



Focused Compliance and Educational Quality Inspection Reports

Mander Portman Woodward College, London

February 2022

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School's Details

College	Mander Portman Woodward			
DfE number	207/6363			
Address	Mander Portman Woodward College 90–92 Queen's Gate London SW7 5AB			
Telephone number	0207 835 1355			
Email address	Enquiries@mpw.ac.uk			
Principal	Mr John Southworth			
Proprietor	MPW LTD			
Age range	14 to 20			
Number of pupils on roll	431			
	Years 10 and 11	78	Sixth Form	353
Inspection dates	1 to 4 February 2022			

1. Background Information

About the school

- 1.1 Mander Portman Woodward is an independent co-educational day school. The school was founded in 1973, moving to its present site in 2000. It is part of the Mander Portman Woodward Group (MPW), with other schools in Birmingham and Cambridge. The MPW governing body oversees all three schools.
- 1.2 Since the previous inspection, the MPW has acquired a new building near to the main school. Building works are currently underway there to create boarding accommodation.
- 1.3 During the period March to August 2020, the whole school was closed.
- 1.4 During this period of closure the school provided remote learning materials and a full timetable of online lessons and pastoral meetings for all students.
- 1.5 In the interests of infection control during the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic, inspection evidence was gathered partly remotely and partly on-site to reduce contact within the school setting.
- 1.6 In line with the direction given by the Department for Education (DfE) at the time, no evaluation has been made of the nature or effectiveness of any provision made during the period March to August 2020, including its impact on pupils' learning, achievement or personal development. Any concerns relating to pupils' welfare during this period which directly relate to measures implemented by the school have been considered.
- 1.7 During the lockdown period of January to March 2021, all pupils received remote learning provision at home.
- 1.8 In 2020 and 2021, public examinations were not held. For pupils who would have been expected to take these examinations, centre-assessed grades and teacher-assessed grades were awarded.

What the school seeks to do

- 1.9 The college aims to encourage students to have high academic aspirations, working with parents to help them achieve those goals. It aims to provide a broad and flexible curriculum with bespoke programmes of study and a pastoral system geared towards individual needs. The college seeks to assist students in making informed choices about higher education and careers. It seeks to do this through providing a friendly, informal environment in which students develop individually and as members of society.

About the pupils

- 1.10 Students come from a wide range of cultural backgrounds. Around a third are of a nationality other than British. Nationally standardised test data provided by the school indicate that the ability of the students on entry is broadly average.
- 1.11 The school has identified 119 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) including information processing difficulties and dyslexia. All receive additional support. Two students have an education, health and care plan (EHC). English is an additional language (EAL) for 73 pupils, all of whom receive additional support. The needs of students identified by the school as most able are provided for within the curriculum through wider challenges and extension tasks.

2. Regulatory Compliance Inspection

Preface

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is approved by the Secretary of State to inspect schools which are, or whose heads are, in membership of the associations which form the Independent Schools Council (ISC) and report on the extent to which they meet the Independent School Standards ('the standards') in the Schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014. Additionally, inspections report on the school's accessibility plan under Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 and the ban on corporal punishment under section 548 of the Education Act 1996. Inspections also comment on the progress made to meet any compliance action points set out in the school's most recent statutory inspection.

ISI inspections are also carried out under the arrangements of the ISC Associations for the maintenance and improvement of the quality of their membership.

This is a FOCUSED COMPLIANCE INSPECTION which was combined with an inspection of EDUCATIONAL QUALITY. The FOCUSED COMPLIANCE inspection reports only on the school's compliance with the standards. The standards represent minimum requirements and judgements are given either as **met** or as **not met**. All schools are required to meet all the standards applicable to them. Where the minimum requirements are not met, this is clearly indicated in the relevant section of the report and the school is required to take the actions specified. In this focused compliance inspection, key standards have been inspected in detail. These are the standards on safeguarding; measures to guard against bullying; arrangements for pupils' health and safety; arrangements to check the suitability of staff; the provision of information; the handling of parents' complaints; and other related aspects of leadership and management. In addition, the standards relating to curriculum, teaching, and social, moral spiritual and cultural development are also included. The remaining standards and requirements are deemed to continue to be met unless evidence to the contrary has been found.

