

Inspection of Alsop High School

Queens Drive, Liverpool, Merseyside L4 6SH

Inspection dates: 10 and 11 May 2023

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Sixth-form provision

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

In recent years, several changes in senior leadership at this school have had an unsettling effect. The current headteacher, together with the trust and newly formed local governing body, has brought much-needed stability to the school.

Most pupils feel happy and safe at Alsop High School. Relationships between most staff and pupils are positive. Pupils feel well cared for. When they report bullying, leaders address it effectively.

Leaders have high expectations for pupils' academic achievement, including for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils, including students in the sixth form, are beginning to benefit from an ambitious curriculum that has been well designed in most subjects. However, across key stages 3, 4 and 5, these curriculums are not consistently delivered well by teachers. This prevents some pupils, especially those with SEND, from achieving as well as they should.

Pupils understand how they should behave. Most pupils meet leaders' high expectations. In lessons, pupils are mostly settled and attentive to their learning. However, a small minority of pupils regularly truant from lessons. This can, at times, disrupt the learning of others. Some staff do not deal with this effectively and pupils who go missing from lessons sometimes go unchallenged.

Too many pupils are regularly absent from school. This means that they miss lessons and fall behind in their learning. Leaders, together with governors, increasingly work with pupils and their families to support them in attending school more regularly.

Leaders have designed a personal development programme that helps pupils, and students in the sixth form, learn about important life lessons and growing up in modern Britain. However, some teachers do not deliver these activities well. This means that some pupils are less informed than they should be about topics that prepare them for life in modern Britain.

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

Leaders have a sharp focus on improving the curriculum. In most subjects, curriculum plans are ambitious and well thought out. Subject leaders have considered carefully what pupils learn and the order in which they should learn it. They have identified key knowledge and vocabulary that pupils in key stage 3 need to know. This helps pupils to build on what they have learned previously.

Mostly, teachers have a secure subject knowledge. Leaders have set out the teaching strategies that they want teachers to use. They have provided training on these approaches. However, not all teachers use these methods well enough or adapt their teaching to address misconceptions. Moreover, some teachers in some subjects do not choose the most appropriate activities to deliver the knowledge they want pupils to learn. As a result, pupils do not remember what they have been

taught.

In some subjects, assessment systems to check where pupils, including students in the sixth form, are insecure in their learning are underdeveloped. Some teachers do not check that pupils' knowledge is secure. Consequently, they do not adapt the delivery of the curriculum to address pupils' misunderstandings. This means that pupils' misconceptions and gaps in learning are not identified and go unchecked.

Leaders have prioritised reading across the school. They identify pupils with gaps in their reading knowledge and provide effective programmes of reading support. This ensures that those pupils, particularly those who are disadvantaged, can catch up with their peers. Pupils' reading successes are celebrated at 'reading graduations'. Increasingly, pupils are supported to read more widely. For example, they read ambitious texts as part of their form-time programme.

Leaders have taken action to prioritise the support for pupils with SEND. However, leaders' systems for identifying the precise needs of pupils with SEND at the earliest opportunity are underdeveloped. Some pupils struggle to access the curriculum. This is because leaders have not ensured that teachers are fully equipped with the information, knowledge and training that they need to successfully adapt the delivery of the curriculum for this group of pupils. As a result, too many pupils with SEND do not make the gains in learning that they should.

Leaders have put in place clear systems to manage poor behaviour and low-level disruption. In most lessons, pupils and students behave well. Many pupils spoken to by inspectors were polite and well-mannered. Leaders have made efforts to improve the rate of pupils' attendance, with some success. However, a significant minority of pupils, including pupils with SEND, still regularly miss lessons and school. This hampers their learning.

Pupils participate in a range of extra-curricular clubs, such as keyboard, badminton and puzzle club. Leaders have recently designed a personal development programme that supports pupils and students to become responsible and active citizens. Pupils share their views and debate different perspectives. They understand the importance of looking after their mental health and well-being. However, teachers' delivery of the personal development programme is uneven. This means some pupils are less informed than they should be about fundamental British values, different beliefs, religions and the protected characteristics.

