

Maxwell School

Calle Serrano, 158, 28002, Madrid

Calle Alfonso Rodríguez Santamaria,3, 28002, Madrid

School's regional authorisation number: BOE 971/2014

Date of Inspection:

2nd December 2022

Inspection Team:

Fiona Jacobs (Lead Inspector)

Julie Harris (Team Inspector)

Reason for the Inspection:

To evaluate the educational provision for years 7 to 9 and years 12 and 13 with a view to renew the current authorisation as a British school in Spain and to recommend initial authorisation for year 13.

Overall Recommendation:

The school is recommended for authorisation from *Year 7(age 11 to 12 years)* to *Year 9(age13 to 14 years)* and *Year 12(age 16 to 17 years)* to *Year13(age 17 to 18 years)* for a period of 4 years for 75 pupils. The total number of pupils for which school is authorised is 210.

The next inspection is due in *December 2026*.

*Schools are **authorised** by regional authorities after **inspection** by NABSS (or another recognised inspection service) and **certification** by the British Council.*

Schools should not refer to themselves as being authorised by the British Council, NABSS nor any other inspection service. Schools must not use the logos of any of these organisations in their publicity. NABSS member schools may use the NABSS logo.

N.B. A NABSS inspection does not infer membership of the Association. Authorised schools may apply for NABSS membership.

History and Context of the School:

Maxwell School opened in September 2015, situated in Calle Serrano in the Salamanca district of Central Madrid. A second building was acquired nearby in Alonso Rodriguez Santamaria. Key stages 4 and 5 have access to both buildings, although lessons for them mainly take place in the new building whereas key stage 3 pupils are based in the original building. The school is owned by PROED. There are currently 82 students in the school of whom 62% are Spanish, 12% Saudi Arabian, 12% USA, 4% Venezuelan and the rest are of various other nationalities.

Accommodation and Resources:

The site at Calle Serrano is used by key stage 3 for all of their classes except physical education which is taught at local tennis courts that are booked for sole use by the school. Outdoor space is limited but due to careful timetabling, students have sufficient room to play safely. There are separate spaces for calm activities, ball games and a climbing area. The area needs refurbishment as it is not an attractive entrance to the school. The entrance is supervised at the beginning and at the end of the day by the staff. Students are greeted personally. At other times, entry is via a video/ intercom entry system.

The building is on four floors. At the entrance there are offices, a lobby, a multipurpose room, a kitchen and a classroom currently used for art. The other floors house a staff workroom, classrooms (some with direct access to a terrace), toilets and a science room with an outdoor terrace used for practical science activities. All classrooms are of a sufficient size for the maximum number of students. Classrooms are light and comfortable. There are sufficient toilets for all. Displays support learning both in corridors and in classrooms throughout the two buildings. There is a clear focus on the manners and values that are expected in these displays.

The site at Alonso Rodríguez Santamaria has a four- floor building; currently only three floors are used. The size of classrooms is sufficient for the maximum number of students. There are seven classrooms, a spacious library which is well used by the older students for private study, a staff work room, a kitchen, terraces and an outdoor area. All are well maintained and are highly appreciated by the students. The sixth formers enjoy the relaxed, comfortable surroundings, the possibility of preparing snacks in the kitchen and rise to the expectation of being more independent in their work and social behaviours. They are very appreciative of how they are treated and taught as mature individuals.

The attitude towards learning of the key stage 4 students, who also work in this building, is greatly improved as they clearly see the change in expectation and in the manner of the teachers towards the older students.

Health, Safety and Welfare:

The two buildings provide a safe environment.

Students say that there are few problems in the whole school and that if there are any, staff act immediately. There is a bullying report form which all parties are aware of. Students feel very safe in school. All staff are trained in first aid every two years. Fire extinguishers and first aid kits are positioned conveniently throughout and a defibrillator is available in Serrano. There are regular practices for emergency evacuation. Classrooms all have clear evacuation plans. The relevant criminal record checks have been obtained for all staff. There are several policies relevant to health and safety, including a safeguarding and child protection policy. The designated safeguarding leads are named although students choose who to go to with any problems as they are not fully aware of the formal channels of communication.

Several of the policies promote students taking responsibility for their own acts and to reflect on their behaviour. The behaviour throughout the school is excellent and there is a very calm atmosphere conducive to study.

The Curriculum:

The key stage 3 curriculum is broad and balanced. There are appropriate textbooks for all subjects. Detailed schemes of work and action plans are available for each subject to ensure progression of skills and knowledge. Key stage 3 follows the International Middle Years Curriculum although it has been closely matched up to the English National Curriculum objectives to ensure parity. English is insisted on in class at all times. The level of spoken English is good.

In key stage 5, there is a good range of A Level subjects on offer especially considering the current low student numbers. The school aims in future to respond to student demand. Photography and travel and tourism were introduced as students requested them and current staff are able to teach them.

Educational visits are seen as a priority to have a variety of experiences that would not be possible in a school setting. For the secondary students, recent trips have included the Madrid Historical Outdoor Escape Room, a trip to experience and play Kayak water polo using the facilities of the Spanish national team, and a four-day camping trip in the mountains of the Sierra de Gredos.

