ISI Independent Schools Inspectorate

# School inspection report

12 to 14 November 2024

# Maida Vale School

18 Saltram Crescent

Maida Vale

London

W9 3HR

The Independent Schools Inspectorate is appointed by the Department for Education to inspect association independent schools in England. Our inspections report on the extent to which the statutory Independent School Standards and other applicable regulatory requirements are met, collectively referred to in this report as 'the Standards'.

# Contents

**SUMMARY OF INSPECTION FINDINGS** ..... **3**

**THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SCHOOL MEETS THE STANDARDS** ..... **4**

RECOMMENDED NEXT STEPS ..... 4

**SECTION 1: LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT, AND GOVERNANCE** ..... **5**

THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SCHOOL MEETS STANDARDS RELATING TO LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT, AND GOVERNANCE ..... 6

**SECTION 2: QUALITY OF EDUCATION, TRAINING AND RECREATION** ..... **7**

THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SCHOOL MEETS STANDARDS RELATING TO THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION, TRAINING AND RECREATION ..... 8

**SECTION 3: PUPILS' PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH AND EMOTIONAL WELLBEING** ..... **9**

THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SCHOOL MEETS STANDARDS RELATING TO PUPILS' PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH AND EMOTIONAL WELLBEING ..... 10

**SECTION 4: PUPILS' SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC EDUCATION AND CONTRIBUTION TO SOCIETY** ..... **11**

THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SCHOOL MEETS STANDARDS RELATING TO PUPILS' SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC EDUCATION AND CONTRIBUTION TO SOCIETY 12

**SAFEGUARDING** ..... **13**

THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SCHOOL MEETS STANDARDS RELATING TO SAFEGUARDING ..... 13

**SCHOOL DETAILS** ..... **14**

**INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL** ..... **15**

**INSPECTION DETAILS** ..... **16**

## Summary of inspection findings

1. Leaders are highly skilled and knowledgeable. They have put in place well-judged development plans for the continued growth of the school. The plans are informed by a comprehensive process of self-evaluation in which the opinions and views of pupils are valued highly.

2. The school's values of tolerance and respect are clearly seen in the way in which pupils interact with each other and with their teachers. Inclusivity is actively promoted through the school's curriculum. Pupils respond positively to learning about diverse cultural perspectives and listening to those who represent them.

3. Directors provide effective oversight, support and challenge to school leaders. They ensure that leaders implement the school's policies and procedures effectively. Leaders and directors work together to evaluate and then identify how the school can develop further as it continues to grow.

4. Leaders place a high priority on enabling pupils to extend their learning. A well-planned programme of professional development is in place to support teachers and share good practice in the classroom. As a consequence, teaching is planned and delivered effectively. It challenges pupils to think independently and develop their own ideas. This means that pupils enjoy learning and rapidly develop their knowledge, skills and understanding across the curriculum.

5. Leaders monitor pupil progress rigorously. This enables effective support to be put in place for individual pupils when required. As a result, pupils make good progress relative to their starting points.

6. The school's extensive co-curricular programme of activities and enrichment enables pupils to stretch their learning beyond the classroom. However, the tracking of pupils' participation in this programme is not yet sufficiently effective to ensure maximum participation.

7. The school have put in a detailed and appropriate programme for relationships and sex education (RSE) which is part of the 'Individuals in Society' curriculum. Some teaching of the programme does not challenge pupils sufficiently. Consequently, their levels of engagement and progress are inconsistent.

8. Pupils are taught about the importance of being socially responsible and supporting others. They actively volunteer to work in the local community, and in school willingly take on the responsibility of acting as peer mentors and being members of the school council.

9. Leaders mitigate risk effectively and place a high priority on safeguarding pupils. The school's safeguarding policies and procedures are effectively implemented. Suitable staff training is in place resulting in a high level of awareness amongst staff of their responsibilities. Leaders take prompt action when needed and liaise appropriately with external agencies.

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# The extent to which the school meets the Standards

- Standards relating to leadership and management, and governance are met.
- Standards relating to the quality of education, training and recreation are met.
- Standards relating to pupils' physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing are met.
- Standards relating to pupils' social and economic education and contribution to society are met.
- Standards relating to safeguarding are met.

