

Mander Portman Woodward Independent College

17–18 Greenfield Crescent, Edgbaston, Birmingham, B15 3AU

Inspection dates

24–26 September 2014

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

1

Achievement of pupils

Outstanding

1

Quality of teaching

Outstanding

1

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Outstanding

1

Leadership and management

Outstanding

1

Summary of key findings

This is an outstanding school because

- The close monitoring of students' progress, regular assessment of students' work and individual interventions result in their outstanding achievement throughout all phases of the college.
- A-level attainment in all subjects is significantly above that found nationally. The percentage of students gaining A* to B grades is high.
- Students, including those who are disabled or with special educational needs, make excellent progress in Key Stage 4, resulting in attainment at GCSE that is above that found nationally.
- Teachers form exceptionally strong relationships with students. Excellent care and guidance results in the vast majority of students continuing to higher education, including to the country's most prestigious universities.
- Teaching over time is outstanding. Regular assessments and targeted interventions result in most students making outstanding progress in all key stages at the college.
- Students' behaviour is exemplary. They have extremely positive attitudes to learning, and very high levels of tolerance and respect for others.
- The college's curriculum promotes the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students extremely well. Students are thoroughly prepared for life in modern day Britain.
- Leaders at all levels have very high expectations of staff and students. They work extremely hard to ensure that all students receive a highly personalised curriculum.
- College leaders' work to keep students safe and secure is outstanding.

Compliance with regulatory

- The school meets schedule 1 of The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, as amended by The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2012 and associated requirements.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 21 lessons to assess the quality of learning of students in most subject areas of the college. Four lessons were jointly observed with senior leaders.
- Meetings were held with the Principal, senior leaders, key stage leaders, the Chair of Governing Body and two groups of students.
- Inspectors took account of 70 parental responses to a college questionnaire. They spoke to parents and carers before the start of college and on the telephone. Inspectors also took into account letters received from parents during the inspection.
- The inspection team observed the college’s work, scrutinised the college’s information about students’ achievement, including those for whom English is an additional language, and those who are disabled or have special educational needs.
- Students’ behaviour was observed around the college and in lessons.
- Inspectors looked at the work in students’ books.
- Inspectors examined the college’s curriculum, including schemes of work.
- Inspectors examined records relating to behaviour, attendance and exclusions, and looked at documents used by leaders and governors to check and evaluate the school’s work.
- The inspection team looked at records of health, safety and fire checks and other actions carried out by the college to keep students safe.

Inspection team

Jalil Shaikh, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Zahid Aziz

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Mander Portman Woodward College Birmingham was opened in 1980 and is part of a group of independent colleges founded in 1973. The colleges are owned by a private limited company and their work is overseen by a board of directors.
- The college moved to its current location in Edgbaston, Birmingham in February 2006. When it was last inspected in January 2009, it was judged to provide an outstanding quality of education.
- Mander Portman Woodward Birmingham is non-selective and enrolls a wide and diverse range of students, some of whom have special educational needs.
- A significant minority of students at the college have previously been unable to access education successfully in other institutions and are in need of the personalised curriculum that the college provides. The college has a policy of class sizes not exceeding eight students. However, the majority of class sizes are significantly smaller than this.
- There are 176 students on roll aged 14 to 19+ years. The number of students of compulsory school age is very low. Two students have a statement of special educational needs. Approximately 85% of students attend full time and the rest on a part-time basis.
- Most students are from Indian and Pakistani backgrounds. A significant minority of students are White British and Chinese. There is also a very small number of Black heritage students.
- Students at the college come from mainly Birmingham and surrounding towns, and a small proportion from overseas.
- The college does not use any alternative provision for its students.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the monitoring of students' achievement by refining the systems for recording and evaluating students' progress to allow leaders to have a highly accurate understanding of student performance relative to their starting points.

