

Manchester Vocational and Learning Academy Curriculum Plan 2026-2027

Mission Statement

Manchester Vocational and Learning Academy recognises that each student is an individual. We provide a nurturing, safe and stimulating environment in which learners are supported to achieve their full potential educationally, socially and emotionally.

Vision

At MVLA, students develop self-esteem and confidence as individuals. The school provides a range of opportunities to support students in achieving their goals through an inclusive curriculum that enables social, emotional and academic development.

We work in partnership with schools, parents and carers, and other professionals. It is our intention that as many students as possible return to mainstream education, or move on to appropriate further education or training, as quickly and successfully as possible.

Curriculum Principles

This curriculum plan reflects the requirements of the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, ensuring that the curriculum is written, effectively implemented, and supports students' academic and personal development.

The curriculum is designed to:

- Provide effective learning opportunities for all students
- Set suitable learning challenges
- Respond to diverse learning needs
- Remove barriers to learning
- Support students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

The curriculum includes the following areas of learning:

- Linguistic
- Mathematical
- Scientific
- Technological
- Human and social
- Physical
- Aesthetic and creative education

Personal and social development is at the core of the provision at MVLA, ensuring that students are prepared for life beyond formal education.

Aims

MVLA's aim is to:

- Engage students and raise their self-esteem
- Enable all students to have a positive experience of education
- Provide a broad and balanced curriculum that meets students' interests, aptitudes and needs
- Ensure progression in learning for all students
- Establish coherent links across the curriculum and key stages
- Support students to return to mainstream education or progress to appropriate destinations
- Ensure the curriculum supports future opportunities and successful transitions

Implementation

The curriculum is delivered through a flexible and personalised approach, reflecting the needs of students who may have experienced disrupted education.

This is achieved by:

- Providing a broad and balanced curriculum underpinned by personal development
- Delivering content appropriate to students' individual needs and starting points
- Offering bespoke support to facilitate access to learning
- Setting appropriate and challenging learning goals
- Developing independent learning skills and resilience
- Supporting students to understand how they learn and apply these skills across subjects
- Continuously evaluating and improving teaching and learning

Schemes of work are carefully sequenced to ensure that learning builds on prior knowledge and supports clear progression within and across subjects. Teaching staff carry out regular formative and summative assessments to identify and address gaps in learning.

Safeguarding and Personal Development

The curriculum supports safeguarding in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education by ensuring that students are taught about risks, including online safety, healthy relationships and how to seek help.

Relationships, Sex and Health Education is delivered in line with statutory guidance and forms part of the wider personal development curriculum, alongside PSHE, Citizenship and British values.

Students are also supported to develop an understanding of public services, including emergency services, democratic processes and community resources.

Curriculum Delivery

MVLA provides education for students aged 11 to 16 who are currently outside mainstream education. A flexible approach to curriculum delivery is essential in order to meet students' needs.

- Tuition is delivered individually or in small groups
- Groups may include students from different year groups
- Learning is carefully planned to match individual ability levels
- Programmes of study may be adapted across key stages where appropriate

Total teaching time is **19 hours and 35 minutes per week**. This reflects the personalised nature of provision and the needs of students who may require a more supported and structured approach to learning. Additional support, intervention and enrichment opportunities are available beyond core teaching hours.

Subject	Number of lessons
English (Language and Literature)	4
Mathematics	4
Science	4
Statistics	2
History	1
Citizenship/PSHE	3
Art/ creative learning	1
Physical Education	1
Daily discussions (tutor time)	5 x 15 minute sessions

Lessons are all 55 minutes in duration.

Additional opportunities include:

- Extra-curricular activities
- After-school academic support and revision
- Enrichment activities

Variations to the timetable are made to meet individual needs.

Curriculum by Subject

The following summary sets out the intent and structure of each area of the curriculum, drawn from the individual schemes of learning that inform day-to-day teaching.

