

Marylebone Boys' School

60 Christchurch Avenue, London NW6 7BH

Inspection dates

10–11 May 2017

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| Overall effectiveness | Good |
| Effectiveness of leadership and management | Good |
| Quality of teaching, learning and assessment | Good |
| Personal development, behaviour and welfare | Good |
| Outcomes for pupils | Good |
| Overall effectiveness at previous inspection | Not previously inspected |

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Leaders, staff and governors are turning their vision and ambition into a reality. They have created a successful school where pupils are taught well and make good progress.
- The school community is a happy one. Staff are proud to work at the school. Pupils are safe, get on well with each other, and treat each other with respect and tolerance.
- Leaders have high expectations of what pupils should be achieving. Pupils typically work hard to make the progress of which they are capable and to achieve the ambitious targets that staff set for them.
- As this is a new school, leaders have ensured that they use a range of external reviews to challenge and support them to keep improving the school's work. As a result, governors receive high-quality information, which they use to hold leaders to account.
- Subject leaders are becoming increasingly effective in their roles. Senior leaders support them effectively in developing their skills and leading improvements in teaching in their own subject areas.
- Pupils have good knowledge, skills and understanding in a wide range of subjects, including in modern foreign languages.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make the same good progress, or in some cases, better progress than their peers.
- Parents and pupils are equally positive about the work of the school. One parent, whose voice represented many, said, 'We could not be happier with the quality of education and true care provided for the boys.'
- Teachers have good subject knowledge. They use a variety of effective teaching methods to engage pupils so that they learn well.
- Not all teachers consistently check what pupils already know and understand. Consequently, the work given to pupils can either be too hard or too easy.
- Leaders are not rigorous enough in their review of pupil premium funding. For example, although most pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds are making good progress from their starting points, there are some emerging differences for the most able disadvantaged pupils. Leaders know this and organised a recent external review of the funding.
- Leaders are not precise in their improvement planning. It is not always easy to see which subjects or groups of pupils are the focus for the different actions in improvement plans.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Leaders and governors should implement and evaluate the impact of the recommendations of the recent pupil premium review, particularly by ensuring that:
 - the most able disadvantaged pupils make more rapid progress in their learning
 - fixed-term exclusions for disadvantaged pupils are reduced further.
- Leaders and governors should sharpen their improvement planning, so that there are precise targets for different subjects and groups of pupils that can be used to hold leaders to account.
- Improve the quality of teaching by ensuring that teachers check what pupils already know and understand, so that work is consistently set at the correct level.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Leaders and governors are ambitious about what they want to achieve. They have confidently faced the challenges related to the setting up and staffing of a new school. Senior leaders work well together and have ensured that teaching is good and that pupils are making good progress in a wide range of subjects.
- The school is warm and welcoming. There is a strong sense of community between adults and pupils. This is because staff enjoy working at the school and pupils attend regularly. Everyone is enjoying the new accommodation and the additional space and learning facilities that are now available.
- The governors and senior leaders have effectively used external subject specialists and school leaders to review the quality of teaching, curriculum planning and assessments. Leaders use these findings effectively, along with their own evaluations, to help plan and develop the quality of education at the school. As a result, leaders and governors have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
- Senior leaders have ensured that there is high-quality training and support for subject leaders. Subject leaders are increasingly taking effective responsibility for leading improvements in their subject areas. They have ensured that teaching is good overall. The assessments that leaders are using are giving more accurate information about the progress pupils are making. As a result, leaders are quick to put in place the support needed to help pupils who may have fallen behind in their learning.
- Staff morale is high. This is because staff, including those new to the profession, say that leaders are doing all they can to ensure that they are motivated and respected. Staff feel that leaders are considerate about their well-being. Leaders have put in place a good range of training opportunities, including mentoring for new teachers, so that they can meet the individual needs of teachers. Consequently, teaching is good and improving.
- Parents speak highly of the school. Most parents who replied to Parent View, Ofsted's questionnaire for parents, would recommend the school. They feel that the school is well led and managed. The many positive comments made by parents shared the same theme: their children are being taught well, are well cared for and are making good progress.
- Leaders use the funding for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities effectively. Teachers and additional adults know how to adapt their teaching and support to meet the needs of individual pupils. Leaders use the right support and expertise from outside the school when it is needed. As a result, pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are making good or better progress than their peers in a range of subjects.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced. Leaders have decided that 'academic rigour' will underpin the subjects that are studied by pupils. Pupils learn two foreign languages at key stage 3, including Latin. There is a range of academic courses for all pupils to choose from when they reach key stage 4, including those in the arts and computer science. Leaders use catch-up funding well. This ensures that pupils who need support

with their literacy or numeracy, including those pupils who speak English as an additional language, are given effective and personalised support quickly.

