

# Alex Park Democratic School

Alexandra Park Children's Learning Community, Demesne Road, Whalley Range, Manchester, M16 8PH

**Inspection dates**

2 October 2018

**Overall outcome**

**The school is likely to meet all the independent school standards when it opens**

## Main inspection findings

### Part 1. Quality of education provided

*Paragraph 2(1), 2(1)(a), 2(1)(b), 2(1)(b)(i), 2(1)(b)(ii), 2(2), 2(2)(a), 2(2)(b) and 2(2)(c)*

- The school has a clear and effective written curriculum policy which is suitable for the five to 11 age range. Pupils follow a programme of teaching which is broad and balanced. It provides regular opportunities for pupils to develop their learning by researching areas of personal interest and work with others on joint research projects.
- The school proposes that pupils have the opportunity to study a broad range of subjects in key stages 1 and 2. These will promote their knowledge and understanding in languages and literacy, mathematics, science, technology, the arts and humanities. Pupils also study Spanish as a modern foreign language.
- Leaders have designed detailed schemes of work which the teacher adapts to suit individual aptitudes and the pupils' personal interests. Leaders have constructed schemes of work in a way which positively promote the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

*Paragraph 2(2)(d), 2(2)(d)(i), 2(2)(d)(ii), 2(2)(e), 2(2)(e)(i), 2(2)(e)(ii), 2(2)(e)(iii), 2(2)(h) and 2(2)(i)*

- The school has detailed plans in place to promote pupils' personal, social, health and economic education effectively. This is an integral part of the school's core curriculum. Leaders thread pupils' personal, social, health and economic education through a broad range of areas of learning. The school's programme reflects its aims and ethos and promotes an understanding of the protected characteristics identified in the 2010 Equality Act.
- Leaders develop learning through the values of 'freedom', 'commitment' and 'responsibility'. Leaders encourage pupils to consider these values when researching areas of personal interest and during joint research topics.

*Paragraph 3, 3(a), 3(b), 3(c), 3(d), 3(e), 3(f), 3(g), 3(h), 3(i), 3(j) and 4*

- Pupils receive a broad range of opportunities to progress in all aspects of their education. Leaders have designed a curriculum which allows pupils to explore learning in many ways. For example, pupils undertake personal learning projects that they choose themselves and are of interest to them. Teachers skilfully craft the requirements of the national curriculum around these chosen projects to ensure that pupils increase their understanding and develop their skills. This encourages pupils to be self-motivated and able to learn and think for themselves. Additionally, the use of common projects enables pupils to work together effectively to develop their learning as a team.
- Resources are of a good quality, quantity and range for all pupils. Teachers present them well in the classroom. This allows ease of access and encourages pupils to use them effectively.
- The links between pupils' academic needs and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are a strength of the provision. Leaders weave pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through lessons.
- Teachers are effective in planning a wide range of classroom activities. Teachers' planning ensures productive use of learning time. Teachers demonstrate a good knowledge and understanding of the subject matter that they teach the pupils.
- Leaders manage pupils' behaviour exceptionally well. They focus on positive incentives rather than sanctions. Pupils are given a wide range of choices in the ways in which they learn and the places that the learning takes place. Pupils enjoy regular opportunities to share, discuss and reflect on their learning.
- Leaders ensure that there are always high levels of supervision. Strong relationships between pupils and teachers reflect the expectations set by leaders. Good supervision levels ensure that pupils of all ages enjoy regular access to both indoor and outdoor learning opportunities.
- Teachers evaluate pupils' performance closely and produce daily reports on progress. Assessment systems are thorough. Teachers use them effectively to support the personalised learning programmes of each pupil.
- The standards for the quality of education provided are likely to be met.

**Part 2. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils**

*Paragraph 5, 5(a), 5(b), 5(b)(i), 5(b)(ii), 5(b)(iii), 5(b)(iv), 5(b)(v), 5(b)(vi), 5(b)(vii), 5(c), 5(d), 5(d)(i), 5(d)(ii) and 5(d)(iii)*

- As a democratic community, the development of spiritual, moral, social and cultural values of the pupils is core to the existence of this school. The promotion of spiritual, moral, social and cultural education together with fundamental British values is a golden thread which weaves through the curriculum. It also links closely with the promotion of pupils' rights and responsibilities.
- By encouraging pupils to use their freedom to choose their own learning projects and to decide as a group which common projects to undertake, leaders enable pupils to develop their self-knowledge, self-esteem and self-confidence. Teachers encourage

pupils to evaluate their own learning and to make decisions on how they want to move forward.