## Recommended next steps

Leaders should:

- strengthen the delivery of the RSE programme to ensure that it is taught in an effective way to challenge pupils sufficiently to increase their engagement and progress in the subject
- develop the monitoring of the activities programme to strengthen pupils' participation.

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## Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

10. Leaders have a deep understanding of their responsibility to ensure that the school enhances the wellbeing of pupils. Leaders are ambitious and have a clear vision of how the school will grow and develop as it matures in the years ahead. They consistently demonstrate the skills and knowledge to fulfil their responsibilities effectively.

11. While the school is only four years old, leaders have embedded a robust approach to self-evaluation of the ongoing impact of its educational provision on pupils. This process informs detailed strategic plans in which the school's values of respect, tolerance, creativity and resilience are consistently represented. Leaders actively listen to the views and opinions of pupils which informs their decision making, as illustrated by recent developments in the activities and games programmes.

12. Leaders' monitoring of pupil learning, across all aspects of school life, enables appropriate support and enrichment opportunities for pupils to be put in place. There is a constant drive for improvement in the school. The detailed schemes of work for subject areas are constantly reviewed with clear targets and areas for development identified in departmental plans. Weekly training and ongoing opportunities for teacher's professional development ensures that pupils are appropriately challenged in their learning. This has a positive effect on pupils' progress across the curriculum.

13. Directors maintain effective oversight of the school's development and the implementation of school policies. They evaluate the work of leaders through regular termly reporting on key areas of school life, onsite scrutiny of records, and discussions with leaders, pupils and parents. Directors provide appropriate challenge for school leaders. They ensure that leaders have the relevant skills to carry out their roles and to actively promote the wellbeing of pupils.

14. Leaders have a comprehensive understanding of how to mitigate risk. They implement the school's risk assessment policy effectively to promote pupil wellbeing. Staff are trained to identify and manage potential risks including in relation to site management, educational visits, sporting activities and pupil welfare. Leaders are aware of the occasional risks to pupil welfare from within the local community. For example, they identify potential risks associated with pupils' journeys to and from school and ensure that pupils are trained to look after their personal safety.

15. The school communicates effectively with a range of external agencies. Examples, such as links with local companies enabling pupils to benefit from work experience opportunities, and the use of consultants to help the school provide a suitable environment, are typical of the collaborative approach of the school. Leaders also work closely with the local authority, including through informing them appropriately about the use of funding for pupils in receipt of an education, health and care plan (EHC plan).

16. Leaders are regularly available to meet with parents, not only to listen to any concerns that they have, but also to hear their views about life at the school. Complaints are responded to appropriately and suitable records are kept. The school regularly provides information to parents on the progress of their own children, as well as all other required information and guidance on policy updates and events.

17. Leaders' focus on equality of opportunity for pupils is central to their oversight of teaching. They ensure that teaching does not discriminate against any pupil or group of pupils. An appropriate accessibility plan is place. The school fulfils its responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010.

## The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to leadership and management, and governance

**18. All the relevant Standards are met.**

## Section 2: Quality of education, training and recreation

19. Leaders have developed a broad curriculum in which pupils are able to study a suitable range of subjects. The subject content in schemes of work goes beyond national curriculum age-related expectation for pupils' learning in different year groups and age phases. Programmes of study and schemes of work are planned effectively to enable clear progression in the development of pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding.

20. The curriculum enables the development of numeracy, literacy and communication skills and application of subject knowledge from one subject to another, through a cross-curricular approach to planning. For example, there is collaborative work in geography and mathematics in which pupils develop travel plans based on a fixed budget, and in English pupils used mathematical concepts in drafting a piece of persuasive writing to support an advertising budget application.

21. Teaching is consistently effective. Most lessons are characterised by detailed lesson planning in which teachers build on pupils' prior knowledge to extend their understanding. Teachers have wide ranging subject knowledge which enables them to adapt their teaching in response to pupils' questions. They are able to support pupils who find some ideas difficult to understand while challenging other pupils to take their understanding to a higher level. Consequently, pupils make good progress and develop their understanding of subjects well. Pupils' knowledge and understanding are also enhanced by regular and constructive feedback from teachers. Lessons are planned to allow time for pupils to reflect on their learning and check their understanding.

