

Inspection of Manchester Vocational and Learning Academy

19 Albert Road, Manchester M19 2EQ

Inspection dates: 26 to 28 November 2024

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
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Behaviour and attitudes	Good
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Personal development	Good
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Leadership and management	Good
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Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good
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Does the school meet the independent school standards?	Yes
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What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy attending this welcoming school. They value the time that staff take to get to know them as individuals. This helps pupils to build up trusting relationships that make them feel safe and happy in school. Positive relationships with staff and their classmates also create calm and purposeful classrooms.

Pupils are supported well to build up their self-esteem and to become increasingly confident. This stems from the high ambition that the school has for pupils' personal and academic development. Many pupils have had significant periods of time out of education. However, they soon begin to devote their attention to learning at this school. Pupils work hard and strive to meet the high expectations that the school has. They are keen to gain the qualifications that they need to be ready for the next stage of their education.

Pupils benefit from opportunities to take part in a range of trips. These include visiting museums, attending theatre productions and visiting the local park. They also have opportunities to take part in charitable work. For example, some pupils make bracelets, which they sell. They donate the proceeds of these sales to a charity of their choice.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

The school's curriculum plans and schemes of work identify the essential knowledge and vocabulary that pupils should learn and the order in which they should learn it. Typically, teachers use this information well to design learning activities that deepen pupils' knowledge. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) benefit from well-chosen resources that help them to access the same curriculum as their peers. All of this has been supported by high-quality staff training. However, in a small number of subjects, some learning activities do not support pupils to successfully build on what they already know. As a result, some pupils do not deepen their knowledge as well as they could in these subjects.

When pupils join the school, effective approaches help staff to identify any gaps in knowledge that pupils may have. This includes for those pupils with SEND. Some pupils join the school with gaps in their knowledge from the key stage 2 curriculum. Across many subjects, the school's curriculum considers this and provides information for teachers on what they should focus upon. That said, there are a small number of subjects where this curriculum information is not clear. As a result, some teachers are not sure what key knowledge they should prioritise when designing lessons. Consequently, some gaps in pupils' knowledge are not addressed as quickly as they could be.

The school has established systems to identify any weaknesses in pupils' reading knowledge, including phonics. Pupils benefit from additional lessons with staff that help them to improve their reading. The school ensures that pupils have access to a

wide range of books that capture their interests. These carefully selected books help pupils experience success and enjoyment when reading.

Behaviour across the school is positive and learning is rarely interrupted. Pupils who need extra support in managing their emotions are well supported by nurturing staff. Many pupils join the school having previously had high levels of absence. There are highly effective systems and processes in place that help many pupils rapidly improve their attendance. This allows them to benefit from the good quality of education that the school provides.

The school has developed a comprehensive personal, social, health and economic education programme which includes relationships and sex education. It reflects the school's ethos and values and pays regard to the protected characteristics as set out in the Equality Act 2010. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe online, including the appropriate use of social media. Local charities and community groups support pupils in understanding how to keep safe outside school.

The school has designed an appropriate impartial careers information, education, advice and guidance programme. For example, pupils learn about a broad range of careers and what courses are available to them at local colleges after they leave school.

The school has ensured that the education it provides has a positive impact on pupils. The proprietor is fully involved with the school. She has a clear oversight of the school's strengths and weaknesses and a secure understanding and knowledge of the independent school standards ('the standards'). The proprietor has ensured that these are consistently met, including compliance with schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010. Furthermore, the proprietor has appointed a local governing body. This provides effective support and challenge to the school.

Staff are positive about what the school does to support their workload and well-being. This includes measures that keep paperwork to a minimum. The school engages positively with parents and carers. Parents value the work that the school does to help their children re-engage with learning.

The school meets the health and safety and premises requirements of the standards. The building is maintained to a high standard and teaching spaces are bright, clean and well resourced. There is a safe outdoor area that pupils can spend time in at breaktimes.

Policies, including an effective safeguarding policy that meets the current statutory requirements, are made available to parents on the school's website and also on request.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve? (Information for the school and proprietor)

- In a small number of subjects, the curriculum does not account for the gaps that some pupils have in their knowledge. As a result, some teachers are not sure what key knowledge they should prioritise when designing learning. Consequently, gaps in some pupils' knowledge are not addressed as quickly as they could be. The school should finalise its curriculum thinking so that teachers are equipped to promptly identify and address gaps in pupils' knowledge.
- In some subjects, the school has not ensured that teachers have the knowledge they need to teach the intended curriculum effectively. Some of the learning activities that pupils complete do not enable them to learn the important knowledge as well as they could. The school should make sure that teachers have the knowledge they need to deliver the curriculum effectively, so that pupils achieve well.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

School details

Unique reference number	142224
DfE registration number	352/6011
Local authority	Manchester
Inspection number	10342103
Type of school	Other independent school
School category	Independent day school
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	29
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Mahfuza Aktar
Headteachers	Linda Guest and Mahfuza Aktar
Annual fees (day pupils)	£18,525 to £20,475
Telephone number	0161 2250567
Website	mvla.co.uk
Email address	head@mvla.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	10 to 12 December 2019

Information about this school

- The school is located at 19 Albert Road, Manchester M19 2EQ.
- The proprietor is also one of the co-headteachers.
- Pupils have dual registration. This means that they are registered with a mainstream school but attend Manchester Vocational and Learning Academy on a temporary basis to receive their education.
- Most pupils have behavioural and emotional needs.
- The school is registered to admit up to 45 pupils.
- The previous standard inspection took place from 10 to 12 December 2019. A material change inspection, commissioned by the Department for Education, took place on 11 November 2020.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

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

The school meets the independent school standards. These are the requirements set out in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors spoke with the proprietor, who is also one of the co-headteachers, the second co-headteacher, other school leaders and staff.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation, including those relating to the standards and the curriculum.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors: reviewed the single central record, took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. They also considered the responses to the Ofsted survey for staff. There were no responses to the Ofsted survey for pupils. However, inspectors spoke with a range of pupils during the inspection.

- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour at breaktime, lunchtime, in lessons and around the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, mathematics and history. They looked at curriculum plans, met leaders and teachers and visited a sample of lessons. Inspectors spoke with pupils about their learning in these subjects. They also considered the curriculum across some other subject areas and looked at examples of pupils' work.
- The lead inspector made a tour of the school premises to check the suitability of the premises and accommodation against the relevant standards.

Inspection team

David Robinson, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Gil Bourgade

Ofsted Inspector

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