

Inspection of Greater Manchester Alternative Provision

87 Blandford Street, Ashton Under Lyne, Tameside OL6 7HW

Inspection dates: 7 to 9 December 2021

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Requires improvement

Does the school meet the independent school standards?

Yes

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy coming to school. They are keen to join in classroom discussions, read and share their ideas. However, there are many pupils who do not attend school on a regular basis.

Teachers have high expectations of pupils' achievement. Pupils try their best. They achieve well in some subjects such as English, mathematics and science. However, in other subjects, pupils do not achieve as well as they should. This is because curriculum plans in these subjects are not logically planned.

Leaders expect pupils to behave well, and most do. Pupils feel safe at school. They like the fact that the school is small and that they can talk to any member of staff at any time. Pupils know that any concerns they have will be taken seriously and dealt with immediately.

Pupils learn about discrimination such as racism and homophobia. They are confident that staff would quickly deal with any form of bullying or discrimination. Pupils know how to maintain a healthy lifestyle. They are aware of the dangers associated with alcohol, smoking and illegal drug use.

Pupils are developing their appreciation of fundamental British values, such as fairness and equality. They celebrate events such as Black History Month and World Aids Day.

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

The headteacher and proprietor have written curriculum plans for each subject. Curriculum plans in some subjects, such as English, mathematics and science, follow the national curriculum. Planning in these subjects includes the content of each unit of knowledge that pupils will learn and the order it will be taught.

In other subjects, the curriculum planning is not as well organised. It is not clear how teachers will plan learning activities which will enable pupils to build their knowledge over time. For example, the curriculum for personal, social, health and citizenship education is sequenced to help pupils learn and remember more about topics such as parliamentary democracy and cultural diversity. However, teachers focus on the content that is of interest to pupils rather than the planned curriculum. This limits pupils' understanding of life in modern Britain. In addition, due to the restrictions of COVID-19, staff have not had training to ensure that they are confident to deliver all areas of the curriculum well.

Many pupils start at the school with significant gaps in their learning. This is because they have been out of education for a long period of time. Teachers make effective use of assessment in some subjects, such as English and mathematics, to identify the knowledge and skills that these pupils have lost or have not yet acquired. This allows teachers to plan sequences of learning in English and mathematics that build

on what pupils know and can do. However, procedures to assess gaps in pupils' knowledge in other subjects are not as well developed.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities have their needs met appropriately. Through additional support and resources, the curriculum is adapted so that these pupils can access the same learning as their peers. Leaders work well with other agencies to ensure that these pupils, including those with an education, health and care plan, get the support they need.

The school places a high priority on reading. This was evident during the inspection, when pupils in key stages 3 and 4 read extracts from 'A Christmas Carol' and a Sherlock Holmes crime novel. Teachers read with pupils on a regular basis, which is helping to develop their fluency and comprehension skills. Pupils read widely and across different subjects. Those who are falling behind with their reading get the support they need to help them catch up.

Many pupils are reluctant to come to school on a regular basis. Leaders are keen to address this issue and have put in place some initiatives to improve attendance. However, leaders do not routinely monitor pupils' attendance, so they are unable to assess whether these initiatives are effective or not.

Governance is not strong. Leaders do not provide governors with enough information to ensure that they have a secure understanding of the school's strengths and priorities for development. As a result, they do not challenge leaders effectively on all aspects of the school's work, including the quality of education.

The proprietor and headteacher demonstrate the necessary skills and knowledge appropriate to their roles. They ensure that the independent school standards are consistently maintained. Leaders actively promote the health and welfare of pupils. Leaders have ensured that the school meets the requirements relating to the provision of relationships and sex education (RSE) for all secondary-aged pupils. Leaders have consulted with parents and carers and published the RSE policy on the school's website.

Parents are positive about the school. They are happy with the regular reports they receive on their children's progress.

Pupils receive independent careers advice. They learn how to present themselves well at interviews. Pupils also learn to write personal statements and applications for college placements and jobs.

Staff appreciate leaders' consideration of their workload and well-being.

The school has a current safeguarding policy in place, which is published on the school's website. Safeguarding training for the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and the deputy DSL is kept up to date.

A comprehensive fire safety risk assessment is in place. All checks to support this, such as checks and servicing of emergency lighting and of firefighting equipment, are in place. The school's accessibility plan complies with schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.

Pupils take part in physical education away from the school site. When they attend specialist facilities for sports such as football, there are showers and changing accommodation available for them to use. Risk assessments are in place for all sporting activities. Assessments clearly outline the responsibilities of staff and provide a suitable framework for protecting pupils from harm.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders prioritise safeguarding. They make sure that all necessary checks are made to ensure that staff are suitable to work with pupils. Staff induction procedures are thorough and include training about safeguarding. All staff know what action to take if they are concerned about a pupil's welfare or safety

Staff know how to spot potential signs of neglect and abuse. They take prompt action to record and report any concerns they have about pupils. Pupils learn about safeguarding through different aspects of the curriculum.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- Some subjects in the curriculum are not well planned and sequenced. Curriculum plans in these subjects do not clearly identify the key knowledge that pupils must acquire or the order in which it should be taught. As a result, pupils do not achieve well in these subjects. Leaders need to ensure that curriculum plans in these subjects clearly set out in a logical order the key knowledge that pupils must learn. Leaders should also make sure that staff receive training to ensure they have the knowledge and skills to teach all areas of the curriculum effectively. This will help pupils to know more and remember more.
- In some subjects, teachers' assessment of what pupils know and can do is not as precise as it could be. This means that teachers do not have a secure understanding of the gap that pupils have in their learning in these subjects. Leaders should ensure that teachers are trained to use assessment effectively in all subjects so that they can plan activities which build on pupils' prior learning. This will help pupils to catch up with any learning that they have lost or missed.
- The school does not have systematic procedures in place for monitoring pupils' attendance. As a result, leaders do not know if the school's initiatives to promote good attendance are working. Leaders should put in place systems to enable

them to track and monitor pupils' attendance. This will allow leaders to quickly identify pupils who are not attending school regularly.

- Governors do not hold leaders to account for all aspects of the school's work. This is because governors do not have a secure understanding of what the school does well and what needs to improve. Leaders need to ensure that governors are provided with enough detailed information to give them a clear understanding of all aspects of the school's work. This will allow them to offer leaders a higher level of support and challenge with regard to the quality of education that the school provides.

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.

If you are the provider and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

School details

Unique reference number	145290
DfE registration number	357/6005
Local authority	Tameside
Inspection number	10203844
Type of school	Independent school
School category	Independent special school
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	9
Number of part-time pupils	2
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	4 to 6 December 2018

Information about this school

- The school does not use 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.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher and the deputy headteacher. The lead inspector spoke with parents to gather their views about the school, and held discussions with representatives from commissioning schools responsible for placing pupils at the school.
- There were too few responses to the Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, to consider. There were no free-text comments from parents. There were no responses to Ofsted's pupil and staff surveys. The lead inspector spoke with staff about their workload and well-being.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives into English, mathematics, science and personal, social and health education. For each deep dive, inspectors looked at curriculum planning and spoke to leaders about their subjects. They conducted lesson visits, spoke with pupils about their learning and looked at a range of pupils' work. Inspectors also spoke with the teaching assistant from the classes that they visited.
- Inspectors examined a range of curriculum plans and policies. They also scrutinised safeguarding information, including the school's safeguarding policy.

Inspection team

Lenford White, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Mark Quinn

Her Majesty's Inspector

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