

Inspection of a good school: Manchester Communication Primary Academy

49 Parkstead Drive, Harpurhey, Manchester M9 5QN

Inspection dates:

21 and 22 March 2023

Outcome

Manchester Communication Primary Academy continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils feel welcome, cared for and safe at this friendly school. From the Nursery Year up to Year 6, pupils love coming to school because they know that staff will take excellent care of them. The parents and carers who shared their views with the inspector talked about the strong family feeling that comes from being part of this school community. Parents value the level of support that their children receive.

Pupils know that leaders expect the best for their behaviour and achievement. They strive to meet these expectations by demonstrating the school's 'community qualities'. For example, pupils know the importance of learning from their mistakes. Pupils beam with pride when they are 'caught being good'. They particularly enjoy receiving rewards for their good behaviour and positive attitudes to learning. In the main, they achieve well.

Pupils treat each other with respect and kindness. Pupils are confident that staff will listen to their worries. Staff are quick and effective in dealing with any incidents of bullying or discrimination.

Pupils relish their various roles of responsibility. These include being a community champion, eco-warrior, sports leader or part of the 'urban crew'. Pupils make a tangible contribution to school life through these roles.

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

Leaders have designed a rich, ambitious and engaging curriculum. They have successfully ensured that all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), receive the same high-quality education. They are determined that disadvantage should not be a barrier to pupils' achievement.

Leaders have made sure that, in almost all subjects, the curriculum is well thought out. This ensures that teachers are in no doubt about what they should teach and when this should happen. Leaders ensure that staff are well trained so that they can deliver the curriculum effectively. Teachers check pupils' prior learning before moving on to new topics. As a result, in these subjects, pupils learn and remember the curriculum well.

A minority of subject leaders have only been in their role for a short time. They are still finalising their curriculum thinking. In these subjects, teachers are less clear about the building blocks of knowledge that pupils should learn. At times, this results in some pupils developing gaps in their knowledge without teachers realising.

Leaders have a meticulous understanding of pupils' needs. Their systems to quickly identify pupils with SEND begin in the early years. Most pupils with SEND learn well alongside their classmates. A small number of pupils who need extra help benefit from expert individual support. This helps them to achieve well.

From the start of their time in the Nursery class, children develop their awareness of sounds and letters. When they enter the Reception Year, they are well equipped to build on this strong start. Daily phonics lessons help children to develop their phonics knowledge in carefully ordered steps. This continues into key stage 1. Staff ensure that pupils read books that match the sounds they know. This helps most pupils to read accurately and fluently by the end of key stage 1.

Leaders have given reading an equally high priority in key stage 2. They have strengthened the reading curriculum so that older pupils continue to develop into confident and competent readers. This contributes to their good achievement in other subjects. Older pupils who have gaps in their reading knowledge receive support that helps them to catch up quickly. Most staff are experts in teaching pupils to read. However, from time to time, a small number of staff use strategies that are less helpful to pupils.

Leaders and staff support pupils to develop strong learning behaviours. Children in the early years settle quickly into routines and follow adults' instructions well. As they move up the school, pupils build on this positive start. In lessons, they conduct themselves well so that everyone can learn without disruption.

Leaders have carefully considered the life experiences that pupils may have missed out on during the COVID-19 pandemic. They have included these opportunities throughout the curriculum to make up for lost time. Leaders challenge pupils to try new things. This helps them to develop resilience and grit.

Pupils gain a strong understanding of equality and diversity. They talked knowledgeably and enthusiastically about what this means to them in how they treat others. They described their school as including everyone regardless of difference. Pupils are well prepared to take their place in modern society.

Trustees and governors know the school well. They provide support, which helps leaders to improve the school. Staff appreciate leaders' awareness of the challenges that they

face. They were overwhelmingly positive about the steps that leaders have taken to support their workload and well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders are proactive in their approach to safeguarding. They have ensured that staff are highly trained and vigilant for any signs that pupils may be at risk of harm. They report any concerns swiftly. Leaders connect this information together so that nothing is missed.

When pupils need extra help, leaders work closely with external agencies. Leaders are tenacious. They follow up their concerns until pupils and their families get the help they need.

Pupils know how staff help them to stay safe. Pupils learn about how to take care of their physical and mental health. They also learn how to stay safe online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a minority of subjects, leaders have not ensured that teachers are clear enough about the building blocks of knowledge that pupils need for subsequent learning. At times, this hinders teachers in designing effective learning and means that pupils do not experience the depth of learning that they should. Leaders should ensure that teachers are clear about what pupils should know and remember.
- At times, a small number of staff do not implement the phonics programme as effectively as leaders intend. Some pupils do not develop into fluent and accurate readers as quickly as they should. Leaders should ensure that staff receive appropriate training and the support that they need to deliver the phonics programme faithfully.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually, this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in October 2017.

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.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	140482
Local authority	Manchester
Inspection number	10256136
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	457
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Sarah Walker
Headteacher	Alex Reed
Website	www.mcpacademy.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	10 and 11 October 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of Greater Manchester Academies Trust.
- Most of the senior leadership team and a significant number of teaching staff have been appointed since the school was last inspected.
- At the time of the last inspection, the school was only open to pupils in Year 4 and below. Since then, the number on roll has grown significantly. The school is now open for pupils up to Year 6.
- Leaders do not make use of any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken that into account in his evaluation of the school.
- The inspector completed deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and geography. He met with subject leaders, visited some lessons, reviewed pupils' work

and spoke with teachers and pupils. The inspector also observed pupils reading to a familiar adult.

- The inspector also spoke to leaders about the curriculum in several other subjects.
- The inspector scrutinised a range of documentation. He spoke to the headteacher and senior leaders throughout the inspection. He also met with the special educational needs and disabilities coordinator.
- The inspector met with some trustees, including the chair of the board of trustees, and representatives of the local governing body. He also spoke with a representative of the local authority by telephone and met with the chief executive officer of the trust.
- The inspector held meetings with the staff responsible for safeguarding and scrutinised the single central record. He considered leaders' safeguarding processes and procedures. He also observed pupils during social times and discussed safeguarding with them.
- The inspector considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. He also considered the responses to the Ofsted surveys for staff and pupils.

Inspection team

Ben Hill, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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