

Greater Manchester Alternative Provision

87 Blandford Street, Ashton-Under-Lyne, Tameside OL6 7HG

Inspection dates

4–6 December 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	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Despite recent improvements in attendance for individual pupils, a high proportion of pupils do not attend school regularly or on time.
- Older pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to develop their writing skills. This prevents them from making the progress they are capable of in English.
- Leaders are beginning to develop training for staff so that they understand the wide-ranging, complex social and emotional needs of pupils.
- Leaders are beginning to improve opportunities for older pupils to obtain qualifications which will prepare them well for the next stages of their education and/or employment. However, it is too soon to measure the impact of these strategies.
- Variations in the information that leaders gather before pupils start school can sometimes delay immediate support for a small proportion of pupils.

The school has the following strengths

- Leaders have created a safe and nurturing environment. The positive relationships fostered in school contribute effectively to pupils' improving behaviour and attitudes to learning.
- Leaders' high aspirations and expectations of what pupils can achieve are shared by staff and governors.
- The curriculum has been carefully designed to meet pupils' social and emotional needs.
- Pupils make good progress in mathematics.
- Teachers' good subject knowledge enables them to plan activities that build on pupils' prior knowledge, particularly in mathematics.
- Parents and carers speak positively about the school. They appreciate the help, guidance and support provided for pupils.
- Pupils are polite and well mannered. Older pupils treat each other with respect. Pupils' self-esteem is improving because of the support they receive.
- The proprietor and leaders, including governors, have ensured that all the independent schools standards are met.

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?

- Continue to provide training to improve staff knowledge and understanding of pupils' individual, complex social and emotional needs.
- Build on improvements in attendance to ensure that pupils attend school whenever possible and on time.
- Provide further opportunities for pupils to develop their skills as writers, in order to improve the progress they make and reach the potential of which they are capable.
- Use more effectively the information gathered from commissioning schools in order to quickly identify the support individual pupils need, particularly socially and emotionally, when they start school.
- Develop further the opportunities for pupils in key stage 4 to achieve nationally recognised qualifications in a range of subjects, including English and mathematics.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Leaders have established a calm and nurturing environment since the provision opened in December 2017. Their ambition to provide pupils with the skills they need to be reintegrated back into maintained school is beginning to be achieved. Pupils who currently attend the provision feel secure and are keen to re-engage in their learning. Staff share leaders' aspirations and morale is high.
- Leaders, including the proprietor, endeavour to ensure that staff have the knowledge and skills to support the challenging social and emotional needs of pupils who attend the provision. New staff are improving their understanding of pupils' individual needs and this remains an area for further development.
- Leaders deploy skilled support staff effectively to meet individual pupils' needs well. They work effectively with other similar providers to share good practice and expertise.
- Older pupils joined the provision during the autumn term and are working towards national qualifications in a number of curriculum subjects, including English and mathematics. Leaders provide them with impartial careers advice from a number of colleges and employers, designed to help pupils to be ready for life beyond education. However, it is too soon to measure the impact of this work.
- Leaders have carefully designed a curriculum that promotes well British values and prepares pupils for life in modern Britain. Pupils understand, respect and recognise that rules are there to keep them safe. Pupils are beginning to understand their responsibilities in being part of a rich and diverse society. Pupils spoke with pride about the work they have recently covered on World Aids day and during Black History month.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well through visits to local museums, for example the science and industry museum and the local air raid shelters as part of their work in history. Pupils spoke enthusiastically about their recent sponsored walk to raise funds for a national children's charity.
- Leaders work effectively with the secondary schools that place pupils in the provision. Pupils typically attend for 12 weeks before returning to their schools. Leaders work closely with parents, carers, schools and other professionals. Leaders are currently improving the quality of information they gather about pupils before they start attending.
- Representatives of the commissioning schools who spoke with the inspector, were highly complimentary of the information about pupils they received from leaders during the placements, including regarding their attendance, academic achievements and the positive impact on pupils' emotional development and well-being. The majority of pupils who attended the provision during the last academic year successfully returned to mainstream education.
- Parents are very supportive. 'I cannot thank them enough,' typically represents the comments of parents who spoke with the inspector.
- The proprietor has ensured that all the independent school standards are fully met. Policies and procedures are in place and are effective in promoting the school's aims.

