

Inspection of Altrincham College

Green Lane, Timperley, Altrincham, Cheshire WA15 8QW

Inspection dates: 17 and 18 May 2022

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Sixth-form provision **Good**

Previous inspection grade **Good**

What is it like to attend this school?

Trustees, governors and other leaders set clear and high ambitions for all pupils and for students in the sixth form. These expectations help pupils and students to achieve well overall. This includes those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and those who are disadvantaged.

Pupils and students told inspectors that they enjoy coming to Altrincham College. They feel happy and safe, and make friends easily. Pupils and students recognise and accept each other's differences. Staff resolve any bullying incidents quickly.

Pupils and students are well prepared to enjoy and make the most of their education and lives. Extra-curricular clubs are important to many pupils and students. They can choose from a wide range, including the LGBT group, the student council, Italian club and the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme.

Leaders set high expectations for how well pupils and students should behave. Pupils and students behave very well in lessons. They are polite and eager to learn. They are typically considerate and enjoy themselves at social times.

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

Senior leaders, trustees and governors think deeply about the curriculum that they provide for pupils. They have made sure that pupils and students can study a broad and ambitious range of subjects. Many more pupils choose to follow the English Baccalaureate suite of subjects at key stage 4 than previously. This curriculum prepares pupils well for further academic study at A level and beyond.

Leaders have organised subject curriculums well. These curriculums include the essential knowledge that pupils and students need to learn. Leaders have thought carefully about the order in which pupils and students learn this important knowledge. This is to make sure that pupils build securely on what they already know.

Teachers, including in the sixth form, have strong subject knowledge. They select activities that help pupils and students to understand new learning readily. Teachers adapt the delivery of the curriculum, where necessary, to make sure that pupils with SEND also learn well. Leaders have worked with staff to make sure that pupils and students catch up quickly with any learning that was missed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Teachers recognise and address pupils' misconceptions or shortfalls in their knowledge. In most subjects, teachers continue to check until they are confident that pupils' knowledge is secure.

In a small minority of subjects, some staff do not implement the intended curriculum as well. This makes it difficult for pupils and students to learn everything that they need to know with the depth and accuracy that are typical in other subjects.

Through the curriculum, pupils and students develop strong reading knowledge and expertise. Leaders identify quickly any pupils who find reading difficult. They provide support for these pupils so that they catch up quickly and learn successfully across the curriculum.

Leaders and staff identify pupils and students with SEND well. They work effectively with parents and carers and with other professionals to secure help for these pupils if they need it. This enables pupils with SEND to achieve well and to participate fully in school life.

Pupils and students, including those with SEND and those who are disadvantaged, achieve well overall and in most subjects. Students in the sixth form are prepared suitably by their achievements for ambitious further study. For most students, their preferred next step is a degree-level course at a university.

Pupils, including students in the sixth form, benefit from a wide range of activities to support their personal development. They are provided with the knowledge that they need in order to understand, participate and succeed in modern Britain. For example, pupils and students recently marked and celebrated the Queen's Platinum Jubilee with a full day of activities. They also receive clear and independent careers advice and guidance. Leaders ensure that all pupils and students participate in these activities, including those who are disadvantaged and those with SEND.

Pupils and students are curious and polite, and they focus on their work in class. Pupils' learning is not disrupted by poor behaviour in lessons and they need little encouragement to behave well. They are typically responsible and considerate of others. Pupils move between lessons sensibly. They respect the school site, for example by making sure they do not drop litter.

Staff told inspectors that they appreciate leaders' efforts to support their well-being and to ensure that they have a reasonable workload.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders make sure that all staff are trained and kept up to date with any risks that pupils and students may face. Staff are vigilant. They know how to spot the signs that pupils or students may be at risk of harm in or outside school. Staff report concerns quickly. Leaders make sure that any concerns are acted on promptly.

Through the curriculum, pupils and students learn about risks to their safety and how to avoid them. They are confident to seek help from staff when they need it. Leaders and staff work together to quickly identify whether pupils and students require additional support from external agencies. Leaders ensure that pupils, students and their families get the timely help that they need.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a small number of subjects, some staff do not implement the curriculum consistently well. This means that some pupils and students do not learn enough about the small components of learning that they need to know. Leaders should ensure that subject curriculums are delivered consistently well across the school, so that pupils and students know and remember more of the intended curriculum.

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	138614
Local authority	Trafford
Inspection number	10226335
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
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	999
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	87
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Margo Kane
Headteacher	Kim Earle
Website	www.altrinchamcollege.com
Date of previous inspection	7 and 8 March 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school joined the South Manchester Learning Trust in September 2017.
- 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 and qualifications and apprenticeships.
- A small number of pupils attend alternative provision at three registered alternative providers.

Information about this inspection

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

- This was the first routine inspection the school had 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 held meetings with senior leaders and subject leaders.
- The lead inspector met with a group of governors and trustees, including the chair of the local governing body and the chair of trustees.
- Inspectors reviewed the school's records of safeguarding checks and referrals to the local authority. Inspectors spoke with staff about how they keep pupils safe. Inspectors also asked the pupils and students how they learn to keep themselves safe and what to do if they have any concerns.
- Inspectors held discussions with staff and considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey for staff.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils and students from all year groups and considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey for pupils and students.
- Inspectors considered the views of the parents and carers who responded to Ofsted Parent View. This included the free-text responses.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, history, mathematics, science and Spanish. In these subjects, inspectors met with subject leaders, considered subject curriculums, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils and students about their learning, and looked at samples of pupils' and students' work.
- Inspectors also looked at samples of pupils' and students' work from some other subjects.

Inspection team

Stephen Ruddy, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Christine Veitch	Ofsted Inspector
David Woodhouse	Ofsted Inspector
Anne Murphy	Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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