- Leaders have planned the curriculum carefully. Subject leaders organise learning by ensuring that at key stage 3, pupils develop the right knowledge, skills and understanding that they will need for the GCSE courses at key stage 4.
- Pupils in Year 7 attend compulsory enrichment activities on three different afternoons each week. Leaders allocate pupils to a range of activities. This can include activities such as chess, art, debating or film club. These activities help pupils to develop their social skills and to deepen their cultural awareness. However, some Year 7 pupils reported that they would prefer to choose their own enrichment activities. Not many pupils in Years 8 and 9 choose to take part in after-school enrichment. They say that this is because the school day is too long for them if they have to stay until 5pm.
- Leaders use assessment information effectively to track and monitor pupils' progress from their different starting points. Subject leaders are quick to identify and help pupils who have fallen behind. As a result, most pupils are making good progress over time in a wide range of subjects.
- Pupils are being prepared well for life in modern Britain. During an assembly, pupils were enthusiastic and engaged in responding to and showing their good understanding of gender stereotypes. Pupils say that this is typical of their assemblies: for example, a previous assembly was on 'pride', which included learning about being lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) skills and understanding are well developed. Pupils, particularly in classrooms, engage purposefully in class discussions. Pupils demonstrate, through their behaviour, that they understand modern British values. They listen to each other's views and opinions. Pupils have a clear sense of what is right and wrong and are tolerant of each other's differences and beliefs. Although pupils learn about different cultures, including studying different modern foreign languages, they report that they would like more access to visits and trips. Leaders agreed with pupils' views.
- Although leaders' improvement planning recognises the actions needed to improve the school's work, leaders are not precise in setting targets to measure whether their actions are leading to success. This includes targets for the specific outcomes of disadvantaged most-able pupils and targets to reduce the proportion of fixed-term exclusions for disadvantaged pupils. As a result, it is difficult for governors to hold leaders to account for some specific areas of the school's work.
- Leaders plan for their use of the pupil premium funding and know that middle- and lower-ability disadvantaged pupils are making progress in line with that of their peers in a wide range of subjects. There are some differences emerging in the rates of progress being made by the most able disadvantaged pupils and their peers, for example in Year 9. Leaders and governors acknowledge that they need to be rigorous in evaluating their pupil premium strategies, including how to further reduce fixed-term exclusions of disadvantaged pupils. For this reason, they commissioned a very recent external review of their use of pupil premium funding. They are right to implement its findings.

Governance of the school

- Governors are open and honest about their views on the school's strengths and weaknesses. They visit the school regularly as part of their 'link governor' roles and talk to a variety of staff, including subject leaders and pupils.
- The governing body has a good mix of people with a relevant range of skills and experience. They use these different skills and experience well to challenge and support school leaders. The chair of governors was forthright during the inspection that, while governors have full confidence in leaders, they will use external expertise to check on the information they receive in order to hold leaders to account.
- Governors engage frequently in training, usually with a training focus before each of the governing body meetings. Governors talk confidently about the school's work, including the progress of different groups of pupils and their views on the quality of teaching and leadership.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Pupils are safe at the school. Leaders ensure that pupils benefit from a wide range of ways of learning to stay safe, relevant to their different ages. This includes gang affiliation, mental health and sexual relationships. The school has been recognised nationally for its effectiveness on educating boys on female genital mutilation. The assembly programme includes a range of topics and themes that encourage pupils to challenge stereotypes and to feel safe about being an individual. Although pupils have been taught about the range of extremism and radicalisation, some of the younger pupils are less able to talk confidently about these two issues. Leaders acknowledge that regular revisiting of these two areas is needed to deepen pupils' understanding.
- Effective training has ensured that staff are confident in spotting any warning signs in relation to a pupil's welfare. Records kept by the school show that leaders are quick to respond to any concerns. Leaders refer to external agencies swiftly, when needed. They will also challenge external agencies when they do not agree with the decisions that have been made. Inspectors looked at a variety of case studies that showed how quickly leaders help to protect and support pupils.
- Leaders have a range of policies that relate to safeguarding pupils' and staff welfare. However, some of these policies do not fully outline the school's systems and processes, for example, the anti-bullying policy. Leaders updated them during the inspection to give confidence that the school's safeguarding policies reflect the day-to-day life of the school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers have good subject knowledge and high expectations. Most teachers use their knowledge well to plan engaging and challenging activities. A consistent strength in teaching is teachers' effective use of questioning. As a result of good training, teachers ask pupils probing and challenging questions. This helps pupils to deepen their understanding.

