

Inspection of Manchester Secondary PRU

Mersey Valley Campus, Barlow Hall Road, Chorlton, Greater Manchester M21 7JJ

Inspection dates: 4 and 5 June 2024

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Good

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils value the opportunity to attend this school, which offers them another chance to access their education. Many pupils have had considerable disruption to their prior education. When they arrive at the school, they are listened to, respected and valued by staff. This helps most pupils to feel comfortable, happy and safe.

The school has raised its expectations for pupils' academic success. It is determined to ensure that pupils participate fully in what the school has to offer. Most pupils learn well. Thoughtfully designed learning pathways help them to gain the qualifications that they need to move on to further education or training.

Most pupils behave well and understand the school's expectations for their conduct. However, this is variable across the different sites. Some pupils' behaviour disrupts the learning of others. In addition, too many pupils do not attend school regularly enough. This means that these pupils miss important learning opportunities.

Pupils receive a broad range of activities that go beyond the academic curriculum. For example, they enjoy working with visitors such as a DJ and learn how to rock climb. Pupils participate in the wider community, including by displaying their artwork in a local gallery.

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

The school has designed a broad and ambitious curriculum. Pupils benefit from a range of subjects that match the breadth of the national curriculum. The curriculum is enhanced with links to sport, art and outdoor education, which the school uses well to re-engage pupils in their learning. Pupils study for a range of GCSEs and vocational awards, which meet pupils' individual aspirations well. In the main, the curriculum identifies what pupils should learn and when they will learn it.

Staff use effective assessment strategies to establish pupils' starting points and to shape future learning activities. Teachers use appropriate information about pupils' special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), including from their 'learner profiles' and their education, health and care (EHC) plans, effectively.

Teachers present information clearly and explain new concepts well. Mostly, they select resources and activities that successfully engage pupils in purposeful learning. However, at some of the school's sites and in some subjects this is not always the case. Sometimes, teachers do not deliver the curriculum as well as they should. As a result, some pupils do not remember what they have been taught.

Many pupils are disengaged from reading when they start at the school. To address this, the school provides high-quality and relevant texts to capture pupils' imaginations. Staff swiftly identify pupils who find reading difficult. These pupils receive effective support to help them to catch up quickly.

The school's systems for identifying the additional needs of pupils are effective. Staff act quickly to put appropriate support in place. The school works with specialists to provide pupils with targeted support for their social, emotional and mental health needs. Increasingly, staff make use of the information that they have regarding the learning and social needs of these pupils and adapt lessons accordingly.

The school has recently introduced a new behaviour policy and approach. Across most sites, procedures to manage poor behaviour and low-level disruption are starting to have a positive impact. For example, pupils receive vouchers for a 'reward shop' when they demonstrate positive conduct. However, staff's management of pupils' behaviour across the different sites is variable. Some pupils' poor behaviour is not addressed well enough. This makes other pupils' experience of school less positive than it should be. At times, their learning is disrupted.

Many pupils start at the school with a poor track record of attendance. The school accurately identifies the barriers that prevent pupils from attending school regularly. However, the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent from school, including those who are disadvantaged, remains too high. Furthermore, some pupils do not attend school on time. This means that they miss valuable learning opportunities.

The school provides a well-considered personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education programme. This, coupled with a well-crafted approach to relationships and sex education and health education, helps pupils to learn about important issues, such as healthy relationships, the dangers of drugs and alcohol and the importance of tolerance and respect. The school supports pupils to build their self-confidence and resilience, for example through outdoor learning and kayaking.

Pupils in key stage 4 receive helpful guidance that supports them in making well-informed decisions about their next steps in education, employment or training. However, some pupils in key stage 3 do not receive enough high-quality careers education and information. They have a limited understanding about the world of work and their aspirations for the future.

In recent times, the school has undertaken a whole-school staffing review which has led to the school experiencing turbulence in staffing. The school, together with the management committee, has navigated substantial challenges well. The management committee has a strong understanding of the school's work and it provides the school with effective support and challenge. Nevertheless, the school has not monitored the impact of the curriculum on pupils' learning well enough.

Most staff are positive about working at the school. They appreciate the school's consideration for their workload and well-being. For example, the school consults with staff when introducing changes to policies and practices.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The curriculum is not delivered consistently well across the different sites. This means that pupils' knowledge is uneven and some pupils' knowledge is not secure. The school should ensure that staff across the different sites are suitably equipped to deliver the curriculum effectively.
- The school has not checked the impact of the curriculum on pupils' achievement sufficiently well. This means that the school does not have sufficient oversight of how effective the delivery of the curriculum is across the different sites. This sometimes leads to gaps in pupils' knowledge. The school should monitor, and improve when required, the impact of the curriculum on pupils' learning more effectively.
- Too many pupils have high levels of persistent absence. Some pupils' punctuality is poor. As a result, these pupils miss out on essential learning and wider opportunities that the school provides. The school should ensure that pupils attend school regularly and on time.
- Some staff do not ensure that pupils behave consistently well. As a result, some pupils demonstrate poor behaviour which disrupts other pupils' learning. The school should ensure that staff have consistently high expectations of pupils' behaviour and implement the school's behaviour policy effectively.
- Some pupils in key stage 3 do not receive enough information about possible next steps in their education or future career paths. This means that these pupils do not have the knowledge that they need to make informed choices. The school should ensure that pupils receive appropriate careers education, information, advice and guidance.

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](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the

school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	136743
Local authority	Manchester
Inspection number	10290170
Type of school	Pupil referral unit
School category	Pupil referral unit
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	278
Appropriate authority	Local authority
Headteacher	Colin Harvey-Rigby
Website	www.mspru.manchester.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	27 and 28 September 2022, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- All pupils attending the school have been permanently excluded from their previous schools. The school admits pupils throughout the year.
- The school operates from five separate sites. The main site, for pupils in Years 7 to 11, is located at Mersey Valley Campus, Barlow Hall Road, Chorlton, Greater Manchester M21 7JJ. The Richmond Park site, at 223 Stockport Road, Ardwick, Manchester M12 4DY, accommodates key stage 3 pupils. Three sites accommodate pupils in key stage 4: the Proctor site, located at Hulme Street, off Jackson Crescent, Hulme, Manchester M15 5EF; the Clayton site, located at Clayton Street, Manchester M11 4HT and the Newton Heath site, located at Averill Street, Newton Heath, Manchester, M40 1PF.
- The school also operates from two satellite college centres for pupils in Year 11. The North Manchester Learning Centre is at The Manchester College, North Manchester Sixth Form, Rochdale Road, Harpurhey M9 4AF. The South Manchester Learning Centre is at Brownley Road, Manchester M22 9UH.
- The headteacher was appointed in March 2023.
- The school uses four registered alternative providers.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and

engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors spoke with the headteacher, school leaders and staff. Inspectors also met with members of the management committee, including the chair, and a representative of the local authority. An inspector spoke with representatives of some alternative providers used by the school.
- Inspectors visited all of the school's sites. They met with staff and pupils, and observed pupils in lessons and at social times.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils about their experiences of school and their views on behaviour and bullying. Inspectors also observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and at breaktimes.
- Inspectors reviewed a wide range of evidence, including the school's self-evaluation and improvement documents, minutes of committee meetings and records of pupils' behaviour and attendance.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, mathematics, art and design, humanities and PSHE. For each deep dive, they discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers and with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors spoke with leaders about the curriculum in some other subjects.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments, and the responses to Ofsted's online surveys for pupils and for staff.

Inspection team

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