

Urmston Grammar Academy

Address: Newton Road, Urmston, Manchester, M41 5UG

Unique reference number (URN): 136297

Inspection report: 14 July 2026

Exceptional	
Strong standard	
Expected standard	
Needs attention	
Urgent improvement	

Safeguarding standards met

The safeguarding standards are met. This means that leaders and/or those responsible for governance and oversight fulfil their specific responsibilities and have established an open culture in which safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and concerns are actively identified, acted upon and managed. As a result, pupils are made safer and feel safe.

How we evaluate safeguarding

When we inspect schools for safeguarding, they can have the following outcomes:

- **Met:** The school has an open and positive culture of safeguarding. All legal requirements are met.
- **Not met:** The school has not created an open and positive culture of safeguarding. Not all legal requirements are met.

Strong standard ●

Achievement

Strong standard ●

At the end of key stages 4 and 5, pupils and students attain results in national examinations that are usually well above the national average. This is particularly true of disadvantaged pupils, who attain better results than their non-disadvantaged peers nationally. This has been the case over time. Most pupils join the school with higher-than-average prior attainment because admission is selective. Even so, pupils at this school often make greater progress from these high starting points than similar pupils elsewhere.

As pupils progress through the curriculum, they develop a deep understanding of increasingly complex ideas. They strengthen their knowledge of reading and number, with many pupils reading at a level far above what is typical for their age. Pupils, including those who face barriers to learning, produce work of high quality. They apply their learning confidently and are well prepared for the next stage of education, employment or training.

Attendance and behaviour

Strong standard ●

Leaders' strategic approach to attendance has been highly effective. As a result, pupils' rates of attendance have been very high over time. The proportion of pupils who are persistently absent is well below the national average. This is despite some pupils travelling long distances to attend the school.

Pupils understand the importance of attending school regularly. Some pupils face challenges that affect their attendance. When this happens, leaders take effective action to address these barriers. For example, they implement individual plans and work with other professionals when appropriate. Additionally, leaders work collaboratively with parents and carers to help improve individual pupils' attendance. As a result, attendance is improving for most of these pupils.

Pupils carry themselves with utmost maturity and show real self-discipline. They understand leaders' high expectations for behaviour and rarely fall short of them. Pupils are proud of their school and treat each other with respect. This contributes to a highly positive culture across the school. When incidents such as bullying or unkind behaviour occur, leaders deal with them swiftly. Repeat incidents are very uncommon. The school's respectful culture is also evident in classrooms. Pupils value their education and work hard. They support each other's learning and engage positively with their studies.

Curriculum and teaching

Strong standard ●

Leaders have designed a curriculum that introduces pupils to complex ideas in a structured and logical order. As pupils move through the curriculum, they deepen their understanding and meet increasingly challenging concepts. Leaders regularly review and refine the curriculum in response to pupils' experiences. As a result, the curriculum meets pupils' needs while remaining ambitious.

Teachers have very secure subject knowledge. They use this to explain complex ideas clearly. Well-designed tasks help pupils to apply new knowledge and a solid base of understanding. Teachers also use effective strategies to reduce any barriers to pupils' learning. These strategies are routinely embedded in teaching so that all pupils benefit. When needed, teachers provide additional support for pupils who find specific aspects of their learning more difficult.

Teachers regularly check pupils' understanding. When they identify gaps in knowledge, they address them quickly. Any misconceptions are identified and corrected swiftly. This ensures that pupils build secure knowledge and retain what they have learned.

Pupils must pass an admissions test to attend this school. This means that many have high academic starting points. Most have already secured the essential knowledge of reading, writing and mathematics. Leaders identify pupils who are less secure in this knowledge than their peers and provide targeted support to strengthen their understanding further.

