

School inspection report

16 to 18 September 2025

The Maynard School

Denmark Road

Exeter

Devon

EX1 1SJ

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'.

Contents

SUMMARY OF INSPECTION FINDINGS	3
THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SCHOOL MEETS THE STANDARDS.....	4
RECOMMENDED NEXT STEPS	4
SECTION 1: LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT, AND GOVERNANCE.....	5
THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SCHOOL MEETS STANDARDS RELATING TO LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT, AND GOVERNANCE	6
SECTION 2: QUALITY OF EDUCATION, TRAINING AND RECREATION	7
THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SCHOOL MEETS STANDARDS RELATING TO THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION, TRAINING AND RECREATION	8
SECTION 3: PUPILS’ PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH AND EMOTIONAL WELLBEING	9
THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SCHOOL MEETS STANDARDS RELATING TO PUPILS’ PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH AND EMOTIONAL WELLBEING	10
SECTION 4: PUPILS’ SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC EDUCATION AND CONTRIBUTION TO SOCIETY.....	11
THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SCHOOL MEETS STANDARDS RELATING TO PUPILS’ SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC EDUCATION AND CONTRIBUTION TO SOCIETY	11
SAFEGUARDING	12
THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SCHOOL MEETS STANDARDS RELATING TO SAFEGUARDING	12
SCHOOL DETAILS	13
INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL.....	14
INSPECTION DETAILS	15

Summary of inspection findings

1. Leaders and governors have established a close-knit school community with well-established values and a clear purpose. This encourages pupils to work hard and achieve their potential.
2. The school has developed a broad and well-organised curriculum. Teachers, including those in the early years, use a range of strategies and resources to make sure pupils' different needs are met and that they learn effectively. Teachers provide pupils with examples to guide their learning and enable their achievements. Consequently, pupils across the school make good progress and achieve well.
3. Pupils want to learn. They fully engage in lessons and are equally successful when working independently or with others. They demonstrate confidence in their ability to succeed.
4. Throughout the school, there is a positive sense of community amongst pupils and staff. Leaders make sure that pupils are fully involved in school life, taking on many leadership and organisational roles. The sense of mutual purpose and clear direction encourages pupils to commit to the common good and achieve success both inside and outside the classroom. This is a significant strength of the school.
5. This is a caring school where pupils work happily together and support each other. Pupils enthusiastically act as mentors and buddies for each other throughout the school day. Pupils understand the importance of being active and responsible citizens. They raise funds for various charities. They are keen to support those in the local community and the wider world in different ways so that pupils may make a positive difference to communities outside the school.
6. Leaders demonstrate an organised approach to maintaining the premises. They have pupils' wellbeing at the centre of their thinking and their actions. There are effective policies and procedures in place to ensure pupils' safety. These are reviewed regularly to make sure they are fit for purpose. The arrangements for safeguarding are robust, and everyone involved in the school community understands their responsibilities.

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:

- develop more opportunities for pupils to contribute positively to the lives of others in the locality and the wider world.

Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

7. Leaders have planned and created a learning environment that places pupils in the centre and involves them in many aspects of school life. Pupils and teachers work together to reach decisions and take action to move the school forward. This positive atmosphere encourages pupils to take responsibility for their own learning and aim high.
8. Governors involve themselves in the life of the school, visiting regularly to attend events and meet with staff and pupils. Governors use their different areas of expertise to support the school. They have a clear understanding of their responsibilities to ensure that the Standards are consistently met. Governors monitor the impact of leaders' actions, through their different committees and the use of external audits.
9. There is a shared understanding and commitment between senior leaders, middle managers and the staff. The clear and regular systems to evaluate teaching and learning, through departmental reviews and learning walks, give leaders an accurate picture of best practice and where teaching can be improved. This enables a consistent approach towards pupils' positive educational experience across the school.
10. Leaders focus on promoting pupils' wellbeing, alongside establishing a caring and happy environment in which pupils can feel confident, safe and secure. Leaders and staff know pupils well, which enables them to respond to pupils' needs. Pupils benefit from constructive and encouraging relationships with staff.
11. There is a suitable policy for handling complaints that sets out a process with informal and formal stages. This policy is implemented effectively, and detailed records are maintained, including any actions taken.
12. The school provides a range of information through the website or by contacting the school office, which meets the requirements of the Standards. This covers various aspects of school life, with specific information for each section of the school. Leaders ensure that the provision for pupils who have an education, health and care plan (EHC plan) meets their additional needs. Leaders know to provide the local authority with the required information about how the school spends any funding it receives for these pupils. Currently, no pupils who have an EHC plan are in receipt of external funding.
13. The school fulfils its duties under the Equality Act 2010. Leaders meet pupils' different needs and create an inclusive community where everyone can thrive. There is a suitable accessibility plan which includes the actions taken to make sure that pupils with specific needs can fully access the physical environment and the curriculum.
14. The school provides a safe, well-managed environment. Leaders and governors monitor policies and procedures regularly and use the advice from external, professional bodies to ensure everything is as it should be. Leaders and governors assess potential risks and put measures in place to reduce these. There is a robust system of risk assessments for different aspects of the school, and a risk register that is reviewed regularly.
15. Leaders, supported by the governor with responsibility for safeguarding, monitor the work of the safeguarding team to ensure pupils' safety and wellbeing is managed effectively.