22. Pupils react positively to the opportunity to learn from mistakes which encourages them to take risks with their learning. Pupils become confident to try unfamiliar ways of learning and trying out their own ideas. As a consequence, pupils grow in self-confidence and develop more resilience when faced with more challenging concepts and ideas.

23. Leaders maintain extensive oversight of teaching throughout the school. They regularly visit lessons, review pupils' work and talk to pupils about their learning. Detailed individual subject reviews are also part of the monitoring process. This allows leaders to evaluate how effectively the school is delivering its teaching aims. Leaders utilise their monitoring of teaching to provide training to teachers on a weekly basis. Teachers constantly reflect on their work and adapt their teaching methods to enhance pupils' progress.

24. A detailed framework for assessment is implemented by school leaders. Pupils' progress is evaluated effectively and action plans are then put in place to support pupils who need extra help with their learning. Pupils have a clear understanding of how well they are progressing and are motivated by seeing improvements in their attainment over time.

25. Although the school has not yet been open long enough for pupils to take A-level examinations, the first two years of GCSE results are well above the national average for pupils taking these examinations.

26. There is appropriate support for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Teachers use pupils' learning support profiles effectively to plan and adapt their teaching to meet pupils' individual needs. When needed, teachers are able to provide effective one-to-one support for pupils during lessons which enables pupils who have SEND to make good progress from their starting points.

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27. There are many opportunities for pupils to take part in sport, music, drama, academic enrichment, and various clubs outside the curriculum. The activities programme provides pupils with opportunities to extend their learning, particularly with respect to developing leadership and collaborative working skills. Pupils active involvement in the activities programme increases their sense of wellbeing and self-confidence. Pupils' participation in the programme is monitored, but not effectively enough to prevent some pupils missing out on these learning opportunities.

## The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to the quality of education, training and recreation

**28. All the relevant Standards are met.**

## Section 3: Pupils' physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing

29. Leaders have established a well-planned and effective pastoral system. Personal tutors are trained in understanding the needs and interests of their pupils. Tutors know their pupils well and provide them with individual support and consideration that helps to develop their self-esteem and self-confidence.

30. The curriculum helps develop pupils' spiritual awareness effectively. They learn about the values and practices of diverse religions. Staff provide pupils with opportunities to reflect on work-life balance and consider the non-material aspects of life as experienced in subjects such as art and drama.

31. There is a comprehensive curriculum in place for the school's personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education, incorporating RSE. The course is known as 'Individuals in Society' (IS) and places particular emphasis on promoting pupils' emotional wellbeing. Pupils learn, for example, about the nature of different types of healthy relationships, the importance of consent and strategies to resist peer pressure. Regular lessons are complimented by 'IS Days' which give pupils the opportunity to increase their understanding of issues such as the harmful effects of prejudice and discrimination. However, some teaching about RSE does not challenge and engage pupils effectively. Consequently, pupils do not consistently make good progress with their learning in this area.

32. Pupils' physical health is developed through a well-planned physical education (PE) and associated games programme. The PE curriculum and its delivery by teachers enables pupils to develop a range of physical skills, such as endurance and dexterity of movement. Pupils make good progress in improving their ability to play different sports relative to their starting points when arriving at the school. The games programme creates opportunities for pupils to work collaboratively in various team sports such as netball, hockey and rugby. While some pupils will play for school teams, others play against each other in internal school leagues. Pupils are taught about the importance of physical exercise in maintaining a healthy lifestyle and they engage positively in the school's PE and games activities. This has a positive impact on pupils' fitness, self-confidence and self-esteem.

33. Although the school does not currently have a system of prefects, leaders have provided a number of opportunities for pupils to have positions of responsibility. Peer mentors, team captains and school council representatives are a selection of pupil leadership roles. Pupils are trained for their roles and recognise the importance of the role that they play in enriching the school community.

