



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

EDUCATIONAL QUALITY INSPECTION

SHREWSBURY SCHOOL

MARCH 2017



SCHOOL'S DETAILS

School	Shrewsbury School			
DfE number	893/6009			
Registered charity number	528413			
Address	Shrewsbury School The Schools Shrewsbury Shropshire SY3 7BA			
Telephone number	01743 280500			
Email address	reception@shrewsbury.org.uk			
Headmaster	Mr Mark Turner			
Chair of governors	Mr Matthew Collins			
Age range	13 to 18			
Number of pupils on roll	784			
	Boys	569	Girls	215
	Day pupils	159	Boarders	625
	Seniors	425	Sixth Form	359
Inspection dates	01 to 02 March 2017			

PREFACE

The registration authority for independent schools is the Department for Education (DfE), which directs inspection according to a specified frequency or at any time where the DfE has particular concerns about a school. The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Secretary of State for the purpose of inspecting schools which are, or whose heads are, in membership of the associations which form the Independent Schools Council (ISC) and reporting on the extent to which they meet the Independent School Standards ('the standards') in the Schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

All association independent schools will have an inspection within three years from April 2016, in accordance with the Framework and DfE requirements. The inspection may be of COMPLIANCE ONLY or a combined inspection of EDUCATIONAL QUALITY AND COMPLIANCE depending on a number of factors, including findings from their most recent inspection. Schools judged not to meet the standards following their inspection may also be subject to a progress monitoring visit before their next routine inspection. The progress monitoring visit will judge whether the school has taken the necessary action to meet any unmet standards identified at their previous inspection.

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.

The inspection was also carried out under the arrangements of the ISC Associations for the maintenance and improvement of the quality of their membership.

This is an EDUCATIONAL QUALITY inspection, reporting 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.

Since the school was last inspected, the framework for inspection has changed. The current inspection framework uses different criteria and arrangements for grading from those used in previous inspection frameworks. The judgements made on this inspection are, therefore, not directly comparable to judgements made on previous inspections.

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 the published report but will have been considered by the team in reaching its judgements.

All inspections of independent schools in England are conducted according to the requirements of the Independent School Standards Regulations. However, different inspectorates apply different frameworks that are suited to the different types of schools they inspect. The ISI terminology reflects quality judgements that are at least equivalent to those used by the national inspectorate, Ofsted. ISI reports do not provide a single overarching judgement for the school but instead give a clear judgement about key outcomes for pupils and information on the quality of the school's work.

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

INSPECTION EVIDENCE

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

Inspectors

Mrs Roberta Georghiou	Reporting inspector
Mrs Angela Drew	Team inspector (Headmistress, GSA and HMC school)
Mr Anthony Duffield	Team inspector (Head of science, HMC school)
Mr Andrew Gist	Team inspector (Head of form, HMC school)
Mr Michael Windsor	Team inspector (Headmaster, HMC school)

CONTENTS

	Page
1 BACKGROUND INFORMATION	
About the school	1
What the school seeks to do	1
About the pupils	1
Recommendations from previous inspections	1
2 KEY FINDINGS	3
Recommendations	3
3 THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS	4
4 THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT	7

1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

About the school

- 1.1 Situated on the outskirts of Shrewsbury, Shrewsbury School is an independent day and boarding school for boys and girls aged between 13 and 18 years. It is a charitable trust, overseen by a board of governors. It was founded in 1552 as a school for boys. Girls were first admitted in 2008 and it is now fully co-educational. It has eleven boarding houses, three of which are for girls.
- 1.2 Since the previous inspection, the school has opened a new humanities block and a design technology (DT) centre. One boarding house has been refurbished.

What the school seeks to do

- 1.3 The school aims to instil in its pupils a rigorous approach to academic work based upon independent thinking and intellectual curiosity. It encourages pupils to become caring, thoughtful and confident members of society. Its objective is that pupils are equipped to achieve the highest possible academic, sporting, musical, theatrical and artistic standards.

