

The Altus School

Address: Russet House, 35 Russet Close, Tuffley, Gloucester, Gloucestershire, GL4 0RQ

Unique reference number (URN): 135330

Inspection report: 7 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 ●

Inclusion

Strong standard ●

Leaders' commitment to inclusion is impressive. There is a clear determination to ensure that pupils, who have been permanently excluded from their previous school setting, get the support and care that they need to re-engage with education. This is fully supported by skilled staff across the different centres. The inclusive culture is realised through quick and accurate identification of pupils' individual needs and barriers to learning and wellbeing. Leaders have acted quickly to develop and embed highly effective systems and levels of staff expertise to ensure that provision is adapted precisely and flexes as pupils' needs emerge and change.

Pupils typically present with multiple barriers and a range of needs. This adds an increased level of complexity to leaders' work to maintain a demonstrably inclusive culture. Leaders meticulously monitor the impact of the provision for pupils. This ensures pupils are not hindered or disadvantaged in their access to learning and opportunities which enhance and enrich their education.

Swift and impactful work to build and embed relationships with external partners, such as the virtual school, the youth support team and the police, has strengthened the school's inclusive provision since it became Altus. Pupils feel understood and supported. The successful use of alternative provision enhances leaders' and staff's work to address barriers to learning and wellbeing. The school's use of additional funding is aligned with whole-school priorities, particularly attendance. It is informed by evidence and supported through targeted interventions and pastoral support. This often goes beyond the pupil, into the wider family, so that parents and carers can work well in collaboration with the school.

Leadership and governance

Strong standard ●

From the point of amalgamation in September 2023, leaders have been instrumental in establishing a school which makes a significant contribution to alternative provision across the local area it covers. Leaders have worked with tenacity and speed to fully understand their school context, communities and pupils incredibly well and make sure their staff do as well. Leaders have had to take a staged approach to rapid school improvement. They recognise the need to further embed actions and approaches they have put in place and establish a consistent school culture. A culture which also aligns with the bespoke nature of each centre, ensuring a sense of 'the same but different'. As part of this, leaders acknowledge that the teaching of the academic curriculum and pupils' achievement, while crucial and not overlooked, can only now be fully successful. This is as a result of the rapid improvements to ensuring pupils are in school, feel safe and trust the staff around them to effectively support them, care for and respect them.

When Altus was established, leaders were swift to invest in staff wellbeing and expertise. This ensures that Altus staff, no matter which centre they work in, make the most positive impact on the pupils that join their school. Staff benefit from a highly impactful, targeted programme of professional learning. Over the course of the last 3 years, establishing new leadership, new staff structures, growth and rapid school improvement, staff have retained a positive view of how well leaders respect and consider their workload and wellbeing.

The management committee supports and encourages the school's valuable work through their robust, well-informed oversight. It means that decisions are focused sharply on pupils experiencing success in this school setting and thriving beyond it. This is very well supported by gaining trust and confidence from parents and carers and highly collaborative working with key partners across the local area such as the local authority and the police.

Expected standard

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

Attendance is a clear school priority. Leaders track and scrutinise information about pupils' attendance with rigour. This enables them to work with sensitivity and impact to increase pupils' attendance. Leaders hold regular 'student action meetings' to ensure that they are able to adapt swiftly to emerging barriers to attendance. Appropriate partnership work, to enhance the school offer, has been a crucial part of leaders' work. This includes close collaboration with pastoral support in school, as well as with external alternative provision. Staff know the importance of their role in developing and sustaining positive relationships so that pupils want to come to school. All of which has led to rapid improvements in the number of pupils who are regularly in school.

