

Inspection of Sale Grammar School

Marsland Road, Sale, Cheshire M33 3NH

Inspection dates: 29 and 30 June 2022

Overall effectiveness	Outstanding
The quality of education	Outstanding
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Outstanding
Sixth-form provision	Outstanding
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Ofsted has not previously inspected Sale Grammar School under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. However, Ofsted previously judged the predecessor school, Sale Grammar, to be outstanding, before it opened as Sale Grammar School as a result of conversion to academy status.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils and students respond exceptionally well to leaders' and staff's extremely high expectations for their academic achievement, behaviour and personal development. Without exception, pupils and students are extremely proud to attend Sale Grammar School. Pupils, including students in the sixth form, consistently model the school values of 'aspire, act, achieve'.

Pupils described the school as one big family. They have trusting and supportive relationships with staff. Pupils feel safe and happy in school. They are confident that staff deal with rare instances of bullying quickly and effectively.

Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. Their attitudes to learning are noteworthy. Pupils and students approach their work with enthusiasm and diligence. They make full use of the learning opportunities available to them. They achieve exceptionally well.

Pupils' learning experiences are enhanced especially well by a comprehensive extra-curricular programme. This includes diverse and wide-ranging activities, from sports, music and languages to the rainbow LGBTQ+ club. These opportunities meet the varied interests and aspirations of pupils. Pupils relish responsibility. They readily assume leadership roles such as volunteering in the library, helping younger pupils to read and by being student leaders.

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

Leaders, together with governors, have incredibly high aspirations for all pupils and students. They are resolute in their determination to provide all pupils, including the most disadvantaged and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), with an excellent all-round education. In key stage 4, pupils are able to choose freely from a broad range of subjects. All pupils, including those with SEND, study a modern foreign language. Most pupils study the English Baccalaureate suite of subjects.

Students in the sixth form are given the opportunity to study a wide range of subjects. They appreciate the enthusiasm that teachers have for their subjects. Students reported that this makes them keen to learn.

Leaders have created an exceedingly ambitious curriculum. They have thought meticulously about the knowledge that they want pupils and students to learn. This knowledge is carefully mapped out so that all teachers are clear about the order in which pupils and students should learn new content.

The exceptional curriculum design, coupled with teachers' expert curriculum delivery, means that pupils and students build a rich body of knowledge across many subjects. Staff use their specialist subject knowledge to select activities that are best placed to help pupils to build on what they already know and deepen their

understanding. Pupils and students connect new ideas with more sophisticated concepts effectively. They regularly engage in meaningful discussions and debates about their work. This ensures that the knowledge that they gain is secure in their memory. As a result, pupils and students, including those with SEND, achieve highly across the curriculum.

Teachers are adept at using assessment techniques to check that pupils understand what is being taught. Teachers are highly effective in spotting misconceptions or gaps in pupils' learning, which they remedy quickly.

Leaders foster a deep love of reading. Older pupils and students have a voracious appetite for reading. Younger pupils look forward to the time that they have to read with their mentors. Leaders have invested in an extensive range of high-quality diverse books to supply the new outdoor library. Teachers develop pupils' understanding of subject-specific vocabulary skilfully.

Leaders prioritise the early identification of pupils with SEND. Pupils with SEND benefit from a highly supportive environment. Staff have a comprehensive understanding of the needs of these pupils. Pupils with SEND spoke favourably of the support that they receive to meet their academic and pastoral needs.

Behaviour in lessons and around the school is impeccable. Pupils show considered respect towards each other and to adults. They are curious and want to learn.

Leaders promote the extensive personal development of all pupils and students. They have a relentless commitment to ensuring that pupils and students have a secure understanding of current topical issues in society. Leaders demonstrate a deep and genuine dedication to ensuring that pupils and students develop into responsible, respectful and active citizens.

Pupils and students receive highly informative careers education, information, advice and guidance. This helps them to be very well prepared for their next steps into education, employment or training. All pupils in Year 11 and students in Year 13 move on to appropriate, aspirational destinations.

Leaders have won the trust of staff, parents, carers and pupils. Staff appreciate the consideration that leaders give to their workload and well-being. They spoke highly of the training that they receive to enhance their delivery of the curriculum further.

Governors are highly committed to the school. They support and challenge leaders well in equal measure.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

A strong culture of safeguarding permeates the school. Leaders' highly organised systems and effective communication with staff ensure that all pupils are kept safe.

Leaders ensure that staff receive regular, comprehensive safeguarding training. This equips staff well to be alert to the potential risks that pupils may face. Staff are vigilant. They know how to spot the signs of abuse and know what to do if they have any concerns about pupils.

Leaders work effectively with external agencies to ensure that vulnerable pupils and their families get the timely support that they need.

Pupils and students learn how to keep themselves safe from risks through the skills for life programme. Pupils know who to go to if they need support or advice.

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.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	136498
Local authority	Trafford
Inspection number	10199323
Type of school	Grammar (selective)
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1306
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	340
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Alan Budenberg
Headteacher	Rebecca Smith
Website	www.salegrammar.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The current headteacher was appointed on 1 September 2020.
- Sale Grammar School converted to become an academy school in February 2011. When its predecessor school, Sale Grammar School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be outstanding overall.
- Leaders use one registered alternative provider for a very small number of pupils.
- The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors spoke with the headteacher, other senior leaders, subject leaders and members of staff. Inspectors also met with members of the local governing body, including the chair of governors, and with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors spoke to groups of pupils from Years 7 to 10 and students in Year 12 about their experience 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 document, improvement plans, minutes of governing body meetings and records of pupils' behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors checked the school's safeguarding policies and procedures and the school's single central record. Inspectors met with leaders, staff and pupils to check how effective safeguarding is in the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in modern foreign languages, English, history, design technology and mathematics. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers and spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses. Inspectors also considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey for pupils and Ofsted's online survey for staff.

Inspection team

Rebecca Sharples, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Michael Pennington	Her Majesty's Inspector
David Woolley	Ofsted Inspector
Deborah Bailey	Ofsted Inspector
David Roberts	Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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