

Manchester Settlement

Independent school inspection report

DCSF registration number	352/6067
Unique Reference Number (URN)	135948
Inspection number	353900
Inspection dates	30 June – 1 July 2010
Reporting inspector	John Coleman HMI

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Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Section 162A¹ of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005², the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Information about the school

Manchester Settlement School is owned by Manchester Settlement which is a charitable organisation, whose aims are related to its origins: 'The charity was set up in 1895 by the University of Manchester to address the effects of disadvantage and poverty in East Manchester.' Situated in the urban area of Openshaw, it moved to new premises in May 2009 and was registered in July 2009. This is the school's first inspection. The school took over two previous education projects run by the settlement which provided support for students who found difficulty engaging in mainstream education. The school admits students aged 13 to 16 years who have behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. There are 27 students currently on roll of whom one student is looked after by the local authority and two have statements of special educational needs. Several current students were present on the projects before the school's registration. Students remain on the roll of their placing high school. The trustees have recently established an advisory board to lead the strategic management of the school. The proprietor is the manager of the settlement and provides line management to the headteacher. The school is led by a qualified full-time headteacher supported by a number of part-time visiting teachers. Youth workers provide additional guidance and support for students' personal and educational development. The school shares the site with a number of partners including Manchester College, a housing association and the Prince's Trust.

The school aims: 'to address the specific personal and social needs of our young people through sessions like communication, conflict resolution and emotional literacy, as well as GCSE English and maths, ICT, ASDAN, OCN and sports courses delivered by a team of experienced teachers and youth workers dedicated to engaging young people in danger of underachieving.'

Evaluation of the school

Manchester Settlement provides a satisfactory and improving overall quality of education for its students and meets its aims. A good curriculum combined with satisfactory teaching and assessment leads to students making satisfactory progress. Students' social, emotional and behavioural development is good due to the consistently high priority given to this area by the school. The school meets all the

¹ www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2002/ukpga_20020032_en_14#pt10-ch1-pb4-l1g162

² www.opsi.gov.uk/ACTS/acts2005/ukpga_20050018_en_15#sch8

regulations required for registration as an independent school. Arrangements for safeguarding meet all requirements and the school makes good provision for students' welfare, health and safety.

Quality of education

The curriculum and other activities are good in meeting the range of needs and interests of students. A broad and balanced curriculum concentrates on the basic skills of mathematics, English and information and communication technology (ICT), and for personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE). Sports are provided and the school promotes the development of personal skills, and skills for independent living. Art sessions are run regularly and there is a specialist art project, a film project and an off-site music provision. Science skills and knowledge are taught, but the school has no laboratory facilities and this restricts investigative learning in this subject. The curriculum is enriched by a good range of visits and visitors. For example, the community nurse attends each week to deliver health education, a researcher has spoken to students about spirituality and an outward bound residential trip to the Lake District is much enjoyed by students. The school has many partnerships which broaden students' curriculum experiences such as the links on site with Manchester College and by utilising local sports venues with a fitness suite, plus indoor and outdoor facilities. At lunchtime the school provides activities such as chess and other board games.

The school provides the full National Curriculum. There are policies and schemes of work in place for each subject. The school is expanding the range of accreditation and qualifications available for students to attain. GCSE is offered in English and mathematics. Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) modules are also offered in many subjects including, literacy, numeracy, ICT and personal and social development.

The effectiveness of teaching and assessment in meeting the full range of students' needs is satisfactory. The deployment of part-time teachers utilises their specialist subject expertise well. The teaching expertise of the headteacher is underused and this limits the impact of the school's only full-time qualified teacher on the overall quality of teaching provided. In lessons, the very good relationships developed between staff and students enable learning to proceed largely uninterrupted by any disruptive behaviour. Any low-level disturbance or disengagement from learning is managed well by the youth workers and teachers. All staff know the students well; they show high levels of care and an understanding of students' behaviour and their social and emotional needs. Students' self-esteem and confidence in learning is successfully developed because staff use a lot of praise. The quality of support and guidance from youth workers is a strong feature of all lessons and aids the progress which students make. Generally, teachers have good subject knowledge; they plan lessons conscientiously and use the subject syllabi to structure these. Insufficient use is made of what is known from assessments about what students already know and can do in order to build on their prior learning. As a result, some students are not

challenged sufficiently and find the work too easy, whilst for others the work can be too difficult. Teachers do not always engage the students in question-and-answer sessions to check on their learning and to reinforce it. Students have few opportunities to take the initiative in their learning as most lessons are characterised by a series of instructions and an over reliance on worksheets. In the best lessons, such as ICT, the practical nature of the tasks are interesting and motivating for students and they are encouraged to apply the skills which they learn.

Overall, students make satisfactory progress in their learning. Students with a statement of special educational needs also make satisfactory progress. Many students join the school after significant periods of disrupted education and frequent absence from school. They have a low level of skills, knowledge and experience for their age. Due to the good provision which the school makes for basic skills, including ICT, students gain accreditations and qualifications which prepare them satisfactorily for their future learning and adult life. They mature and become increasingly able to manage and control their own behaviour. The students improve socially and emotionally because the school rightly prioritises the development of these aspects of their growth. In the last two years almost every student has been helped to gain a college place to follow courses in areas such as hairdressing, childcare and an apprenticeship in motorcycle maintenance. Two former students told the inspector about the good support they had received from the school and how the skills they had learned in school had helped them to gain a college place.

