior leaders. Staff are not held closely enough to account for pupils' academic performance and personal, social and emotional well-being. In addition, specialised training to further their understanding of conditions, such as autism spectrum disorder and dyslexia, which affect pupils' behaviour and learning, is limited. While there is good teaching practice in the school, this is infrequently shared.
- Senior staff are beginning to work with specialists in partner schools, including those with expertise in working with pupils with SEND. However, procedures for monitoring the performance of such pupils are not fully developed. Procedures for assessing pupils' skills on entry to the school are improving, establishing pupils' skills in a wide range of areas including, speaking, listening, language and communication.
- Leaders have been particularly successful in improving pupils' behaviour and outcomes at the end of key stage 4. They are ambitious, capable and determined to continually improve the school. Together with governors and the proprietor, the senior leadership team works effectively to ensure that all independent school standards are met.
- Staff morale is very high. All staff who spoke with the inspector, and those who completed the inspection questionnaire, said they are proud to work at the school. Typically, staff commented, 'I feel valued and motivated', 'we work in a very challenging environment but are exceptionally well supported by senior leaders' and 'leaders help us to give positive experiences to our young people'.
- Pupils benefit from a widening curriculum, which they find stimulating and relevant. Teachers make learning interesting by linking it to local events, such as the Battle of Stamford Bridge and terror threats in Manchester. Leaders promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Pupils have a developing understanding of the consequences of their actions and the impact of anti-social behaviour on communities. They learn about the rule of law and social responsibility through the citizenship aspects of the curriculum. Pupils enjoy visiting the theatre and local museums. Several pupils are members of the local boxing club.
- Pupils have a good understanding of British values, observe occasions such as

Remembrance Day and appreciate the culturally diverse nature of British society. Pupils know what democracy is. They learn about active citizenship and political activities, such as campaigning and voting.

- Parents speak very highly of the school, typically indicating that their children's behaviour improves dramatically after they start at the school. Parents who spoke with the inspector commented, 'my child's behaviour was good at Harpurhey, it wasn't at school' and 'the school is much better than I thought it would be, communication is good, and my child really enjoys learning'.
- Representatives from partner schools and the pupil referral unit feel that the school offers good value for money, leaders are responsive, and provision has significantly improved over the last year. They are happy that pupils are well looked after, safe and engaged in learning. Partners indicate that the school is increasingly 'outward facing' as senior leaders and teachers start to work with specialists in English, special educational needs and health and welfare.

## **Governance**

- Governors' effectiveness is improving as they increasingly hold senior leaders to account. The proprietor is knowledgeable, works at the school and knows that leadership and pupils' behaviour, attendance and achievement are all improving. The proprietor provides useful advice and guidance to staff and has helped senior leaders to improve the school.
- All governors know there is more to be done to improve the quality of teaching, planning procedures and staff performance. Senior leaders regularly meet with governors and report on their work. Governors say that the information they receive from senior leaders is improving. However, governors are not as well informed as they should be because the reports provided by senior leaders are not fully comprehensive. Data analysis does not clearly indicate how different groups of pupils are performing.
- All governors have had appropriate safeguarding training; they come into the school to meet with teachers and talk with pupils about their learning. Governors increasingly ask pertinent questions and require senior leaders to provide clear evidence that the school is moving forward.

## **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Effective systems are in place to record any concerns raised by staff. All concerns are reported quickly to appropriate authorities and parents as necessary. Designated safeguarding leads are trained to a high standard. They know how to spot signs of neglect and/or abuse. All checks are made on the suitability of staff to ensure that they are suitable to work with children.
- The safeguarding policy is current and available on the school's website. Staff are familiar with the school's policies and government guidelines, including the latest guidance on keeping children safe in education. All staff have had 'Prevent' duty training, which is in keeping with the government's guidelines to counter terrorism and radicalisation.
- Pupils trust staff and have strong bonds with them. This helps to ensure pupils' confidence to disclose any concerns they may have. Staff understand the potential

dangers which vulnerable pupils face and are familiar with the detailed risk assessments drawn up for each pupil, the school premises and educational visits.

