

MANCHESTER COMMUNICATION ACADEMY (MCA)**What was the main aim of the measure?**

To support effective teaching and learning, as well as social investment to support the surrounding community.

What were the conditions and steps taken that have contributed most to the success of the measure?

The academy has developed partnerships and initiatives with local businesses, voluntary and community organisations, service providers, and local primary schools. Many see the academy's social investment team as a common space where they can share local knowledge, and concerns and identify possibilities to work together.

Which stakeholders were involved in identifying needs and in the planning and design of the measure?

Partnerships are in place with local businesses, voluntary and community organisations, service providers, and local primary schools.

- The sponsor has served as a catalyst, not only for the academy to 'do things differently', but to begin to create a coherent neighbourhood programme – for children, families, residents, and schools. It is also important that the academy's governing body is committed to supporting its senior leadership team to realise this vision.
- Rather than trying to fit new partnership arrangements into existing school structures, partnerships need to be supported by structures which can help them to achieve their goals – in this instance, through the creation of a registered charitable company.

Who was involved in implementing the measure?

The academy is committed to working in partnership with the neighbourhood's primary schools, and other local services and organisations to develop neighbourhood-wide initiatives such as the Family Zone (see related Toolkit case study).

Who has key responsibility for implementation?

School and community

How are the different people involved in implementation being supported (e.g. do they receive specific training?)

The academy is an accredited initial teacher training provider so that it can train teachers with the skills needed to support a flexible, outward-looking approach. The academy also holds a weekly continuing professional development session for staff, often led by staff themselves.

What have been the obstacles to introducing the measure? How have they been addressed?

To harness the potential of this loose arrangement and ensure that the neighbourhood's resources are not 'captured' by the academy, MCA has supported the creation of a registered charitable organisation. The academy's core partners are trustees, and the charity operates independently of the academy for the benefit of the whole area.

As part of its pastoral offer, the academy offers a range of fully-funded or subsidised extra-curricular learning opportunities; deals with the acute symptoms of disadvantage – from buying uniforms, to hosting a food bank which transferred from a local community setting; and has developed a ‘pastoral tracking system’ which follows every student’s attainment, attendance and behaviour alongside their exposure to known ‘risk factors’ associated with underachievement (covering factors ranging from known chronic health conditions, to having families members in the criminal justice system, to experiencing bereavement or homelessness). As soon as a student ‘dips’ or risks are flagged, appropriate supports can be put in place. In these instances, the school works collaboratively with the student, family members and peers, to ensure that a holistic programme of support addressing the student’s full range of needs is developed. This might also include providing specific supports for family members in instances where this will also support the student.

Is there a monitoring/evaluation system in place? What is monitored? Who monitors and how?
(text field)

The academy has a linked governor for each area of its activity and the governing system, as a whole, tracks the effectiveness of its provision and value for money.

The academy collects evidence on the impacts of all of its activities and for every student involved in the pastoral tracking programme. Some of these data are publicly reported.

A PhD student has just been appointed to work with the school to evaluate its approach to meeting the needs of disadvantaged students.

The academy’s offer is informed by learning from:

- The national evaluation of extended school
- The Coalition of Community Schools
- Evaluations of the Harlem Children’s Zone and Promise Neighbourhoods
- Evaluations of area-based initiatives in England (Education Action Zones, Excellence in Cities, Sure Start), and France (Education Priority Areas).

Are further evaluation planned and when will the results be available?

What has been the impact of the measure?

In 2017 the Manchester Communication Academy took the Community impact award at the prestigious 2017 TES Schools Awards. The awards, now in their ninth year, recognise outstanding contributions made by education teams and individuals to help students around the country to succeed, both inside and outside the classroom.

The academy has improved its examination results for three years running, and it has been recognised by the Department for Education as one of the most improved schools in England for student progress and attainment.

What resources are involved (material, space, amount of funding)?

The academy has initiated a model of joint fundraising and investment to support some projects.

Further info (website, contact person e-mail, organisation details)

<http://www.manchestercommunicationacademy.com/>

Relevant documents, photos or videos

<http://www.innovatemyschool.com/ideas/once-upon-a-time-in-manchester-interview> (interview with principal on the academy's approach)

Winner of Times Education Supplement Award for community impact award

Cited as good practice example in recent government report on social mobility:
<https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Growing-Up-North-March-2018-1.pdf>

Case study in the 2018 Parliamentary Review of Secondary Education:

<http://www.manchestercommunicationacademy.com/latestnews/manchester-communication-academy-has-been-featured-in-the-parliamentary-review>

<http://www.theparliamentaryreview.co.uk/organisations/manchester-communication-academy>

Case study in international handbook of extended and community education:

- Dyson, A., Kerr, K., Heath, L. & Hodson, P. (2016). From school to children's community: the development of Manchester Communication Academy, England. In H. A. Lawson & D. Van Veen (eds.), Developing community schools, community learning centers, multi-service schools and extended-service schools: International exemplars for practice, policy and research. The Hague: Springer International. 277-302