- Teachers encourage pupils to learn about different religions and their positive contribution to our society, including atheism and humanism. Leaders ensure that pupils have a clear understanding of a range of cultural traditions by encouraging pupils to bring ideas for learning from their own family traditions. Teachers weave these ideas through the curriculum.
- Teachers implement every change in the classroom after going through a collective decision-making process. In this way, pupils gain an understanding of how citizens can influence decision-making through the democratic process. Pupils choose classroom rules to help them to distinguish right from wrong. The school's ethos, 'with freedom comes responsibility' is key to this.
- Pupils go on a range of visits to various public institutions such as museums and libraries. They also set their own rules in school. These are discussed, decided and voted on in the daily meetings that they hold. In this way they develop an understanding of culture and of the rule of law.
- Leaders have procedures in place to inhibit the promotion of extremist or partisan materials and views.
- The standard for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is likely to be met.

### Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

#### *Paragraph 7, 7(a) and 7(b)*

- The school's safeguarding policy is up to date and reflects the latest statutory guidance. The policy is supported by a wide range of other policies such as those for providing food and drinks, administering medication and dealing with illness and infection.

#### *Paragraph 9, 9(a), 9(b), 9(c) and 10*

- The school's behaviour policy identifies the expected standard of behaviour for pupils. Leaders and teachers implement it effectively. It includes information about sanctions imposed for serious misbehaviour. The policy links closely to pupils' personal, social and emotional development and focuses on the importance of mutual respect and tolerance. The anti-bullying policy clearly sets out the staff's responsibilities in dealing with bullying. Leaders ensure that it takes into account the ages of the pupils in school. It clearly identifies the strategies that leaders implement to prevent bullying.

#### *Paragraph 11, 12, 14, 16(a) and 16(b)*

- A written health and safety policy is in place which outlines all procedures to keep pupils and staff safe. It is closely linked to the school's safeguarding policies and risk assessments.
- The proprietor ensures compliance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire safety) Order 2005. Work to check the safety of electrical installations and equipment is detailed and comprehensive.

- Fire routes are visible and free from clutter. Clear signage is in place to enable adults and pupils to leave the building safely.
- Annual maintenance of firefighting equipment (such as fire extinguishers and the fire alarm) are undertaken. During the inspection, the proprietor provided paperwork to confirm that such checks have been made.
- The fire risk assessment shows that the premises comply with regulations and meet the required standards.
- The school does not have a website. However, leaders ensure that a broad range of information, including the school's safeguarding policy, is available on request.
- Pupils are very well supervised. Leaders deploy staff in an effective manner.
- The standard for the welfare, health and safety of pupils is likely to be met.

#### Part 4. Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

*Paragraph 17, 18, 18(1), 18(2), 18(2)(a), 18(2)(b), 18(2)(c), 18(2)(c)(i), 18(2)(c)(ii), 18(2)(c)(iii), 18(2)(c)(iv), 18(2)(d), 18(2)(e), 18(2)(f), 18(3), 19(2), 19(2)(a)(i), 19(2)(a)(i)(aa), 19(2)(a)(i)(bb), 19(2)(a)(i)(cc), 19(2)(a)(ii), 19(2)(b), 19(2)(c), 19(2)(d)(i), 19(2)(d)(ii), 19(3), 20(6), 20(6)(a), 20(6)(a)(i), 20(6)(a)(ii), 20(6)(b), 20(6)(b)(i), 20(6)(b)(ii), 20(6)(b)(iii), 20(6)(c), 21(1), 21(2), 21(3), 21(3)(a), 21(3)(a)(i), 21(3)(a)(ii), 21(3)(a)(iii), 21(3)(a)(iv), 21(3)(a)(v), 21(3)(a)(vi), 21(3)(a)(vii), 21(3)(a)(viii), 21(3)(b), 21(4), 21(5), 21(5)(a), 21(5)(a)(i), 21(5)(a)(ii), 21(5)(b), 21(5)(c), 21(6), 21(7), 21(7)(a), 21(7)(b)*