Inspection judgements

Achievement of pupils

Outstanding

- Attainment on entry to the college at Key Stages 4 and 5 is varied. Some students have complex learning needs. However, the highly personalised curriculum, close monitoring of students' progress, regular assessment of students' work and individual interventions ensure that the achievement of students throughout all phases of the college is outstanding.
- Achievement at the college goes well beyond just academic excellence. Students are nurtured and developed exceptionally well. As a result, they gain high levels of confidence, speak articulately and are very well prepared for life outside of the college. A very high proportion of students go on to higher education, including at the country's most highly regarded universities.
- Parents and carers are extremely complimentary about their children's progress at the college. One parent commented, 'From a little girl who was a little dot with no confidence at all, she has become a woman overnight - she is unrecognisable!' when describing the impact the personalised care has had on her dyslexic daughter.
- A-level attainment has been well above that found nationally for the last three years. Close monitoring and tracking of students' learning, followed by individual support, ensures that they make exceptional progress. The percentage of students gaining A* to B grades in all subjects at A level is much higher than that found nationally. In a significant number of subjects at A level, all students gain an A* to C grade.
- Students with a range of diverse learning needs make exceptional progress at Key Stage 4. This is as a result of high expectations, linked closely to targeted support and guidance. Consequently, all students at the end of Key Stage 4 continue to further education.
- Attainment at Key Stage 4 is also above that found nationally. The percentage of students gaining five A* to C grades at GCSE including English and mathematics is higher at the college than found nationally.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs make outstanding progress in their learning and personal development. This is as a result of high quality personalised support due to small class sizes, and effective dialogue with personal tutors and subject teachers. However, although exceeding expectations, they sometimes do not attain quite as well as students from other groups in the school. This is because they often have complex needs and much lower starting points.
- Students who speak English as an additional language develop their reading, writing and literacy skills quickly and achieve very well. The proportion of these students gaining top grades at A level in humanities and English-based subjects is high.

Quality of teaching

Outstanding

- Teaching and intervention strategies at the college are highly effective. Small class sizes allow personalised teaching which results in students making outstanding progress in their learning over time.

- Relationships between students and teachers are extremely positive and are a major strength of the college. This is a highly caring and supportive college that is building a strong reputation in the community for the personalised attention it gives to its students.
- Teachers have high expectations of what students can achieve. They support them very well in developing the necessary skills to attain the highest grades at A level and at GCSE.
- Teachers have very strong subject and examination knowledge. They are incredibly enthusiastic about the subjects they teach, which enthuses students to have consistently positive attitudes to their learning.
- Questioning deepens students' understanding and ensures high levels of challenge, so that learning is moved on quickly. Teaching encourages genuine dialogue, debate, and critical thinking. It develops high levels of independence, tolerance and respect, together with excellent levels of literacy and numeracy. As a result, students develop into highly confident and articulate individuals who have a first-rate understanding of the rule of law, democracy and life in modern day Britain.
- Regular monitoring and tracking of students' progress through timed assessments in Key Stages 4 and 5 allow students to have an excellent understanding of how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve their work. In discussion, students said they found the college's assessment strategy extremely helpful for them to keep track of and advance their learning.
- Teachers consistently use assessment data to plan highly effective interventions both in and out of regular lessons. For example, during the inspection teachers used the results of timed assessments to plan activities and questions extremely well in order to further improve students' work. Homework is used effectively to support learning and students' progress.
- Personal tutors work exceptionally well with subject teachers to ensure students' needs are closely met through meaningful dialogues and by facilitating additional support. This results in students' misconceptions being addressed quickly and them making consistently high levels of progress over time.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Outstanding

- The behaviour of students is outstanding. Highly successful strategies to engage students at the college result in exemplary attitudes to learning. Students are highly motivated to do well and work extremely hard, even when unsupervised. Attendance at the college is very high and well above that found nationally.
- Students collaborate extremely well to support each other in learning, both in and out of the classroom. For example, during their free time students were observed preparing for timed assessments, carrying out research in groups in the common room and doing additional work in the corridors.
- Students are exceptionally respectful of teachers and each other. Their behaviour in lessons and around the college is consistently outstanding. Students opened doors and extended greetings to inspectors throughout the inspection.