Relationships between staff and pupils are built on mutual care and respect. They are fundamental in contributing to the school's safe and inclusive environment. At the point of amalgamation, and the school becoming Altus, leaders quickly established clear routines and consistent expectations for pupils' conduct and attitudes to learning. These are generally well understood across the different school sites. Leaders recognise the importance of a shared approach which also needs to be appropriate to the uniqueness of each centre. Pupils value the rewards that work alongside trusting relationships to encourage them to work to meet staff high expectations of them. They know how it creates a ready, respectful and safe learning space. Impact is evident in significant reductions of high levels of behavioural incidents, suspensions and use of physical intervention. Incidents of discrimination and other negative behaviours, both online and offline, are dealt with effectively.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

Pupils' personal development is an integral part of the school's provision. The personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum is responsive to pupils' needs. Beginning in primary, leaders have designed an ambitious and well-sequenced curriculum. It addresses the context of pupils', often complex, experiences of education and high levels of vulnerability. Pupils, across the school sites, learn about important issues. These include mental health, positive relationships, online safety and risks, including exploitation and substance misuse.

Beyond the PSHE curriculum, the school's wider personal development offer supports pupils well. It enables them to develop the knowledge, understanding and confidence needed to become resilient learners and participate with increasing success in school and the wider

community. Pupils develop a greater understanding of respect and tolerance, within a highly changeable school community. They demonstrate these qualities across the different experiences they have, beyond the classroom and school centres, which enrich their time in school. These include outdoor learning, college visits, and sporting and musical events. It supports the highly inclusive culture, builds aspirations and encourages pupils towards higher attendance.

Leaders support pupils pastorally, with sensitivity to their needs and lived experiences. When the school became Altus, leaders quickly strengthened pastoral capacity, including wider family work, to make the most difference to pupils' social and emotional development. Staff know pupils well. They provide targeted support, including mentoring, counselling and intervention programmes. This contributes to pupils feeling supported and included.

Careers education is becoming more effective in supporting pupils to make informed decisions about their next steps. It is mapped out clearly and considered from primary upwards. Older pupils benefit from awareness of different post-16 options. Leaders have oversight of pupils' destinations when they move onto post-16 placements or employment.

Overall, the personal development programme supports pupils' wellbeing and preparation for adulthood effectively. Leaders are now focused on strengthening the consistency and impact of monitoring, ensuring there is a consistent offer for all pupils.

Needs attention

Achievement

Needs attention 

Leaders know that pupils' achievement is not where it needs to be. However, while there is work to be done to address this through the curriculum, more pupils are securing ambitious outcomes and qualifications. This is rooted in the impact of swift and embedded improvements in positive behaviour, attendance and staff's understanding of pupils' needs and barriers to learning. Leaders and staff are aspirational for pupils' attainment. This is evident through pupils completing the phonics screening check, sitting end-of-key-stage-2 tests and some GCSEs and functional skills in key stage 4.

Leaders ensure that there are processes in place to support staff to identify where pupils' learning starts from. They use this to support pupils and make sure they learn essential knowledge which can be built on across the broad range of subjects on offer. This includes attention to critical gaps that often exist from important early learning and development milestones. Ultimately, pupils are increasingly well prepared, academically, for the demands of their onward education settings. Leaders' work to improve the curriculum offer, and how well it is taught, is well placed to provide clearer pathways and greater consistency in the outcomes that pupils can achieve.

Curriculum and teaching

Needs attention 

Leaders have an accurate view of the curriculum and how well it is taught across the different centres and age ranges. Leaders are clear about what needs to improve so that

pupils learn and develop with greater success. Work has started to strengthen the consistency in how different subjects are taught and how learning can be adapted to meet the different needs that pupils have. The impact the curriculum has on pupils' learning is more secure in some subjects and phases than it is in others. Leaders have clear and appropriate plans in place to ensure that all teaching is as effective as possible, no matter which centre or which subject is being taught. Leaders are building on the highly effective and embedded improvements in attendance and behaviour so that pupils can benefit fully from a highly inclusive curriculum offer.

The curriculum is designed to capture the interests of pupils who join the school through a varied offer. This includes attention to developing pupils' foundational knowledge in English and mathematics as well as providing vocational and active learning in subjects such as cooking and outdoor, active education. Leaders are working to make sure that, during their time at The Altus School, the curriculum equips pupils with sufficient knowledge and skills to return to mainstream education, move on to a specialist setting or transition into post-16 education, training or employment.

