

## School inspection report

24 to 26 September 2024

# Mayfield Preparatory School

Sutton Road

Walsall

West Midlands

WS1 2PD

The Independent Schools Inspectorate is appointed by the Department for Education to inspect association independent schools in England. Our inspections report on the extent to which the statutory Independent School Standards and other applicable regulatory requirements are met, collectively referred to in this report as 'the Standards'.

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## Summary of inspection findings

1. Leaders have established a supportive and nurturing ethos that gives pupils a sense of belonging within a family style atmosphere. This has a positive impact on the pupils' wellbeing and enables them to feel safe, happy and ready to learn. Pupils love coming to school, and parents are extremely complimentary about how much they appreciate that leaders and teachers work hard to ensure that their children are happy.
2. Leaders and governors work collaboratively to monitor the school's provision and to ensure that they fulfil their responsibilities effectively. They have developed and successfully implemented policies to meet regulatory requirements. However, the website does not always contain the most up-to-date versions of policies and requires more careful monitoring, so parents have the relevant information available.
3. Leaders closely check the quality of teaching and learning to ensure that pupils are developing their knowledge, skills and understanding effectively. There are high expectations for pupils' learning. Pupils are both challenged and supported at their level. This ensures that all pupils make good progress with their learning.
4. Pupils achieve highly in their examinations for entry to senior schools, with many awards being offered from a variety of places. Leaders are proactive in preparing pupils and liaising with parents about finding a suitable school that meets their child's interests, strengths and needs.
5. Children thrive in the early years due to the active and holistic curriculum that inspires them to learn and make good progress. Staff in the early years build warm and caring relationships with the children, successfully modelling how to be kind and considerate towards others.
6. The curriculum is broad and balanced. Pupils are enthusiastic about the range of subjects and activities on offer to them. Class teachers have good subject knowledge, and the addition of subject specialist teachers enhances the learning experiences for pupils further.
7. Communication with parents is very effective. Parents appreciate talking to staff informally at the beginning and end of the day, as well as meeting them at formal times. Leaders' recent decision to introduce a new online learning platform has further increased parents' involvement with their children's work and continues to strengthen the partnership between school and home.
8. Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. They display kindness and courtesy towards each other. Leaders seek ways that could enhance their provision and pupil outcomes further. This has led to the creation of the mantra of 'kind hands, kind feet, kind speech' to which staff and pupils refer regularly to assist pupils to remember the expectations for being a kind friend and develop their social skills.
9. Pupils effectively learn about the values of respect, tolerance and the importance of family through well-structured personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) lessons. The school community is diverse, and pupils work and play in harmony with those of different faiths and cultures.
10. Leaders have established an effective safeguarding culture by providing appropriate training to staff and governors to ensure that they all understand safeguarding procedures and the contextual risks

faced at the school. Leaders have identified and, as much as possible, minimised risks from harm so that pupils are safe at school.

## The extent to which the school meets the Standards

- Standards relating to leadership and management, and governance are met.
- Standards relating to the quality of education, training and recreation are met.
- Standards relating to pupils' physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing are met.
- Standards relating to pupils' social and economic education and contribution to society are met.
- Standards relating to safeguarding are met.

## Recommended next steps

Leaders should:

- strengthen their monitoring processes to ensure that policies on the website reflect the most up-to-date versions in use by the school.

## Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

11. Governors and school leaders work effectively together to ensure that the school's aims and ethos are implemented well and that pupils are happy and feel safe. There is a nurturing atmosphere at school that prioritises the wellbeing and mental health of its pupils. Leaders work to ensure that their pupils flourish not just academically, but also personally and socially. Equally, governors and school leaders are thorough in their approach to considering potential risks and incorporating this into their strategic thinking and planning.
12. Governors take an active interest in the life of the school so that they can act as critical friends to leaders and staff. They achieve this through monitoring the school's development plan and by visiting the school regularly to provide challenge and support. This partnership ensures that the school's work is effective, with an emphasis on wellbeing as well as academic progress.
13. Governors and school leaders regularly review their practice to ensure that their work meets regulatory requirements. Leaders have developed a robust appraisal system. All staff, including senior leaders, are supported and have the right knowledge and skills to undertake their role successfully. Through the appraisal process, leaders and staff reflect on any training requirements to enhance their knowledge and skills further.
14. Leaders have an accurate view of what the school does well and what needs to improve further. They make changes that they feel will enhance their provision further and improve pupil outcomes. Recently, leaders revised the curriculum to focus more on creativity and analytical thinking to enable pupils to develop their problem-solving skills.
15. School leaders communicate the aims, values and approach of the school clearly to parents via the school website. They have used relevant legislation and regulations to draw up policies that are effectively implemented, as well as being available on the school's website for parents to review. However, some of the updated policies had not been renewed on the website. Leaders should strengthen their monitoring processes to ensure that policies on the website reflect the most up-to-date versions in use.
16. Leaders have written and implemented a suitable complaints policy which is available on the school website. This ensures that parents understand the process and timescales for complaints. Governors understand their role in handling complaints should the need arise.
17. Leadership in the early years is effective. Staff use their knowledge extremely well to provide individual nurture and support so that children are settled at school and more than ready for the transition to Year 1. Staff prioritise children's wellbeing. Parents are extremely satisfied with the caring way in which their children are looked after at school.
18. Leaders work appropriately with other agencies and take effective action accordingly. For example, they liaise with the local authority in conducting annual reviews for any pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan to ensure that these pupils' needs are being supported well. They also have a thorough understanding of working collaboratively with social services on the occasions when this might be required in the best interests of pupils and their families.
19. Leaders effectively fulfil their responsibilities according to the Equality Act, making the school environment inclusive. Leaders are mindful of the importance of ensuring that teaching does not

discriminate against any individuals or groups. They have taken careful consideration when developing and implementing an accessibility plan to make adjustments for any pupils with disabilities and to evaluate if there are any further improvements that could make the school site even more accessible.

### **The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to leadership and management, and governance**

**20. All the relevant Standards are met.**

## Section 2: Quality of education, training and recreation

21. Pupils experience a broad curriculum which develops their knowledge, skills and understanding across a wide range of subjects. The curriculum is ambitious and focuses on pupils' needs by building on their strengths. Pupils work on linguistic, mathematical and scientific subjects, and have ample opportunities to develop their oral language, and to be creative and physically active. Subject-specialist teaching enriches the curriculum further and helps individuals to learn well. Leaders have made a conscious decision to introduce more devices for pupils to use. This enhances their learning in computing, successfully supports their learning in numerous other subjects, and helps them to be ready for the wider world.
22. Through effective teaching and individualised support, teachers ensure that pupils make good progress. Targeted and specialist intervention successfully enables pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to also make good progress. Leaders and teachers make effective use of assessment data to check and track pupils' progress from the early years to Year 6 to ensure that different groups of pupils are making progress. Pupils achieve above the national average in standardised assessments, and they have successful outcomes in their 11+ examinations, with many pupils gaining academic awards to their chosen senior schools.
23. Teachers plan lessons well, ensuring that they meet the needs of different levels of ability through tailored activities as well as adult support. Teachers consistently apply the 'Mayfield way of teaching and learning'. This includes an opportunity for pupils to recap their previous learning before moving onto the new learning for that lesson. Where appropriate, pupils are given exemplars so that they know what they should aim for when completing their own work. Lessons end with pupils reflecting on what they have learned and how they could improve. Pupils behave extremely well in lessons and display diligence towards their work.
24. Teachers provide feedback to pupils that is clear and concise. Pupils appreciate this feedback, know what they are doing well and effectively use the feedback to make improvements to their work. As a result, many pupils say that teaching enables them to make progress and is appropriate to their age and level of ability.
25. Pupils benefit from a wide range of extra-curricular activities. They appreciate activities such as art, sport, chess and drama which enables them to develop their knowledge and skills in a variety of interesting ways. Pupils enjoy their extra-curricular activities and participation rates are high.
26. Children in the early years have access to a variety of inspiring learning opportunities to enable them to make good progress according to their starting points. Children participate with enthusiasm in 'little independent learners' activities that develop their creative thinking, such as working together to build a maze using large blocks. Teachers use a suitable balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities to stimulate the children's interests so that they are engaged in their learning. Development of children's oral language is an integral part of teachers' practice, with numerous opportunities for children to speak in a variety of situations, such as playing and conversing with their peers in role-play activities as well as responding to adults' questions about their play.
27. Leaders evaluate the learning outcomes in the early years to ensure that their teaching is effective, with a view to identifying ways to improve their practice further. One recent example has been



enhancing the outdoor provision for the early years so that children can extend their understanding of and appreciation for the local habitat and the creatures that live within it.