- There is a positive culture of safeguarding in the school. Leaders work effectively with parents and outside agencies to keep pupils safe and secure.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

## Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching has improved since the previous inspection. However, too few opportunities are given to pupils to engage in research, use technology and find things out for themselves. This is especially the case for the most able pupils who complete quickly their work in English and mathematics. Too often, additional work does not require pupils to think deeply about their learning. For example, opportunities are sometimes missed for pupils to develop their practical skills in using computers and their investigation skills.
- Teachers often focus on developing pupils' confidence and fluency in reading. This was evident in key stage 3, where pupils develop their vocabulary and appreciation of literacy techniques, such as alliteration and onomatopoeia. Pupils are encouraged to read texts and identify powerful words and interesting adjectives. However, pupils are rarely encouraged to read for pleasure and have a limited appreciation of the work of different authors.
- Some teachers do not routinely use information on pupils' prior performance to plan teaching activities. Where this is the case, groups of pupils, including the most able and those with SEND, do not make the good progress of which they are capable.
- Teaching in science is strong. This was evident in key stage 4, where pupils engage in different practical investigations. Pupils enjoyed estimating the weight of various small cubes made of different materials including copper, wood, plastic and lead, before weighing them. Pupils then worked out the volume of the cubes, while others considered the density of various materials and how to calculate the volume of irregular shapes.
- Teachers make learning interesting. This was evident during the inspection when pupils were learning about Britain's most notorious serial killers. All pupils, including those who found it difficult to engage in learning for long periods, could explain what they were learning, linking it to contemporary issues, such as knife and gun crime in the community. The teacher's and teaching assistant's skilful management of behaviour helped them to spot and divert potentially disruptive behaviour, without interrupting the smooth flow of the session.
- Teachers' good questioning skills and the positive relationship that staff have with pupils help pupils to stay engaged and interested. Teachers are not afraid to alter activities to tackle misapprehensions, or simplify tasks when pupils find aspects of learning difficult. This was evident during the inspection when pupils were finding it difficult to draw 'free hand' sweet peppers (capsicums). The teacher suggested to some pupils that they try to make a collage. As a result, pupils produced excellent collages, using papers of different textures and colours, as well as well-executed pencil drawings.
- Most teachers have sound subject knowledge. Pupils make good gains in their learning when they are challenged. This was evident in key stage 4 mathematics where pupils were taking out common factors from algebraic expression to produce answers. Pupils

enjoyed factorising increasingly complicated expressions and finding common factors in given numbers. The most able pupils were fully challenged. The teacher's good rapport with pupils and high praise helped to ensure that pupils stayed on task and enjoyed learning.

- Teachers adhere to the school's feedback and assessment policy. The content of workbooks is improving, including those of pupils still developing their basic writing, grammar, punctuation and spelling skills. Some books contain thoughtful creative writing and carefully presented mathematics work.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

## Requires improvement

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- Pupils are learning to appreciate that there are always consequences to their actions, particularly when interacting with others, but this is not yet consistent across the school. The school's restorative approach to ensuring good relations between pupils is effective, providing opportunities for pupils to discuss their feelings and consider how they make others feel.
- Pupils benefit from independent careers advice. They are supported with writing personal statements (curriculum vitae) and developing interview techniques. Pupils are encouraged to attend various events, including job fairs, employer recruitment events, and 'boxing and employability' sessions.
- Well-established arrangements are in place to support pupils' transition into mainstream schools. Of those who left the school at the end of Year 11 in 2018, 98% went into either further education, employment or training.
- Pupils increasingly persevere with their work, even if they find it difficult. Some pupils are beginning to develop their resilience to failure and the ability to learn from their mistakes. Parents who spoke with the inspector were amazed at their children's achievements, recognising the good work the school does to engage pupils in learning and improve their attendance.
- Pupils are learning to channel their ideas positively and express their views democratically, although a minority of pupils are not doing this as successfully as others. Pupils make suggestions in relation to rewards for good behaviour and school trips. In Harpurhey, pupils value their 'achievement rewards' highly. Time is set aside on Friday to reward pupils for their good behaviour and work in class. Rewards include trips to the theatre, sports centre, boxing club and the local trampoline park.
- Pupils know what bullying is and say that it rarely happens. They learn about racism and homophobic bullying, through the personal, social, health and citizenship aspects of the curriculum. Pupils know it is wrong to treat someone differently because of the colour of their skin, religion or place of origin.
- Pupils know how to stay safe when using the internet, which is limited and monitored in the school. Pupils know they should take care when accessing websites, chat rooms and social-media sites.