About the pupils

- 1.4 Pupils come from a range of backgrounds, mostly from White British families. The majority of day pupils live within a twenty-mile radius of the school. Boarders come from homes throughout the UK and from 23 countries overseas. The school has identified 264 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), which include dyslexia and dyspraxia, 56 of whom receive additional specialist help. English is an additional language (EAL) for 139 pupils, of whom 22 receive additional specialist help and for whom the curriculum may be modified. The remainder are supported by their classroom teachers. Data used by the school have identified 86 pupils as being the more able in the school's population. Their needs are met within lessons and through academic extension programmes. Nationally standardised test data provided by the school indicates that the ability of the pupils in school is above average.
- 1.5 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school. Where the school's own names differ from those used nationally, the details are given in the table below:

<i>School name</i>	<i>National Curriculum name</i>
Third form	Year 9
Fourth form	Year 10
Fifth form	Year 11
Lower sixth	Year 12
Upper sixth	Year 13

Recommendations from previous inspections

- 1.6 The previous full inspection of the school was an ISI interim inspection in May 2011. The recommendation from that inspection was to:
- Consider ways to raise the profile of the school council so that the views and concerns of the younger pupils can receive closer attention.
- 1.7 The school has successfully met the recommendation of this previous inspection. Further detail is given in the main text of the report.
- 1.8 The recommendations of the ISI intermediate boarding inspection in November 2014 were:
- Ensure that the systems for house staff to report the sanctions they set are fully implemented, to facilitate monitoring by senior staff.
 - Ensure that communication with boarders enables them to understand that their views on whole-school issues are heard and considered by the school.
 - Clarify the specific duties and authorities of the staff with designated responsibility for safeguarding.
- 1.9 The school has successfully met all the recommendations of this previous inspection.

2. KEY FINDINGS

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

- Pupils, including those with SEND and EAL, have excellent levels of knowledge, understanding and skill across the curriculum, and are especially proficient in communication and numeracy.
- Pupils' achievements in external competitions, in gaining other academic distinctions, and their successes in sport, music and the arts are exceptional.
- Pupils make rapid progress in the great majority of lessons because they take responsibility for their learning and develop their understanding further through independent study.
- Pupils do not always make the progress that they might in the few lessons where teaching does not provide enough opportunities for them to participate actively in their learning.

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

- Pupils are self-confident and understand how to improve their learning, with the result that they are well prepared for the next stage in their lives.
- Pupils are socially assured and collaborate well with one another.
- Pupils demonstrate excellent behaviour, are respectful of one another and of the adults who care for them.
- Pupils contribute positively to their boarding houses and school and demonstrate their responsibility to the wider community through their volunteering and charitable activity.

Recommendations

2.3 In the context of the excellent outcomes, the school is advised to make the following improvement:

- Ensure that all teaching provides opportunities for pupils to be active participants in their learning in order that they may progress rapidly in all lessons.

3. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS' ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

- 3.1 The quality of pupils' academic and other achievements is excellent.
- 3.2 The pupils demonstrate the successful fulfilment of the school's aims because they are intellectually curious and adopt a rigorous approach to academic study. Their boarding experience encourages them to work independently and effectively and, as a result, they achieve highly. Pupils, including those with SEND and EAL, have excellent levels of knowledge and understanding across all areas of learning. They follow a curriculum which is balanced and appropriately challenging and benefit from teaching which is scholarly and, in many lessons, employs strategies which develop pupils' skills and understanding.
- 3.3 Pupils demonstrate strong linguistic skills, such as grammatical awareness. They speak foreign languages with excellent pronunciation and extensive vocabulary and many are able to translate challenging texts. They display confident scientific skills which allow them to carry out original research in experimentation. For example, in a sixth-form physics lesson, pupils designed personal research projects from hypotheses they had formulated. Assured technological skills in design technology allow sixth-form pupils to manage a design cycle from original pencil drawings and computer-aided design and computer-aided manufacturing (CAD/CAM) to modelling using a laser printer and then making an original artefact. Pupils' use of information and communication technology (ICT) is embedded in their learning. They are encouraged to use it within the classroom and in their activities. This was demonstrated in a GCSE biology lesson, where pupils created a visualisation of the human body using augmented virtual reality technology and chose file-sharing software to collaborate more effectively. In photography, pupils apply digital technology to edit and enhance their work. High levels of resources allow pupils to use technology in a range of activities such as the 'Shrewsbury TV' projects.
- 3.4 Pupils' achievements in external competitions, in gaining other academic distinctions, and their success in sport, music and the arts are exceptional. Within the past year they have enjoyed success in academic competitions in biology, chemistry, physics and mathematics, and won a regional general knowledge competition. Pupils are successful in gaining national music and drama awards to diploma level. They perform to notably high standards, for example in concerts and at a national 'fringe' festival. They gain awards in Model United Nations conferences. Pupils achieve The Duke of Edinburgh's Award (DofE) scheme gold award and those in the Combined Cadet Force have won military competitions. In sport, teams have enjoyed regional and national success in girls' cricket, fives and lacrosse, and in boys' fives, cross-country, cricket, hockey, rugby and rowing. Pupils have gained representative honours at national level in cricket, fencing, hockey, lacrosse, rifle shooting and rowing. In cricket, pupils have been selected for county academies and have received professional contracts. Pupils benefit from the very wide range of activities provided by the school. They are encouraged by governors and the leadership, who seek to continue the tradition of success at the school through the provision of resources and facilities and take considerable pride in the pupils' achievements. Pupils achieve exceptionally high standards in their sports because they are well coached, train hard and are committed both to achieve personal success and to maintain the high standards set in the school over past years.
- 3.5 Pupils' attitudes to their learning are exemplary. They have highly-developed study skills and draw upon a wide range of resources in their learning, demonstrated in the extensive use of quotation to support arguments. They synthesise information effectively, make successful cross-curricular links and use their prior knowledge in new situations. Younger pupils, for example, consider future outcomes of the plot of *Othello*, analyse the validity of contemporary