16. Leaders in the early years have the appropriate knowledge and skills and fulfil their responsibilities so that the requirements of the early years foundation stage (EYFS) statutory framework are met consistently. They have a clear understanding of how to safeguard and promote children's wellbeing.

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

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

Section 2: Quality of education, training and recreation

18. Leaders and governors have designed a curriculum that gives children in the early years, through to the oldest pupils in the sixth form, a breadth of knowledge and skills in many subjects. In English, pupils learn a wide range of vocabulary and demonstrate complex analytical skills as they study high-quality texts. In their mathematical and scientific studies, pupils show their subject-specific knowledge when answering challenging questions. Older pupils demonstrate a secure understanding of complex concepts in their independent work.
19. In humanities, pupils develop their knowledge and understanding of the world around them. They learn to analyse cause and effect. In the creative and technological subjects, pupils develop both their collaborative skills when working on projects together and their confidence as independent learners. Across subjects, pupils make good progress from their different starting points. Pupils typically attain above the national averages in their GCSE and A level examinations.
20. Pupils learn successfully due to effective teaching. Teaching is consistent because teachers use the school's agreed approach, referred to as 'The Maynard Way'. Teachers give clear explanations to develop pupils' subject-specific skills and help pupils understand key information. They model examples to guide pupils in their learning and give pupils regular opportunities to practise new skills and demonstrate what they have learned. Teachers use targeted questions to ensure pupils can participate and make progress.
21. Leaders have established an effective system to assess pupils' abilities and track their progress. Teachers use the information gathered to support pupils' ongoing development and academic achievements. Parents are regularly kept informed about their child's progress so that they can support their child's learning at home.
22. Pupils across the school enjoy learning. They are focused and engaged during lessons. They are keen to improve and achieve success.
23. Teachers adapt how they teach the curriculum to match pupils' individual needs. Teachers understand the needs of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They provide the right support so that pupils who have SEND learn effectively. Teachers create a nurturing environment and provide clear guidance to make sure that pupils who have SEND make good progress from their starting points.
24. The teaching for pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL) is carefully adapted to make sure pupils can access the curriculum and make good progress. Pupils are supported to develop and practise subject-specific vocabulary and knowledge. This enables them to participate during lessons and increase their fluency and confidence.
25. The school extends pupils' learning beyond the classroom. Activities combine academic rigour with rich opportunities for pupils' personal growth. A broad range of clubs and experiences offers practical contexts for pupils from the youngest years through to the sixth form. Pupils apply their knowledge, explore new areas and develop transferable skills, such as collaboration, problem-solving, creativity and effective communication. Pupils value these opportunities and enjoy success in individual and team activities at local, regional and even national levels.

26. The curriculum for the early years is well planned and engaging. It is enriched by specialist teaching, including for swimming and outdoor learning. The curriculum and how it is taught broadens children's experiences and encourages them to do their best. Children participate in a wide range of activities across all areas of learning. Teachers are careful to match learning to children's individual needs. Leaders support children's transition from Reception into Year 1 through opportunities to get to know the Year 1 teaching team prior to children moving on.