English (Language and Literature)

English is delivered as a single programme combining English Language and English Literature rather than being delivered as two separate subjects. This means that reading, writing and analytical skills are always developed together. Key Stage 3 uses self-contained termly modules grouped into three broadly age and ability based bands, so that students joining or leaving at any point receive a complete unit of study. Key Stage 4 follows a continuous looping cycle of eight units aligned to the AQA GCSE specification, with texts also chosen wherever possible for compatibility with the OCR and Edexcel specifications used by referring schools. Students with significant literacy gaps are taught through a dedicated Functional Skills English pathway until they are ready to join the main programme.

Mathematics

The curriculum is built around the White Rose Maths mastery framework, which provides a coherently sequenced route through the national curriculum and clear checkpoints for assessing progress. The specialist mathematics teacher supplements the published scheme with bespoke materials suited to students' current needs, and retains oversight of mathematics provision across all groups, including any students receiving nurture group support, where more foundational content is delivered under specialist planning and guidance. Students who are not yet ready for GCSE study follow the AQA Functional Skills Mathematics pathway.

In addition to Maths lessons, students also receive additional exposure to Mathematical concepts through Statistics sessions.

Science

Key Stage 3 students study Biology, Chemistry and Physics as separate disciplines on a two-year rolling programme, allowing each unit to be completed in full before moving on. Students at MVLA rarely attend the school for more than two full years, but where there are any exceptions to this, measures will be put in place to ensure that students are not repeating content. The Key Stage 4 curriculum is designed to meet the requirements of the AQA GCSE Biology specification, with all content completed by Easter of Year 11 to allow time for structured revision before examinations. Practical observation and evidence-based reasoning are used throughout to develop students' ability to explain, predict and evaluate.

Statistics

A three-year Key Stage 3 programme builds core statistical literacy, including data handling, probability and the statistical enquiry cycle, before students move on to a two-year Key Stage 4 programme preparing them for the AQA GCSE Statistics Foundation tier, with extension material available for students working towards the Higher tier. Lessons make regular use of real-world data so that students see statistics as a tool for evidence-based decision-making.

History

A rolling three-year programme delivered largely through discussion-based lessons that develop students' ability to reason, weigh evidence and consider multiple perspectives. Topics include the First and Second World Wars, the Korean, Vietnam and Cold Wars, the

Civil Rights Movement, the history of medicine and public health, and early medieval Britain, with geographical skills, including map work and human and physical geography, woven into every topic. History is not currently offered as a GCSE at MVLA, although students wishing to take the qualification may access it through additional provision. Students rarely attend MVLA for more than three years in total, but provision would be made for any students who have to ensure that they are not repeating content already encountered.

Citizenship

Citizenship is taught as a six-term rolling cycle covering democracy and Parliament, rights and the legal system, life in modern Britain, government and the economy, global issues and human rights, and active citizenship, with the cycle repeated in greater depth for students who remain with the school for longer. Citizenship is offered as a full AQA GCSE, including the Non-Exam Assessment in which students research and carry out a genuine citizenship action.

PSHE

PSHE content is taught as rolling programme based on the PSHE Association model. This is delivered alongside Citizenship and daily discussion sessions as part of the overall personal development offer. Parallel Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 pathways cover the same themes at different levels of depth, with each set of students accessing age appropriate materials. Relationships and Sex Education is taught at least twice a year in every cycle to ensure statutory requirements are met, alongside wider health, wellbeing and safeguarding content.

Art

A three-year progressive programme covering drawing and line, colour and painting, and collage and mixed media, with each discipline revisited at increasing complexity across the three years. Sessions are mixed age, with differentiation built into every unit so that younger or less experienced students are supported and older or more able students are stretched, and artist references are drawn from a broad range of cultures, periods and traditions.

Physical Education

A three-year rolling cycle of football, cricket, rounders, circuit training and aerobic training, delivered to mixed age groups with older students taking on leadership, coaching and officiating roles as the cycle progresses. Every student experiences each sport and fitness discipline at least once every three years, with increasing technical and tactical demand with each cycle.

