

Inspection of Urmston Grammar Academy

Newton Road, Urmston, Manchester M41 5UG

Inspection dates: 24 and 25 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	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Ofsted has not previously inspected Urmston Grammar Academy as an academy school under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 as, until November 2020, the school was exempted by law from routine inspection, so there has been a longer gap than usual between inspections.

Judgements in this report are based on the current inspection framework and also reflect changes that may have happened at any point since the last inspection of the predecessor school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils, including students in the sixth form, are happy and proud to be part of this welcoming school community. Pupils and students work hard and are highly motivated. Their behaviour matches the high expectations that their teachers have of them. In lessons, pupils relish the academic rigour that teachers expect from them. As a result, most pupils and students in the sixth form, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), achieve well across a range of subjects.

Pupils and students in the sixth form are polite and respectful. Bullying incidents are rare and pupils told inspectors that they felt safe in school. Sixth-form students act as positive role models for younger pupils, for example through the peer-mentoring schemes and peer-to-peer reading programmes. These are part of the sixth-form enrichment programme, which successfully allows students to support younger pupils both academically as well as personally.

Pupils benefit from an extensive range of extra-curricular activities. Examples include: clubs for debating and public speaking; drama; music and the arts; sports; regular trips and visits and the opportunity to take part in The Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme.

Pupils respect each other's differences. They spoke highly of the opportunities that they have to support their understanding of diversity.

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

Leaders, including trustees, are ambitious for all pupils and students at Urmston Grammar Academy. This includes those pupils and students with SEND. Leaders ensure that all pupils and students are given the opportunities that they need to succeed.

The overarching curriculum has been appropriately designed. Leaders' improvements to the curriculum ensure that pupils gain the breadth and depth of knowledge that they need across a range of subjects. For example, leaders have deliberately strengthened the offer for pupils to study humanities at key stage 4 and art and design and computing at key stage 3. The key stage 3 curriculum is commensurate with the national curriculum.

In most subjects, leaders have identified the key knowledge that pupils should learn. This knowledge is ordered logically so that pupils across key stages 3 and 4, and students in the sixth form, can build on their learning over time. In a very small number of curriculum areas, subject leaders are still refining the content that teachers must deliver. They are also still deciding on the order in which this new knowledge must be taught.

Across subjects, teachers present subject matter clearly and ensure that the curriculum content is delivered well. Teachers have strong subject knowledge.

Leaders of SEND make sure that subject teachers have the information that they need to identify and meet pupils' needs quickly and effectively. In lessons, pupils with SEND are well supported by teachers and staff to access the same curriculum as their peers. These pupils are well prepared for their next steps in learning and further education.

Most teachers check how well pupils have learned new knowledge. In many subjects, teachers use leaders' assessment systems well to address pupils' misconceptions and to fill any gaps in pupils' learning. However, in a very small number of subjects, particularly at key stage 3, teachers do not use their checks on how well pupils are learning as effectively as they should. Occasionally, some pupils' misunderstandings go unchecked and teachers are not certain that new knowledge has been learned as intended.

Leaders prioritise reading across the curriculum. Pupils' reading knowledge is routinely assessed and any gaps are addressed quickly and effectively for all pupils. This successfully helps pupils who struggle with reading to catch up with their peers. There is also a strong focus on improving pupils' vocabulary and their ability to read fluently and for enjoyment. Leaders implement a range of strategies and opportunities to foster a love of reading and to develop oracy to support reading. These initiatives include book clubs, tutor time reading sessions and poetry competitions. Pupils from the school's debating club recently competed in the national finals of a public speaking competition.

Pupils, and students in the sixth form, benefit from a carefully planned programme to promote their personal development. For example, they successfully learn about tolerance, respect, healthy relationships and online safety. Leaders are in the process of further strengthening the personal development lessons for students in the sixth form by including more explicit information related to sexual harassment and sexual consent. There is a range of leadership opportunities for pupils and students in the sixth form, such as through the school's council or anti-bullying ambassador programme. Pupils said that these opportunities help them to be more independent and resilient.

In Year 10, and in the sixth form, pupils and students engage in work experience to develop their work-related skills. Leaders ensure that there is strong provision for careers education, information, advice and guidance in all year groups. As a result, pupils and students are well prepared for their next steps. They successfully enter education, employment, or training when they leave the school or sixth form.

Pupils and students have a positive attitude towards their education. In lessons, and during social times, their behaviour is calm and respectful. This means that pupils and students are able to learn in lessons without disruption. Leaders are successfully supporting pupils and students in the sixth form who have found it difficult to attend school following the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Trustees are committed to the school and provide appropriate support and challenge to leaders. Staff feel well supported and appreciate leaders' actions to address their workload and well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have been highly proactive in developing the culture of safeguarding at the school. They have continually raised the profile of safeguarding, for example by introducing regular updates and briefings. Leaders routinely evaluate the effectiveness of their systems to record and share safeguarding information. All staff receive appropriate safeguarding training. They are confident to identify and report any concerns regarding pupils who may be at risk of harm.

The link governor for safeguarding provides rigorous support and challenge to safeguarding leaders. Leaders work effectively with outside agencies and safeguarding partners to seek advice and support for pupils who may be at risk.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a small number of subjects, leaders are still in the process of refining what pupils and students must learn. They are also establishing the order in which new subject content should be learned. Consequently, some pupils do not build upon their prior learning as well as they could. Leaders should finalise their curriculum thinking so that all teachers know exactly what pupils and students must learn and in what order.
- Leaders' systems to assess how well pupils have learned key knowledge are not consistently implemented in a small number of subjects, particularly in key stage 3. This means that subject leaders and teachers in these subjects do not have the most pertinent information to address pupils' misconceptions. Leaders should continue to refine and embed their approaches to assessment. This is so that all teachers routinely check that pupils have learned the essential knowledge and concepts that they need. It is also so that teachers address any misconceptions.

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	136297
Local authority	Trafford
Inspection number	10226374
Type of school	Secondary 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	1,113
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	300
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Nick Crowther
Headteacher	Riffat Wall
Website	www.urmstongrammar.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Urmston Grammar Academy converted to become an academy in September 2010. When its predecessor school, Urmston Grammar School, was last inspected by Ofsted it was judged to be outstanding overall.
- The school makes use of one registered alternative provider.
- The school meets the requirement of the Baker Clause. This means that pupils in Years 8 to 13 receive information about the full range of training options open to them. This includes opportunities for a range of education and training providers to speak to pupils about technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this 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 headteacher, other senior leaders, subject leaders, and a range of staff. The lead inspector spoke with representatives of the trust board, including the chair of the trust board.
- The lead inspector spoke on the telephone with a representative from the local authority.
- As part of this inspection, inspectors carried out deep dives in English, mathematics, geography, science and art and design. Inspectors met with subject leaders, visited some lessons, looked at pupils' and students' work and spoke with pupils, students and teachers.
- Inspectors met with groups of pupils and students from a range of year groups. Inspectors also observed and spoke to pupils and students at social times.
- Inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders and reviewed a range of documentation, including that relating to safeguarding, leaders' own evaluation documents, external quality assurance documents and attendance and behaviour records.
- Inspectors checked on the school's safeguarding arrangements, including the recruitment checks made on staff. Inspectors met with leaders, staff, pupils, students and trustees to evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding in school. An inspector checked the arrangements for safeguarding at the alternative provision.

Inspection team

Amanda Downing, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Craig Yates	Ofsted Inspector
Thomas Fay	Ofsted Inspector
Dympna Woods	Ofsted Inspector
David Roberts	Ofsted Inspector

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