- Pupils know about the dangers of illegal drugs, tobacco and alcohol. They appreciate the importance of healthy eating and regular exercise and how these contribute to effective learning. Pupils learn about sexual health and contraception. In addition, the school works with a range of partners, including the police, social services, sexual health services and children's and adolescent mental health services. This ensures that the school liaison officer has a good overview of all aspects of pupils' personal development and welfare.

## **Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Almost all pupils were well behaved during the inspection. Pupils are increasingly realising that Harpurhey is likely to be their last opportunity to behave properly, 'knuckle down' and reach their potential.
- The school's behaviour log shows that behaviour requires improvement over time. There is physical evidence that pupils have previously taken their frustration out on school buildings and premises. They have not always been respectful to staff. However, the school has reached a turning point. Strong leadership, a consistent approach to managing pupils' behaviour and highly effective rewards and sanctions procedures are all helping to modify pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning.
- Staff, governors and representatives from schools are of the view that behaviour has improved since the previous inspection. Parents say that behaviour is good.
- The headteacher's decision to stagger the beginning and end of the school day, so that key stage 3 and 4 pupils start and end their learning at different times, has improved behaviour and reduced conflicts. The new breakfast club provides an excellent start to the school day for key stage 3 pupils. Here they can eat a healthy breakfast, catch up with their friends and discuss any concerns with staff.
- School records show that exclusions have reduced dramatically over the last two terms. Although well below average, attendance is improving. It improves for all pupils after they join the school. Pupils' attendance at Harpurhey is usually much better than in their previous schools. The pastoral leader is well known in the community. She makes home visits and works closely with attendance teams, including those in partner schools, and monitors individual pupils' attendance trends closely.
- Pupils behave sensibly at lunchtime, when they enjoy eating a healthy meal and talking with their peers and staff. Staff are available during breaktimes and between lessons to ensure that movement around the school is calm and orderly. No poor behaviour was observed during these times.
- Staff manage behaviour effectively. They know pupils well and understand each pupil's specific needs. This helps staff to quickly identify 'flash-points' and avoid situations in which pupils feel under pressure to respond to staff requests inappropriately.
- Early interventions by staff ensure that there is minimal disruption to pupils' learning. Pupils who have difficulty managing their own behaviour are learning to develop coping strategies. Where appropriate, pupils can request time out of lessons, when they can meet with the school's pastoral leader, who offers counselling and supports pupils back into lessons.
- Pupils who met with the inspector indicated that behaviour is much improved. Lessons are



no longer disrupted by pupils using mobile phones and/or inappropriate language. Pupils are insightful. All say that they have, 'come on really well' since being at the school. They were eager to let the inspector know that, 'we get lots of rewards and awards; our parents are really proud'. When asked how the school could be improved, pupils presented a unanimous voice and said, 'I wouldn't change the school for the world, it's like a second home.'

