

Manchester Education Strategy 2024–2034



Context

This strategy supports UNICEF Article 28 (Right to Education) and Article 29 (Goals of Education) where it is stated that education must develop every child's personality, talents and abilities to the full.

The strategy also supports the vision set out in Our Manchester, Our Children: Manchester's Children and Young People's Plan, that all children and young people should be safe, happy, healthy and successful, and that disabled children can be independent and have choices.

The overall aim of the strategy is to meet the ambition set out in the Our Manchester Strategy for a highly skilled city, where all children have the best start in life, and where they are given the opportunity to go to excellent schools, colleges and universities that will prepare them for the future job market.



Introduction

Our children and young people told us that education is extremely important to them and that they want settings, schools and colleges that:

- Listen and respond to what they have to say and ensure children and young people know their rights and are influential
- Are inclusive, promote equality, and challenge discrimination
- Are places where they feel safe and where they belong
- Support their mental and physical wellbeing and self-esteem
- Provide trips and residential, and provide or promote low-cost clubs and activities
- Provide them with skills for life
- Support them with their transitions at all phases
- Promote awareness of climate change and take steps to reduce their carbon footprint
- Provide a digital offer relevant to the future world
- Provide good-quality careers advice, including access to employment activities and work experience
- They can travel safely and independently to
- Enable them to live satisfying lives and get a good job, offering some the opportunity to access the most competitive career pathways.

These asks from our children and young people form a golden thread throughout the strategy. In response to these, a key part of our strategy is an offer to all children and young people educated in Manchester that will form part of their educational experience and support their future success. This offer is based on existing practice across many of our educational establishments. Our strategy will ensure that these opportunities are consistent and made available to all our children and young people regardless of which setting or school they attend and their family's income.

The strategy includes early education in our Early Years settings, our school system and alternative provision, and our sixth form colleges and providers located in Manchester.

Our offer to children and young people educated in Manchester

Throughout their education in our settings, schools and colleges, every child and young person will have the opportunity to:

- Develop Skills for Life: communication, creativity and problem-solving, self-management, self-belief, team-building
- Take part in and/or experience a performance
- Attend a live sporting event
- Visit Manchester City Centre
- Visit a library, museum and an art gallery
- Experience swimming
- Visit a place of natural beauty
- Visit different places of worship
- Receive a book as part of a transition read, and meet an author
- Enter a competition
- Make a contribution to the local community/environment and engage in social action
- Participate in physical and outdoor adventure activities
- Learn how to achieve good physical and mental health, including through healthy eating
- Learn about how to stay safe and have positive relationships
- Experience travelling independently
- Participate in a democratic process
- Think critically and debate an issue
- Use advanced technology to develop and use digital skills
- Visit a Further Education college and/or university
- Meet inspiring role models
- Access work experience and/or a work placement
- Volunteer
- Develop enterprise skills, eg. by raising money for a charity
- Access a mentor if needed.

Our shared values and collective ambition

From across the sectors, we have agreed that our shared values are:

- Aspirational and ambitious for our children and young people
- For educational excellence and promotion of lifelong learning
- Inclusive to all learners
- In the promotion of resilience, health and wellbeing
- Collaborative and connected
- Inspirational and creative
- In the promotion of fairness and equity, to reduce the impact of any disadvantage
- Responsive and accountable to our families and local community
- A sense of place locally, nationally and internationally.

Our collective ambition as an education system is that through education our children and young people will:

- Form and shape future opportunities in our city
- Have high aspirations and choices as they progress into the world of work
- Have well-developed skills for life (self-belief; self-management; team-working; communication; creativity, and problem-solving)
- Be proud of their identity, feel safe, and have a sense of belonging and pride in Manchester
- Understand their rights and have opportunities to influence decisions about themselves and their communities
- Be intellectually curious, creative, and socially and morally responsible
- Be articulate, numerate and have a love of books and reading
- Achieve outcomes in line with, or better than their peers nationally
- Have good mental and physical wellbeing
- Have the digital skills that benefit them and shape their future
- Be informed and empowered to influence sustainability and the green economy.

How we will achieve our collective ambition

Ensuring all children access excellent Early Years education

This will be achieved by continuing to work in partnership with our Early Years sector to:

- Ensure Manchester's Early Years providers are fully aware of national and local developments and are at the forefront of practice
- Increase the uptake of nursery places and support more flexible Early Years education where needed
- Ensure sufficiency of high-quality sustainable daycare and respond to the extension of the free entitlement offer
- Provide start-up advice, support and courses to expand Early Years education and the childcare sector where most needed
- Address the impact of the pandemic on our most disadvantaged children through determined and targeted action, including investment in additional speech and language programmes and family support
- Promote what should ordinarily be available for children with additional needs
- Champion and lead inclusive practice through the delivery of evidence-based programmes, our quality-assurance process, special educational needs and disabilities training, and specialist outreach services
- Implement the Manchester Early Years Quality Assurance Framework
- Support providers to successfully transition children to school.