Inspections do not include matters that are outside of the regulatory framework described above, such as: an exhaustive health and safety audit; compliance with data protection requirements; an in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features; contractual arrangements with parents; an investigation of the financial viability of the school or its accounting procedures.

Inspectors may be aware of individual safeguarding concerns, allegations and complaints as part of the inspection process. Such matters will not usually be referred to specifically in published reports in this document but will have been considered by the team in reaching its judgements.

Links to the standards and requirements can be found here: [The Education \(Independent School Standards\) Regulations 2014](#).

COVID-19: Inspection judgements do not cover the period March to August 2020 inclusive.

Key findings

- 2.1 The school meets the standards in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 and associated requirements and no further action is required as a result of this inspection.**

PART 1 – Quality of education provided

- 2.2 At GCSE in the years 2018 to 2019, performance has confirmed that teaching enables pupils to make good progress in the context of Part 1 paragraph 3(a).
- 2.3 In the sixth form, A-level results in the years 2018 to 2019 have confirmed that teaching enables pupils to make good progress in the context of Part 1 paragraph 3(a).
- 2.4 The curriculum is documented, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work for the pupils and covers the required breadth of material. The teaching enables pupils to make good progress, encompasses effective behaviour management and is supported by suitable resources. A suitable framework for the assessment of pupils' performance is in place.
- 2.5 Pupils receive relationships and sex education in the senior school, except in so far as they are lawfully excused. The school has consulted parents and published a written statement of its policy which has regard to the relevant statutory guidance.
- 2.6 The standards relating to the quality of education [paragraphs 1–4] are met.**

PART 2 – Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

- 2.7 Principles and values are actively promoted which facilitate the personal development of pupils as responsible, tolerant, law-abiding citizens.
- 2.8 The standard relating to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development [paragraph 5] is met.**

PART 3 – Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- 2.9 Arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils by means that pay due regard to current statutory guidance; good behaviour is promoted; bullying is prevented so far as reasonably practicable; health and safety requirements are met, including those relating to fire safety; provision is made for first aid. Pupils are properly supervised; admission and attendance registers are maintained, as required, and there is a strategic approach to risk assessment. A disability access plan is in place.
- 2.10 The standards relating to welfare, health and safety [paragraphs 6–16], the requirement of Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010, and the ban on corporal punishment under section 548 of the Education Act 1996 are met.**

PART 4 – Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

- 2.11 The school makes appropriate checks to ensure the suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors, and a register is kept as required.
- 2.12 The standards relating to the suitability of those in contact with pupils at the school [paragraphs 17–21] are met.**

PART 5 – Premises of and accommodation at schools

2.13 Suitable toilet and changing facilities, and showering facilities where required by the standard, and appropriate accommodation for pupils' medical and therapy needs are provided. The premises are maintained to a standard commensurate with health and safety; acoustics and lighting are appropriate; water provision is adequate. Suitable outdoor space is provided for physical education and outdoor play.

2.14 The standards relating to the premises and accommodation [paragraphs 22–31] are met.

PART 6 – Provision of information

2.15 A range of information is published, provided or made available to parents, inspectors and the Department for Education. This includes details about the proprietor, the ethos of the school and the curriculum, and of the school's arrangements for admission, behaviour and exclusions, bullying, health and safety, first aid, details of the complaints procedure, and the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year, and the provision for any with education, health and care plans or English as an additional language. It also includes particulars of the school's academic performance during the preceding school year, inspection reports and (for parents only) a report at least annually of their own child's progress. The safeguarding policy is posted on the school's website.

2.16 The standard relating to the provision of information [paragraph 32] is met.

PART 7 – Manner in which complaints are handled

2.17 Parental complaints, if any, are handled effectively through a three-stage process, (informal, formal and a hearing before a panel of three, one of whom is independent of the school). Each stage has clear time scales, and at the third stage the panel can make findings and recommendations which are communicated to the complainant. Records are kept appropriately, including of any action taken, whether or not a complaint is successful.