## Outcomes for pupils

## Requires improvement

- The progress made by pupils in subjects such as English, mathematics, science and art is directly related to the time they spend at the school. The longer pupils stay, the better their progress. The amount of time a pupil spends at the school is usually dictated by the contract Harpurhey has with a partner school or the Manchester pupil referral unit.
- Almost all pupils start school with skills and abilities below those expected for their age. The results of assessments of pupils' core skills, including speaking, listening, writing and mathematics, taken shortly after pupils are admitted, are providing increasingly useful baseline information for senior leaders and teachers. Such information helps staff to develop initial programmes of learning for pupils.
- A significant proportion of pupils have SEND, which adversely affect their academic, personal and social development. Senior leaders believe that some have learning difficulties which are yet to be diagnosed.
- At the time of the inspection, several pupils were being assessed by specialists, including educational psychologists, others were in the process of acquiring EHC plans. Procedures for monitoring the progress of such pupils, and other groups of pupils, are not as well developed as they should be. Leaders do not have a clear picture of the progress these pupils make.
- Pupils start school at various times during the academic year. Almost all have significant gaps in their learning. Some have been out of school for extended periods, others have attended school or a pupil referral unit on a part-time basis. Increasingly, such pupils are settling into learning, quickly gaining in confidence and refining their basic skills.
- Pupils' progress in writing is improving. Their books demonstrate a considerable depth of understanding in some subjects. For example, in English some pupils confidently write interesting accounts of Victorian England and life in the workhouse. While in history, pupils write about the events leading up to the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia and give their own accounts of Bloody Sunday, which they identify as a significant event in Irish history.
- The curriculum is still broadening. However, pupils can combine their mathematics, home economics and cooking skills on short courses such as, 'eat well for less'. Here, pupils budget, shop for ingredients and prepare healthy meals, such as chickpea and sweetcorn fritters and other dishes. Pupils canvas the views of their peers and families, who sample treats, and collect useful information on consumer preferences. Such courses help to develop pupils' independent living and communication skills.
- A small number of pupils attain highly at GCSE level in various subjects, including English, mathematics, science and art. In 2018 at the end of Year 11, around an eighth of the pupils attained five GCSEs, including in English and mathematics, at grades 4 to 9. All



pupils gained five GCSEs at grades 1 to 9. The proportion of pupils attaining GCSEs in 2018 was greater than in previous years.

- Pupils can also take short qualifications, improve their literacy and numeracy skills, and attain awards such as those accredited by the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network.
- Those who left the school at the end of Year 11 in 2018 were equipped well with the necessary skills for the next stage of their learning and nearly all went into either education, employment or training.

## School details

Unique reference number	141680
DfE registration number	352/6010
Inspection number	10053736

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	50
Proprietor and Chair	Colin Bell
Headteacher	James Bradley
Annual fees (day pupils)	£14,000
Telephone number	0161 6741681
Website	<a href="http://www.haps.manchester.sch.uk">www.haps.manchester.sch.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:j.bradley@haps.manchester.sch.uk">j.bradley@haps.manchester.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	6–8 December 2016

## Information about this school

- Harpurhey Alternative Provision School opened in 2015. It currently caters for 50 pupils, all of whom have either been permanently excluded from mainstream provision or are at risk of being excluded. The school works in partnership with eight local schools, and the Manchester pupil referral unit, from where it draws pupils.
- The school aims to reintegrate pupils back into mainstream provision. It is contracted to deliver an agreed curriculum, focusing on English, mathematics, science, physical education, history and art, for a specified period of time for each pupil. The school also caters for pupils' social, emotional, health and well-being needs, and delivers a citizenship programme of study.
- Most pupils are aged between 13 and 16. A large proportion have spent extended periods out of education. Almost all pupils are disadvantaged and a large proportion have SEND. However, the school is not in receipt of additional funding for such pupils.

- Since the previous inspection, a new headteacher has been appointed. The senior leadership team has been reorganised and several new members of staff, including three teachers, have joined the school.
- The school day has been restructured, with different start and finishing times for key stage 3 and 4 pupils. A breakfast club has recently been introduced for key stage 3 pupils.
- The proprietor is also the chair of the governing body. He supports and mentors the headteacher.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed learning in a range of subjects, including English and mathematics. All observations were made jointly with the headteacher. Pupils' work was scrutinised during observations and separately.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders, the proprietor and governors. The inspector met with a group of staff and considered 12 staff responses to the inspection questionnaire. Telephone conversations were held with parents and representatives from the pupil referral unit and local schools.
- The school's own surveys of parents' views were scrutinised. There were too few responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, to be considered. Formal and informal discussions were held with pupils throughout the course of the inspection.
- The inspector examined a range of documentary evidence. This included checks on the quality of teaching, safeguarding documentation, including risk assessments, various records of pupils' achievement, attendance and behaviour, development plans and the school's records and checks on the suitability of staff to work with children. In addition, the inspector scrutinised the school's development plans and reviews of its own performance.

## Inspection team

Lenford White, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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