

Inspection of Mander Portman Woodward

3–4 Brookside, Cambridge, Cambridgeshire CB2 1JE

Inspection dates: 19–21 November 2019

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

The quality of education

Outstanding

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Sixth-form provision

Outstanding

Overall effectiveness at previous
inspection

Outstanding

Does the school meet the independent
school standards?

Yes

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils and sixth-form students say that Mander Portman Woodward (MPW) is 'amazing' and a great place to study. They know what they want to get out of their studies and are exceptionally well motivated to learn. Staff have high expectations. Most pupils and students respond to these expectations by working hard, so they achieve very well. They are confident that the support they get from their teachers will help them to be 'the best that they can be'.

International students settle into the MPW community quickly. They appreciate the high-quality, small-group and individual support they get from personal tutors. Pupils and students behave exceptionally well in lessons and around school. They say that bullying is not an issue at the school. Pupils feel safe, get on well together and support each other. Staff make sure that students who live in private boarding accommodation, or with host families, are well looked after. GCSE pupils and A-level students have access to a wide range of provision. This includes sports, after-school clubs, charity work with the school council, and personal, social and health education (PSHE). Pupils and students are very well prepared to move to their next stage in education, employment and/or training.

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

The senior leadership team, including governors, is highly ambitious for the pupils and sixth-form students it serves. Leaders have ensured that all the independent school standards are met. The school is on a well-established journey of continuous improvement. Parents and carers who responded to Ofsted's survey, Parent View, praised the quality of education the school provides. The range of courses on offer is impressive. Working relationships, at all levels, are powerful, productive and highly effective. Teachers have very strong subject knowledge. They say they feel well supported by senior leaders and other colleagues in the school.

Lessons are planned skilfully to build on what pupils and sixth-form students already know. Teachers go to great lengths to ensure that pupils remember important knowledge and skills before moving on to the next stage. They regularly check pupils' learning. Teachers use this information to provide extra help so that any gaps in understanding are closed quickly. Staff plan exceptionally well for individual learning needs. This ensures that pupils and students with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) make the same strong progress as others in the school.

A few pupils study GCSE subjects in key stage 4. Some need extra support because things have not gone so well with their studies in previous schools. As members of the MPW community, pupils work hard and achieve well because they know that their teachers expect nothing less.

A-level students are exceptionally well motivated to succeed. They have very clear goals for the future and most achieve their ambition. They showed pride as they

spoke about their experiences in school, and when they told inspectors, with a smile, that they 'can't get away with anything here'.

International students especially welcome the intensive support offered by their personal tutors. This helps them to manage their feelings and the challenges of being so far away from home. PSHE lessons are carefully planned. Pupils are supported to discuss sensitive subjects such as gender identity. They show maturity and British values, such as respect for each other's individual differences, as they learn together.

Pupils are sociable, polite and extremely well behaved in school. They enjoy sports, including playing in the football team, and after-school clubs. The recently introduced school council represents MPW's inclusive and multi-cultural community. The council organises charity events and social activities. It also acts as the 'student voice' in introducing new ideas. Teachers provide opportunities to debate and discuss a wide range of topics. In a religious education lesson, pupils thought about research into the different interpretations of 'hell' in Christian traditions. Their knowledge and skills stood up very well to the teacher's probing questions. They enjoyed presenting their ideas about the Catholic understanding of purgatory and Dante's 'Inferno'.

In the sixth form, leaders have established a curriculum designed to meet students' different learning needs. Students attend school regularly. They get expert academic and pastoral support from personal tutors. Almost all students stay on in school and complete their courses. Students receive high-quality guidance which prepares them well for future education and employment. A high proportion of students move on to university. Leaders are working to make sure that students are aware of the full range of higher education and employment routes, including apprenticeships.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Senior leaders and governors ensure that safeguarding remains the highest priority. This includes protecting pupils' physical and mental health. Staff training is regularly updated. Pre-employment checks for new members of staff meet statutory requirements. The members of the whole school team know they have a duty to safeguard the young people in their care. Pupils know how to keep safe outside school. Leaders check the agencies providing guardianship and accommodation for international students with great care. They stay in regular contact with parents and carers to make sure students are safe. Personal tutors know their pupils and sixth-form students exceptionally well. The wraparound support they provide is impressive.

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're not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

School details

Unique reference number	110930
DfE registration number	873/6017
Local authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	10113569
Type of school	Other independent school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	14 to 20
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	207
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	189
Proprietor	Mander Portman Woodward Ltd
Chair	Dr Nigel Stout
Headteacher	Dr Markus Bernhardt
Annual fees (day pupils)	£4,320 to £25,935
Telephone number	01223 350158
Website	www.mpw.ac.uk/locations/cambridge/
Email address	markus.bernhardt@mpw.ac.uk
Date of previous inspection	8–10 November 2016

Information about this school

- Mander Portman Woodward College is a small independent school located in the centre of Cambridge. It provides education for pupils in Years 10 and 11 and students up to the age of 20. Two other centres operate in London and Birmingham.
- The school opened in 1987. Classes are housed in two linked Victorian houses and another building a short walk away from the main site.

- Around half of the school's community are international students who live with host families or in private boarding accommodation. Most students are between the ages of 18 and 20, studying for A levels and/or courses in English for speakers of other languages (ESOL). Some attend to re-take examinations. A few pupils study full-time GCSE courses at key stage 4.
- The school does not use alternative provision.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is around the national average.

Information about this inspection

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

The school meets the independent school standards. These are the requirements set out in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

- We visited lessons across a variety of subjects. We looked in detail at English, mathematics, business studies, economics, humanities and PSHE.
- We spoke with subject leaders, teachers, pupils and students about their work and about other aspects of life in the school.
- We also met with the principal, senior leaders, and governors, including the chair of the governing body. We looked at a range of documents, including all the required policies, information published for parents, curriculum plans, leaders' evaluation of the school's performance, development plans, and attendance, behaviour and safeguarding records.
- We looked at the 14 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and their free-text comments. We also took account of the views of staff, pupils and students during the inspection.

Inspection team

Christine Dick, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Adrian Lyons

Her Majesty's Inspector

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