28. Children's progress in the early years is closely checked with adults intervening for individual children as and when required. As a result, children make good progress and achieve extremely well on the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile.
29. Leaders provide a detailed annual report for every pupil. Parents value the regular communication they receive face-to-face with staff and the newly introduced online learning platform that allows for photographs and information to be shared about their child's learning. This communication allows parents to have an effective partnership with staff to support their child's progress.

### **The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to the quality of education, training and recreation**

- 30. All the relevant Standards are met.**

## Section 3: Pupils' physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing

31. Pupils' wellbeing is successfully supported. Leaders have established staff mental health champions who can offer expert advice and a listening ear to pupils as well as provide training for other members of staff. Pupils are encouraged to share any worries by speaking to an adult or by using a 'worry monster' to raise their concern. Pupils enjoy warm interactions with teachers and teaching assistants which positively influences their self-confidence and ability to express their opinions.
32. Management of behaviour in the school is very effective. Leaders take a proactive stance to ensure that pupils behave with kindness and that they respect all members of the school community, regardless of individual differences. Leaders have worked with pupils in school council to develop the 'Mayfield Mindset' which is a shared understanding of behaviour expectations. Pupils have a highly developed moral understanding and invariably behave well towards others. The recent introduction of the mantra 'kind hands, kind feet, kind speech' has been effective in assisting pupils to remember the expectations for being a kind and respectful friend.
33. Leaders have established a culture of kindness and anti-bullying. Incidents of undesirable behaviour are rare, and examples of bullying are even rarer. On the occasions that there is an issue, staff help to resolve the situation quickly and with empathy for all concerned. There are very effective processes in place to help pupils to improve their behaviour, focusing on learning from their mistakes, reflecting on positive outcomes, and boosting their self-esteem.
34. Pupils are encouraged to show tolerance and respect towards each other through carefully planned learning activities. For example, pupils in Year 4 learn about human rights and what this means for their interactions with others; in Year 6 pupils consider the importance of not discriminating against others through exploring issues such as homophobia.
35. Pupils are adept at reflecting on their lives and the world around them. In music lessons, pupils listen to different genres of music and think about how it makes them feel. Similarly, as part of a writing task, pupils reflect on art and what emotions it evokes for them. Pupils in all year groups reflect on what makes them happy, what makes a good friend and what makes them grateful.
36. The curriculum in the early years is designed to enable children to develop their emotional literacy and to understand their own feelings. Through the use of stories, children can learn about different emotions and how this affects them personally.
37. Pupils' physical education (PE) is effectively promoted through an extensive programme that focuses on the development of skills, working in teams, and being physically active. Children in the early years are supported to develop their physical skills through a range of fine and gross motor activities in class and through PE sessions.
38. Through a well-delivered PSHE programme, pupils understand the importance of being healthy. They know that physical activity is beneficial, and they explore healthy eating, such as pupils in Year 1 designing a balanced menu. They also know about the importance of personal hygiene and why, for example, brushing teeth is so important.

39. There is a suitable relationships policy which is implemented well. Pupils learn about the different relationships in their lives, focusing on friends and family. They explore what constitutes healthy or unhealthy relationships, including issues of consent, in an age-appropriate way. This enables pupils to think about showing respect towards people they encounter at school and within the wider world. Leaders have consulted parents about the curriculum for relationships and keep them informed as to any changes to the content.
40. Leaders have a careful approach to health and safety; this ensures that the site is safe and well supervised for pupils. Children in the early years are effectively supervised to keep them safe throughout the school day, including carefully managed collection arrangements to ensure that children safely leave with the right adult.
41. Risk assessments are effectively implemented to protect pupils from harm. Responsibilities for the management of risk are understood and actions are taken by leaders when necessary. First aid arrangements and procedures are effective in ensuring that pupils' needs are met, and they have access to suitable medical care when required. Staff are trained appropriately, with those in the early years trained as paediatric first aiders.
42. Leaders have implemented suitable systems to manage admission and attendance registers according to the required regulations. Analysis of attendance takes place to check there are no patterns of absence for any individuals or groups.
43. Pupils benefit from developing their sense of responsibility at school through the variety of roles available to them, such as Year 6 monitors and pupil representation on the school council. Pupils enjoy making decisions about life in school, such as which equipment to include in the trim trail.

