

# Inspection of Altrincham Grammar School for Boys

Marlborough Road, Bowdon, Altrincham, Cheshire WA14 2RS

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Inspection dates: 27 and 28 September 2022

## **Overall effectiveness**

**Outstanding**

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The quality of education

**Outstanding**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Outstanding**

Personal development

**Outstanding**

Sixth-form provision

**Outstanding**

Leadership and management

**Outstanding**

Previous inspection grade

Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

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

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils, and students in the sixth form, at Altrincham Grammar School for Boys exude kindness towards each other. They said that they feel very safe in school. Pupils and students demonstrate the highest levels of respect, responsibility and resilience.

Leaders and staff are exceedingly ambitious for pupils and students. Pupils and students relish the challenge to excel. They are eager, and they demonstrate a thirst for learning. Pupils' and students' academic achievements are impressive. They mirror their excellent engagement in an exciting range of personal development opportunities.

Students in the sixth form are an example and inspiration to younger pupils. They display high aspirations, strength of character and a can-do attitude to learning. They do so with humility. Younger pupils benefit greatly from students in the sixth form, who are positive role models and a shining example to their peers.

Pupils and students behave impeccably around the school site. They act with maturity. Staff have high expectations of pupils' and students' behaviour. Adults are vigilant in checking for any rare incidents of poor behaviour. Pupils feel safe from bullying and other forms of unpleasant behaviour. When necessary, staff quickly address any incidents of bullying and support pupils and students extremely well.

Pupils and students are very happy at school. They are grateful for the extensive range of academic and sporting clubs, as well as the societies and competitions which help them to nurture their wider interests. They cherish learning about the different backgrounds and cultures of others in their school community.

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

Leaders and staff have successfully realised their highly ambitious aims for pupils in key stages 3 and 4, and for students in the sixth form. They ensure that pupils and students get the opportunities, guidance and support that they need to enable them to excel academically and personally.

Pupils in Years 7 to 11, and students in the sixth form, benefit from a well-crafted curriculum that is broad and balanced. Pupils who are disadvantaged, and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), benefit exceptionally well from well-designed subject curriculums.

Across all subjects, leaders carefully consider the starting points of pupils and students when deciding what is to be learned in the curriculum. Leaders ensure that pupils and students benefit from subject content that builds seamlessly on the knowledge that they have already acquired. This is pivotal in helping pupils and students to make impressive gains in what they know, remember and can do.

Teachers have strong subject knowledge. They explain subject content clearly. Teachers select and use suitably demanding activities to help pupils and students acquire and absorb increasingly complex information. Teachers skilfully support pupils' development in reading, writing and oracy. From their high starting points, pupils use an even wider range of subject-specific vocabulary and complex writing techniques across the subjects that they study.

Pupils' and students' behaviour in lessons is exemplary. They consistently demonstrate excellent attitudes to learning. Pupils and students listen to and respect the highly positive contributions shared by others. They eagerly immerse themselves in the activities that teachers provide in lessons.

Teachers are experts in using well-established assessment techniques to check pupils' and students' understanding. Teachers accurately identify the knowledge that pupils can remember and apply. They confidently use this information to ensure that what pupils learn next is suitably demanding. Teachers are quick to identify and address any misconceptions that pupils may have.

Leaders ensure that pupils and students read widely and often. Pupils benefit from reading a breadth of genres that are rich in culture. Pupils and students value the way this deepens their knowledge of the literary works of different authors. Additionally, staff provide a broad range of debating forums and competitions that help pupils and students to apply and practise their sophisticated reading and oracy skills.

Staff have high aspirations for pupils and students with SEND. Expert staff work closely with pupils, parents and carers to identify the additional support that some of these pupils need. Subject staff ensure that pupils and students with SEND get the timely support that they need to learn well. Pupils told inspectors that staff empower them to understand and overcome the specific barriers that they face.

