Inspection of The St Marylebone CofE School

64 Marylebone High Street, London W1U 5BA

Inspection dates:	4 and 5 February 2025
The quality of education	**Outstanding**
Behaviour and attitudes	**Outstanding**
Personal development	**Outstanding**
Leadership and management	**Outstanding**
Sixth-form provision	**Outstanding**
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

What is it like to attend this school?

Staff are highly dedicated to the school. Pupils and their families value staff's care and commitment. Exceptionally high expectations are set for pupils academically and for their personal development. Pupils' academic success is reflected in the consistently above-average published outcomes. The school is inclusive. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) learn and progress very well. Everyone plays an active role in the school.

Pupils' behaviour and attitudes towards learning are exemplary. They live and display the 'Marylebone five' attitudes of being curious, responsive, compassionate, imaginative and courageous in all they do. Pupils rightly feel safe in the school. They share any concerns with trusted adults. There is extensive support for pupils with their mental health and well-being. Bullying is not tolerated in the school, and if it does happen, staff address it quickly.

Pupils thrive, developing their interests and talents excellently. The arts are at the heart of the school. There is an impressive range of extra-curricular activities, and a considerable number of these are led by pupils. Students in the sixth form act as excellent role models and inspire younger pupils to lead. At lunchtimes, the buzz of pupils singing, walking, running to the local park, playing sports and dancing is vibrant. This reflects the strong community, which thrives on pupils learning and performing together.

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

The school has designed a very ambitious curriculum, including in the sixth form, which is highly successful. The curriculum is structured thoughtfully. Important knowledge and skills that pupils need to learn are revisited regularly over time. This supports pupils to recall their knowledge exceptionally well. They then apply this successfully when tackling more complex challenges. For instance, during geography field work in Year 7, pupils learn specialist data-collecting skills. Pupils use these skills later to tackle more challenging activities.

Teachers have extremely strong subject knowledge. They explain and model using subject-specific language clearly and very effectively. High expectations are set for pupils to explain their ideas using specialist language with skill. Pupils excel at this. Through their responses and discussions, pupils show their deep insights. For example, in English, pupils debate and understand the motivation for characters' behaviour in the 'Merchant of Venice'. They then use this language to develop their written analysis skills with great ability. Equally, in mathematics, the expectation for pupils to explain their concepts is part of a strong, planned approach.

Pupils' learning is checked consistently through questioning and assessment. Teachers address any misconceptions and gaps in pupils' learning quickly. Pupils think for themselves exceptionally well. They exemplify being curious learners. For example, in art, they demonstrate their adept research skills when exploring different artists. Pupils with SEND learn very successfully alongside their peers. They benefit from the highly

consistent approach to teaching across the school. Teachers adapt the curriculum skilfully to meet the needs of pupils precisely. This supports pupils to become increasingly independent. The sixth form is similarly very inclusive, and students with SEND achieve very well here too.

Reading is a priority. The library is a hive of activity, where pupils enjoy a range of diverse books. Pupils with weaker reading skills are identified quickly. Appropriate, targeted interventions are put in place to help them become confident and fluent readers without delay. Teachers track pupils' reading extremely closely to ensure they make the rapid progress the school expects.

Relationships between pupils and staff are very strong. Pupils are very polite and courteous. Pupils receive excellent pastoral support. They show their care for others through their extensive charity work. Pupils gain a strong spiritual awareness through their weekly whole school assemblies and daily thought for the day, in which pupils regularly participate.

Pupils' wider personal development is extensively promoted. The curriculum is enriched with a wide range of exciting activities and visits. These include history and music tours to Germany, and trips to Paris and Greece. The school makes the most of being in the centre of London. Its links with significant landmarks give pupils inspiring experiences. There are many opportunities in every year group for pupil leadership, including in the sixth form. For example, pupils relish acting as reading mentors, ambassadors or laboratory technicians. Younger pupils take on roles such as anti-bullying, mental health and diversity ambassadors.

Pupils, including students in the sixth form and those with SEND, benefit from a highly effective careers programme. The school's 'Careers and Inspiration Fair', with 50 different organisations, is just one example. There is highly personalised support for pupils to make informed choices. Pupils are very well prepared for the next stage of their education, employment or training.

There is a strong focus on attendance and punctuality. As a result, attendance is high. The school has strong systems for following up any absences. It works with external agencies diligently to gain appropriate further support on the rare occasions this is needed.

Leaders and governors work very effectively together. Their strong leadership creates the ethos of continuous improvement where all can succeed. This has sustained the school's high performance. Staff retention is exceptionally high. Their commitment to the school reflects their sense of care. There is a great deal of trust across the school community. Staff value highly the extensive support for professional development. Equally, they appreciate the careful consideration of their workload. They are rightly immensely proud to work at the school.

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 special educational needs and/or disabilities (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	137353
Local authority	Westminster
Inspection number	10345926
Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
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	1,181
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	374
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Eliza Low
Headteacher	Kat Pugh
Website	www.stmaryleboneschool.com
Dates of previous inspection	1 and 2 April 2014, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Information about this school

- The school has a Church of England religious character. The school had its last section 48 statutory inspection of Anglican and Methodist schools in May 2018.
- The school uses two registered alternative provisions.
- 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 education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and

management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other senior staff.
- Inspectors also met with members of the governing board.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, geography, modern foreign languages (French and Spanish) and music. 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. Inspectors also visited a sample of lessons in history, science and art
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, 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' interest first.
- Inspectors spoke with several groups of pupils and observed their behaviour at breaktime and lunchtime.
- Inspectors met with groups of staff and considered the views expressed through the staff survey. They also considered the views of pupils through the pupil survey.
- Inspectors took account of the views of parents who completed Ofsted Parent View.

Inspection team

Janice Howkins, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Shaun Dodds	Ofsted Inspector
Alex Hayes	Ofsted Inspector
Luisa Bonelli	Ofsted Inspector
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