Staffing:

The school is well staffed. Teachers are suitably qualified and experienced. All staff take part in online and in-house professional development including the use of Google applications, exam invigilation, and improving teaching and learning through effective feedback and safeguarding. The staff themselves have been involved in giving the feedback training and there are some excellent examples in key stage 5. Further work is planned to ensure similar approaches throughout the school.

A psychologist, who is also the assistant head of secondary, produces individual education plans for all students with specific learning needs of whom there are a significant number. These plans are shared with all members of staff and include useful strategies on how to best work with each student. Staff find these extremely helpful. They use them to help with seating plans and ways that students learn best. For example, students are identified as having a stronger learning style such as visual and the teacher knows that for an explanation to be more readily understood, visual props could be used.

Staff retention is good and staff say that they enjoy working at the school as they feel their ideas and opinions are listened to and used to improve practice.

Teaching and Learning:

Teaching is generally good throughout key stages 3 and 5. In key stage 5 there are examples of outstanding practice. In a year 13 global perspectives lesson with one student, the pace was fast, there was excellent, challenging questioning, the structure and planning of the lessons was exceptional as it was thorough but flexible enough to take into account the student's needs. The teacher has excellent subject knowledge and excellent awareness of the needs of her student. It was very similar in style to a university tutorial.

Students respect staff; they participate with genuine interest. They all take their learning seriously. Marking and feedback are currently a topic of staff meetings. The school is working on developing consistency. Students say that they have varied feedback depending on the teacher and subject, but some feel that they know how to improve. There is excellent feedback in some key stage 5 classes. In a travel and

tourism class, feedback was given on an assessed piece of work. The class was given general points on how to improve in each question and then further individual pointers. Due to the small class sizes, oral feedback is used frequently and effectively although at times there is no written record for students to refer back to.

Assessment:

The school uses standardised and internal assessment. The results of these are tracked on a new system, but practice is not yet embedded across all subjects. Planning is not adapted to the assessment data as well as it would be if used consistently, as in mathematics. In mathematics, the teacher tracks the objectives taught and identifies exactly where class and individual weaknesses are. She then plans regular work to address these areas.

Reporting to parents in key stages 3 and 5 is excellent as it is highly personalised, detailed and clearly states next steps towards improvement.

Presentation of student work in key stage 3 is disappointing. It gives the impression, in many cases, of a poor attitude whereas the attitude to learning is actually good. This poor presentation borders on the illegible and does not give an accurate impression of the students' abilities. Poor presentation often means that students' notebooks are disorganised which makes it difficult for them to use their notes to revise their learning.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development:

The program of study for personal, social health and emotional education (PSHE) is well considered. With the aid of the school psychologist in year 6, the pupils cover teamwork, group cohesion, emotional regulation and positive relationships. Weekly assemblies focus on the values promoted by the school such as respect, resilience, thoughtfulness and communication, and these are clearly evident in each classroom. Students in key stage 5 have weekly sessions on careers and personal development where they are supported in university applications, study skills, personal wellbeing and preparation for the work environment. The psychologist knows the students well due to the small size of the school and works with individuals, when needed, giving emotional support and guidance.

The school has a warm, well mannered, respectful and calm atmosphere throughout. Many examples of supportive behaviour are evident from a hug from an older to a younger student when she scored a goal to the patience and care exhibited by students towards those with special learning needs. This is certainly a strength of the school.

Leadership and Management:

The senior leadership team and the owner have regular meetings which are minuted and actioned. The head and the assistant head of secondary work well together supporting each other in their various roles of responsibility. They both have a clear vision for improvement and have plans to develop these further. Support from the headteacher and owner will be crucial in the success of their plans, although at present the school does not have a fully implemented system for the appraisal of teachers. The headteacher is responsible for staff appraisal. He meets with staff and discusses targets, but the implementation of a full appraisal system would help to develop his knowledge of the teaching and learning in the school.

The owner's passion is transmitted to the teachers who respond by following the philosophy of the school.

Response to the previous inspection report:

- Practical science resources have been invested in and are suitable for teaching up to GCSE combined science level, although they remain limited for A Level practical work. There is now a lock up metal cupboard for dangerous chemicals.
- An excellent system has been introduced for tracking student attainment and progress but is not yet embedded in everyday practice to inform planning. Senior leaders do not insist that it is used.
- Communication has improved as senior leaders have weekly meetings which are more structured. Roles and responsibilities of the leadership team still remain unclear.
- Challenge is now more evident in the classrooms. This is especially evident in Years 12 and 13 and also Year 9.

Recommendations:

- Introduce a more rigorous appraisal system to further motivate and support teachers
- Ensure that the assessment system is used by all teachers and that it is used to inform planning
- Ensure that sufficient written feedback is given to all students in all subjects so they are clear about how well they have done and what they need to do to improve
- Raise standards of presentation of work in KS3
- Maintain the school's strength in students social and emotional response to their peers
- Continue supporting individual needs in the successful way that it currently is, led by the psychologist and managed by all leaders and staff.