2.18 The standard relating to the handling of complaints [paragraph 33] is met.

PART 8 – Quality of leadership in and management of schools

2.19 The proprietor ensures that the leadership and management demonstrate good skills and knowledge, and fulfil their responsibilities effectively, so that the other standards are consistently met, and they actively promote the well-being of the pupils.

2.20 The standard relating to leadership and management of the school [paragraph 34] is met.

3. Educational Quality Inspection

Preface

The **EDUCATIONAL QUALITY** inspection reports on the quality of the school's work. It focuses on the two key outcomes:

- The achievement of the pupils, including their academic development, and
- The personal development of the pupils.

The headline judgements apply one of the ISI descriptors 'excellent', 'good', 'sound' or 'unsatisfactory'.

Key findings

3.1 The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements is excellent.

- Students' attainment is high at both GCSE and A level, enabling them to successfully proceed to university courses of their choosing.
- Students make rapid progress from their various starting points, in small-sized classes, due to highly effective specialist teaching and closely focused pastoral support.
- EAL and SEND students achieve in line with their peers, due to the very good support they receive.
- Students have excellent attitudes to learning in a relaxed and purposeful atmosphere for learning.
- Students have strong skills in communication and apply these well in their studies.

3.2 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.

- Students are mature, responsible and highly self-motivated to succeed.
- Students have strong self-awareness and hold themselves accountable for their decision-making.
- Students develop high levels of self-esteem and self-confidence. They are resilient and extremely well organised.
- Students celebrate diversity and individuality and are very respectful to one another.
- Students engage fully in a range of opportunities, preparing them well for the next stage of their lives.

Recommendation

3.3 In the context of the excellent outcomes the school might wish to consider:

- enhancing students' social skills by providing greater opportunities for collective interactions.

The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements

3.4 The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements is excellent.

3.5 Students' attainment in public examinations in the years 2018 and 2019 was high, at both A level and GCSE, and consistent across all subjects. College data show that the centre-assessed grades and teacher-assessed grades in years 2020 and 2021 continued to improve. Almost two-thirds of students attained the top grades A* and A at A level because of the rapid transition the college made to full online learning. High-quality online lessons ensured that students could maintain their determined attitudes to learning throughout the pandemic. Students from across five continents swiftly had full access to lessons. Governors' foresight and investment in information and technological infrastructure

ensured that all students experienced minimum disruption to learning. During the inspection some students were continuing to learn online, as they were subject to restrictions on travel, or due to illness. These hybrid lessons are closely tailored to a student's individual needs and any gaps in learning and consequently momentum is not lost.

