

Mander Portman Woodward

3–4 Brookside, Cambridge, Cambridgeshire CB2 1JE

Inspection dates

8–10 November 2016

Overall effectiveness	Outstanding
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Outstanding
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Outstanding
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Outstanding
Sixth form provision	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Outstanding

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- The college's leaders and governors have maintained the high standards achieved at the time of the previous inspection. This is due to their high expectations and the excellent care, guidance and support they offer to pupils.
- The quality of teaching is outstanding because it takes account of the needs of individual pupils exceptionally well and ensures that they make strong progress.
- Teachers' excellent subject knowledge, along with pupils' positive attitudes towards their learning, ensures that outcomes are outstanding.
- Teachers' assessment of pupils' work is rigorous and ensures that any gaps in their knowledge are quickly identified and addressed.
- The most able pupils achieve exceptionally well because they are challenged by the work they are given and encouraged to make good use of research skills.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities achieve very well because they are identified early on and provided with very high-quality support.
- The curriculum is well planned and provides pupils with an excellent choice of subjects in which to excel.
- The college provides a safe and secure environment in which pupils flourish. Bullying is extremely rare. Outstanding behaviour is the norm in this college.
- The sixth form is outstanding. Students make excellent progress and are very well prepared for the next stage of their educational career.
- Governors are rigorous in holding college leaders to account and in ensuring that safeguarding arrangements are robust.
- There is potential to develop pupils' leadership more by giving them a 'voice'. They do not contribute much to the college or local community.
- Pupils are presented with opportunities to read materials related to the subjects they are studying, but do not regularly read for pleasure.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent standards') and associated requirements.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Encourage pupils in key stage 4 to read for pleasure so that they develop a love for reading, beyond the books relevant to their studies.
- Develop the leadership role of pupils in key stage 4 and students in the sixth form by:
 - creating a system for them to convey their views as a group
 - creating more opportunities for pupils and students to organise events which will benefit both the college and the local community.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- The principal has a clear vision for the college which is fully supported by staff, parents, pupils and members of the governing body. Staff at the college are overwhelmingly supportive of its senior leaders and morale is high. High expectations lead to outstanding outcomes because everyone connected with the college understands its aims.
- College leaders have established a caring and supportive environment where every pupil is known as an individual and nurtured to achieve their full potential. Pupils are proud of their academic achievements, which are celebrated regularly and shared with parents.
- The college's self-evaluation summary document realistically evaluates its current position. The priorities identified through this document tie in closely with the college improvement plan, which is regularly checked for progress by the governing body.
- Leaders and governors have an excellent understanding of the most recent independent school standards and what the college must do to comply with these. The college is fully compliant with all of the standards.
- Parents who responded to Parent View, as well as those who completed the college's own surveys, are overwhelmingly supportive of what the college is aiming to achieve. Regular and high-quality communication between parents and the college is a key strength of the provision. Many parents who responded to Parent View praised individual staff members for their commitment. One parent also wrote that college staff are 'professional, caring, diligent at handling issues, responsive and accessible'. The same parent stated that the college is 'exceptionally well run'.
- Teaching in the college is managed well. A number of the college's senior leaders regularly observe teaching, and records of the quality of teaching are very well maintained. High-quality staff training ensures that teachers remain up to date with their subject knowledge and sharpen their expertise in their specialist subject areas.
- Teachers have access to a wide range of helpful resources to enhance pupils' experiences in the classroom. Their performance is managed well and targets are typically related to pupils' outcomes.
- The college's curriculum is well matched to pupils' specific needs. Consequently, it secures outstanding outcomes. College leaders are willing to listen to pupils' requests regarding the curriculum and to provide tailor-made teaching, even if this is on a one-to one basis. Pupils told inspectors they are extremely appreciative of this level of provision.
- Pupils are prepared well for life in modern democratic Britain and have a very good understanding of British institutions. The personal, social, health and economic education aspect of the curriculum is comprehensive, and the college promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very well. The very nature of the multi-cultural intake enables pupils to learn about each other's cultures and appreciate different ways of life, including those pupils who have 'protected characteristics' (as defined in the Equality Act 2010).

