

Inspection of Matthew Arnold School

Arnolds Way, Oxford, Oxfordshire OX2 9JE

Inspection dates: 10 and 11 June 2025

The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Sixth-form provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Good

The headteacher of this school is Anthony Broadley. The school is part of the ACER Trust, which means that other people in the trust has responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Nathan Thomas, and overseen by the board of trustees, chaired by Jill Cottee.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy attending this welcoming school. The school ethos of 'Success for Everyone' is lived out by staff and pupils. Pupils throughout the school benefit from positive relationships with each other and staff. They benefit from high-quality pastoral support. This makes them feel safe.

The school's curriculum is ambitious for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and those who are disadvantaged. The key knowledge pupils need to know has been identified in all subjects. Pupils learn well across the curriculum, producing work of a high quality.

The school has high expectations of pupils' behaviour. This means pupils are able to learn in lessons, which are rarely disrupted. Pupils are polite as they move around the school and socialise calmly at break and lunchtimes.

Pupils are ready for the next stages in their education. They benefit from a wide range of clubs, such as netball and lacrosse, performing arts and dungeons and dragons. The school has a large number of pupils that participate in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award. Pupils recognise how these clubs and opportunities support them and appreciate the time that staff spend running them.

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

The school curriculum is carefully sequenced across all subjects. The knowledge pupils learn builds on what they already know. Pupils study a broad range of subjects, including those with SEND. Teachers have expert subject knowledge and use this to collaboratively design the curriculum. The school has put in place systems to check that pupils are learning and remembering the intended curriculum. Teachers use these to identify any gaps in pupils' knowledge and to adapt future learning. However, where these systems are not used effectively it means that pupils do not retain the knowledge they should.

The school supports pupils with SEND well. They identify the needs of these pupils promptly. Staff ensure that pupils with SEND receive the support they need to learn alongside their peers. The school works well with pupils, parents and external agencies to put the right provision in place. In lessons, adaptations meet the needs of individual pupils, allowing them to achieve well.

The school effectively checks pupils' reading fluency when they start school. It uses this information well to spot any pupils who may be struggling. Staff provide these pupils with the support they need, which helps them to catch up quickly. As a result, most pupils become confident and fluent readers.

The school has prioritised attendance. Attendance is monitored and challenged through letters, meetings and work with external agencies. The pastoral team works with families to overcome individual barriers. This means that the attendance of pupils, including those with SEND and those who are disadvantaged, is improving. The school has organised

behaviour expectations successfully. Staff and pupils understand these expectations. Consequently, pupils are able to concentrate well in lessons and behave sensibly around the school.

The school has a planned curriculum for personal, social and health education (PSHE). This covers what pupils need to know including how to keep themselves safe online and stay healthy. Pupils also learn about healthy relationships effectively across the school. However, PSHE is not delivered consistently well across all year groups. Consequently, pupils do not deepen their understanding of the concepts taught as well as they could.

Pupils learn about a variety of religions throughout the school. This happens through religious education lessons. In addition, pupils learn about and celebrate the diversity of the school through the annual cultures' day. On this day, pupils are encouraged to wear clothing that represents their own culture and talk about where they are from. They celebrate their differences and strive to learn more about each other.

Students in the sixth form provide high-quality student leadership with committees that work with the school. They run charity events to raise money for local and international causes. Students also focus on improving the environmental impact of the school. Sixth-form students act as peer mentors to younger pupils, supporting them in school.

Pupils at all ages access a range of information on their future careers. This includes careers fairs, visits to universities, work experience and focused careers meetings. This means pupils are well prepared for the next stage in their education.

Since the last inspection, leaders, governors and members of the trust have taken effective action to improve the school. Staff feel supported by leaders and recognise that their workload and well-being are considered when decisions are made. Trust leaders and the local governing body work together to hold the school to account for the decisions they make. They ensure that all statutory duties are fulfilled to a high standard.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some lessons, the school's pedagogical processes are not embedded consistently well. This means that some pupils do not achieve as well as they could. The school should ensure that pedagogical approaches support all pupils to achieve well.
- The curriculum for PSHE is not consistently implemented across the school. This means that pupils do not retain what they have been taught and have not secured the understanding intended to help broaden their personal development. The school should

ensure that the intended PSHE curriculum is implemented consistently across all year groups.

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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	142104
Local authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	10379893
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	1246
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	243
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Jill Cottee
CEO of the trust	Nathan Thomas
Headteacher	Anthony Broadley
Website	www.maschool.org.uk
Dates of previous inspection	30 April and 1 May 2024

Information about this school

- The school currently uses 10 alternative provisions, 3 of which are registered and 7 which are unregistered.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements

(quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The lead inspector met with the chair of the trust, the chief executive officer and members of the local governing body, including the chair of governors.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, other senior leaders, middle leaders, staff and pupils.
- An inspector evaluated how well the school identifies and supports pupils with SEND.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, history, geography, physical education and music. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also spoke to leaders about the curriculum and visited lessons in some other subjects.
- Inspectors held meetings with leaders and reviewed records relating to attendance, behaviour and personal development.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school site. Additionally, they spoke to pupils to discuss their views about the school.
- Inspectors considered the responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View. They also took into consideration the views of staff through discussions and from the online Ofsted staff survey.

Inspection team

Paul Grundy, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Wendy Martin	Ofsted Inspector
Mike Boddington	Ofsted Inspector
Jane Cartwright	Ofsted Inspector

Julia Mortimore

Ofsted Inspector

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