- As part of the school's strategy to improve teaching, teachers give pupils time to think and discuss their learning. When teachers decide to use group work, pupils actively engage. It was common for inspectors to see pupils listening carefully to each other's ideas. This was observed in a mathematics lesson where pupils had to use their reasoning skills to solve worded problems to see whether they could work out the answer. This is characteristic of teaching in mathematics.
- In mathematics, teachers insist that pupils show their workings. Teachers are actively developing pupils' confidence in explaining 'why and how', and their understanding that it is not just about arriving at the correct answer. The new site now includes state-of-the-art science laboratories. Teachers have been quick to ensure that pupils are given opportunities to develop their investigation skills. This was observed in Year 9, where pupils were thoroughly engaged with their experiment, showing an ability to work safely to develop and test out their hypothesis.
- Teaching is equipping pupils with good knowledge, skills and understanding relative to their age. Pupils are showing good confidence in their abilities across a range of the different subjects they study, including their speaking and pronunciation skills in modern foreign languages.
- Teachers know their pupils well. They have a good understanding of pupils' needs and abilities. Teachers use the information they have to plan their teaching effectively, for example in targeting questions to specific pupils. Effective support given by teachers and additional adults ensures that pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities achieve well and make good progress.
- Checks on pupils' work are reliable. This is because leaders have worked with other schools and national organisations to seek advice and guidance to give them confidence in their approach to planning and assessment.
- Not all teachers are skilled at checking pupils' understanding. When teachers do not check pupils' understanding sufficiently, they then give work to pupils that can be too easy or too hard. This prevents some pupils, including the most able, from making more substantial progress in their learning.
- Some pupils stated that they did not receive enough homework. Leaders acknowledged that the new homework policy, launched in January 2017, is not consistently established across all subjects in the school.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Staff are aware of the challenging circumstances often affecting some pupils. Staff know pupils well and are alert to any warning signs that they need to follow up with school leaders. Leaders are proactive in ensuring that if early help is needed for a pupil, the pupil receives it swiftly. A pupil told an inspector, 'You can go to any teacher,' and this was similar to the views of other pupils.
- Pupils are confident that they are safe in school and that the school helps them to stay safe when they are outside school. This includes on their journeys to and from school.