- 3.6 From an academic non-selective student entry, the college adds high value. Many pupils progress rapidly because they are happy at the college. Students receive regular confirmation of their improvement and make the most of opportunities given to them. Nearly all students successfully obtain their chosen university place, including those with highly competitive entrance criteria.
- 3.7 Students who enter the college at all points, including mid-year, progress rapidly and in most cases faster than expectations, because they are taught by highly-qualified teaching staff who are specialists in their fields. Teachers are fully conversant with the demands of the various examination syllabi. Students' excellent, focused attitudes to learning and their strong skills in self-organisation ensure that they keep up with the deliberately challenging pace of lessons. This was seen, for example, in a beginner and near beginner GCSE Spanish lesson, where, after one term's study, students had already acquired sufficient vocabulary and syntax to form sentences describing how to limit the impact of damage to the environment. They had developed sufficient skills in reading to infer how new tenses work from a text presented. Students' excellent progress in all subjects is supported by extensive resources to support study, both online and in printed booklets or revision guides.
- 3.8 Students progress rapidly in the very small classes, as this allows students of all abilities to receive prompt guidance and feedback. Students feel emboldened to participate actively in lessons. Students are highly engaged in their lessons because they have chosen exactly what they wish to study and so are willing to work hard. They say that they appreciate the free choice in combining the subjects they wish to study and the very wide range available to them from which to choose. Students comment that they like that they can combine GCSEs with A levels and can complete them in one year instead of two, or as a retake short course. They carefully tailor their choices to fit their chosen paths for further study, to ensure that they are successful. GCSE students are prepared well to embark on A-level study.
- 3.9 Students who have SEND or EAL progress to a level commensurate with their challenges and many achieve beyond this. Students with a low level of English skills on entry benefit from specifically-targeted individual provision to develop their English skills to the level they need to achieve examination success. All EAL students successfully overcome barriers to learning by also drawing on subject-specific vocabulary lists. Students with SEND are supported very well to achieve by the specialist staff of a dedicated unit, and by teachers working in conjunction, who devise tasks that take account of the student's individual needs. Students' rapid progress is promoted further through subject workshop surgeries which they can attend on a voluntary, drop-in, basis to extend their learning or pursue interests. Many are keen to do so, as observed in the enthusiastic engagement of one group for talented students in Year 13, focused on English literature.
- 3.10 Inspectors agree with students that the college's systems for pastoral support and regular assessment have a crucial impact on their attitudes and ultimate success. Each student is allocated a director of studies as a personal tutor and mentor to keep them on track. Students are tested regularly, formally every month and with practice examinations, but in between are in constant dialogue with their tutor. In this way, students understand their progress and are spurred on to further success. In their questionnaires and in interviews students unanimously praise their directors of studies, crediting them with having a major influence on their success. They place high trust in their tutors' advice, support and understanding.
- 3.11 Students' communication skills are excellent. They are articulate and express their views confidently. Non-native speakers of English communicate well in their lessons. Taught study skills and surgeries support them in developing reading and writing skills to a higher level. Students listen attentively and participate enthusiastically in lessons, often engaging in debate, such as on the ethics of selective

breeding, listening empathetically and independently intertwining ideas such as human eugenics, inbreeding and unbalanced food webs. In an English literature lesson, students evaluated the relationship between Caliban and Prospero, discussing the dependency between the white colonial power and the natives of the island.

- 3.12 Students' written skills are excellent and serve them well in examinations, with well-structured, well-argued, fluent responses. Creative writing produced as part of a school competition demonstrates the excellent range and grasp of students' language, form and structure. In many examples of assessed work, students write with clear structure and purpose, responding to arguments and articulating their views, supported by evidence of wider reading.
- 3.13 Students of modern foreign languages (MFL) communicate extremely well, both orally and in their writing. For example in French A level, on topics such as the pandemic, the environment and politics, students conveyed fluently with a good range of idiom their opinions on recent changes in voting habits, and compared UK and French actions during the pandemic. Students showed excellent command of grammar and syntax when discussing the themes of their set text. In a one-year Russian A2 level course, native and near native speakers learned how best to structure their opinions when answering written examination questions on set topics.
- 3.14 Students' mathematical skills are good. Students show secure understanding, manipulating both numerical and algebraic equations well. Students are competent across subjects in applying their mathematical skills to support their learning, for example in their accurate use and manipulation of statistics in science, geography, psychology and economics. Students achieve highly in examinations in mathematics, further mathematics and statistics.
- 3.15 Students are competent users of ICT as a tool for research, for finding key information. Most students also use their ICT skills successfully to access remote learning. Students' application of ICT skills in more interactive and creative ways is more limited. Many teachers use ICT effectively to ensure continuity of learning and for the sharing of teaching resources.
- 3.16 Students draw very effectively on a wide range of study skills which are actively taught and supported across the curriculum. Students display a very strong understanding of examination assessment objectives and mark schemes and take regular class assessments. This regular testing helps students to build on prior learning. Prompt feedback enables them to take the next steps supporting their progress. Students use ICT efficiently as a tool for research and revision and make perceptive links between subjects.
- 3.17 Students draw knowledge from a wide range of sources, displaying sophisticated study skills for their age. Students think for themselves, confidently hypothesise, accurately analyse data and text, and synthesise information accurately. They apply their knowledge to new situations. For example, in a Year 14 biology lesson students demonstrated strong hypothesising skills, going beyond the set syllabus when discussing how the size of molecules could be altered by the use of carrier proteins, illustrating sophisticated and confident independent thinking. Year 13 students confidently explained meaning in gothic genre semantics, connecting to contextual references from their independent wider reading.
- 3.18 Over and above their success in examinations some students are also successful in competitions, such as those run by the Independent Schools Association (ISA). Students achieve over one-third of prizes awarded annually in competitions run by the Independent Sixth Form Colleges and around 20 Bronze, Silver and Gold awards in national competitive senior mathematics challenges. Other students successfully gain places in events, such as the ISA swimming competition and in cross-country for London schools.
- 3.19 Students' excellent attitudes are a major factor underpinning their academic success. They are highly self-motivated and extremely well organised. Students say this is in response to the relaxed climate for learning. Students show high levels of adaptability and are keen to work with their teachers.