Inclusion

Strong standard ●

Leaders' close partnership with primary schools allows them to understand the barriers that their pupils face before they join the school. This ensures that pupils get the help they need very quickly. This proactive approach continues once pupils arrive in Year 7. Leaders collaborate with staff and other professionals to make sure that pupils are very well supported. An ongoing review process helps leaders to adapt this support when necessary. This includes creating individual programmes of support to reduce barriers as quickly as possible. Additionally, staff help pupils to understand and support each other's differences. This helps pupils from all backgrounds know that they are an important part of the school community. As a result, pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, attend often, behave well and make very positive progress from their starting points.

Leaders use rigorous processes to make sure that disadvantaged pupils benefit fully from the whole-school offer. This includes effective use of additional funding, such as the pupil premium, so that pupils in financial difficulty attend trips and have the resources they need for their studies. When necessary, leaders provide extra help such as counselling or additional careers guidance. Consequently, disadvantaged pupils are very well prepared for life after they leave school.

Leadership and governance

Strong standard ●

Leaders and those responsible for governance embody the high ambitions they instil in pupils. Although the school is highly effective, leaders are not complacent. They use their detailed knowledge of the school to reflect on and refine their practice. Those responsible for governance share leaders' vision and provide effective challenge, holding leaders to account while also offering support once plans have been thoroughly scrutinised. This includes allocating resources for recruitment and supporting initiatives to improve staff's wellbeing and workload.

Staff feel valued and supported. They are proud to work at the school and particularly value its professional development programme. Leaders work with other schools and

professionals to ensure that this programme reflects current educational research. It addresses leaders' priorities while enabling staff to take ownership of their professional learning. Leaders also support staff with additional responsibilities, helping them to develop the knowledge and expertise needed to carry out their roles effectively. Robust systems enable leaders to evaluate the impact of their professional development programme on each aspect of the school's provision. They use this information to shape future training and drive continuous improvement.

Leaders engage regularly with local charities and other schools. Local employers enhance the careers programme by providing work experience opportunities and speaking to pupils about employment pathways. Parents and carers value both the academic and personal development their children receive. They praise the support provided by leaders and staff. Many comment that their children develop the confidence, knowledge and skills that prepare them well for adulthood.

Personal development and wellbeing

Strong standard ●

Leaders' well-considered programme ensures that pupils are taught important information about life in modern Britain. Leaders adapt the programme to reflect emerging themes. For example, they increased the focus on water safety during recent periods of hot weather. Leaders also use the expertise of external professionals and charities to help pupils understand different perspectives. Leaders' detailed knowledge of pupils and their backgrounds ensures that additional support is well targeted and effective. This can include small-group work on the risks associated with gang culture, for example.

Pupils have a deep understanding of the values that underpin British society. They understand the importance of democracy in allowing their voices to be heard. Pupils and students speak confidently about respecting and accepting differences. This is evident in clubs established by pupils, such as the Pride Group and Feminism Society. Pupils understand how the law protects individual rights. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe, including online. Their conduct reflects this understanding. Pupils are respectful of others' views and keen to understand different opinions. The debating club provides opportunities for pupils to discuss important issues in a supportive environment.

Leaders provide a broad range of activities and trips that allow pupils to find new passions. Pupils are encouraged to establish clubs linked to their interests, helping to develop their confidence and maturity. They raise funds for local charities and represent the school in national competitions. Leaders ensure that pupils who face challenges in their lives, including special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), have equal access to these opportunities. For example, trips are adapted so that pupils can be supported by staff they know well. As a result, pupils benefit from experiences they might not otherwise have.

From Year 7 onwards, pupils learn about a wide range of career pathways through guest speakers, work experience and individual careers guidance. Disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND receive additional support if they need it. Consequently, pupils understand the options available to them and progress to ambitious and appropriate destinations.

Leaders have designed a highly effective post-16 study programme that prepares students very well for independent life in modern Britain. Students take part in a wide range of enrichment opportunities and take up many additional responsibilities. These include mentoring younger pupils and leading enrichment activities. As a result, students develop maturity, confidence and organisational skills while also contributing positively to their school community. Students discuss current affairs regularly and express thoughtful views on complex matters, including misogyny and diversity.