sources in history and deliberate the causes, results and implications of world food inequalities in geography. Pupils of all ages take responsibility for their learning and develop their understanding further through independent study. They make good use of the readily available information on the school's virtual learning environment provided for them by staff. The library supports pupils' learning by offering a scholarly atmosphere and ample resources to encourage its use. Pupils show initiative and independence, as demonstrated in their reading about current affairs. The high volume of their work shows that they devote considerable time and effort to it. Boarding encourages their highly effective collaborative learning. Tutors are on hand to offer advice and pupils also relish working together in various activities, such as creating group presentations and solving problems.

- 3.6 Using the most recently available nationally standardised data, results at GCSE at Year 11 have been above the national average and in line with the national average for maintained selective schools. Results at IGCSE have been in line with worldwide norms. Results at A-level have been well above the national average and above the national average for maintained selective schools. Results at pre-university examinations, where national data are available for 2013 and 2014, have been similar to national norms.
- 3.7 From the results at GCSE and standardised measures of progress that are available, it is evident that pupils make good progress in relation to the average for pupils of similar abilities. From the results at A-level and standardised measures of progress, the sixth-form pupils make excellent progress in relation to the average for pupils of similar abilities. Pupils respond positively to teaching which encourages them to reach these high standards. In the pre-inspection questionnaire, a small minority of pupils did not agree that lessons were interesting. Inspectors found that the great majority of lessons were stimulating, effectively resourced, well-paced and engagingly delivered and that in these lessons progress was rapid. Where, in a few lessons, teaching did not invite response from pupils nor challenge them to develop their own ideas, progress was slower.
- 3.8 Data for 2016 provided by the school show that pupils with SEND make progress that is broadly in line with their peers. Pupils with EAL perform in line with their peers and in some subjects exceed them. Pupils with SEND and with EAL achieve well because their individual difficulties are understood. The learning support department ensures that their needs are made known to teachers who, where necessary, adapt the approach in lessons to suit their learning needs. Their progress is monitored to ensure that they make expected progress. Around half of pupils with SEND receive additional one-to-one lessons from trained staff. Where necessary, pupils with EAL receive specialist teaching and the curriculum may be adapted for them. More able pupils achieve the high standards expected of them. They are encouraged to attend an academic extension programme and provided with work in lessons designed to challenge them.
- 3.9 School records show that, on average over the past three years, over 90% of pupils have gained places at university, most of these achieving their first choice. Others have entered music or drama conservatoires and some have chosen to take a gap year or study abroad.
- 3.10 In human and social areas, pupils display sophistication in their thinking by offering different interpretations, for example younger pupils discussing the problem of evil and older pupils weighing evidence in analysing classical texts. Pupils' highly-developed physical skills are demonstrated in a wide range of sports such as football, where pupils pass the ball effectively and display excellent control and an intelligent tactical approach, and cross country, where pupils are provided with precise and challenging pacing. Artwork and ceramics displayed within the school show the aesthetic and creative skills of pupils of all ages which are further developed in lessons as they experiment with different ideas, media and approaches. Pupils'

musical abilities are particularly well developed. They play a wide range of instruments to very high standards and understand musical concepts to the point where they can conduct their peers within ensembles.