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

Pupils typically view The Altus School as a safe and trusted setting where they feel a sense of belonging. Pupils feel seen and valued as members of the Altus school community because they are firmly at the centre of decision-making. Pupils benefit from a highly inclusive approach, across the different centres. It is built on meaningful and supportive relationships with staff. Staff take time to get to know pupils well. Pupils quickly develop confidence in staff to provide them with what they need to gain a more positive experience of education, typically having experienced a permanent exclusion. This is because leaders and staff identify and address the challenges, barriers and special educational needs and/or disabilities pupils face. As a result, pupils receive an educational provision that is responsive and intuitive to what they need. This equips them to move on successfully to their next setting, whether that is a mainstream school, specialist setting or post-16 place.

Pupils benefit from the significant actions taken to increase pupils' attendance and behaviour expectations. Pupils experience positive and respectful support when they struggle to remain calm or maintain the high expectations staff and leaders have for their conduct and attitudes towards learning and each other. This has vastly improved the school culture, making it a place where pupils can learn and thrive. While pupils are realistic about the challenges they can, at times, face in meeting leaders' high expectations of their conduct, they do not voice concerns about disrespectful or discriminatory behaviour.

Leaders have now reached a point in the school's improvement journey where greater attention can be focused to the quality and consistency of the academic curriculum and how well it enables pupils to achieve, across the different school sites and age ranges. This is so that it can further enhance the positive school culture that has been established.

Next steps

- Leaders should continue the development of the academic curriculum across the school, ensuring that staff are secure in the knowledge and skills needed to implement it effectively, so that pupils achieve and are equipped for their next steps with increasing success.
 - Leaders should increase and embed the secure practice seen across some parts of the school so that the school-wide priorities, culture and high expectations make the most impact on pupils' learning, development and conduct in and out of the classroom.
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About this inspection

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

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 director and deputy director of alternative provision, senior leaders, centre managers, staff, pupils, parents and carers during the inspection. In addition, the lead inspector spoke with representatives from the local authority including the deputy director for education, the inclusion lead, the fair access protocol outcome coordinator and a headteacher from a local secondary school. The lead inspector met with members of the management committee and inspectors spoke with a sample of the alternative provisions used by the school.

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 makes provision for pupils who have been permanently excluded from at least one other education setting. Pupils face many barriers to learning and development, including special educational needs and/or disabilities. A significant number of pupils have an education, health and care plan.

The school currently makes use of 11 alternative provisions, including 9 that are unregistered. Inspectors spoke with a sample of the alternative provisions used by the school, including those that are commissioned by the local authority, to gain assurances about safeguarding and how they work with the school in the best interests of the pupils who attend.

The recorded number of pupils on roll changes regularly due to pupils coming on roll at any point in the school year as a result of a permanent exclusion, or, for a minority, at risk of being permanently excluded. During this inspection, there were 257 pupils on roll from Year 1 through to Year 11. Year 11 pupils were not on site.

The school has undergone a significant change since the last inspection. The school was established as a local authority maintained alternative provision in September 2023 following an amalgamation with another setting, which had also recently joined with another setting. As a result, the school expanded and adopted a new name, logo and uniform. This was carried out under a new leadership team and newly constituted management committee. Since 2023, the school has continued to grow the number of pupils on roll from 108 to a capacity of 280 commissioned places. It has also increased the number of sites it operates from 3 centres to 8 centres based in Gloucester, Cheltenham and Stroud.

Director of alternative provision: Emma Gundry

Lead inspector:

Leanne Thirlby, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Sean McKeown, Ofsted Inspector

Hester Millsop, Ofsted Inspector

Rachel Hesketh, His Majesty's 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 7 July 2026

School and pupil context

School capacity

90

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.

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
2022 leavers (revised)	50%	93%	Not available
2021 leavers (revised)	43%	94%	Not available

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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