

Inspection of Mayfield Grammar School, Gravesend

Pelham Road, Gravesend, Kent DA11 0JE

Inspection dates: 30 April and 1 May 2024

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

The headteacher of this school is Elaine Wilson. This school is part of Mayfield Grammar School trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Valerie Green.

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 under section 5 of the Act since June 2013.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils thrive within the school's highly ambitious culture. The expertly designed curriculum inspires pupils to develop a deep understanding across a broad range of subjects. Pupils are challenged both academically and personally. The 'Learning Excellence and Aspire Programme' cultivates pupils' many talents and individual interests through inspiring project work. Sixth-form students are well prepared for their future study and careers.

High expectations underpin every aspect of school life, from academic success to attendance and behaviour. Pupils eagerly aspire to meet the challenges they are set. They are extremely attentive during lessons and behave maturely and sensibly around the school. Pupils are not concerned by bullying. They are confident that staff would address any issues that arise. This helps pupils to feel safe. High levels of respect are shown to others. This reflects the emphasis on ensuring an inclusive environment where everyone is welcome. The 'Speak Out' group promote equalities, diversity and inclusion. Enjoyable cultural days provide an opportunity to celebrate pupils' different heritages and beliefs.

Pupils appreciate the vast array of sporting, cultural and creative activities on offer. The 'Mayfield Challenge' extends pupils' skills beyond the classroom. Opportunities to learn camp craft, achieve a first-aid qualification or raise money for charity are valued and cherished.

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

The school's curriculum is aspirational for every pupil. In each subject, lessons ensure pupils learn knowledge and skills that are beyond the expectations of the national curriculum. The 'Mayfield Baccalaureate' provides pupils with an interesting mix of humanity subjects at key stage 4, including classical civilisation, economics and psychology. There is a strong culture of reading in the school where pupils read widely and often. Poetry and journalism competitions support this, igniting a passion for literature.

Across subjects, the powerful knowledge that pupils will learn and remember is diligently identified and taught. Important themes and concepts are threaded through the curriculum and revisited regularly. Practical skills are also developed in a well-sequenced manner. This ensures that, for example, pupils develop the ability to work scientifically and carry out interesting experiments that deepen their expertise.

At key stages 3 and 4, the curriculum is delivered exceptionally well. Teachers have expert subject knowledge, providing precise explanations. The way that modern foreign languages are taught is a particular strength of the school. Pupils benefit from the opportunity to learn several different languages, including Mandarin. Through the 'Mandarin Excellence Programme', pupils rapidly develop excellent speaking, listening and writing skills.

Teachers regularly refer to prior learning, helping pupils to make connections between what they already know and new information. The activities provided to help pupils learn are carefully crafted. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) specifically receive comprehensive support that meets their identified individual needs. This ensures pupils develop a secure understanding of complex concepts and vocabulary that helps them to achieve highly in national examinations. This includes the small number of disadvantaged pupils who are also successfully prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.

Sixth-form students study a broad range of academic and vocational subjects. Additionally, they benefit from an impressive enrichment offer. Wednesday afternoons provide the opportunity to pursue interests including in sport, developing confidence with public speaking or learning British Sign Language. Careers guidance is comprehensive. Those who progress to university receive comprehensive support. The 'Wills and Walder' lecture programme provides further learning across stimulating academic topics to support this transition. However, students do not typically achieve as highly here as they do in key stage 4. While many subjects are taught very well, in some others, teachers do not always check students' understanding as well as they could. The school recognises this inconsistency and is implementing its comprehensive plans to address this.

Attendance is high. Within school, pupils are punctual to their lessons, moving quickly and sensibly around the site. The school thoroughly monitors absence. Assistance is quickly put in place for the very small number of pupils with lower attendance. This includes pastoral support when this is needed. Pupils behave remarkably well. They are polite and courteous to one another and their teachers.

The school's personal development programme is outstanding. Pupils develop real strength of character because of the abundant opportunities provided to them. For example, leadership skills are fostered through high-profile peer mentoring schemes and the school council. Pupils play an important role in their local community, including supporting local care homes. Sixth-form students receive training to mentor younger pupils. Through this, pupils recognise the value of their role in the school community and as citizens.

Over recent years the school has grown considerably. School leaders and trustees have overseen ongoing building work which is providing pupils with access to high-quality learning environments. Leaders have fostered a collaborative environment where professional development and staff well-being are prioritised. Staff value the systems and processes in place to provide a high-quality education for all.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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' is used to mean pupils with SEND; pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	137834
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10317957
Type of school	Grammar (selective)
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Girls
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,392
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	361
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Valerie Green
Headteacher	Elaine Wilson
Website	www.msgg.kent.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	11 and 12 June 2013, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is a single-academy trust.
- The school currently uses one registered alternative provider to support the education of a very small number of pupils.
- 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 educational qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The lead inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken that into account in his evaluation of the school.
- The inspectors met with the headteacher, senior leaders, subject leaders, the leader responsible for pupils with SEND, other teachers and support staff.
- The lead inspector met with trustees.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, science, history, social sciences and modern foreign languages. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils and staff to hear their views.
- The inspectors considered the responses to the confidential Ofsted surveys for staff and pupils, and the survey for parents, Ofsted Parent View.

Inspection team

Martin Smith, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Simon Woodbridge	His Majesty's Inspector
Jon Wood	Ofsted Inspector
Marian Feeley	His Majesty's Inspector
Simon Webster	Ofsted Inspector

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