### **The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to pupils' physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing**

- 44. All the relevant Standards are met.**

## Section 4: Pupils' social and economic education and contribution to society

45. Pupils have well-developed social skills as a result of the kind and caring ethos that has been established. They have numerous opportunities to work collaboratively in class. Assemblies are carefully planned to help pupils to reflect on how they could enhance their social skills for example. Children in the early years have many opportunities to develop their social skills through working together on activities both inside and outdoors. Circle times are used effectively as a way of talking through any social issues and how children might resolve these, as well as reflecting on their own actions towards each other.
46. The 'Mayfield Mindset', a set of school rules, has been effective in helping pupils to understand about making good choices and taking responsibility for their own behaviour. In following the school rules, pupils are not only learning how to be kind and respectful members of the school community but are being prepared to be effective citizens in their community.
47. Staff in the early years liaise effectively with parents to help children learn about different occupations, such as visits from parents who are a policeman, dentist and doctor. Children develop their knowledge and understanding of important roles and jobs that people do.
48. Leaders help and support finding the right secondary school for each pupil, matching their individual strengths to the school that might suit them best. They liaise with families accordingly and ensure that the curriculum enables pupils to be prepared for, and successful in, the 11+ process.
49. Pupils develop their economic understanding through a variety of practical ways at school. For example, leaders provided the school council with a budget to design a new trim trail. Pupils effectively liaised with their peers to establish requirements, ensuring that their choices remained within budget. Pupils in Year 2 PSHE lessons learn about different ways to pay and why people borrow money, while pupils in Year 5 learn about profit and loss in maths. Children in the early years use pretend money in their role-play activities. Children also spend real money when they visit a local supermarket to purchase an item of fruit for their cookery time.
50. Elections for Year 6 positions of responsibility provide a meaningful way for pupils to develop their understanding of democracy. Pupils in Reception to Year 6 vote after listening to speeches given by Year 6 candidates in assembly. Pupils also learned about how a government is elected when they focused in assembly on the recent general election. Leaders ensure that careful consideration is given to presenting balanced views at these times.
51. Pupils contribute to a wide range of charities and have responsibility within the house system for devising activities to raise money for their own selected charity. Pupils learn to think empathetically through donations to the local food bank as part of harvest festival and by raising money for children affected by international disasters. Pupils experience further contact with the wider community through events with local primary schools and by visiting local places of worship.
52. Pupils in all year groups consider their own and other people's cultures to help them develop respect and tolerance. The religious education programme provides rich learning opportunities for pupils to learn about different cultures and religions. In addition, family members deliver assemblies on

different religious festivals which enhances the pupils' understanding of cultural and religious differences.

### **The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to pupils' social and economic education and contribution to society**

