Inspection of Maida Vale School

18 Saltram Crescent, London, W9 3HR

Inspection dates: 16–18 November 2021

Overall effectiveness	**Good**
The quality of education	**Good**
Behaviour and attitudes	**Outstanding**
Personal development	**Good**
Leadership and management	**Good**
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected
Does the school meet the independent school standards?	**Yes**

What is it like to attend this school?

Most pupils enjoy school and learning. They feel safe and said that there is little bullying. If it does happen, pupils know that it will be dealt with well. Pupils are respectful of others and welcome visitors warmly.

Behaviour in lessons and around the school is excellent. Pupils move from classroom to classroom calmly and sensibly. Learning is seldom disturbed by silly behaviour and pupils know what is expected of them. Pupils take their work seriously. This has a positive impact on their learning.

Pupils achieve well. For the most part, the well-thought-out curriculum enables pupils to develop their knowledge and understanding. Sometimes, however, curriculum plans do not identify the essential knowledge that pupils need so that they can move to the next step in their learning.

Leaders ensure that pupils' welfare and safety is a priority. The robust procedures for safeguarding pupils are effective. Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe online and to consider important themes, for example about anti-bullying and respecting others.

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

Leaders and the proprietor have achieved a great deal since the school opened in September 2020. The thoughtful and sensitive refurbishment of the Victorian school building is of high quality. Not only does it exude a sense of calm, excellence and high aspirations, but it also provides first-rate facilities and equipment. In addition, leaders and the proprietor ensure that the independent school standards are met in a way that adds significantly to the day-to-day running of the school.

Much has been achieved, too, in setting up a strong curriculum. Subject plans reflect the school's overall aim and values. In most cases, these plans identify where pupils are expected to get to by the end of the course and the knowledge and skills they need to get there. For example, in mathematics the work covers number, algebra and ratio in a logically sequenced programme. As a result, all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), become increasingly fluent in using number.

Similarly, in history and languages, curriculum leaders have set out the curriculum intentions with clarity. Plans show how pupils should increase their learning, step by step, so that they build their knowledge and skills progressively. In art, for example, staff are clear about what pupils need to know, remember and be able to do by the time they choose their GCSE subjects. This means that pupils who choose not to continue with art to GCSE, including those with SEND, still have a strong grounding in the subject.

Despite these strengths, there are some inconsistencies. Sometimes, subject plans do not set out as clearly the essential knowledge and skills that pupils need to learn. As a result, learning can be a little disjointed, with pupils jumping from one topic to another without a clear link. When this happens, it makes it more difficult for staff to both check and ensure that pupils have the knowledge and skills they need to tackle more advanced work. Occasionally, the work set is not demanding enough. This means that pupils make less progress through the curriculum than they should.

Pupils study a broad curriculum in Years 7 and 8 before choosing their GCSE options at the end of Year 8. While this means that pupils in Year 9 experience fewer subjects, the curriculum remains suitably broad. The length of the school day and the variety of enrichment activities also enable pupils to continue to extend and deepen their learning. Nearly all pupils attend at least one enrichment activity each week, and often more than one. This helps to ensure that the provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is of high quality. Together with the programme for personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education, pupils get an experience that prepares them well for the next stage in their education. Leaders seek pupils' views on the school, although a few older pupils said that leaders do not listen fully to their opinions or suggestions.

Provision for careers education and relationship, sex and health education (RSHE) is, as leaders recognise, a work in progress. Nevertheless, current provision meets requirements. Leaders have consulted with parents on the RSHE curriculum and have clear plans for expanding careers education for January 2022. Leaders ensure that the school complies with schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and staff work effectively to make sure that pupils' welfare, health and safety are promoted properly. Systems for identifying pupils who may be experiencing difficulties are clear. This enables leaders to take swift action to help pupils and provide appropriate support. Strong links with the local authority's social services mean that this support is well targeted.

Checks on the suitability of staff are robust. This includes the procedures for recruiting new staff. Appropriate training on safeguarding is provided regularly. This helps to ensure that all staff are aware of the most recent guidance and recognise pupils who may be worried about something.

The safeguarding policy is published on the school's website and reflects current government guidance.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- Leaders have devised subject plans so that they all follow a similar format. Most plans set out the essential subject knowledge and skills in a logical structure that shows progression. However, this is not the case for all subject plans. In a few instances, the plans are not as well sequenced and do not show explicitly the essential knowledge to be taught. As a result, pupils' learning is not built up as logically over time and, on occasion, can be undemanding. Leaders need to ensure planning in all subjects is logically sequenced and appropriately delivered so that pupils know more and remember more as they move through the school.
- Most pupils enjoy school and there are opportunities for them to make their views heard, for example through the school council. A few older pupils said their views were not given sufficient consideration. Leaders should build on their existing work to ensure that pupils' views are used more systematically to evaluate the school's strengths and areas for improvement.

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 provider and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can complain to Ofsted.

School details

Unique reference number	147957
DfE registration number	213/6012
Local authority	Westminster
Inspection number	10204261
Type of school	Other independent school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	113
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Gardiner School Group Ltd
Chair	Maria Gardener
Headteacher	Steven Winter
Annual fees (day pupils)	£24,000
Telephone number	020 3196 1860
Website	https://www.maidavaleschool.com
Email address	schooloffice@maidavaleschool.com
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Maida Vale School opened in September 2020 with 61 pupils in Years 7 to 9. It currently has 113 pupils from Year 7 to Year 10.
- The school is part of the Gardener Schools Group which has three other schools: Kew House School, Ravenscourt Park Preparatory School and Kew Green Preparatory School.
- The school meets the independent school standards. These are the requirements set out in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

- The school was registered by the Department for Education in July 2020. This is the school's first standard inspection.
- There are a small number of pupils with SEND.
- Leaders do not make use of any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors carried out this inspection under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008. The purpose of the inspection is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- During the inspection, inspectors spoke with pupils about school life. They also spoke with the proprietor, the managing director of the Gardener Schools Group, the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and staff.
- There were 14 responses to Ofsted Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, and 11 written comments from parents. There were 19 responses to the online staff survey and 95 to the survey for pupils.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: mathematics, history, languages, and art and design. Other subjects were also considered as part of the inspection, including English, science, design and technology and computing. Inspectors met with subject leaders and visited lessons, and spoke to teachers and pupils about their learning.
- During the inspection inspectors reviewed a range of documentation, including curriculum plans. They also looked at safeguarding and child protection policy and procedures, records of behaviour and attendance, and other information provided by school leaders.

Inspection team

Brian Oppenheim, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Kanwaljit Singh	Ofsted Inspector

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