34. The school's behaviour policy is implemented effectively by staff. Behavioural expectations are clear, and rewards and sanctions are applied consistently across the school with the result that pupils demonstrate good behaviour. Leaders maintain detailed records of pupil behaviour and monitor patterns and trends in different year groups. When needed, staff provide suitable opportunities for pupils to reflect and learn from their mistakes. Incidents of bullying are rare and are effectively managed by pastoral leaders. Teachers and leaders know pupils well and are observant of any signs of pupils' unhappiness, enabling suitable action to be taken to support the emotional needs of individual pupils.

35. Effective health and safety, fire safety and site maintenance procedures are in place. Staff training is regularly updated and appropriate checks are made on fire equipment, evacuation routes and

electrical and other equipment. The school building and outside areas are well maintained to provide a suitable environment for pupils.

36. First aid and medical provision is appropriate for supporting pupils who are taken ill, injured or have specific medical needs. There are suitable procedures for responding to any accidents and for the administration of medication and first aid. A sufficient number of staff are trained in first aid to meet the pupils' needs.

37. Supervision is effective throughout the school. Staff are deployed to ensure that pupils have easy access to them should they need support or wish to raise any concerns or worries.

38. The school's attendance and admission registers are accurately maintained in line with current statutory guidance. Leaders inform the local authority of any pupils who leave or join the school at non-standard transition points, or are absent for significant periods of time.

## The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to pupils' physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing

**39. All the relevant Standards are met.**

## Section 4: Pupils' social and economic education and contribution to society

40. Leaders and staff constantly model the school values of respect and tolerance for everyone, regardless of their background and beliefs. The school promotes the importance of mutual respect and inclusivity throughout the curriculum. Pupils are taught the importance of listening to and respecting others who have a different social and cultural perspective or background to their own. Pupils learn through, for example, assemblies, and tutorial discussions on themes such as neurodiversity and respect and Black History month, about the harm that prejudice and discrimination have caused throughout history. Additional opportunities through the school's enrichment programme, such as learning British Sign Language, broaden pupils' understanding of the importance of being inclusive. Pupils understanding of different people's perspectives grows as they get older and this has a positive effect on their social and cultural awareness.

41. The curriculum ensures that pupils are knowledgeable about the roles that mutual respect, the rule of law and the democratic process play in British society. These values match closely those of the school and are reinforced through, for example, opportunities to elect members of the pupil council and in conducting their own mock general elections. Pupils are taught how the British democracy works, such as how members of Parliament and local councils are elected. Older pupils learn about, and become able to contrast, different democratic systems in, for example, Britain and the United States of America. Teachers ensure that pupils are consistently given a balanced representation of different political views.

42. Pupil develop a sense of right and wrong which is supported typically by themed assemblies on issues such as anti-bullying and equality. Pupils are taught about the importance of the rule of law, including how courts work, to protect people and uphold their rights in British society. As pupils move through the school the curriculum provides many opportunities for them to explore moral and ethical issues such as the effects of slavery and of modern wars, and to engage in more general discussions on the abuse of power. As a consequence pupils develop their moral understanding well.

43. Pupils receive effective economic education. For example, pupils studying food preparation and nutrition analyse food costs when designing menus, and in geography, pupils consider possible implications of a sugar tax on society. The personal tutor programme enables older pupils to think about the decisions that they will have to make when budgeting independently after leaving school. They learn, for example, how student loans work, how to open bank accounts and the differences between debit and credit cards.

44. Pupils' sense of social responsibility is enhanced by the opportunities to carry out voluntary work in local primary schools and on behalf of charities. In school, older pupils take on the responsibility of mentoring those in the younger groups. A number of clubs and activities in the enrichment programme are pupil-led, such as taking a leading role in directing one of the school productions.

45. The school's IS programme incorporates careers education from a pupil's first year in school. As pupils progress through the school, careers guidance becomes more bespoke to the interests of the individual. Pupils are given a teacher mentor with specialist knowledge of possible career options and who can provide support when pupils make decisions about sixth-form pathways. Pupils meet with professionals from the world of employment through the extensive range of assemblies and career talks. In addition, the school works with parents and local employers to provide pupils with

the opportunity to take part in work experience. Pupils are given one-to-one support when selecting universities to consider and when applying to higher education through UCAS. Staff also provide individual guidance for pupils applying for apprenticeships, gap years or seeking employment directly after leaving school. The effective careers guidance prepares pupils well for the next stages of their education or employment.