The quality of the pupils' personal development

- 3.20 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 3.21 Students develop high self-awareness, self-esteem and self-confidence, which underpin their success in examinations. These qualities fulfil the college's aims of enabling young people to be highly successful in public examinations and well-equipped for the next stage in their lives. The college achieves this through establishing a relaxed, yet purposeful ethos, where students are treated as adults and grow rapidly in self-belief and self-esteem. This encourages students' determined attitudes to learning and sharpens their focus on success. Students' considerable self-motivation is reinforced through dialogue based on excellent student and staff relationships, founded on mutual trust and understanding.
- 3.22 Students' self-awareness develops rapidly, because they are expected to be independent from the outset and to assume responsibility as adults for their decisions. They are free to come and go between scheduled lessons but choose to study at home or in the library and do not waste time. Students quickly re-discover their interest and application to their studies, understanding that effort brings reward. This often represents a significant shift in outlook from their previous schools, where many lacked self-confidence or faced failure. Students are extremely resilient when facing difficulties and determinedly seek out advice in order to be more successful. They insightfully outline the ways in which they personally combat examination stress and anxiety, such as going outside, practising a sport, or yoga, keeping busy, having good friends and getting enough sleep. They are aware of the importance of high levels of self-organisation in all that they do, together with a deep understanding of the part others play in their success.
- 3.23 Students show great maturity when making decisions that affect their future, in choosing their courses and university, and in how they manage their learning. In their questionnaire responses all students were clear as to why they had chosen the college, saying it was the right decision. Students carefully draw on excellent guidance from the college's careers programme to successfully tailor applications for their desired university courses.
- 3.24 Students' skills in making decisions that affect their personal lives are excellent. Students are prepared well for living independently at university, having been treated as adults and expected to make sensible decisions of their own will. Students form well-judged opinions and make meaningful responses to events in the media that might impact on their personal lives. For example, students have a very good understanding of issues such as sexual consent, and drug awareness, following thought-provoking input in personal, social and health education (PSHE) and relationships and sex education (RSE) lessons, and from visiting speakers. Governors ensure that the provision for students' personal development remains relevant. Students comment that these lessons help to equip them with the knowledge and skills they need when making personal decisions. For example, following talks on drugs and on stalking they explored how to recognise the dynamics of abusive relationships.
- 3.25 Students are highly respectful of others, crediting the liberal ethos of the college for this, commenting that individuals and their beliefs matter, as the MPW strapline says: 'Tailored-not uniform'. From the absence of school uniform to the tolerance and overt promotion of diversity, students say that leaders value each student as unique. They respond accordingly, rising to the trust placed in them and the high expectations in terms of their behaviour. Most students have a true grasp of the need for both autonomy and accountability. College rules are few and are understood well. Students respond with great maturity to the open, relaxed atmosphere in organising themselves in support of academic study and in their personal interactions. Students state that respect is the foundation of what the college does, reflecting this in their excellent demeanour and attitudes towards others, showing high levels of courtesy and consideration. The empathetic manner in which they express their views, testifies to their acceptance and promotion of difference. Students comment that the absence of conflict is a direct result of mutual respect.