Leaders have listened to the views of parents in creating a highly ambitious programme of wider personal development. Teachers deliver this programme with skill and confidence. Pupils and students make impressive gains in their knowledge of how to be safe, how to have healthy relationships and how to make a positive contribution to society. They have a depth of understanding of the world around them.

Pupils and students, including those who are disadvantaged and those with SEND, make extensive use of the additional enrichment opportunities that staff provide. Older students lead many of these activities alongside staff. This helps these students to strengthen and enhance their leadership skills. Pupils appreciate the sheer breadth of opportunities they get to learn more about their interests. Through these activities, pupils successfully make and nurture new friendships.

Pupils and students benefit from a rich and carefully ordered programme of careers education, information, advice and guidance. They are supported with high-quality and timely information to help them to make choices about their futures. Former

pupils and students generously share their experiences to enrich further pupils' knowledge of different careers.

Leaders and members of the local governing body have an in-depth knowledge of the excellent education that pupils and students get. Nevertheless, they listen carefully to the views and experiences of staff, pupils and parents. This helps leaders to refine and enhance further the quality of education that pupils receive.

Staff described leaders as kind and supportive. They said that leaders listen carefully to their views. They appreciate the many forms of support that leaders provide, including making workload manageable. Staff echoed the strong community spirit that pupils and parents conveyed to inspectors during this inspection.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that pupils and students feel safe at school. Pupils are taught comprehensively about the potential risks that they may face in their lives. Pupils understand these possible risks and articulate with confidence how to keep themselves safe.

Leaders and staff have a secure understanding of the challenges that pupils and students may face in the wider community. They are vigilant about pupils' safety. Adults make effective use of leaders' systems to report concerns about pupils when they arise.

Staff do everything that they can to offer pupils high levels of pastoral care. For example, they provide timely advice and support relating to any concerns about pupils' and students' mental and physical well-being.

Staff make effective use of external expertise where necessary. They carefully follow up on and check how well support is helping pupils.

## **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.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	136458
<b>Local authority</b>	Trafford
<b>Inspection number</b>	10211811
<b>Type of school</b>	Grammar (selective)
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Boys
<b>Gender of pupils in sixth form provision</b>	Boys
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1359
<b>Of which, number on roll in the sixth form</b>	383
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Ann Balfour
<b>Headteacher</b>	Graeme Wright
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.agsb.co.uk">www.agsb.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- Altrincham Grammar School for Boys converted to become an academy school in February 2012. When its predecessor school, Altrincham Grammar School for Boys, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be outstanding overall.
- The school is part of The Hamblin Education Trust. This is a local multi-academy trust.
- A small proportion of pupils in key stages 3 and 4, and students in the sixth form, have SEND. Some of these pupils have education, health and care plans to support a range of moderate learning or physical needs.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.
- A very small number of students in the sixth form receive part of their education at another local school. Leaders ensure the appropriate arrangements are in place to undertake this effectively and safely.

- 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**

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection that 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 met with the headmaster and other senior leaders. They met with representatives of the academy trust and members of the local governing body. Inspectors spoke with a representative of Trafford local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, science, history and design and technology. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors looked at samples of work across a wider range of subjects, including the work of disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND.
- Inspectors reviewed the school's records of safeguarding checks and referrals to external agencies. They met with the leaders who have overall responsibility for safeguarding. Inspectors spoke with staff and pupils about the leaders' work to keep pupils safe.
- Inspectors spoke with the leaders responsible for SEND and reading. They also looked at information about the support for pupils who have additional needs.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in class and around the school site. They also scrutinised behaviour and attendance records.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils from all year groups and considered the responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for pupils.
- Inspectors held discussions with staff and considered the responses to Ofsted's questionnaire for staff.
- Inspectors took account of the responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including the comments received through Ofsted's free-text facility.

## **Inspection team**

Michael Pennington, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Charlotte Oles	His Majesty's Inspector
Chris Glennon	Ofsted Inspector
Deborah Bailey	Ofsted Inspector
Craig Yates	Ofsted Inspector



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