## The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to pupils' social and economic education and contribution to society

**46. All the relevant Standards are met.**

# Safeguarding

47. Leaders prioritise safeguarding and ensure that staff understand their safeguarding responsibilities and the importance of safeguarding. The school has a clear and appropriate safeguarding policy which is line with the latest statutory guidance. Leaders ensure that the policy is implemented effectively. The school's safeguarding team are trained for their role in line with local procedures. They liaise effectively with external agencies for training, seeking advice when needed and making appropriate referrals.

48. Staff receive effective and regular safeguarding training, including through a comprehensive induction programme for those new to the school. As a consequence, staff have a detailed understanding of safeguarding procedures and how to escalate concerns about a pupil. Staff are aware of how to respond to any allegations made against adults working at the school.

49. The safeguarding team respond to safeguarding concerns swiftly and effectively and ensure that pupils affected by safeguarding issues receive appropriate support. Safeguarding concerns are suitably recorded showing actions taken and decisions made. Safeguarding records are maintained in line with statutory guidance.

50. Directors maintain effective oversight of the review of policies and their implementation. Directors receive termly safeguarding reports and regularly discuss safeguarding matters with the safeguarding team.

51. Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe, including when online. Suitable filtering and monitoring of internet use are in place, and the safeguarding team responds quickly should there be any alerts.

52. All required pre-appointment checks are carried out for staff, supply staff, directors and contractors working at the school. A suitable single central record of appointments records these checks accurately and staff files also include evidence that all necessary checks have been completed.

## The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to safeguarding

**53. All the relevant Standards are met.**

## School details

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|---|---|
| **School** | Maida Vale School |
| **Department for Education number** | 213/6012 |
| **Address** | Maida Vale School<br>18 Saltram Crescent<br>London<br>W9 3HR |
| **Phone number** | 020 4511 6000 |
| **Email address** | schooloffice@maidavaleschool.com |
| **Website** | https://www.maidavaleschool.com |
| **Proprietor** | Gardener Schools Group Ltd |
| **Chair** | Mrs Maria Gardener |
| **Headteacher** | Mr Magnus Bashaarat |
| **Age range** | 11 to 18 |
| **Number of pupils** | 211 |
| **Date of previous inspection** | 16 to 18 November 2021 |

## Information about the school

54. Maida Vale School is a co-educational independent day school located in Maida Vale, London. The school comprises a senior school, which includes a sixth form, on a single site. The school is owned by Gardener Schools Group Limited whose directors form the school's governing body.

55. The school has identified 81 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Five pupils in the school have an education, health and care (EHC) plan.

56. No pupils speak English as an additional language.

57. The school states its aims are to value each pupil as an individual who is motivated to fulfil their potential. The objective is to cultivate the values of respect, compassion, tolerance and community responsibility in each pupil. The school seeks to pursue excellence in all areas of study.

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# Inspection details

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| **Inspection dates** | 12 to 14 November 2024 |

58. A team of three inspectors visited the school for two and a half days.

59. Inspection activities included:

- observation of lessons, some in conjunction with school leaders
- observation of registration periods and assemblies
- observation of a sample of extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection
- discussions with the chair and other governors
- discussions with the head, school leaders, managers and other members of staff
- discussions with pupils
- visits to the learning support area and facilities for physical education
- scrutiny of samples of pupils' work
- scrutiny of a range of policies, documentation and records provided by the school.

60. The inspection team considered the views of pupils, members of staff and parents who responded to ISI's pre-inspection surveys.

61. The school was previously inspected by Ofsted. This is the first inspection of the school by ISI.

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- The Department for Education is the regulator for independent schools in England.
- ISI is approved by the Secretary of State for Education to inspect independent schools in England, which are members of associations in membership of the Independent Schools Council.
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- For more information, please visit **www.isi.net**.

**Independent Schools Inspectorate**

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