

Inspection of Altrincham Grammar School for Girls

Cavendish Road, Bowdon, Altrincham, Cheshire WA14 2NL

Inspection dates: 11 and 12 October 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

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

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils and students at Altrincham Grammar School for Girls explained how they live out the school's values in full. These include embracing diversity, perseverance and selflessness. Pupils and students show a genuine care and respect for each other. They leave the school remarkably well placed to thrive in a modern society.

Pupils, including students in the sixth form, benefit from extremely supportive relationships with their teachers. Pupils and students explained to inspectors that staff would listen if they had any worries or concerns. They are confident that teachers will do their best to help. Pupils also explained that incidents of bullying are taken very seriously and will be dealt with effectively. This helps pupils and students to feel happy and safe in school.

There are extensive opportunities for pupils and students beyond the classroom. For example, they are proud to sit on the highly influential school council, representing the views of their peers. Pupils and students also talked eagerly about the clubs that they attend, such as: coding club, origami folding, the politics society, the Hindu society, gardening club, hip-hop-dance crew, play reading, Indian dance and Latin club.

Pupils and students live up to leaders' high expectations of what they can and should achieve, both academically and personally. Pupils and students, including those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), have very high expectations of themselves. They excel in all aspects of school life. Their behaviour during lessons is faultless. They listen attentively to their teachers, are keen to get things right and they follow instructions from staff conscientiously.

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

Leaders ensure that all pupils and students achieve their best. At the same time, leaders are committed to ensuring that pupils and students are prepared exceptionally well for life beyond school. To this end, leaders have designed a highly ambitious curriculum. For example, all pupils benefit from studying two modern foreign languages in depth in key stage 3. Almost all pupils in key stage 4 study the suite of subjects that make up the English Baccalaureate. Pupils and students achieve exceptionally well across the curriculum.

Subject leaders have skilfully considered the knowledge that pupils, including students in the sixth form, should learn. Leaders make it explicitly clear to teachers when learning should be delivered. This leaves teachers confident in what they should be teaching and when new content should be taught. Teachers use their expert subject knowledge to design learning effectively. They are well trained. Teachers choose suitable, research-informed approaches to designing learning

activities. These activities support pupils and students to build securely and successfully on what they already know and can do.

Teachers adeptly check pupils' and students' understanding of key concepts. Staff are skilled in planning for misconceptions. They provide opportunities for meaningful debate and discussions linked to pupils' and students' learning. Teachers' effective use of assessment strategies means that pupils and students are reflective, highly motivated and independent learners. If they get something incorrect, they remain resilient and keen to ensure that their own understanding of earlier learning is secure.

The impeccable conduct of pupils and students, coupled with their mature attitudes to their studies, enables teachers to focus solely on delivering the curriculum. This helps pupils and students, including those with SEND, to acquire a rich body of knowledge across the full range of academic subjects that they study.

While most pupils join the school able to read accurately, staff check whether any pupils would benefit from additional help with reading. This ensures that pupils receive appropriate support to develop their fluency and enjoyment of reading. Pupils and students read avidly. For example, pupils in key stage 3 talked enthusiastically about the books that they are relishing, such as non-fiction texts about the plight of the Suffragettes. Added to this, teachers across subjects encourage pupils to read widely beyond the curriculum.

Leaders have effective systems in place to ensure that the needs of pupils and students with SEND are identified quickly. Teachers receive high-quality information about the needs of this group of pupils and students. Teachers skilfully tailor their delivery of the curriculum for pupils with SEND. All pupils and students with SEND learn the same ambitious curriculum as their peers. They achieve exceptionally well and they are fully involved in all aspects of school life, including the abundance of extra-curricular activities on offer.

Pupils and students make excellent use of a wealth of experiences that enrich their wider development. They understand the fundamental importance of celebrating difference and respecting each other's uniqueness. A range of worthwhile occasions, such as the inter-school Diwali events and Islamic charity week, support pupils and students to broaden their cultural awareness. Through the citizenship and personal, social and health education curriculums, pupils and students learn about the features of healthy relationships. In these sessions, they engage articulately in discussions on some complex and sensitive topics, confidently giving their reasoned opinions.

Pupils and students are ambitious about their next steps. They benefit from high-quality and impartial careers advice. This inspires pupils and students to be the best that they can be. A large proportion of students in the sixth form secure places on highly competitive degree courses at university, such as medicine and dentistry.

The local governing body and trust representatives provide insightful challenge and support for leaders. Staff are immensely proud to work at the school and they enjoy their roles. They feel that they are supported well by leaders, particularly regarding opportunities to develop their subject knowledge. Staff provide an exceptional quality of education for pupils at this school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have ensured that all staff understand that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Staff receive regular and appropriate safeguarding training. This ensures that staff remain alert to the signs that may indicate that a pupil or student is at risk of harm. For example, staff have recently completed refresher training on recognising the early signs of neglect.

Leaders have fostered strong links with external agencies, including those who provide mental health support for pupils and students. This is to ensure that vulnerable pupils and students and their families receive appropriate help.

Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe through a carefully considered and age-appropriate curriculum. For instance, pupils learn about how to recognise and give consent and how to resolve friendship issues.

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

Unique reference number	137289
Local authority	Trafford
Inspection number	10226363
Type of school	Grammar (selective)
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Girls
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Girls
Number of pupils on the school roll	1395
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	374
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Daniel Rubin
Principal	Stephanie Gill
Website	http://www.aggs.bright-futures.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Altrincham Grammar School for Girls converted to become an academy school in February 2012. When its predecessor school, Altrincham Grammar School for Girls, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be outstanding overall.
- The school is part of the Bright Futures multi-academy trust.
- Leaders currently 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

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

- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors spoke with the principal, the vice principal, other senior leaders, subject leaders and other staff. Inspectors spoke with the chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust, a representative of the trust board, a trust representative, five members of the local governing body, including the chair.
- As part of this inspection, inspectors carried out deep dives in mathematics, design and technology, languages, science and geography. Inspectors met with subject leaders to discuss curriculums, visited lessons, reviewed samples of pupils' work, spoke with teachers and spoke with pupils and students about their learning in these subjects.
- Inspectors met with pupils and students from all year groups. Inspectors visited some extra-curricular activities that were taking place at lunchtime. Inspectors also observed pupils' and students' behaviour at social times and lesson changeovers.
- Inspectors met with those responsible for governance, leaders, staff, pupils and students to evaluate the culture of safeguarding in the school. Inspectors checked on leaders' safeguarding procedures, including recruitment checks made on new staff.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation, including that relating to safeguarding, leaders' behaviour and attendance records and minutes of meetings held by those responsible for governance.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for staff and pupils. Inspectors also considered the views of the parents and carers who responded to Ofsted Parent View. This included the comments received via Ofsted's free-text facility.

Inspection team

Emma Gregory, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
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Alison Stott	Ofsted Inspector
Jenny Jones	His Majesty's Inspector
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