Governance

- The quality of governance is high and governors demonstrate an in-depth knowledge of what constitutes an effective and efficient provider.
- As the principals of the three Mander Portman Woodward colleges are members of the governing body and the governing body is exactly the same for each of the three colleges, they have an excellent understanding of each other's establishment and are in an ideal position to identify and share good practice.
- Governors hold the college's senior leaders to account well. Targets set for their performance are challenging and their progression and rewards are directly linked to how well they work towards achieving their targets.
- College policies are reviewed regularly and are fully up to date. Governors check how effectively these policies are implemented through their regular meetings and through the principal's termly report.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The college has a suitable safeguarding policy published on its website, which is also available to parents as a hard copy on request. The policy takes account of the latest guidance 'Keeping children safe in education' (2016).
- The college does its utmost to keep pupils safe. The single central record of recruitment checks of staff's suitability to work in the college is compliant with current requirements.
- The designated safeguarding leads have received up-to-date training, and all staff employed at the college receive regular training in the safeguarding of children and young adults.
- Staff have also been provided with up-to-date training on the government's 'Prevent' duty which aims to prevent young people from being drawn into terrorist activity or becoming the victims of radicalisation.
- Records relating to vulnerable pupils and students are well maintained and record all actions taken with details of the resolution.
- The college operates within a culture of vigilance. In their discussions with inspectors, it was clear that staff are suitably trained to recognise the signs of abuse and neglect. Staff build up positive relationships with parents and guardians to promote pupils' well-being.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Outstanding

- The quality of teaching over time is outstanding. Teachers at Mander Portman Woodward College have excellent subject knowledge and have high expectations of the pupils they teach. Relationships between teachers and pupils are strong.
- Teachers skilfully incorporate the development of literacy and numeracy skills in their planning and pupils make effective use of these when attempting tasks set for them.
- Reading is taught particularly well in lessons. Pupils have access to a wide range of relevant reading materials which supplement their learning. Pupils who inspectors chose to read aloud to them read with great fluency and expression. Discussions with pupils

demonstrated, however, that many pupils only read books associated with their particular subject and few demonstrated a desire to read for pleasure.

- Teachers are adept at checking for pupils' understanding as the lesson progresses. This is effective and helps teachers to identify if any pupils have misunderstood any aspect of the teaching or are falling behind with their learning.
- Teachers' planning is effective because it takes into account the specific needs of individual pupils, including the most able and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. This enables all pupils to make rapid progress.
- The college's marking policy is followed strictly by teachers. Teachers implement this policy diligently, highlighting what pupils have done well and how they can improve the quality of their responses. Typically, teachers link their marking to examination assessment criteria and many use their experience as past or current examiners to ensure that pupils' answers demonstrate good knowledge and attract high marks.
- Rigorous and regular assessment of pupils' work is a strong feature of teaching in this college. Pupils sit past examination papers at least twice a term under examination conditions in a designated examination room and acquire the essential skills which enable them to thrive.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The college's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding. Pupils told inspectors they feel very safe in the college.
- Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to keep themselves safe when using the internet or social networking sites. Systems for blocking access to unsuitable websites are tight, and any contact via the internet between pupils and teachers is restricted to the college's email systems.
- The small size of the college enables pupils to be known as individuals. Inspectors observed the college's leaders and teachers regularly interacting with pupils, checking on their well-being and enquiring about their academic progress. Pupils confirmed that this demonstration of support and guidance is typical of the staff at the college.
- Pupils' personal development and welfare are checked on regularly through the college's well-established personal mentoring systems which are conducted by senior leaders on a weekly basis. Detailed notes are taken during these discussions, appropriate actions identified and all relevant parties are informed on a 'need-to-know' basis. Pupils value this approach, particularly those who have come from abroad and have the potential to be more vulnerable.
- The college has appropriate risk assessments in place to keep pupils safe both when in the college and when participating in excursions. Any pupils who experience problems of a personal nature know they are able to speak to a member of staff or a member of an external listening service.
- Pupils receive a high-quality induction when joining the college, which is preceded by an interview and which involves parents. It is not unusual for college leaders to put together

bespoke courses for pupils based on their needs and wishes.

