

# Manchester Young Lives

Independent school standard inspection report

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## **Purpose and scope of the inspection**

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005, 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.<sup>1, 2</sup>

## **Information about the school**

The school is part of Manchester Young Lives, a charitable organisation and company limited by guarantee. It was registered as an independent special day school in December 2010 for students between 13 and 16 years of age. It has no religious affiliation. It occupies two single-storey buildings four miles apart, both close to the centre of Manchester; the unit for Years 8 and 9 is at Moss Side and the unit for Years 10 and 11 is at Ardwick. Both buildings are shared with other branches of the organisation, although not used at the same time. There are 47 students on roll. The school provides for students at risk of exclusion from their home school who have behavioural, emotional and/or social difficulties, often with associated learning difficulties. Currently four students have a statement of special educational needs and one is looked after by the local authority. All students remain on the register of their home schools which pay the fees, including any additional funding for students with a statement of special educational needs. The school aims to offer: 'an appropriate programme; addressing and resolving behaviour issues and aiding individual students back into school, employment, training or further education'. This is its first inspection.

## **Evaluation of the school**

Manchester Young Lives School provides a satisfactory quality of education and meets its aims. The curriculum is satisfactory with many good features; it has been developed to re-engage disaffected students in learning and to give them a broad, balanced and interesting education. Teaching and assessment are satisfactory, and some of the lessons are good. Behaviour is satisfactory overall and the school has very effective and consistently applied procedures to calm challenging behaviour when it arises; these procedures support students' satisfactory progress. Provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, as is the school's effectiveness in promoting their welfare and safeguarding. The vast majority of the regulations for the continued registration as an independent school are met.

## **Quality of education**

The quality of the curriculum is satisfactory. Much of the National Curriculum and all of the required areas of learning are covered. A wide range of enrichment activities

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<sup>1</sup> [www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/32/contents](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/32/contents).

<sup>2</sup> [www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2005/18/contents](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2005/18/contents).

provided both on- and off-site does much to capture the interests of the students, many of whom have been disengaged from learning before being admitted to this school. The most notable feature of the curriculum is the extensive provision designed to stabilise students' behaviour and to re-engage them in academic learning. Courses designed to support this aim and the general personal development of students, are very well conceived. They include courses in citizenship, personal and social education and personal effectiveness alongside a well-coordinated tutorial programme. The school makes good use of external visits and speakers to stimulate students' interests and broaden their personal and cultural horizons. The curriculum is appropriately tailored to the specific needs of each student, which differ widely, and these needs are carefully recorded in individual learning plans. In addition, those with statements of special educational needs have individual education plans, the requirements of which are well covered by the curriculum.

Curriculum planning is thorough. Useful schemes of work have been developed for all subjects. Lesson planning is good, and sometimes exemplary in the way in which the individual needs of each student are catered for. Work-related learning takes place throughout the age range and is supported by vocational courses for older students. These activities provide the students with a good preparation for life after school, and they are well supported by the good provision for basic skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology, and also the good range of externally accredited courses, including GCSE, which students are encouraged to study.

The quality of teaching and assessment is satisfactory. Teaching has improved in the recent past because of a concerted effort to recruit specialist teachers and their deployment to work side-by-side with teaching assistants who have youth-work expertise. Collaboration between these members of staff in lessons and around the school is often effective in stimulating the interests of students, improving their behaviour and enabling them to make satisfactory progress overall. It also enables staff to support those with specific learning or behavioural difficulties. The effectiveness of teaching in enabling students to control their anger, consider the consequences of their actions and get along with other students and staff, is satisfactory overall. It is good with respect to the older, more settled students who have been at the school for some time. The subject expertise of staff is good. They generally have positive relationships with students, combining high expectations, firmness and consistency with a friendly and relaxed manner. They display impressive levels of patience and calmness in dealing with challenging students and defusing conflict if it arises. In their day-to-day work with most students, the staff implement the school's carefully developed procedures for behaviour management very effectively.

The best teaching is characterised by clear and carefully explained learning objectives and good sequencing of tasks with activities broken down into short but connected activities which students find interesting. These lessons give students ample opportunity to contribute through, for example, being challenged to think and appreciate other people's points of view. In lessons which are satisfactory rather

than good, some students are not clear about what they are expected to do. Occasionally, the teacher and teaching assistant confuse students by talking simultaneously, but about different matters, to the whole class. Teaching is also less effective with some younger students, who have been on roll for only a short period, when poor behaviour is not always effectively controlled, leading to some loss of learning time and when work does not engage them well. As a consequence, students' progress is satisfactory overall, although it is good for many of those in Years 10 and 11.

The school has good procedures for recording the behaviour of students and keeping track of their personal development. Effective use is made of formal testing to gauge students' attainment on admission to the school. This information is well used for lesson and course planning. Work is marked regularly and students receive useful feedback from staff, largely through individual discussion in lessons. Students' academic progress is tracked satisfactorily as they proceed through the school and the use of information from marking, testing and analysis of attainment data is satisfactory.

## **Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils**

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students is good. The school is particularly successful in helping them to improve their behaviour, consideration for others and self-control over the long term; this is particularly clear among those students in Years 10 and 11. The students are encouraged to think about the consequences of their words and actions and this supports their moral development. Behaviour is satisfactory overall, but often good among the older students. In all age groups, however, anger does surface at times. The staff are consistent and diligent in defusing these situations and encouraging students to return to an acceptable standard of behaviour. Attendance is below average but improving; the school has a good plan to accelerate this improvement. Two thirds of the students answering the pre-inspection questionnaire stated that they enjoy school; this is a major improvement on their reported attitudes to schooling when they were admitted. Enjoyment was clear in most of the lessons and most students responded positively to the interesting and varied lesson content and the calm, encouraging and warm manner of the staff.