- Leaders have undertaken all the necessary checks on the suitability of staff to work with children.
- Leaders are aware that appropriate overseas checks need to be made for any workers who have lived or worked abroad. There are no outstanding checks.
- Leaders do not intend to use external persons or agencies to provide supply cover to the school. Leaders intend to make use of the staff employed to cover absences and planning and preparation time.
- All the necessary checks have been made on the background of the directors of the school concerning their suitability for their roles, including enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service checks.
- The school's single central record is well presented, complete and up to date. It contains all the necessary information about members of staff, including checks to see if they are subject to prohibition orders.
- The standards about the suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors are likely to be met.

## Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

### *Paragraph 23(1), 23(1)(a), 23(1)(b) and 23(1)(c)*

- Suitable toilet facilities are available for the use of all pupils. They are in individual cubicles provided with suitable locks. There is an adequate number for both boys and girls.
- These toilets are for the sole use of the pupils. An additional toilet is accessible to boys and girls who have physical disabilities.

### *Paragraph 24(1), 24(1)(a) and 24(1)(c)*

- Provision is in place for the medical examination and treatment of pupils and for the short-term care of sick and injured pupils.

### *Paragraph 25, 26, 27, 27(a) and 27(b)*

- The school's buildings are clean and well maintained. Appropriate levels of sound proofing are in place between rooms.
- Classrooms and other areas within the school building are well lit, bright and airy. External lighting ensures that the premises are safe to access and leave after dark.

### *Paragraph 28(1), 28(1)(a), 28(1)(b), 28(1)(c), 28(1)(d), 28(2), 28(2)(a) and 28(2)(b)*

- Pupils have access to cold drinking water from sinks which feed from the mains water supply. All drinking water is clearly labelled. Washing facilities are available for pupils.
- Hot water, of a suitable temperature, is available for hand washing.
- Toilets and urinals have adequate supplies of cold water.

### *Paragraph 29(1), 29(1)(a) and 29(1)(b)*

- The classrooms are part of a building which also houses Alexandra Park Children's Learning Community, which is an early years setting also owned by the proprietorial body.
- There is an appropriate range of outdoor spaces for pupils to play in. Teachers use the local park to teach physical education. The proprietor has detailed risk assessments for these activities.
- Leaders have ensured that the standards for the premises of and accommodation at schools are likely to be met.

## Part 6. Provision of information

### *Paragraph 32(1), 32(1)(a), 32(1)(b), 32(1)(c), 32(1)(d), 32(1)(f), 32(1)(h), 32(1)(i), 32(1)(j), 32(2), 32(2)(a), 32(2)(b)(i), 32(2)(c), 32(2)(d), 32(3), 32(3)(a), 32(3)(b), 32(3)(c), 32(3)(d), 32(3)(e) and 32(3)(f)*

- The school does not currently have a website.
- The information required by the standards, including appropriate contact details for the school and the proprietorial company are available for parents.

- Copies of the school's complaints procedures and up to date safeguarding and child protection policies are also freely available in paper form. Leaders have ensured that copies of all the school's policies are available to prospective parents on request.
- Leaders have ensured that appropriate procedures are in place to report on pupils' progress and attainment to parents.
- Leaders demonstrate a clear understanding of their duty to report the annual income and expenditure relating to any pupil who is wholly or partly-funded by a local authority. Leaders demonstrate a good understanding of how they will provide information to support the annual review process of any pupil who has an education, health and care plan.
- Procedures are in place to report on pupils' progress and attainment to parents and also to local authorities who place pupils in the school. Currently, parents of the existing pupils receive a detailed report at the end of each term.
- Leaders have ensured that all the standards for the provision of information are likely to be met.

#### Part 7. Manner in which complaints are handled

*Paragraph 33, 33(a), 33(b), 33(c), 33(d), 33(e), 33(f), 33(g), 33(h), 33(i), 33(i)(ii), 33(j), 33(j)(i), 33(j)(ii) and 33(k)*

- The proprietor has ensured that the complaints procedure is freely available to parents on request.
- The complaints policy sets out the informal and initial formal stages of the complaints procedure. The policy also includes parents' right to a panel hearing with appropriate representation.
- The standards relating to the manner in which complaints are handled are likely to be met.

#### Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

*Paragraph 34(1), 34(1)(a), 34(1)(b) and 34(1)(c)*

- Persons with leadership and management responsibility in school demonstrate a broad range of skills and knowledge appropriate to their roles.
- Leaders actively promote the welfare, health and safety of pupils. All leaders and staff are extremely vigilant about safeguarding.
- Detailed provision is in place to support all aspects of pupils' well-being. This is a strength of the provision.
- The standards for quality of leadership and management of schools are likely to be met.

### Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

- The school's equality policy sets out the ways in which leaders will support all the protected characteristics. The promotion of equality is evident in the school's schemes of work. It is particularly evident in sections relating to personal, social, health and cultural education. As a result, pupils are likely to be well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Leaders have ensured that the requirements outlined in Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 are likely to be met.

## **Compliance with regulatory requirements**

The school is likely to meet the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

## Proposed school details

Unique reference number	146337
DfE registration number	352/6014
Inspection number	10077899

This inspection was carried out under section 99 of the Education and Skills Act 2008, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's likely compliance with the independent school standards that are required for registration as an independent school.

Type of school	Independent democratic school
School status	Independent day school
Proprietor	MPECC Limited
Chair	Ms Susana Lopez Penedo
Headteacher	Ms Susana Lopez Penedo
Annual fees (day pupils)	Not yet determined
Telephone number	0161 2268080
Website	No website
Email address	<a href="mailto:enquiries@alexandraparkclc.co.uk">enquiries@alexandraparkclc.co.uk</a>
Date of previous standard inspection	Not previously inspected

## Provider already operating

Number of pupils of compulsory school age	21
Number of pupils of compulsory school age for whom a statement is maintained under section 324, or who is looked after by a local authority	1
Total hours operating as a school per week	25
Total hours of teaching provided per week	25

## Pupils

	<b>School's current position</b>	<b>School's proposal</b>	<b>Inspector's recommendation</b>
Age range of pupils	5–11	5–11	5–11
Number of pupils on the school roll	21	25	25

## Pupils

	<b>School's current position</b>	<b>School's proposal</b>
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Mixed
Number of full-time pupils of compulsory school age	4	25
Number of part-time pupils	17	0
Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	0	Up to 25
Of which, number of pupils with an education, health and care plan	1	Up to 25
Of which, number of pupils paid for by a local authority with an education, health and care plan	0	Up to 25

## Staff

	School's current position	School's proposal
Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff	1	1
Number of part-time teaching staff	0	0
Number of staff in the welfare provision	1	Not yet determined

## Information about this proposed school

- Alex Park Democratic School will be an independent co-educational day school proposing registration for boys and girls aged five to 11, from Year 1 to Year 6.
- The school is to be housed in the premises of the existing Alexandra Park Children's Learning Community.
- The school aims to promote a democratic curriculum. This will foster in pupils the values and skills needed to be citizens able to take part in society by becoming active members of their communities.
- Alex Park Democratic School proposes to present an educational environment within which pupils can develop a largely experiential curriculum which is developed with staff and pupils in mixed-age social groups.
- Some pupils may have an education, health and care plan.
- The school is already providing part-time provision of up to 18 hours a week for 17 pupils
- The school provides more than 18 hours a week of teaching time for pupils; some pupils have full-time provision.
- Pupils are currently admitted to the school following referrals from other schools, local authorities or other agencies.

## Information about this inspection

- This was the first pre-registration inspection of the proposed school.
- During the inspection, the inspector held meetings with the representatives of the proprietorial company, including the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and the school's administrator.
- The inspector checked the school's likely compliance with the independent school standards.
- The inspector observed two lessons where a range of learning activities were taking place.
- The inspector scrutinised documents provided by the school. This included a broad range of health and safety documents including risk assessments, registers and policies. This also included the school's safeguarding policy.
- The inspector also checked documentation relating to the curriculum, including schemes of work and the curriculum policy.
- The inspector checked the premises.
- The inspector checked the proposed school's register of checks on staff.
- The inspector reviewed the proprietor's policies in relation to welfare, health and safety. A scrutiny of the proprietor's safeguarding procedures, including recruitment processes and checks, was also undertaken.
- A tour of the school premises was jointly undertaken with the headteacher.

## Inspection team

Gill Pritchard, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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