



## JOHN RYAN'S STORE OF THE WEEK

# M&S's back-to-school shop Trafford Centre

The number of parents who wander into a big store in search of back-to-school clothing is considerable, whether the chosen emporium is Tesco, Primark, BHS, New Look or any of the other retailers that see the category as a moneyspinner. Yet sometimes it can be hard to undertake this shopping mission, owing to the multiple distractions that are present in the shop, for adults and children alike.

Now help is at hand, or at least it is for another two days. Marks & Spencer has opened its first standalone back-to-school shop, in Manchester's Trafford Centre. On the face of it, this would seem a perfectly reasonable thing to do and the real puzzle must be why others haven't done it before. The answer, in part at least, must be the availability of suitable shop units when they are needed for this to be a profitable proposition. To its credit, M&S has seized the opportunity afforded by a vacant unit, just along the way from its main store in the Mancunian mall.



The result is a store that looks like a standard back-to-school department of the kind found in any large M&S outlet. The idea of spinning off categories from shops that cover multiple merchandise areas is hardly new, yet it is surprising how little it is actually done.

And if proof were needed of the efficacy of the approach, a quick word with the manager of the pop-up shop tells the story.

Since opening – and this is not a long selling period – the back-to-school unit has become M&S's biggest purveyor of the category.



Others might do well to sit up and take notice. They'll have to be quick, though, because the store closes on September 7.



For more images of the store visit the website at [retail-week.com/sotw](http://retail-week.com/sotw)