Pupils and students receive a comprehensive programme of careers education. This helps them to make informed decisions about their future.

Mostly, staff enjoy working at the school. Many staff believe that leaders consider their well-being and workload carefully. Senior leaders and trustees know what needs to be done to improve the school. They are starting to bring about the necessary improvements.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have a clear understanding of the risks that pupils may face in the community. Staff at all levels are well informed about these.

All staff and governors receive regular safeguarding training. They know what to be alert to. They can spot the signs of abuse and neglect. Staff use the school systems effectively to promptly report any concerns that they may have about pupils.

Leaders are adept at working with a wide range of external agencies to support and protect pupils who are at risk of harm. They are persistent in securing the right support for them.

Staff teach pupils about how to stay safe. Pupils are aware of the risks they may face when online and how to manage them. They know who they can speak to if they are feeling anxious or worried.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders are clear about the teaching methods teachers should use to implement the curriculum. In some subjects, teachers do not use these approaches effectively or select appropriate activities to deliver the intended curriculum. This means that, in these subjects, pupils are not making the gains that they should. Leaders must support teachers to use consistently effective teaching methods and select appropriate activities effectively so that pupils can learn well.
- Some subject leaders' systems to check how well pupils are learning and retaining new knowledge are underdeveloped. This means that pupils develop misconceptions in their learning that go unchecked. Leaders must ensure that teachers are well trained to use assessment systems that identify where pupils are insecure in their learning. They must ensure that teachers know how to adapt the delivery of the curriculum to address these misunderstandings.
- Leaders do not identify the precise needs of pupils with SEND well enough. Nor have leaders ensured that staff are fully supported to adapt the delivery of the curriculum for pupils with SEND. Consequently, too many pupils with SEND do not make the gains in learning that they should. Leaders must ensure that early identification processes are secure. Moreover, they must ensure that the precise needs of pupils with SEND are being effectively supported through adaptations to the delivery of the curriculum and the choice of teaching method.
- Too many pupils, including pupils with SEND and students in the sixth form, do not attend school as often as they should. As a result, pupils miss out on important learning and do not achieve as well as they should. Furthermore, too many pupils internally truant when at school. They sometimes disrupt the learning of others. This means that they are missing learning and are at risk of

falling behind their peers. Leaders must support staff to apply the school behaviour policy confidently and consistently. Additionally, leaders should continue to develop strategies to engage with these pupils so that their attendance improves.

- The implementation of the personal development programme is uneven across year groups and key stages. As a result, pupils do not have all the information that they may need to be fully prepared for life in modern Britain. Leaders must ensure that the delivery of the personal development programme is consistently implemented as leaders intended.

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	148226
Local authority	Liverpool
Inspection number	10257096
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
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	1,488
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	147
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Andrew Bent
Chief Executive Officer	Christian Wilcocks
Headteacher	Paul Masher
Website	www.alsophigh.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Alsop High School converted to become an academy in November 2020. When its predecessor school, Alsop High School Technology & Applied Learning Specialist College, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be inadequate overall.
- The school joined the Omega Multi-Academy Trust in November 2020.
- Leaders use six registered alternative providers and one unregistered alternative provider for a very small number of pupils.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 7 to 13 with information and engagement 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.
- Inspectors spoke with the headteacher, other senior leaders, subject leaders and other members of staff. They also spoke with members of the trust and the local governing body.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils about their experience of school and their views on behaviour and bullying. They also observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and at breaktimes.
- Inspectors reviewed a wide range of evidence, including leaders' self-evaluation documents, improvement plans, minutes of governing body meetings and records of pupils' behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors checked the school's safeguarding policies and procedures and the single central record. They met with leaders, staff and pupils to evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, science, mathematics, art and computer science. For each deep dive, they discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers and some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors spoke with leaders about the curriculum in some other subjects.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, and the responses to Ofsted's surveys for pupils and staff.

Inspection team

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