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

27. All the relevant Standards are met.

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

28. The physical education (PE) curriculum provides a range of opportunities for pupils, from the youngest years to the sixth form, to improve their physical health and develop specific physical skills. Dance and gymnastics form part of the PE curriculum and are popular with pupils, alongside their involvement in team games. The extra-curricular programme offers additional opportunities for pupils to be active and to broaden their physical abilities further. Pupils in the sixth form often support those in younger years with their sports' clubs. Healthy eating is promoted across the school and care is given to ensure pupils' meals are healthy and appealing. Older pupils know how to take care of themselves and develop healthy lifestyles.
29. The curriculums for personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) and relationships and sex education (RSE) cover a range of topics, such as health and wellbeing, relationships and living in the wider world. Subject content provides pupils with valuable knowledge and teaches important skills for their personal development, such as preparing for their futures and the importance of building positive relationships.
30. Pupils are confident and articulate. They thrive in the school's positive and respectful environment. Pupils understand and model the school values of kindness, courage, community and integrity. Pupils are keen to play their part in decision-making and enhancing all aspects of the school. Through their many leadership roles and organisational responsibilities across the school, pupils support and encourage each other. They achieve considerable success academically, in their extra-curricular endeavours and in their personal development.
31. Leaders and staff implement the behaviour policies consistently, so that pupils are confident that any incidents are dealt with fairly and appropriately. Pupils understand how they are expected to behave and respond accordingly. The school's approach to managing misbehaviour is calm and respectful. Teachers provide quiet reminders during lessons rather than raising their voices. Behaviour records show that serious misbehaviour and bullying are rare events in the school and are dealt with effectively when they occur.
32. Leaders demonstrate a clear and well-informed awareness of their health and safety responsibilities. Robust policies are implemented consistently by staff. Governors and external specialists check that policies and systems are effective. Comprehensive training, meticulous record-keeping and systematic checks, such as for fire safety, ensure that statutory duties are met. Risks are well managed and the school community benefits from a safe, well-maintained physical environment.
33. There is suitable provision for first aid. A qualified nurse supervises the medical room and ensures that records are maintained appropriately. Several staff have qualifications in first aid and their training is reviewed annually. Staff supervise pupils appropriately throughout the school day. Leaders' supervision rota helps pupils across the school to quickly find an adult, if needed. Admission and attendance registers are maintained as required. Any attendance issues are addressed quickly and thoroughly. The school is fully aware of its responsibility to liaise with the local authority over any attendance concerns that may arise. Leaders report to the local authority when pupils leave and join the school at non-standard points in the school year, as required.

34. The curriculum in the early years promotes children's wellbeing through physical activity, emotional support and health education. The use of varied resources and outdoor space contributes positively to children's physical and mental health. Children's fine motor skills are developed in the classroom through a range of craft activities. Staff build positive relationships with children. They encourage children to develop their independence and teach them how to share and take turns.

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

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

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

36. The PSHE curriculum teaches pupils about British society. Pupils learn about British values, including the rule of law, the functions of public institutions alongside how these serve society and the principles of democracy. There are useful opportunities for pupils to practise these values in mock elections and when voting for the various pupil committees. In the sixth form, pupils create their own 'pathways' programme, guided by staff. This programme develops their understanding of wider society and how they can be active and responsible citizens. Pupils are taught about respect and tolerance, which contributes to the social harmony that is evident throughout the school.
37. Pupils learn about the ways people can be different and how difference should be celebrated. The pupil-led equality, diversity and inclusion committee is a powerful voice in promoting and developing pupils' understanding of these principles. Pupils have a clear understanding of right and wrong developed through the positive modelling by staff and older pupils.
38. Children in the early years talk about their own families and communities and then learn about life in other cultures, so that they begin to understand diversity and difference. Older pupils learn about the diverse communities, traditions and faiths represented within the school. They participate in a programme of multi-cultural events that develops their appreciation of the wider world and the values that other societies embrace.
39. Pupils show a positive understanding of global issues. They actively engage in environmental concerns within the school, such as canvassing to reduce the use of single-use plastic, and to replace the lighting in the school buildings with more energy-efficient bulbs.
40. The curriculum teaches pupils the knowledge and skills to develop their economic understanding. Younger pupils learn how to use money and how to budget. They consider the risks involved with the way society uses money and the ethical impact that spending can have on the environment. Pupils in the senior school learn about entrepreneurship and use this knowledge to create a product and market it. They learn how to manage bank accounts and prepare themselves for financial independence in the future.
41. From the youngest years, pupils learn to identify what they are good at, what they can improve and how to make the best choices in life. Older pupils are given access to accurate and current careers guidance to enable them to make informed choices about a range of careers. The effective links with outside agencies and businesses provide pupils with broad, balanced and impartial careers advice.
42. In the school's caring culture, pupils are keen to help and support others. The active pupil-led charities committee organises fundraising for local, national and international causes. However, pupils do not engage with and support the local community and the wider world as much as they could. There is scope for greater engagement beyond the school gates. This is an area that pupils are keen to develop, so that they can contribute positively to the lives of others outside of school.

