

Inspection of Alcester Grammar School

Birmingham Road, Alcester, Warwickshire B49 5ED

Inspection dates: 7 and 8 December 2022

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

The quality of education

Outstanding

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Sixth-form provision

Good

Previous inspection grade

Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

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

What is it like to attend this school?

Alcester Grammar School is a thriving and happy place. Pupils are extremely proud to be part of this highly ambitious school. Leaders have the highest expectations for their pupils. The school's vision of 'nurturing aspiration, achievement and opportunity for all' permeates throughout the whole organisation. Pupils meet these expectations consistently.

Pupils love learning. They benefit from an exceptional curriculum. They are completely engaged in lessons and are enthusiastic learners. Teaching and assessment are effective, and pupils learn well. Teachers are highly knowledgeable. They have nurtured a keen sense of curiosity in their pupils. As a result, pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), enjoy their lessons very much.

Pupils welcome opportunities to extend their experiences wherever possible. Almost all of them participate in the wide range of activities the school provides. Teachers encourage all pupils to take part, including those from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. They treat everyone with courtesy and respect those with different lifestyles and backgrounds. Pupils have a strong understanding of equality, diversity and inclusion. They accept that individuals can be themselves.

Pupils feel safe here. There is always a trusted adult to go to. Staff do not tolerate bullying and discriminatory language.

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

The new principal and senior team provide exceptional leadership. They lead by example, with sensitive and calm authority. They know what is best for their pupils. They prioritise professional development for staff so that they too can do their best. Consequently, staff are highly competent in their roles.

The curriculum is exemplary. It is very broad, providing all pupils with access to a wide range of subjects. Subject leaders have carefully sequenced every topic. Plans set out the crucial knowledge and skills that pupils must know and remember. Teachers have strong knowledge of the subjects they teach. They plan lessons well, ensuring the learning needs of all pupils, including those with SEND, are incorporated. As a result, almost all pupils achieve highly and pupils with SEND achieve exceptionally well.

Teachers deliver lessons with passion. They use a range of effective and engaging strategies to teach the pupils. These ensure that pupils learn and remember what they have been taught. Leaders recognise that reading and literacy are key to high achievement. Pupils read a range of highly interesting texts in all subjects. They discuss and express their ideas articulately and produce high-quality written work. Teachers use questioning effectively to check pupils' understanding in lessons. They

adapt their teaching if they find gaps in pupils' knowledge. Teachers provide constructive feedback indicating what pupils are good at and where they need to improve, how to do that. As a result, pupils achieve very well.

Pupils have highly positive attitudes toward their learning. They concentrate fully in lessons and their exemplary behaviour supports their learning. Pupils say that on the rare occasion bullying happens, it is dealt with quickly and resolved. Attendance levels are very high for all pupils. They love coming to school.

Leaders value pupils' personal development highly. Their ethos of pupils being 'decent human beings' is just as important as their academic development. Pupils benefit from a highly effective personal, social and health education programme. Pupils understand the importance of healthy relationships and good physical and mental health. They know how to keep themselves safe online. Where pupils may experience mental health problems, staff provide individual support.

Careers education begins in Year 7. Pupils learn about different types of careers, and the qualifications and skills each one requires. This supports pupils in Year 9 in making their option choices. All pupils benefit from an extensive range of enrichment opportunities including music lessons, sporting activities and trips around the world.

In the sixth form, students benefit from a very high-quality education in a broad range of subjects. Lessons are highly challenging, and students rise to that challenge exceedingly well. Students are very well prepared for their next stage in education, employment or training. They are able to make informed decisions about their future. Many choose to go to university, but increasing numbers are now opting for apprenticeships. Personal development plans are robust in Year 12 but are not yet embedded well enough in Year 13. As a result, these students have not yet had the high-quality experience seen in Year 12.

Leaders have taken practical steps to manage staff workload and to look after their well-being. Staff are very proud to work at the school.

Governance is a strength. Governors know the school very well and visit regularly. They hold leaders strongly to account and ensure that the school fulfils its statutory duties.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders maintain a constant focus on the safety and well-being of pupils. The safeguarding team is very knowledgeable and knows pupils well. It is vigilant in making sure that pupils are safe. Staff receive regular safeguarding training. This means that they know the signs that could indicate if a pupil is at risk. Staff follow the school's processes to report any concerns. Leaders then act quickly to support pupils. Leaders work with external agencies as necessary.

Leaders carry out the required checks on the suitability of all staff to work at the school thoroughly.

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	136622
Local authority	Warwickshire
Inspection number	10242480
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	1,324
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	590
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Jacqueline Gough
Principal	Rachel Thorpe
Website	www.alcestergs.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school makes use of one registered alternative provision.
- 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 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.

- During the inspection, inspectors held discussions with the principal and other leaders, including curriculum and pastoral leaders, the special educational needs coordinator and those responsible for post-16 education.
- The inspectors talked to pupils to find out their views on behaviour, safety and relationships.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, mathematics, science, geography and design technology. For each of these subjects, inspectors met with subject leaders and teachers, carried out visits to lessons, spoke to pupils and looked at their work. They also looked at other subjects to check how they are planned and taught.
- Inspectors also attended an assembly and visited tutor periods.
- Inspectors met with teachers and spoke to pupils formally and informally throughout the inspection. Inspectors took account of responses to pupil and staff surveys, as well as to Ofsted Parent View.
- Inspectors observed informal times of the day to evaluate safeguarding and pupils' behaviour.
- Inspectors reviewed records of behaviour and bullying incidents, attendance and safeguarding.
- Inspectors checked the school's approach to safeguarding, including recruitment and policy documents, and held a meeting with the designated safeguarding lead.

Inspection team

Nicola Walters, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Tim Bassett	Ofsted Inspector
Mike Onyon	Ofsted Inspector
Russell Hinton	Ofsted Inspector
Sarah Steer	Ofsted Inspector

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