- Pupils work well together. In classrooms, they are typically respectful in listening to each other's ideas and opinions. This can be from solving a problem together in a mathematics lesson or responding to questions in an assembly in front of their peers.
- Pupils' friendliness towards each other extends out of the classroom. As the school is small, pupils know each other well. From the Ofsted survey, almost all pupils strongly agreed or agreed that the school encourages pupils to respect people from different backgrounds and to treat people equally. As a result, any form of bullying or racism is rare. When it does occur, most parents and pupils feel that school leaders deal with it effectively.
- Pupils have good attitudes to learning. Most pupils take their learning seriously and sustain high levels of concentration. Some pupils are reliant on the teacher to manage their behaviour rather than through being sufficiently self-disciplined.
- Pupils in Year 9 have been well prepared for their GCSE courses, which start in September. They have had effective and well-organised advice on the range of courses that they can choose from and how these link to their future careers and aspirations. Leaders know that there is still further work to fully embed careers education into Years 7 and 8.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are confident and typically polite. They were keen to talk to the inspection team and share their thoughts about the school.
- Pupils engage well in their learning. When teachers decide to ask pupils to work together and to discuss their work, they do so quickly, remaining focused and listening well to each other's ideas and opinions. When teachers ask pupils to work independently, they concentrate well and get to work quickly. Pupils' ability to work effectively with each other is a strong feature of the good behaviour in the school.
- The quality of work that pupils produce is good. They take pride in their work and in its presentation. Some pupils need reminders from their teachers to remain focused on their learning and not to distract others.
- Attendance for all groups of pupils is in line with or close to the national average. Persistent absence is now below the national average.
- Leaders have a strict behaviour for learning policy. Some pupils feel that it is too strict and some worry about collecting too many 'no excuses points', which can result in an exclusion. Exclusions are falling. Leaders are aware that the proportion of exclusions for pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds is not falling as rapidly as it is for other pupils.
- Pupils behave well inside and outside the building. When moving around the corridors, they do so in a calm and orderly way. However, occasionally, there is some boisterous behaviour in the playground when pupils are not mindful of others around them.
- The school will, on the rare occasion when pupils need support to improve their behaviour, arrange a short-term placement through the local authority's off-site training facility. Leaders monitor pupils' attendance, progress and welfare effectively.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils are making good progress over time in a wide range of subjects, including modern foreign languages. This is because teachers are effectively developing pupils' subject-specific knowledge, skills and understanding. Pupils are being prepared successfully for the demands of the courses that they will study at key stage 4.
- In mathematics, English and science, most groups of pupils are making good progress from their different starting points. This is because teachers explain concepts well and give pupils time to apply their understanding. For example, in mathematics, pupils practise solving problems and in doing so, develop their reasoning skills well. In geography, pupils are developing good research skills and are learning how to use statistics effectively to improve their written responses when answering challenging enquiry-based questions.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are making at least good progress, particularly in English, mathematics and science. This is a result of strong support from teachers and additional adults, including in developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills.
- As a result of good teaching across a wide range of subjects, the differences between the progress of lower- and middle-ability disadvantaged pupils is either small, or in some cases, above the progress being made by their peers.
- A group of 12 most-able disadvantaged pupils took part in a national scheme, aiming to equip them with new skills and to inspire them to think about attending university. This was successful, with all pupils having high levels of attendance over the course of the scheme and all successfully completing their assignments. Pupils reported that the scheme helped to inspire them in thinking about university at the end of their school-based education.
- Pupils speak confidently and use subject terminology well in their written and oral responses. The most able pupils read fluently. Pupils who need to catch up with their reading and writing skills, including pupils who speak English as an additional language, are well supported by targeted intervention. Listening to readers and reviewing the school's assessment information show that lower-ability readers are making good progress in improving their reading skills. The school has recently moved into its temporary accommodation and plans to develop specific library provision are in place.
- The school's assessment information shows that some differences are emerging between the progress being made by most-able disadvantaged pupils and their peers. This is more evident in Year 9 mathematics and science.

School details

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| Unique reference number | 140884 |
| Local authority | Westminster |
| Inspection number | 10031665 |

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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| Type of school | Secondary comprehensive |
| School category | Academy free school |
| Age range of pupils | 11 to 18 |
| Gender of pupils | Boys |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 360 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Sarah Clifford |
| Headteacher | Richard Ardron |
| Telephone number | 0203 475 6968 |
| Website | www.maryleboneschool.org |
| Email address | info@maryleboneschool.org |
| Date of previous inspection | Not previously inspected |

Information about this school

- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information on its website about the content of the curriculum followed by the school for each subject in each academic year. An executive summary of the curriculum is on the website.
- The school does not comply with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish on their website about the school's equality objectives.
- The school opened as a free school in September 2014.
- The school is smaller than the average-sized secondary school. The school has boys in Years 7, 8 and 9.
- The school moved into its purpose-built temporary buildings in February 2017. This is while the construction of the school's permanent site is completed. The new school site is in Paddington and is scheduled to open during 2018.

- The proportion of pupils who are eligible for free school meals is above the national average. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is average.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is above the national average.
- Pupils who attend the school have above-average prior attainment from their primary school education.
- Leaders make use of off-site education at the Westminster Education Centre, commissioned through the local authority, as required.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team visited lessons in a range of subjects. Most of the visits to classrooms were undertaken jointly with school leaders. During these visits, inspectors also scrutinised a wide range of books and assessments, to look at pupils' learning over time.
- The inspection team held meetings with senior and subject leaders to evaluate the impact of their work. Meetings were also held with governors, newly qualified teachers and different groups of pupils.
- Inspectors evaluated 82 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's questionnaire for parents, 30 replies to the staff survey and 39 replies to the pupil questionnaire.
- Inspectors considered a variety of documentation provided by leaders, including: internal assessment information for pupils in all year groups; external reviews of the school's work; leaders' self-evaluation; the school improvement plan; minutes of governing body meetings; attendance and behaviour information; case studies; a variety of school policies; the single central record of recruitment checks; and a wide range of other information relating to the safeguarding of pupils.

Inspection team

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|----------------------------|-------------------------|
| Sam Hainey, lead inspector | Her Majesty's Inspector |
| Alison Moore | Ofsted Inspector |
| Gerard Strong | Ofsted Inspector |

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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. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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