In lessons, students continue to benefit from the high-quality teaching found across the school. They read widely around their subjects and develop knowledge beyond what is required for their examinations. This helps them gain the skills needed for independent study and prepares them well for their next steps in education, employment or training. Leaders identify gaps in students' knowledge quickly. Students then follow a structured programme of support until these gaps are addressed.

Students consistently attain very well in national examinations. Combined with the sixth form's highly effective careers programme, this helps students move on to ambitious destinations that match their interests and aspirations.

What it's like to be a pupil at this school

When pupils arrive at school each morning, they enter a caring, supportive and ambitious community. They understand their role in maintaining this culture and treat each other with kindness. Staff help pupils from all backgrounds to make the most of school life. Pupils, including students in the sixth form, support one another through formal and informal responsibilities such as mentoring younger pupils or running extracurricular activities. Pupils take part in a wide range of clubs and trips. They value the opportunities these provide. For example, pupils build their teamwork skills during a residential visit to the Lake District. Pupils learn to recognise and respect the differences between people. This includes learning about neurodivergence, for example. This helps pupils to show the utmost respect for each other.

Pupils are known well by staff. Pupils are confident that staff will help them with any concerns, including bullying and other unkind behaviour. When issues arise, staff address them quickly and effectively. Pupils are safe. The school's culture of respect and support contributes to pupils' consistently high rates of attendance.

Pupils benefit from an ambitious curriculum taught by subject specialists. Over time, they build secure knowledge and understanding across subjects. Pupils value learning and approach it with focus and determination. This helps to ensure that classrooms are purposeful and pupils learn well. This, along with the high-quality teaching they receive, has a particularly positive impact on pupils who face barriers to their learning or wellbeing. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive effective support that helps them to access the curriculum successfully. Consequently, they achieve well alongside their peers.

Results in national examinations are consistently high. Pupils and students are well prepared for the next stage of their education, employment or training. They successfully move on to an ambitious range of destinations.

Next steps

- Leaders and those responsible for governance should maximise the effectiveness of their systems and processes to gather and share the right information about pupils facing barriers to their learning or wellbeing, in order to drive a transformational impact on these pupils' experiences and opportunities.
 - Leaders should seek continued improvement across the curriculum, overcoming barriers and challenges in order to drive a transformational impact for all pupils' learning and achievement.
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About this inspection

This school is the only school in a single-academy trust. The trust is overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Nick Crowther.

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

This inspection took place on 14 and 15 July 2026.

Following our renewed inspection framework, all inspections are now led by His Majesty's Inspectors (HMIs) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMIs.

Inspectors spoke with the headteacher and other senior leaders during the inspection. They also spoke with some of the trustees. Inspectors spoke with groups of pupils, students and staff and considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View.

The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school currently uses no alternative provision.

Headteacher: Tom Kennedy-Fowler

Lead inspector:

Tom Theobald, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Liz Kelly, Ofsted Inspector

Christopher Beard, Ofsted Inspector

Louise McComas, Ofsted Inspector

Gerard Preston, Ofsted Inspector

Facts and figures used on inspection

This was the data available at the time of the full inspection, taken from [different sources](#). More recent data may have been published since the full inspection took place.

 The inspector(s) used this data during the full inspection on 14 July 2026

School and pupil context**Total pupils**

1,124

Close to average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils currently at this school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 1,067

School capacity

1,097

Close to average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils who can attend the school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 1,154

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

8.64%

Well below average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals at any point in the last 6 years.

National average: 28.9%

Pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan

0.71%

Well below average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan. This covers pupils with more support than is available through special educational needs support.

National average: 3.09%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

4.89%

Well below average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with reported special educational needs support at the school.

National average: 13.4%

Location deprivation

Well below average

What does this mean?

Based on the English indices of deprivation (2019) and the school's location, we have calculated whether the school is located in a more or less deprived area.

Resourced provision or SEND Unit (if applicable)

No resourced provision

What does this mean?