Ensuring all children access excellent schools

This will be achieved by continuing to work with our school leaders and multi-academy trusts to:

- Ensure the city's education offer comprises highly inclusive mainstream schools that clearly state what is ordinarily available for children with additional needs, including a comprehensive graduated response, resourced provision, as well as specialist and alternative provision to meet the needs of all learners
- Encourage all schools and settings to obtain the Rights Respecting Schools Award or adopt a similar approach
- Implement the Inclusion Strategy and use our Inclusion Toolkit and other evidence-based programmes to reduce exclusion and support early identification and intervention at all phases
- Implement a multi-agency approach to ensure regular school attendance
- Ensure children access a curriculum and resources that they can relate to
- Address the impact of the pandemic on our most disadvantaged learners through determined and targeted action, including provision of speech and language programmes, and strengthen links to Family Hubs
- Ensure children and young people have access to books and literature through continued support for Read Manchester, working with the National Literacy Trust
- Provide children and young people with an enhanced and aspirational digital offer
- Ensure children and young people access high-quality music, physical education and arts teaching, including opportunities to compete, and perform to an audience
- Provide children and young people with opportunities to experience outdoor education through our Outdoor Education Plan
- Provide a robust healthy schools offer, including an inclusive approach to RSE (relationship and sex education) and PSHE (personal social health education) where confident educators are the key resource
- Develop an agreed approach to transition into and between schools, ensuring that this is a positive experience for children and young people
- Share tools and resources to enable schools to be 'poverty proof'.

Ensuring young people are equipped for adult lives, know the opportunities available to them, and have access to an excellent post-16 education offer

This will be achieved by working with our settings, schools and colleges to:

- Promote and embed Manchester's Skills for Life: communication, team-working, creativity and problem-solving, self-belief and self-management
- Ensure young people access high-quality careers information advice and guidance and that they are aware of post-16 pathways and skills gaps in the city
- Promote, with equal value, technical and academic pathways across all levels
- Ensure sufficient academic, technical and apprenticeship pathways are in place to meet the needs and aspirations of young people and the local economy
- Ensure young people continue to have opportunities to achieve qualifications in English and Maths post-16
- Commission a range of evidence-based interventions to prevent young people from becoming NEET and identify young people at risk early
- Increase the number of supported internships available for young people with additional needs
- Work with employers to provide sustained and meaningful opportunities for young people, including volunteering, work experience and industry placements
- Celebrate success and recognise the achievements of our children and young people
- Draw on the expertise and contributions of our universities to support education settings and inspire our learners
- Support young people to overcome barriers to achieving ambitions through promotion of schemes such as the Rising Star Award.

Ensuring all children and young people are taught in suitable and sustainable good-quality learning environments by a highly skilled and committed workforce.

We will achieve this by working with all our education providers to:

- Ensure Manchester is regarded as a great place to work for education professionals, working with our partners to support the recruitment and development of a high-quality and diverse education workforce
- Support settings, schools and colleges to be good employers for all staff by ensuring they access career pathways and development, are well supported, pay the living wage, and work collaboratively with trade unions
- Invest in educators to ensure they are skilled and confident in meeting the needs of our child population and that they are equipped to respond to learners with additional needs, demographic changes and emerging needs
- Promote evidence-based approaches and research, and evaluate what works best in our city
- Support and encourage collaboration and improvement through our quality assurance arrangements, networks, brokered support, communication, and the development of an education website for Manchester
- Support well-informed and effective school governance, and the recruitment of talented governors from diverse backgrounds and with different skills
- Secure and invest capital funding in Early Years and school buildings to ensure children learn in high-quality, low-carbon modern environments
- Implement our Education Carbon Reduction Plan across schools, colleges and universities
- Ensure Manchester is influencing national policy and benefiting from opportunities for external investment and funding
- Ensure Manchester is recognised as a great place for children and young people to grow up and learn by celebrating our successes and promoting the work we do
- Have a clear set of expectations for all providers of education working in Manchester.

Our expectations

We already have a positive relationship with our education providers and Multi-Academy Trusts that operate in the city, and we expect all our local providers to meet our ambition for children and young people. This includes:

- Listening to and understanding our children and young people and their parents/ carers, learning from their experiences, and working in co-production with them
- Embracing our vision and priorities for inclusion and equity, as set out in our Inclusion Strategy to ensure every child has a sense of belonging, feels respected, and is valued for who they are
- Being ambitious and ensuring that all children and young people have access to high-quality learning, and have the opportunity to develop skills, knowledge, confidence and resilience, as well as the social and cultural capital to support their success
- Taking determined action to reduce disadvantage and achieve outcomes in line with national guidance
- Celebrating the diversity and talent of Manchester's children and young people and valuing their range of backgrounds, their heritage, and experiences
- Ensuring that all children and young people are prepared for adult life as active citizens and ready for employment
- Taking collective ownership for ensuring that all schools, settings and colleges in the city are excellent and all our children and young people achieve
- Working collaboratively across all phases of education to support their successful and seamless transition of our children and young people through education and into employment
- Developing trusting and supportive partnerships with the Council, local services and local schools, colleges and universities so that together we can make the best use of our combined resources and expertise to effectively support our children and young people
- Being proud and passionate about Manchester, being an active partner in the city, informing and implementing our local priorities, and working collaboratively to develop solutions to our challenges
- Being community-focused and viewed as a vital part of the local community.