- Pupils value the academic support they are given, as do their parents. However, currently there are no opportunities for pupils to formally convey their views as a student body. For example, there is no structured way for pupils to have their views represented and very few pupils have been offered the opportunity to take on key responsibilities which would develop them as future leaders.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Pupils take responsibility for their own behaviour and show excellent attitudes towards their teachers and their learning. They behave maturely and are proud of their achievements.
- Pupils move around the college sensibly and with great purpose. They arrive at lessons with the correct equipment and ready to work. They are attentive and considerate of each other's needs. Pupils are self-assured learners.
- Pupils come from a range of ethnic backgrounds and appreciate each other's differences and beliefs. The college is a harmonious community in which pupils socialise with each other well, particularly during breaktimes.
- Fixed-term exclusions are an extremely rare occurrence. Pupils respond exceptionally well to the college's three-stage disciplinary system. Low-level disruptive behaviour is extremely rare.
- Inspectors' scrutiny of the college's records of bullying shows that such incidents are very rare. Pupils have a detailed understanding of different forms of bullying and know who to speak to if they were to be a victim of bullying.
- Pupils' attendance is broadly in line with the college's target of 95%. College staff work in close partnership with parents to encourage regular attendance. Persistent absence is low. Details relating to each pupil's attendance and behaviour are readily available to parents through each pupil's personal page on the college's intranet system.

Outcomes for pupils

Outstanding

- Pupils achieve exceptionally well and make outstanding progress across a wide range of subjects. This is due to the high quality of teaching they experience. Inspectors' scrutiny of pupils' books shows that they make rapid progress over time. Their outcomes compare favourably with pupils nationally who have similar starting points.
- Pupils make substantial progress in English and in mathematics compared to the national average. Notable progress was also made in 2016 in biology, chemistry, physics, English literature and history. Current pupils in Years 10 and 11 are maintaining this level of progress in the subjects they study.
- Pupils with low starting points catch up quickly and make rapid progress because of well-targeted teaching, regular assessment and very small class sizes.
- The most able pupils excel particularly in English, mathematics and the sciences. This is because teaching offers them the opportunity to deepen their understanding and to develop higher-level skills in reasoning. Inspectors saw these pupils being challenged exceptionally well through their teaching. They are encouraged to further their knowledge

by setting themselves challenging tasks.

- The progress of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is impressive. In 2016, a higher proportion of these pupils achieved A* to C grades at GCSE than their peers nationally. Parents of these pupils are extremely complimentary about the college's provision for this group of pupils. Systems for tracking and supporting these pupils are well-established and thorough.
- Pupils who are admitted to the college from abroad make sustained progress by the time they reach the end of key stage 4. This is because leaders work relentlessly to improve their writing skills in the English language and to broaden their range of vocabulary and subject-specific words and phrases.
- Pupils' outstanding outcomes enable them to move on to further education at an institution of their choice. Many choose to continue their studies in the sixth form at Mander Portman Woodward.