Governance

- Governors, including the proprietor and the headteacher, bring a range of skills and knowledge to the governing board. They attend training to ensure that they remain up to date with safeguarding issues. The chair of the governing body is also the headteacher of a specialist provision and is able to share expertise and ideas.
- Effective working relationships with leaders enable the governing board to challenge leaders and hold them to account effectively. They check the impact of the actions that leaders have taken by visiting school and talking with pupils. Governors have high aspirations for the school and the chair of the governing body is extremely knowledgeable about the priorities for continued improvement.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Absences are followed up immediately with parents and reported to the commissioning schools to ensure that pupils who are not in school are safe.
- Leaders, including governors, ensure that appropriate checks are in place to confirm that all adults in the school, including any volunteers or supply staff, are suitable to work with pupils.
- The safeguarding policy meets requirements and is reviewed and updated annually. This sets out clear guidance for staff and is shared with parents and commissioning schools, both on the school website and with a hard copy on request.
- Training for staff enables them to quickly identify any changes in pupils' demeanour or behaviour. Staff understand the procedures to follow if they have any concerns about any pupil.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Weaknesses in the quality of teaching in English mean that teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement. Teachers do not ensure that pupils routinely apply their knowledge and skills in their writing. Teachers do not provide pupils with the opportunity to write in any depth. This hinders their progress.
- Teachers have created a calm and focused learning environment for pupils. Pupils have positive attitudes to learning.
- Teachers use the information they receive from the commissioning schools to evaluate how they can effectively support pupils' needs. Teachers use their initial assessments of pupils well to plan activities that ignite pupils' interest. Where teachers do not have comprehensive information about a pupil's social and emotional needs, this can impact on the initial transition into the provision.
- As a result of the training they receive, teachers' understanding of pupils' complex and often challenging social and emotional development is improving. Teachers work with other colleagues, including colleagues in similar schools, to share expertise. This is particularly helpful for new staff.

- Teachers' good subject knowledge enables them to plan learning activities which meet pupils' academic needs well. Teachers use assessment information effectively to identify the next steps in pupils' learning and provide appropriate challenge and support. This is particularly effective in mathematics. For example, staff quickly assessed pupils' prior knowledge about line graphs and how to interpret information. Pupils quickly moved on to more challenging tasks, including solving challenging problems which required them to find the information from a scatter graph. Pupils make good progress from their starting points in mathematics.
- In some English activities, teachers use questions effectively to assess pupils' understanding by encouraging them to refine and develop their explanations. For example, pupils in Year 10 were discussing the poem 'Hawk Roosting' by Ted Hughes. They identified the different types of vocabulary the poet had chosen and how effectively it had depicted the actions of the hawk.
- Skilled support staff are deployed effectively to support pupils' social and emotional development and re-engage them in their learning when necessary, particularly younger pupils.
- Teachers' good subject knowledge supports well pupils who are beginning to work towards national qualifications. However, it is too soon to measure the impact on pupils' achievements.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Relationships in school are modelled and promoted well by staff. Pupils' positive attitudes towards learning are promoted consistently throughout the day. Staff model high expectations of conduct and of the language they expect pupils to use when talking with others.
- The strong relationships fostered by staff enable pupils to grow in confidence and self-esteem. Pupils are developing good interpersonal skills to develop and sustain their relationships with others. For example, pupils congratulated each other when they gave good answers to the questions the teacher asked about the use of evocative language.
- Staff provide opportunities for pupils to visit places in the local area. Fundraising activities broaden pupils' horizons and give them the opportunity to impact positively on their community. For example, a recent sponsored walk in the local countryside raised funds for a national children's charity.
- Pupils engage well during discussions in citizenship and personal, social and health education sessions. They are developing an understanding of the rule of law and the rights of people to feel safe.
- Older pupils have aspirations to be electricians, mechanics, beauticians or to work with young children. They understand the importance of gaining the qualifications they need in order to access training for their chosen profession.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. Although attendance has improved considerably for some individual pupils, a high proportion of pupils are still persistently absent from school. Many pupils do not arrive at school on time each day.
- The behaviour policy is understood well by pupils and implemented consistently by staff.
- Pupils are becoming increasingly more engaged in their learning, which is having a positive impact on the progress they make.
- Pupils are polite and well-mannered when talking to adults. They conduct themselves well. Older pupils commented positively about the improvement in their behaviour and attitudes since joining Greater Manchester Alternative Provision because of the support from the adults around them.
- Although there is the potential for extremely challenging behaviour, occurrences are managed well by staff. Pupils understand the different forms that bullying can take. They spoke confidently about any inappropriate behaviour being dealt with quickly and said that adults take time to listen and explain. They talked openly about the way that they previously behaved and treated others but said that this does not happen now. A typical comment was, 'I was worried about coming here but everyone helped me to settle in and made me feel welcome.'