**53. All the relevant Standards are met.**

## Safeguarding

54. Leaders ensure there is a robust safeguarding culture and that they meet all regulatory requirements to promote the welfare of pupils. They understand the need for swift action and early intervention if necessary. This ensures a safe learning environment for pupils.
55. Governors and leaders have a suitable understanding of their collective role in overseeing safeguarding, including safe recruitment and training for all staff and governors. Staff understand that safeguarding of pupils is their prime responsibility. Their knowledge of safeguarding procedures is promoted through induction and enhanced through regular training and updates. Prevent training is also prioritised as part of leaders' work in understanding contextual risks. Through these activities, staff understand the processes for reporting concerns about pupils and staff, including when to involve external agencies. Regular supervision meetings in the early years ensure that staff can confidently raise concerns with leaders.
56. The safeguarding team maintains records effectively and information is shared on a need-to-know basis. Leaders have ensured that staff are knowledgeable about whistle blowing and reporting any low-level concerns. There is a suitable code of conduct which enables staff to have a detailed understanding of appropriate and respectful behaviour, including procedures for the use of mobile phones.
57. Leaders have an in-depth knowledge of safe recruitment procedures which they use well to ensure that all the required regulatory checks are undertaken before staff start working at the school. Leaders maintain a single central record to evidence recruitment checks; this is monitored effectively by the school's safeguarding governor.
58. Teachers ensure that pupils know how to keep safe, including when they are online. Appropriate filtering and monitoring of internet usage is in place, which ensures pupils use devices safely and cannot access any inappropriate material.

### The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to safeguarding

- 59. All the relevant Standards are met.**

## School details

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>School</b>                          | Mayfield Preparatory School   |
| <b>Department for Education number</b> | 335/6000  |
| <b>Registered charity number</b>       | 1175360   |
| <b>Address</b>                         | Mayfield Preparatory School<br>Sutton Road<br>Walsall<br>West Midlands<br>WS1 2PD |
| <b>Phone number</b>                    | 01922 624107  |
| <b>Email address</b>                   | info@mayfieldprep.co.uk   |
| <b>Website</b>                         | www.mayfieldprep.co.uk  |
| <b>Proprietor</b>                      | Queen Mary's Schools Foundation   |
| <b>Chair</b>                           | Dr Edward Ng  |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                     | Mr Matthew Draper   |
| <b>Age range</b>                       | 2 to 11   |
| <b>Number of pupils</b>                | 195   |
| <b>Date of previous inspection</b>     | 30 November to 3 December 2021  |

## Information about the school

60. Mayfield Preparatory School is an independent co-educational day school for pupils aged between 2 and 11. The school is situated in a residential area in Walsall. It is part of the Queen Mary's School Foundation, which is a registered charity. The other two schools in the Foundation are the state-maintained Grammar School for Boys and High School for Girls. Until 1944, the school was the preparatory school for the High School for Girls. In that year, it was set up as an independent school in its own right. The school has a board of governors separate from the other schools in the foundation. Governors include trustees of the foundation.
61. The school has 48 pupils in the early years organised into two Nursery classes and one Reception class.
62. The school has identified ten pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). One pupil in the school has an education, health and care (EHC) plan.
63. Currently, no pupil speaks English as an additional language.
64. The school states its aims are: to provide the security of a constant, caring environment where the health, safety and welfare of each individual is promoted; to promote academic excellence through a broad and balanced curriculum; to encourage a sense of curiosity, and an enjoyment and passion for learning; to develop the confidence and determination of our pupils to achieve their full potential in all aspects of school life; to be aware of the need for consideration and courtesy to others around us and make a positive contribution in the wider community; to promote the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs; to develop the pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural awareness; to develop, encourage and promote teamwork; and to communicate effectively and positively with everyone in the school and local community.



## Inspection details

### Inspection dates

24 to 26 September 2024

65. A team of 3 inspectors visited the school for two and a half days.

66. Inspection activities included:

- observation of lessons, some in conjunction with school leaders
- observation of registration periods and assemblies
- observation of a sample of extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection
- discussions with the chair of governors
- discussions with the head, school leaders, managers and other members of staff
- discussions with pupils
- visits to the learning support area and facilities for physical education
- scrutiny of samples of pupils' work
- scrutiny of a range of policies, documentation and records provided by the school.

67. The inspection team considered the views of pupils, members of staff and parents who responded to ISI's pre-inspection surveys.

**How are association independent schools in England inspected?**

- The Department for Education is the regulator for independent schools in England.
- ISI is approved by the Secretary of State for Education to inspect independent schools in England, which are members of associations in membership of the Independent Schools Council.
- ISI inspections report to the Department for Education on the extent to which the statutory Independent School Standards, the EYFS statutory framework requirements, the National Minimum Standards for boarding schools and any other relevant standards are met.
- For more information, please visit **[www.isi.net](http://www.isi.net)**.

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For more information, please visit [isi.net](http://isi.net)