Digital Literacy

Rather than being timetabled as a separate subject, digital and computing skills are taught through a structured framework embedded across English, Mathematics, Science, Art, History, PSHE and Citizenship, and reinforced through daily discussions. The framework covers online safety and digital wellbeing, data handling, research and information literacy, communication and collaboration, creative digital skills, digital citizenship and emerging

technologies including artificial intelligence, in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education and related statutory guidance.

Functional and Basic Skills

Students who are not yet ready to access mainstream English or Mathematics lessons follow a dedicated Basic Skills bridging programme, before moving on to AQA Functional Skills English and Mathematics from Entry Level to Level 2 as their literacy and numeracy develop. Both pathways are designed so that students move into the main curriculum as soon as they are ready, rather than remaining on a lower level programme for longer than necessary.

Phonics Intervention

Students who have not yet secured age appropriate phonics knowledge receive one-to-one or small group intervention delivered by the school's reading mentor, using an approach adapted from a structured synthetic phonics programme with materials chosen to be appropriate for secondary age students. Sessions prioritise students' dignity and confidence, and progress is tracked through regular screening.

Daily Discussions

Five short tutor time sessions each week give every student the opportunity to discuss a themed topic drawn from personal development, safeguarding, current affairs and the wider PSHE and Citizenship curriculum, including online safety, extremism and radicalisation, mental health, careers and British values, supporting the school's wider programme of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Daily discussions are adapted as the year progresses to address any emerging needs and priorities.

Religious Education

Religious education is not taught as a separate subject but is delivered through PSHE, daily discussions thematic learning and British values sessions. Students develop an understanding of different beliefs and cultures as part of their wider personal development.

Extra-curricular Provision and Enrichment

In addition to the core curriculum MVLA offers enrichment sessions and extra-curricular provision. To ensure that we offer a broad programme, many of our extra-curricular sessions are offered as short 6-8 week blocks on a rolling programme. Typical clubs include craft, musical and creative activities as well as more traditional academic clubs.

At relevant intervals in the programme, students are able to access trips which supplement the curriculum topics being studied at that time. We also invite visitors into school to speak to the students about careers or to offer specialist activities such as musical and creative workshops.

Attendance and Timetabling

Students are entitled to full-time education and are not placed on part-time timetables unless there are exceptional circumstances. Where this occurs, a clear plan is implemented to support a return to full-time education as soon as possible. This plan is shared with the student, parents/carers and referring school and reviewed at agreed intervals.

Phased returns to mainstream schools may be used where appropriate to support successful reintegration.

Qualifications

MVLA is a registered examination centre. Students in Year 11 may be entered for GCSE qualifications where appropriate.

The school offers GCSEs in:

- English Language
- English Literature
- Mathematics
- Biology
- Statistics
- Citizenship

Additional subjects, such as History, may be accessed through additional provision.

Where students are due to return to their referring school, collaboration ensures continuity of learning, including access to materials and online provision where appropriate.

For students not yet ready to access GCSE courses, the school offers AQA Functional Skills qualifications in English and Mathematics from Entry Level 1 to Level 2, with a Basic Skills bridging programme available for students who need additional foundational support before beginning Functional Skills.

Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance

Careers education is an integral part of the curriculum. The school works with external providers and independent careers advisers to support students in planning their future pathways.

Provision is developed in line with the Gatsby Benchmarks for good careers guidance. The Headteacher monitors the development of careers provision through regular review and audit.

Resources

The Proprietor, supported by the Management Committee, ensures that resources are used effectively to support the curriculum. This includes:

- Employing suitably qualified and experienced staff
- Developing appropriate accommodation and learning resources
- Providing ongoing professional development
- Building partnerships with other schools and organisations
- Using technology effectively to support learning

Impact

The impact of the curriculum is evaluated through:

- Examination results
- Attendance data
- Reintegration into mainstream education or progression to further education
- Ongoing assessment and progress tracking, recorded through the school's DCPro system
- Quality assurance processes led by the Headteacher
- Monitoring the implementation of staff development targets
- Evaluation of students' personal and social development

Monitoring and evaluation form part of an ongoing cycle to ensure continuous improvement.