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

43. All the relevant Standards are met.

Safeguarding

44. Leaders have effective arrangements in place to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils, including children in the early years. Leaders understand and follow the latest statutory guidance and have created a robust culture of safeguarding in the school. The governor with responsibility for oversight of safeguarding meets formally with the safeguarding team every term, as well as having regular informal contact. This enables governors to assure themselves that the school has a suitable approach towards safeguarding and pupils' wellbeing.
45. Leaders liaise with external agencies to ensure the school's policies and procedures are suitable, and they make effective use of the training these groups provide.
46. All staff receive regular and detailed safeguarding training, with annual refresher sessions and the use of weekly briefings for any immediate updates. Staff also complete online training programmes to broaden their understanding further. They understand the part they must play to help keep pupils safe. Records of this training are kept centrally, including when qualifications need updating.
47. The safeguarding team meets regularly to review cases, with all concerns assessed and actions determined. It maintains detailed records of concerns.
48. The junior and senior schools both have dedicated physical spaces for wellbeing that can be used by pupils at any time. This provision is valued by pupils as places where they can be calm and seek support. The school makes use of external counselling services to provide additional support for pupils when required.
49. Pupils can use an anonymous online system to report any concerns they have. The safeguarding team monitors this and responds accordingly. The school maintains a robust filtering and monitoring system of online activity which highlights any issues and enables pastoral leaders to take action. Pupils are taught how to stay safe when online and receive guidance for their general wellbeing.
50. Recruitment checks are carried out efficiently, and a central record of appointments is maintained accurately and checked regularly by senior staff and governors.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to safeguarding

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

School details

School	The Maynard School
Department for Education number	878/6034
Registered charity number	1099027
Address	The Maynard School Denmark Road Exeter Devon EX1 1SJ
Phone number	01392 273417
Email address	office@maynard.co.uk
Website	www.maynard.co.uk
Proprietor	The Maynard School
Chair	Mr Henry Luce
Headteacher	Mrs Liz Gregory
Age range	4-18
Number of pupils	409
Date of previous inspection	18 to 20 October 2022

Information about the school

52. The Maynard School is registered as a single-sex day school for female pupils aged between four and eighteen. It comprises a junior school, which consists of a pre-prep department, including the early years, and a prep department; a senior school; and a sixth form. The school was founded in 1658 on its site in the centre of Exeter, Devon and was renamed The Maynard School in 1912. It is a charitable trust overseen by a governing body. The current headteacher and the chair of governors took up their respective posts in September 2022.
53. There are ten children in the early years, consisting of one Reception class.
54. The school has identified 105 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). A very small proportion of pupils in the school have an education, health and care plan (EHC plan).
55. The school has identified English as an additional language for 11 pupils.
56. The school states its aims are to provide educational excellence in a caring and happy environment that fosters a life-long love of learning and the confidence to excel academically, socially and morally. It seeks to maintain an atmosphere where pupils can succeed in every aspect of their education and thrive as individuals, equipped with the skills and courage to go out into the world to make a real difference.

Inspection details

Inspection dates

16 to 18 September 2025

57. A team of four inspectors visited the school for two and a half days.

58. 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 a group of governors
- discussions with the headteacher, 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.

59. 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**.

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