

Inspection of Maiden Erlegh School

Silverdale Road, Earley, Reading, Berkshire RG6 7HS

Inspection dates: 11–12 February 2020

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

The quality of education

Outstanding

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Sixth-form provision

Outstanding

Previous inspection grade

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils receive an excellent education at this school. They excel in the subjects they study and grow into confident, articulate individuals. Pupils come to this school knowing they are expected to do their very best.

Leaders have the highest academic expectations for all pupils. Pupils routinely take ownership of their learning. They often check their own work and that of others to make it even better. Pupils expertly share what they know and remember from the topics they learn.

Pupils feel safe at school. They are exceptionally well cared for. Bullying is extremely rare and dealt with promptly, if it does occur. Pupils' behaviour in classrooms and around the school is exemplary.

Pupils' artistic successes are displayed prominently in a central gallery for pupils, staff and visitors to view. Pupils are rightly proud of what they can and do achieve.

Pupils are highly considerate of their own and others' right to education. As such, they are very respectful towards each other and the staff who work with them on a daily basis. Parents and carers are incredibly supportive of the school. One parent comment reflected those of many when they wrote via the Ofsted Parent View survey, 'This is a great all-round school.'

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

Leaders have developed a highly ambitious curriculum for all pupils. They consider each pupil's needs and abilities. Leaders match the curriculum to these expertly. Leaders have comprehensively mapped the breadth of topics pupils learn about from Years 7 to 9 across the whole curriculum. Most pupils in key stage 4 study a modern foreign language. All pupils study religious studies, and nearly all take this subject as a GCSE. A very high percentage of pupils study the English Baccalaureate subjects. Leaders ensure that all pupils study a wide range of subjects. Pupils' subject learning is supported by an extensive out-of-lesson offer. For example, all Year 9 pupils take part in regular STEAM (science, technology, engineering, art and mathematics) enrichment activities.

Teachers use their expert subject knowledge to plan and deliver activities in a logical order that helps pupils build on what they have learned before. They use probing and often very challenging questions to make sure pupils know and remember what has been taught. For example, in Year 7 religion and philosophy, pupils used specific subject terminology accurately to discuss and debate the question posed by their teacher, 'Does God really exist?' Furthermore, teachers use other, highly effective methods for checking that pupils are secure in the knowledge and skills they have been taught. Pupils in Year 7 through to Year 13 learn the skills they need to identify their own gaps in knowledge. They often check their own work and rectify any gaps they have in their knowledge accurately.

Pupils concentrate well and participate enthusiastically in lessons. Year 13 English literature students were keen to debate the 'heroes and anti-heroes' of the book they were reading. Pupils blossom when teachers ask them to share their knowledge and skills.

Leaders have made sure that pupils receive an expansive range of opportunities to develop their spiritual and moral understanding. The philosophical questions posed by teachers, such as 'Is there life after death?', alongside weekly tutor-led sessions on Fridays build pupils' spiritual and moral awareness very effectively. Pupils develop their social and cultural understanding incredibly well. For example, student representatives address equalities issues on behalf of the student body with school leaders. More so, international trips such as a sixth-form trip to Germany help pupils develop their language skills and business acumen. Pupils have a high regard for, and understanding of life in modern Britain and beyond.

Trustees maintain a very secure overview of how well the school provides for every pupil. They know the school's strengths incredibly well, yet they strive for even further improvement. Alongside the very effective executive leadership of the trust, leaders are collectively well placed to ensure the school goes from strength to strength.

Leaders have developed a highly inclusive sixth-form provision. They support all students to achieve academic success. Students study a well-planned and ambitious curriculum that is supported by work experience opportunities and other well-considered non-subject activities. Students in the sixth form are exceptionally well prepared for their next steps.

Leaders have ensured that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive the very best personalised support, alongside the subjects they study. Teachers and other staff working with these pupils understand their needs well. They adapt the curriculum to ensure that pupils with SEND enjoy learning and are challenged to do as well as they can. Pupils with SEND achieve exceptionally well.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and staff have the skills and knowledge they need to recognise and respond to any concerns with a pupil's welfare and safety. Leaders take appropriate actions quickly when needed.

Leaders work closely with other agencies to provide the necessary support for vulnerable pupils and their families. Leaders follow up concerns to satisfy themselves that the pupils' safety and welfare needs are being met.

Trustees fulfil their legal safeguarding duties. They make regular checks of the school systems to ensure they remain effective. Trust-wide safeguarding systems add an extra level of support and checking.

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 Ofsted Parent View information 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.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

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

Unique reference number	136637
Local authority	Wokingham
Inspection number	10135794
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,837
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	454
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Nick Jones
Headteacher	Paul Gibson
Website	http://maidenerleghschool.co.uk/
Date of previous inspection	12 September 2018

Information about this school

- The headteacher started in January 2019.
- The school uses the following alternative providers for a small number of pupils: Cranbury College and Reading Football Community Trust.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- We met with senior leaders, curriculum leaders, teachers and pupils.
- We met with representatives of the board of trustees. We met with the chief executive officer of the trust and met representatives of the local advisory board of governors. The lead inspector spoke to the trust's school improvement partner by phone.

- We considered the Ofsted Parent View survey responses and associated texts. We considered the pupil and staff survey responses.
- The lead inspector reviewed the school's website, publicly available information on pupils' performance and other relevant school documentation.
- The lead inspector reviewed safeguarding procedures in place at the school, including checking the single central record and safeguarding policies. He met with the designated safeguarding lead.
- We observed pupils' behaviour in classrooms, at break- and lunchtimes and as they moved around the school.
- We did deep dives in these subjects: English, science, religious education, history and modern foreign languages. We spoke to pupils, teachers and leaders, visited lessons and reviewed pupils' work as part of these deep dives.

Inspection team

Dylan Davies, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Anne Turner	Ofsted Inspector
Richard Carlyle	Ofsted Inspector
Paul James	Ofsted Inspector
John Burridge	Ofsted Inspector

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