In practice, as part of these expectations, we require our education providers based in the city to:

- Commit to work with Manchester City Council and partners to deliver the city's ambitions and priorities for children and young people, along with our ambition to become a UNICEF Child Friendly City
- Support our priorities for inclusive education by:
 - » Recognising all types of achievement
 - » Promoting equality and diversity
 - » Welcoming children from a diverse range of backgrounds, SEND and abilities and engaging with local admissions arrangements
 - » Promoting good attendance
 - » Identifying and responding early to children and young people's additional needs
 - » Providing a graduated response to need, working in partnership with local services, and engaging with our processes to support vulnerable children
 - » Using exclusion as a last resort
 - » Ensuring that schools, colleges and universities are 'poverty proof'
- Share data with the Council and other schools, settings and colleges where appropriate
- Participate in local forums and other networks
- Co-operate with the Manchester Safeguarding Partnership
- Engage with our local quality assurance arrangements and campaigns
- Share expertise and learning with other schools, colleges and universities
- Work with the Council to ensure we have the right number of places in the right areas of the city
- Commit to high standards of environmental sustainability and promote active travel
- Be a good employer for all staff by giving them access to career pathways and development, and ensuring they are well supported, paid the living wage and funded by trade union facility time
- Commit to community engagement, enabling the community to use their buildings and facilities where possible
- Commit to local governance or committee arrangements, including parents/ carers and the local community.

The role of Manchester City Council

Manchester City Council is in a unique position to narrate, coordinate and ensure coherence across the local education system to ensure all children and young people receive an excellent education and that families are treated fairly and equitably. This includes:

- Listening and responding to what children, young people and parents/carers tell us about their educational aspirations, and ensuring that this is at the heart of our decision-making
- Representing and promoting the interests and rights of Manchester children and young people locally and nationally
- Championing the education of all children and young people, and acting as a corporate parent of the children and young people we look after
- Quality-assuring our schools, settings and elective home-educators to provide an overview of education in the city, identifying common strengths, challenges and risks
- Ensuring that there is coherence, consistency and equity across education settings, and that agreed values and expectations are met
- Holding multi-academy trusts and other education providers to account in a fair and consistent way, and addressing concerns in a timely and decisive way to minimise the impact on learners
- Working with partners to support children and young people's wellbeing, and ensuring they are safe wherever they are educated, and that education is represented in the Manchester Safeguarding Partnership
- Working to reduce the impact of poverty and disadvantage on children and young people's educational opportunities through the use of the city's collective resources and partnerships, and championing investment nationally
- Connecting education settings to opportunities available in the city and linking them to employers and businesses
- Committing to local governance and committee arrangements which include parents/carers and representatives from the local community
- Delivering our statutory duties effectively and efficiently, within the resources available and in collaboration with our partners, and co-produced with parents/carers and young people when appropriate.

To do this we will:

- Provide a single point of contact for all our settings and schools to maintain links with the Council and wider partnerships
- Ensure clear and transparent communication to and from schools/settings and promote local priorities
- Encourage local partnerships to share practice and develop solutions to local or emerging challenges
- Convene multi-agency teams and partners around schools, to provide support, help and guidance when appropriate
- Develop and promote best practice using research and evidence
- Establish and co-ordinate common arrangements for transition through all education phases
- Apply for and implement grant funding when it benefits Manchester children and young people.



The role of our partners

As well as the Council, there are a number of organisations that have an impact on enabling settings, schools and colleges to improve outcomes for children and young people. These include: three local dioceses, the Manchester Schools Alliance (MSA), One Education, our designated Teaching School Hub, and the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA). We work in partnership with these organisations and education leaders to ensure training, development and support are available when key themes and gaps are identified, and that we have a joined-up approach.

MSA is partnership-led and funded directly by schools and colleges, with the Council as a partner. Its aims are to promote collaboration, networks, innovation and practice-sharing across the system and respond to identified priorities and themes.

One Education is an organisation that provides a range of pupil and business-related services and support for schools and trusts across Manchester.

Manchester City Council works as part of the Greater Manchester Combined Authority. Working as part of a combined authority adds value and consistency to the education offer across GM, tackling regional inequalities, and through the GM skills devolution deal will align technical education and the needs of the local economy.

Governance of this strategy

This strategy will be governed through our Strategic Education Partnership. This partnership includes representatives from Early Years, a range of schools (academies, maintained, voluntary aided and voluntary controlled), the post-16 sector, universities, as well as senior officers from Public Health, Work and Skills, and Neighbourhoods. It is chaired by the Executive member for Education and Children's Services. Twice a year, the Partnership has a joint meeting with the Work and Skills Board to ensure work is aligned.

