

# Inspection of Maidstone Grammar School for Girls

Buckland Road, Maidstone, Kent ME16 0SF

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Inspection dates: 7 and 8 March 2023

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>
The quality of education	<b>Outstanding</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Outstanding</b>
Personal development	<b>Outstanding</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Outstanding</b>
Sixth-form provision	<b>Outstanding</b>
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

Until November 2020, the school was exempt from routine inspection because it was judged as outstanding at its previous inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. The school has not been inspected since May 2009.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

The ambition for pupils at Maidstone Girls Grammar School (MGGS) is limitless. Pupils, from Years 7 to 13, aspire to be the very best they can be. They value the dedicated support from staff as they determinedly pursue different career ambitions. Pupils are eager to explain how the school's extensive and well-considered curriculum is helping them pursue their dreams, whether this is to be a doctor, actor, author, scientist or something else.

Pupils share the high expectations their teachers have for academic success. Pupils strive to achieve these, knowing that their personal development and well-being are also at the heart of everything staff do. The importance of debate is continually promoted, ensuring that everyone has a voice. Pupils are encouraged to challenge their own and others' beliefs. Events such as the recent 'Unity in Diversity' House Arts Week inspire pupils to be proud of who they are and what they want to achieve.

Time is taken to develop pupils' resilience and confidence. Teachers do this daily by carefully identifying what support pupils need to achieve highly. Pastoral care is always available. Pupils know they can report any concerns they have, including any potential bullying. They are confident that staff will also listen and provide the right help whenever this is needed.

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

Pupils, parents and staff highly value the school's care, ambition and history. They are proud to be members of the MGGS community. Leaders and governors, some of whom attended the school previously, are dedicated to providing an exceptional education. The school's alumni, including the 'Old Girls', regularly come back into school to share their life experiences with pupils. This recently included daily sessions linked to International Women's Day. Events such as these exemplify the school's thought-provoking and extensive careers programme. Pupils clearly benefit from the thorough guidance they receive to support their applications for further education or employment.

Excellence sits at the very heart of the school's meticulous curriculum. Staff use their detailed subject expertise to diligently identify the most important knowledge pupils need to learn. Pupils keenly master different skills, whether this be solving complex problems in mathematics or using their creativity in English, art, and design and technology. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) specifically benefit from this support. Leaders ensure that the needs of pupils are carefully identified. They use this to provide staff with information that outlines what support each pupil with SEND needs. All of these actions by staff, across the breadth of the curriculum, ensure that pupils achieve highly.

Teachers work closely within their subject teams to identify how learning can be adapted to help pupils progress. Staff weave the school's 'MEGA' ethos throughout

their work. Thinking and enquiry underpin the curriculum. Pupils deepen their learning through collaborating with their teachers using online tools. The online platform also ensures that work is recorded and can then be accessed by any pupils who might be absent from school. Teachers also use this resource, as well as classroom-based activities, to check what pupils have learned and to give feedback. This ensures that pupils have a clear sense of the areas of learning they need to focus on to achieve well.

Pupils consistently demonstrate exemplary learning behaviours. Lessons are focused and productive. Pupils are urged to positively explore their views and ideas. They know it is safe to ask questions and make a mistake because this is part of the process of learning. The school's 'RISE' (Resilient, Inspirational, Supportive, Excellence) curriculum strengthens this. During form time, assemblies and 'RISE' days, pupils explore many aspects of life in modern Britain. This includes exploring how to make safe choices and considering what attributes pupils will need for them to lead successful lives.

Leaders prioritise the well-being of pupils. Pupils are encouraged to talk about how they can stay mentally and physically healthy. Sixth-form students value the additional enrichment opportunities as part of their weekly timetable. They particularly appreciate how they are able to make choices about how they use their time. Some enjoy debating political issues, while others appreciate the 'self-care' sessions, where they learn about breathing and calming techniques.

Pupils are eager to come to school, and attendance is high. Sensitive support is put in place to support the small number of pupils who may be finding attending school more difficult. This help is based on a detailed understanding of the provision each pupil needs. Pupils with SEND also benefit from tailored pastoral support. Staff have regular training on the educational and medical needs of pupils. Many parents praised the thought and care provided in their responses to Ofsted's online survey.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Highly knowledgeable leaders ensure that all staff have specific and up-to-date safeguarding information. Detailed record-keeping enables staff to identify where pupils might be showing behaviours that indicate they may be at risk of harm. Concerns are reported promptly, and swift action is taken when needed. Governors and leaders work closely to ensure all appropriate safer recruitment processes are rigorously completed.

Pupils value the time given to consider their personal safety. They are acutely aware of potential risks to their well-being, including when using social media. Pupils feel safe, knowing there is always an adult ready to listen to their concerns.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	118836
<b>Local authority</b>	Kent
<b>Inspection number</b>	10256359
<b>Type of school</b>	Grammar (selective)
<b>School category</b>	Foundation
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Girls
<b>Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1,199
<b>Of which, number on roll in the sixth form</b>	322
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Lindsay Horne
<b>Headteacher</b>	Deborah Stanley
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.mggs.org">www.mggs.org</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	19 May 2009, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- Since the last inspection, there have been significant changes in staffing, leadership and the governing body.
- The school uses one unregistered and two registered alternative providers to support the education of a 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 educational 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. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with senior leaders, staff and pupils. They also spoke with members of the governing body, including the chair. An inspector also spoke to a representative from the local authority.
- The inspection team carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, geography, computing, physical education and art and design. They discussed these subjects and other aspects of the curriculum with leaders, heads of department, teachers and pupils, visited lessons and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors considered the responses to the Ofsted Parent View questionnaire, as well as the free-text comments that were submitted. They also took account of the responses to the confidential staff and pupil surveys and gathered the views of both staff and pupils throughout the inspection.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors viewed the school's website and policies, met with the designated safeguarding leads, spoke with pupils and staff, checked school records of safeguarding checks carried out on adults working at the school and spoke with governors.

## Inspection team

Aimee Floyd, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Paula Sargent	Ofsted Inspector
Martin Smith	His Majesty's Inspector
Simon Potten	Ofsted Inspector
Daniel Botting	His Majesty's Inspector

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