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- The majority of current pupils joined the provision at various points throughout this academic year. A high proportion of pupils are in key stage 4 and are preparing for national examinations.
- Outcomes require improvement because pupils are not catching up quickly in order to reach the standards of which they are capable in English. Pupils do not routinely apply their knowledge of grammar, spelling and punctuation when writing across a range of styles.
- Leaders know it is important to support pupils' personal development and well-being before they are able to engage in learning. Each pupil has targets agreed with the commissioning school, parents and pupils when they arrive. These include both academic and emotional targets. Detailed assessment information highlights that, as a result of the good support that they receive, pupils are beginning to make good progress in taking responsibility for their own conduct.
- Most pupils have had their previous education disrupted when they arrive. There are gaps in pupils' knowledge. Teachers use assessment information to accurately identify the next steps in pupils' learning and build on pupils' prior knowledge. This is particularly successful in mathematics, where pupils make good progress from their starting points. For example, work in pupils' books showed that pupils in Year 11 had quickly revisited work on fractions and they are now able to tackle increasingly challenging problems.
- Pupils' work shows that they are developing the specific subject knowledge they will need to succeed in science. For example, pupils in Year 10 were eager to share with the inspector their presentation on specific diseases.
- Information is shared with the commissioning school during fortnightly meetings. This

enables teachers and pupils to maintain strong links. This positively supports pupils' successful reintegration back into mainstream school. Most pupils who left the provision at the end of the last academic year were successfully reintegrated into a mainstream school.

- Younger pupils who continue to struggle with their learning are supported well by staff to make small steps of progress. For pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, leaders work with mainstream schools to support the application for an education, health and care plan.
- Older pupils are working towards national qualifications in a range of curriculum subjects, for example biology, citizenship, religious studies and health and social care, as well as English and mathematics. However, it is too soon to evaluate the impact on pupils' achievements in obtaining qualifications.
- Pupils receive appropriate independent careers advice and guidance. As a result, they are aspirational for their future careers.

School details

Unique reference number	145290
DfE registration number	357/6005
Inspection number	10053743

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 Special School
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	14
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Cerise Pike
Chair	Lana Wild
Headteacher	Shane Mahon
Annual fees (day pupils)	£8,100
Telephone number	0161 459 7447
Website	www.gma-provision.co.uk
Email address	gmaprovision@gmail.com
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The Greater Manchester Alternative Provision School is an independent school registered for boys and girls aged 11 to 16.
- The school opened on 19 December 2017 and this is the first standard inspection.
- The school's aim is to ensure that pupils receive high-quality education and achieve accredited qualifications. It aims, too, where possible, to support pupils to meet their needs and overcome their difficulties in order to return to mainstream education.
- The pupils are placed at the school due to their social, emotional, behavioural or mental health needs.

- All pupils are dual registered with the commissioning school.
- The school does not access any additional provision.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was conducted with one day's notice to the school.
- The inspector made a thorough tour of the school and checked the school's compliance with the independent school standards.
- The inspector scrutinised a range of school documentation, including policies, referral forms, planning, documentation relating to training and information about the progress, behaviour and attendance of pupils in the school. The inspector also looked at the school's single central record and any risk assessments where appropriate.
- The inspector visited classrooms to observe teaching, and pupils' learning and behaviour. The inspector observed and spoke with pupils during lessons and met formally with groups of pupils.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher and members of staff. The inspector also met with the proprietor, who is also an employee at the school, and the chair of the governing board.
- There were no responses to Parent View, the Ofsted online questionnaire. The inspector held telephone conversations with a number of parents. The inspector also considered the responses from staff questionnaire. There were no responses to the pupils' questionnaires.
- The inspector held telephone conversations with a number of the commissioning schools.

Inspection team

Amanda Stringer, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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