Whether school has Resourced provision or SEND unit (if applicable).

All pupils' performance

English and maths GCSE

Percentage of pupils who achieved grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (final)	94.7%	45.4%	Above
2023/24 (final)	98.7%	45.9%	Above
2022/23 (final)	96.7%	45.3%	Above

Attainment 8

A measure of pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (final)	71.7	46.1	Above
2023/24 (final)	75.9	45.9	Above
2022/23 (final)	72.7	46.3	Above

Progress 8

How much progress pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	0.88	-0.03	Above
2022/23 (final)	0.43	-0.03	Above

Disadvantaged pupils' performance

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after.

Disadvantaged pupils' English and maths GCSE grade 5 or above

Percentage of disadvantaged pupils achieving grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (final)	84.2%	25.8%	Above
2023/24 (final)	100.0%	25.8%	Above
2022/23 (final)	100.0%	25.2%	Above

Disadvantaged pupils' Attainment 8

A measure of disadvantaged pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (final)	65.3	34.9	Above
2023/24 (final)	77.0	34.6	Above
2022/23 (final)	76.2	35.0	Above

Disadvantaged pupils' Progress 8

How much progress disadvantaged pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	1.07	-0.57	Above
2022/23 (final)	0.69	-0.57	Above

Disadvantaged pupils' performance gap

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after. The school disadvantage gap is the difference between the performance of the school's disadvantaged pupils compared to the performance of all non-disadvantaged pupils nationally.

Disadvantaged pupils' English and maths GCSE grade 5 or above

Percentage of disadvantaged pupils who achieved grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2024/25 (final)	84.2%	53.1%	31.1 pp
2023/24 (final)	100.0%	53.1%	46.9 pp
2022/23 (final)	100.0%	52.4%	47.6 pp

Disadvantaged pupils' Attainment 8

A measure of disadvantaged pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2024/25 (final)	65.3	50.4	14.9
2023/24 (final)	77.0	50.0	27.0
2022/23 (final)	76.2	50.3	25.9

Disadvantaged pupils' Progress 8

How much progress disadvantaged pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2023/24 (final)	1.07	0.16	0.90
2022/23 (final)	0.69	0.17	0.52

Destinations after 16

Destinations after 16

Percentage of pupils staying in education or employment for at least 2 terms after the end of secondary school (key stage 4).

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023 leavers (revised)	99%	92%	Above
2022 leavers (revised)	99%	93%	Above
2021 leavers (revised)	99%	94%	Above

16 to 18 performance

A-level average point score

The average points that students achieved per A-level entry.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (final)	41.29	35.00	Above
2023/24 (final)	39.87	34.38	Above
2022/23 (final)	39.35	34.16	Above

A-level value added

A score showing students’ progress between the end of key stage 4 and the end of their academic qualification studies.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (final)	0.0	0.0	Close to average
2023/24 (revised)	-0.1	0.0	Close to average

Absence

Overall absence

The percentage of all possible mornings and afternoons missed due to absence from school (for whatever reason, whether authorised or unauthorised) across all pupils.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (3 term)	4.2%	8.4%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	4.2%	8.9%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	4.6%	9.0%	Below

Persistent absence

The percentage of pupils missing 10% or more of their possible mornings and afternoons.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (3 term)	6.5%	23.4%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	7.3%	25.6%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	8.6%	26.5%	Below

Our grades explained

Exceptional 

Practice is exceptional: of the highest standard nationally. Other schools can learn from it.

Strong standard ●

The school reaches a strong standard. Leaders are working above the standard expected of them.

Expected standard ●

The school is fulfilling the expected standard of education and/or care. This means they are following the standard set out in statutory and non-statutory legislation and the professional standards expected of them.

Needs attention ●

The expected standards are not met but leaders are likely able to make the necessary improvements.

Urgent improvement ●

The school needs to make urgent improvements to provide the expected standard of education and/or care.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) inspects services providing education and skills for children and learners of all ages, and inspects and regulates services that care for children and young people.

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