The school as a whole makes a significant contribution to student's social development, and this contributes well to students' preparation for life after school. Students develop a good awareness of the cultural and racial make-up of our country through various parts of the curriculum, and the tutorial programme. As they discuss moral issues, for example in relation to bullying, they are encouraged by staff to examine their own prejudices. The curriculum gives good opportunities for students to learn about our major public institutions.

## **Welfare, health and safety of pupils**

Provision to promote students' welfare, health, safety and their safeguarding is good. This reflects the determination of the staff and trustees to care for the vulnerable

and disaffected students who are referred to the school. The school has appointed staff who are committed to working with disadvantaged youngsters; this shines through in their interactions with students in lessons and around the school and the consistency with which they implement the school's well-conceived policies to promote students' well-being. They keep detailed records of students' behaviour and of any sanctions imposed. The provision of healthy meals, and tuition in the major aspects of healthy and safe living are good. The school makes effective use of external specialists to support this. There are good opportunities for sports and physical exercise. The premises are vigilantly supervised by the staff; supervision of off-site activities is equally rigorous. Staff are well trained in child protection procedures and follow them carefully, reviewing them regularly. Risk assessments are rigorous and well used to inform the supervision of activities. Attendance registers are kept as required. The admissions register does not fully meet regulations because not all of the necessary contact information about the parents of each student, where parents are not living at the same address, is recorded. The school fulfils its duties under the Equality Act 2010.

### **Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors**

The suitability of all staff and volunteers, including the trustees, to work with students has been checked. The information is recorded on a single central register which meets requirements.

### **Premises and accommodation at the school**

The two sites provide satisfactory accommodation for the curriculum provided. The outdoor areas at both sites are of a high standard with good quality adventure playgrounds as well as pleasant green areas. In addition, students in Years 10 and 11 have access to an on-site, purpose-built fitness centre. The two kitchens used to prepare meals for students, though modern and clean, do not have adequate hand-washing facilities.

### **Provision of information**

Parents, carers, social workers, staff in the local authority's student referral unit service and staff in the home schools, are given a good range of information about the school and students, which meets requirements, using a variety of means including frequent telephone contact. Parents and carers receive termly reports on the progress of their children.

### **Manner in which complaints are to be handled**

The school's procedures for handling complaints meet the regulations.

## **Compliance with regulatory requirements**

The proprietor has ensured that the school meets The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, schedule 1 ('the Regulations'), with the exception of those listed below.<sup>3</sup>

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of provision for welfare, health and safety of students (standards in part 3) and must:

- ensure that the admission register records the full names and addresses of every person known to the proprietor to be a parent of each pupil (paragraph 17).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the premises of and accommodation at schools (standards in part 5) and must:

- provide facilities for hand washing in the two kitchens which are used to prepare meals for students (paragraph 23(l)).

## **What the school could do to improve further**

While not required by regulations, the school might wish to consider the following points for development.

- Ensure that teachers and teaching assistants always work in mutually supportive ways when speaking to whole classes during lessons.
- Strengthen procedures for assessing attainment and tracking progress over time, so that the generally satisfactory practice in the school is brought up to the level of the best.
- Improve the attendance of students.
- Improve students' behaviour in Years 8 and 9.

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<sup>3</sup> [www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2010/1997/contents/made](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2010/1997/contents/made).

## Inspection judgements

outstanding	good	satisfactory	inadequate
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### The quality of education

Overall quality of education			✓	
How well the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of pupils			✓	
How effective teaching and assessment are in meeting the full range of pupils' needs			✓	
How well pupils make progress in their learning			✓	

### Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Quality of provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development		✓		
The behaviour of pupils			✓	

### Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The overall welfare, health and safety of pupils		✓		
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## School details

<b>School status</b>	Independent		
<b>Type of school</b>	Special day school for students with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties		
<b>Date school opened</b>	December 2010		
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	13–16 years		
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed		
<b>Number on roll (full-time pupils)</b>	Boys: 32	Girls: 15	Total: 47
<b>Number on roll (part-time pupils)</b>	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
<b>Number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs</b>	Boys: 2	Girls: 2	Total: 4
<b>Number of pupils who are looked after</b>	Boys: 0	Girls: 1	Total: 1
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	£10,000		
<b>Address of school</b>	A6 Young People's Centre Wilson Street Ardwick Manchester M13 9EX		
<b>Telephone number</b>	0161 273 4474		
<b>Email address</b>	Vicky@manchesterlives.org.uk		
<b>Principal</b>	Vicky Southern		
<b>Proprietor</b>	Tim Ferguson		

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



17 November 2011

Dear Students

### **Inspection of Manchester Young Lives School, M13 9EX**

I promised to write to you after my inspection to let you know what I thought of your school. Here are my main findings:

- Your school gives you a satisfactory quality of education.
- You are given a good range of subjects to study and activities to enjoy. I know from the questionnaires you filled in that a majority of you like being at this school and appreciate the helpful things it is doing for you.
- The staff work very hard to support you as you strive to improve your behaviour and what you learn in your lessons. All of the lessons I saw were at least satisfactory and some were good, lively and very interesting.
- You are given a good range of activities to help you understand the complexity of the world outside school. You are also able to contribute to such activities as raising funds for charity.
- The school does very well in caring for you and ensuring that your school activities are carried out safely.
- The staff are very keen to continue to improve the school and I have suggested that they need to: improve facilities for practical work; help you to improve your attendance; improve behaviour, especially in Years 8 and 9; and ensure that you get clear instructions from staff in all lessons, as you already do in most of them.

Yours sincerely,

Peter Toft  
Lead Inspector