- High levels of cohesion in lessons allow students of all ethnicities, cultures and religions to have the confidence to discuss highly personal issues in a climate of mutual tolerance and reverence. For example, in a personal, social and health education lesson a Muslim student was able to talk about a racist incident his mother had experienced in a fully supportive and trusting environment.
- The college has clear systems to challenge and support students who find good behaviour difficult at times. However, the college's log of students' behaviour, including bullying and racist incidents, indicates that poor behaviour is extremely rare.
- College leaders are excellent at 'nipping any potential issues in the bud'. Personal systems of support allow the college to adapt a student's curriculum offer, where needed, to ensure the highest levels of behaviour and achievement are attained. As a result, there have been no fixed-term or permanent exclusions at the college for a number of years.
- The college's work to keep students safe and secure is outstanding. All students spoken to by inspectors during formal meetings and around the college felt safe and free from harm. This was also overwhelmingly supported by responses of parents to a recent college survey.
- The college carries out robust checks of its premises to ensure that the building is maintained to a high standard so that students are always safe. External organisations are used well to carry out risk assessments, health, safety and fire safety checks, and to ensure that equipment used in the college is safe.

Leadership and management

Outstanding

- Leaders and managers at all levels have been extremely successful in sustaining very high levels of achievement over the last few years. They lead by example and are highly ambitious in respect to what they can achieve through a substantially personalised curriculum.
- The college's self-evaluation is accurate. Improvement plans clearly map out how the college will sustain the highest levels of attainment and outstanding progress.
- Data gathered from student and parent interviews on admission to the college, as well as previous examination performance, are used extremely well by senior leaders to plan interventions and support for new students. This results in the outstanding achievement and exemplary behaviour of students.
- Parental engagement at the college is outstanding. Parents are extremely complimentary about the college's systems to inform them about their children's progress. Results of bi-weekly timed assessments are put on the college's intranet system. Parents receive five detailed reports of their children's progress every year. The college's open-door policy ensures that parents feel comfortable to contact the college when necessary. One parent mentioned that 'communication from the school is amazing!'
- The school has highly effective strategies for care and guidance. For example, students in the sixth form receive high quality careers guidance from their personal tutors, outside speakers and local university lecturers, which enable them to make informed decisions about their future career choices. As a result, high percentages of students continue on to higher

education, including to the country's most prestigious universities.

- The college's curriculum, although highly academic, is broad and balanced; it is well suited to the needs and aspirations of students. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students is promoted exceptionally well through extra-curricular activities and in-depth personal, social and health education.
- Leaders' work to ensure students are safe and free from harm is outstanding. College policies are thorough and have an uncompromising impact on preventing extremist ideas and behaviour. Outside speakers are carefully vetted. Systems for the recruitment of staff are vigorous and go well beyond statutory guidance to ensure the safety of students.
- The highly qualified college governance supports and challenges the Principal and senior leaders well. They have detailed knowledge of the college, its strengths and areas of development. They ensure that all leaders and staff are held to account through well-planned performance management systems.
- Although the procedures for measuring students' achievement are outstanding, systems for recording and evaluating students' progress are not sufficiently refined to allow leaders to have a highly accurate understanding of students' performance relative to their starting points.

What inspection judgements mean

School	
Grade	Judgement
Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Requires improvement
Grade 4	Inadequate

Detailed grade characteristics can be viewed in the *Non-association independent school inspection handbook* which is published on the Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/140053.

School details

Unique reference number	103587
Inspection number	443497
DfE registration number	330/6079

This inspection was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Type of school	5 th and 6 th Form College
School status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	14–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	176
Number of part time pupils	23
Proprietor	Mander Portman Woodward Limited
Chair	Dr Nigel Stout
Headteacher	Mark Shingleton
Date of previous school inspection	13–14 January 2009
Annual fees (day pupils)	£12,435 to £17,790
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