Poor attendance significantly hinders the rate of progress made by some students and students who have good attendance achieve the most highly. Too many students do not attend regularly enough, even though most have improved their attendance since joining the school. The school has in place a range of assessment procedures to measure the attainment of students. However, it does not yet use these systematically to track their progress and targets are not rigorously set to predict the expected progress for each student. Consequently, the school's leadership is insufficiently aware of the progress made by students in different subjects or at different times during the school year.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

The quality of students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Students who spoke to the inspector say they enjoy school and are well looked after and feel safe. Unanimously, all students say the school is 'the best school they have been to'. Behaviour is very well managed and is founded upon very good relationships between staff and students. Overall behaviour is satisfactory. Students say that staff treat them fairly. Students are maturing and increasingly are encouraged to become independently able to manage their own behaviour. Students who spoke to the inspector were polite, courteous and well mannered.

Each student has a key worker and a dedicated team of staff. They seek to identify opportunities for students to excel, to take part in community activities, and which

promote their self-confidence and the ability to communicate well with other members of the school and the wider community. All students are encouraged to take responsibility for their own lives and to make informed decisions about their future. A Connexions worker has helped students to gain college places, enquire about apprenticeships, and open bank accounts. Students are able to access advice from the Supported Housing Manager, student social worker, college and Prince's Trust staff. The school liaises with Manchester College to arrange taster days and post-16 placements; an example of this liaison is a 'health and beauty day' at the St Matthew's campus.

Students study poems from other cultures and participate in poetry writing. They have taken part in a recording project with a local Manchester poet, participated in an art and a film project and have had guest speakers who talked about what it is like living in other cultures. Students have taken part in research on religious beliefs as well as learning about their own diverse cultures and others through the PSHCE and English curricula. Through the school council, students have organised various events including a Christmas party for the school and wider community, an end of term party/promenade, a sponsored run to raise funds for Haiti, which grew out of a lesson relating to the earthquake on the island and they also provided help and support for local residents on election day.

Attendance rates for students are low but improving. The school uses a wide range of incentives and deterrents to reduce absence rates. Home visits are made to persistent absentees and the student social worker gives good support to these students. In school good attendance is celebrated. Parents and carers who spoke to the inspector appreciated the efforts of the school to help them improve their child's attendance, in particular, the quick response of the school in contacting parents and carers on the first day of absence. Weekly school reports keep parents and carers regularly informed about any non attendance. The school's attendance policy outlines the strategies it will employ to improve attendance, but it does not emphasise sufficiently the importance of good quality lessons as an incentive to students to improve their attendance.

Welfare, health and safety of the pupils

The overall welfare, health and safety of students are good. The school meets the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act. A full range of policies are in place which are up to date and give clear guidance to staff. As a result, staff show a high regard for students' welfare. Risk assessments are completed which safeguard students in their school activities. Supervision of students is vigilant and students say they feel safe. Staff are quick to respond to any concerns about students and make good use of external agencies. Students are encouraged to make healthy choices through the good range of options provided in the on-site canteen. Students are offered a free breakfast in the mornings. Staff training in safeguarding, child protection and first aid has been appropriately completed. The school nurse attends

the school regularly for drop-in clinics and when appointments are made. She has also held health fair days with sessions on smoking cessation, healthy eating, dental hygiene and sexual health.

Suitability of the proprietor and staff

All the required checks are made to verify the suitability of staff when they are appointed including those with the Criminal Records Bureau. The school maintains a single central register of these checks in line with the regulations.

School's premises and accommodation

The school accommodation is newly built and provides a bright and airy environment in which to learn. Classrooms on the first floor are spacious and well equipped with whiteboards and comfortable furnishings. The school shares the use of a good computer suite with the college which is located on the second floor. At ground level the canteen facility contains a large seating area which can extend to include outdoor benches. Access to each floor is aided by a large capacity lift. The school also makes use of local sports facilities to compensate for the lack of a large outdoor space on site.

Provision of information for parents, carers and others

The school has a website with useful information for parents, carers and others. Schools wishing to place a student also receive further information about the school's policies and procedures and about the curriculum offered. These are also made available to parents and carers. Regular reports are sent to parents and carers each week. Each term comprehensive reports about each student's progress and attainment are sent out. The school contributes fully to the annual reviews of students with a statement of special educational needs.

Procedures for handling complaints

The procedures fully meet the requirements.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets all of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 as amended ('the Regulations').

What the school could do to improve further

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

- Improve students' attendance especially of those who are persistent absentees.
- Increase the proportion and the consistency of good quality teaching and learning by:
 - ensuring that information about students' prior skills and knowledge is used to plan what they learn next
 - providing interesting and motivating activities which take full account of the different ways in which students like to learn
 - predicting their expected outcomes and ensuring that teaching provides individually-tailored guidance to support the achievement of the targets.
- Improve the rigour of the monitoring of students' academic progress and make better use of the information to inform future learning targets.

Inspection judgement recording form

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

Name of school	Manchester Settlement		
DCSF number	352/6067		
Unique reference number (URN)	135948		
Type of school	Special		
Status	Independent		
Date school opened	May 2009		
Age range of pupils	13–16 years		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 15	Girls: 12	Total: 27
Number on roll (part-time pupils)	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational need	Boys: 2	Girls: 0	Total: 2
Number of pupils who are looked after	Boys: 1	Girls: 0	Total: 1
Annual fees (day pupils)	£6,600		
Address of school	The New Roundhouse 1328–1330 Ashton Old Road Openshaw Manchester M11 1JG		
Telephone number	0161 6148448		
Fax number	0161 3709170		
Email address	info@manchestersettlement.org.uk		
Headteacher	Jason Travis		
Proprietor	Maria Gardiner		
Reporting inspector	John Coleman HMI		
Dates of inspection	30 June–1 July 2010		