- 3.26 Students have a deep understanding of the importance of one's culture and beliefs and the right to individual identity. This comes naturally because of the very wide variety of nationalities attending the college. Students' appreciation of diversity is strengthened through exposure to different ideas; for example in a psychology lesson, where they considered historic and current views on gender dysphoria, recognising how times have changed for the better.
- 3.27 Students listen well, seeking to understand and draw on others' points of view. Students have a keenly developed sense of right and wrong, as shown, for example, in discussion with inspectors on the topic of Black Lives Matter. Students debated whether law breaking could be condoned, in order to fight perceived injustice. They animatedly put forward both sides of the argument, commenting that ultimately the right thing is not necessarily about the laws, but morality is subjective.
- 3.28 Students feel empowered to express their views openly and to make particular interests known, for example taking the initiative to set up an LGBTQ group. Students state that there is no racism or homophobia, and virtually no bullying; therefore, they feel safe and secure. This enables their trust in others to grow significantly, and so they can express themselves as individuals, in dress, beliefs and actions, reflecting their growth in personality. There are a number of transgender students who say they feel safe to be themselves.
- 3.29 Students have good social skills. They work well in pairs and small groups, as observed in a sixth-form chemistry lesson where they participated enthusiastically in a 'round-robin' question and answer session, consolidating recent work on isomers and carbons. Students in an A-level Russian class pooled ideas on a set text, enhancing their ability to explain character. In a photography lesson students showed the value they place on the ideas and opinions of others as they shared their views on youth culture in Britain today, providing helpful ideas for other students to build on in portfolio work. Some students expressed an interest in more opportunities for working in teams, to further enhance their social skills, but recognise that the lengthy college day and the structure of classes place constraints on this. The college recognises that this is an aspect for further development.
- 3.30 Students show excellent empathy and understanding of the viewpoints of others. They patiently share ideas, listening critically to the suggestions of their peers. They quickly realise that they benefit from seeing both sides of a question. Students improve these skills through regular discussions in English literature and psychology lessons. Students' social skills develop further through the weekly activities programme when meeting up with students from different age groups. They have learnt how to relate to new people in a positive way, forging these bonds quickly. Students know how best to approach others, in order to have influence; for example, getting suggestions accepted to extend the range of activities. Students display good levels of initiative through the college council in raising funds for charity.
- 3.31 Students take charge of their own well-being. They understand the importance of good mental health, often bringing detailed awareness of the importance of this from previous experiences. Students' understanding is promoted through the excellent pastoral system and advice from a counsellor. Students appreciate the psychological benefits of being well-organised and self-disciplined, applying these as preventive measures for stress and anxiety. Students progress steadily in basic fitness-related activities that promote their physical and mental health, such as boxercise, yoga, golf and fitness, at a local gym and off-site.
- 3.32 Students rightly express the view that they are a community with shared values and a shared mindset, focused on individual academic success. They establish this climate by working together purposefully in the college. Older students develop well their leadership and team working skills; for example, through volunteering as members of college council and the Model United Nations, and as college ambassadors, representing the college on public occasions. Students have learnt how best to motivate and organise others, through fundraising for charity and through coaching sports and reading sessions at a local school. In this way, students develop a keen understanding of how they can contribute to the lives of others who are less fortunate than they. Students overall develop a satisfactory level of

awareness of their place in the wider community. All year 10 students enhance their awareness of how they can help others through volunteering as part of the Duke of Edinburgh's award.

- 3.33 Students develop sound spiritual awareness through discussions in PSHE, in learning about religious beliefs and in participating in the Christmas carol service. Subjects across the curriculum contribute in a planned way to raising their awareness; for example, students communicate their feelings with sensitivity in art, geography and English literature lessons. Students of art feel closely attuned to the spiritual dimension to life through their creative work and EAL students explain that because they are happy they are now growing more in touch with their spiritual side.

4. Inspection Evidence

4.1 The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with students and examined samples of students' work. They held discussions with members of staff and with the proprietor and chair of governors, and observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period. Inspectors visited the learning support and educational resource areas. The responses of parents, staff and students to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined curriculum and other documentation made available by the school.

Inspectors

Mr Honorée Gordon	Reporting inspector
Mr Alan Cooper	Team inspector (Former senior teacher, HMC school)
Ms Sarah Dunn	Team inspector (Headmistress, GSA school)
Mr James Passam	Team inspector (Headmaster, SoH school)
Mr Mark Taylor	Compliance team inspector (Bursar, HMC school)