Sixth form provision

Outstanding

- The sixth form provision is outstanding. Students start the sixth form with average prior levels of attainment, and many join the sixth form having followed courses elsewhere at GCSE, or join the college having come from abroad.
- Students make outstanding progress by the time they leave the college. The proportions gaining top grades at A level are well above the national average. For example, the proportion of students gaining an A* to A grade in 2016 was 40%, and the proportion achieving A* to B was 67%. This represents outstanding achievement.
- Students who have special educational needs and/or disabilities also excel in the sixth form. Over the last three years, these students have achieved extremely well in their studies, peaking at 81% A* to B in 2014 at A level.
- Strong leadership of the sixth form ensures that the provision is highly effective. A group of the college's senior leaders have specific roles and responsibilities for leading the sixth form. All these roles play to strengths, and regular communication between these colleagues ensures that individual students' progress and well-being are tracked and monitored effectively.
- Students are exceptionally well supported during their time at Mander Portman Woodward. Weekly meetings with personal mentors ensure that students' progress is checked and that all students have the opportunity to raise any matters of concern. Students receive a comprehensive induction into the sixth form, which includes the use of information technology and the risks associated with the use of social networking sites, a tour of the college and arrangements to promote their health and safety.
- The quality of teaching in the sixth form is high. Small class sizes ranging from one student to a maximum of eight ensure that teaching targets students' individual needs well. This, coupled with excellent subject knowledge, allows teachers to plan for learning which is tailored to students' abilities.
- Systems for assessing students' progress are forensic in nature. Having prepared students for examination-style assessments in lessons, they are examined every week using A and AS levels papers in a bespoke examination room. This style of assessment prepares

students well for tackling their public examinations when the time comes.

- Students' personal development and welfare are a high priority at the college. In addition to the weekly mentoring by their personal tutor, they are interviewed prior to joining the college to establish their specific requirements and to plan a bespoke programme of study. They behave exceptionally well, showing positive attitudes towards their studies, and are appreciative of the support they receive.
- The sixth-form curriculum meets students' needs well. They are offered a wide range of subjects, and leaders actively seek out teachers to deliver subjects when a student wishes to follow a course that is not currently offered. The college has recently introduced digital photography, film studies and media studies. Good guidance from personal mentors ensures that courses can be changed swiftly if the student decides they have made an inappropriate choice. Retention from Year 12 to Year 13 is high. In 2015, the college retained 93% of students.
- Good-quality careers guidance enables students to make the right choice when considering higher education opportunities. The overwhelming majority of students apply to continue their studies at well-regarded universities, including Oxford and Cambridge.
- The college keeps sixth-form students safe, and liaises regularly with their parents or guardians if they have come from overseas. Parents and guardians can access the college's intranet to monitor students' progress and attendance. Systems for reporting on students' progress are informative. The college organises sessions abroad in order to report on students' progress and well-being, including in China, Indonesia and Russia.
- There are limited opportunities for students to express their views as a student body. The lack of a student council limits the extent to which students can contribute towards creating a 'community feel', although a very few students support pupils in key stage 4 with their studies.

School details

Unique reference number	110930
DfE registration number	873/6017
Inspection number	10008885

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Type of school	Other independent school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	14–20
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	204
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	181
Proprietor	Mander Portman Woodward Ltd
Chair	Nigel Stout
Headteacher	Nick Marriott
Annual fees (day pupils)	£4,320 to £25,935
Telephone number	01223 350158
Website	http://www.mpw.ac.uk/locations/cambridge/
Email address	nick.marriott@cambridge.mpw.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	9 December 2009

Information about this school

- Mander Portman Woodward is a small independent college in the centre of Cambridge which caters for pupils in Years 10 and 11 and students up to the age of 20. Two other colleges operate in London and Birmingham.
- The college opened in 1987 and occupies two large linked Victorian houses and another house which is about five minutes away on foot from the main site.
- The college admits a number of pupils from abroad who live either in hostels or with a

host family. All pupils have a legal guardian. Many pupils travel a considerable distance on a daily basis in order to attend the college.

- Foreign pupils are expected to have a high level of proficiency in English before they are admitted.
- The college has a below-average proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- The college does not make use of any alternative provision.
- Pupils follow courses leading to GCSE, AS level, A level and the International Foundation Programme. Many pupils attend the college in order to retake their examinations.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was conducted with one day's notice.
- Inspectors observed learning in all year groups and across a range of subjects. Some of these observations were conducted jointly with the college's senior leaders. Inspectors also looked at a range of pupils' folders and books.
- Meetings were held with the principal and other senior leaders, managers, the chair of the governing body and two groups of pupils.
- Inspectors scrutinised college improvement documents; policies; information on progress; records of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment; and information on pupils' behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors considered 25 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and 18 responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

John Daniell, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Vanessa Love

Ofsted Inspector

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