- 3.11 Pupils, including those with EAL, are notably fluent in their spoken communication. They employ sophisticated vocabulary and are confident using the full range of language structure with the result that they can convey complex meanings when discussing mathematical principles or poetry in GCSE lessons and the principles of economics in the sixth-form, or taking part in a maths speaking competition. The many opportunities for debating informally in lessons, in the boarding houses and more formally, such as in the Model United Nations, help develop these skills. Teachers set high standards of written expression and accuracy through their marking. Pupils are encouraged to adopt practices such as self-editing, with the result that their writing is accurate and well controlled. This was evident even in the work of younger pupils who write fluently on topics as diverse as the physics behind a smart-phone and on the subject of jealousy. Pupils display advanced mathematical skills. They tackle difficult problems and apply their knowledge and skills in other lessons such as science and computer studies. Work in a sixth-form business studies lesson showed a high level of graphical and pictorial analysis, such as in the use of a sophisticated cost-benefit curve. Within mathematics lessons, pupils persevere and enjoy solving problems and older pupils are able to undertake original analysis without prompting.

4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

- 4.1 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 4.2 Pupils make an exceptional contribution to their school community, thus reflecting the school's aims, which encourage them to become caring, thoughtful and confident members of society. Leadership, teaching and boarding staff exemplify the school's expectations and pupils respond positively to the models they set.
- 4.3 Pupils are self-confident and understand how to improve their learning, with the result that they are well prepared for the next stage in their lives. Older pupils show mature consideration of how they prioritise their time in different areas of their busy school lives. They are resilient and self-disciplined. Pupils with SEND know that their difficulties could make some aspects of their learning more demanding than for their peers and determinedly learn how to make adjustments so that they can perform at the same level. Pupils told inspectors that perseverance was part of the culture of the school; no one gives up. They value the support of their teachers but also expect to take responsibility for their own learning. They respond positively to a busy and challenging school environment and persist in a culture where other pupils are also working conscientiously around them. As a result, they develop as strong independent learners. In the sixth-form, the wide range of extended project qualification choices demonstrate the breadth of pupils' interests. Pupils readily understand the options and choices available to them. Those in the sixth-form appreciate that they have more opportunities to make their own decisions. A few find the level of direction constraining.
- 4.4 In responding to the questionnaire, a small number of parents did not agree that their child receives suitable advice about choices of subject or career. Inspectors found that pupils had received appropriate advice to help support their choices. Pupils said that they receive advice about GCSE choices in their tutor periods. Those in Year 11, who choose subjects to study at the next stage, receive information which additionally shows the impact of subject choices upon university entry. Sixth-form pupils appreciate the support they have been given in preparing applications for their next stage of education or training. They also feel confident in their own powers of research and decision-making. Pupils agree that the school would help them obtain work experience if they wished, but in practice many prefer to organise it for themselves. Those seeking to study in the United States receive support in preparing for admission tests.
- 4.5 Pupils collaborate well with each other at all times and are socially very assured. They relish the opportunities offered by house life to work as a team in activities such as house sport or in school-wide activities such as concerts, debates or charitable activities, for example a recent sponsored walk. They take responsibility for maintaining the lively, friendly and inclusive ethos of their houses and enjoy the opportunities to socialise with other pupils from across the year groups. Boarding encourages them to work with one another at all times. Older pupils described themselves as very socially aware and said that boarding had made them tolerant of one another and able to achieve common goals.
- 4.6 Pupils take responsibility for their own behaviour. They are naturally courteous and respectful of one another and of the adults who care for them. Relationships between them and their teachers are notably cordial. Boarding plays a significant part in establishing values of mutual respect and in creating a supportive and respectful community in which good behaviour is the norm. Pupils respect systems of rules within the school. On occasions, older pupils find them constraining given their ages. Instances of serious misbehaviour are rare. During the inspection, pupils' behaviour was exemplary.

- 4.7 Pupils contribute positively to their boarding houses and school and demonstrate a keen awareness of their responsibility to the wider community through volunteering and charitable activity. At all ages, pupils relish the opportunity to take on roles of responsibility in teams, societies and houses. The majority of younger pupils, for example, are involved in DofE and take opportunities for service in the school, such as looking after animals in the biology department and helping tidy up the Cricket Centre. Those taking part in the Sports Leadership scheme are expected to contribute to a tournament for primary school children. Within their boarding houses, all pupils expect to carry out duties. Older pupils mentor the younger ones. School and house prefects are much admired by fellow students for the way they exercise leadership skills. All pupils show commitment to charity. Sixth-form pupils volunteer with a variety of organisations including a youth club in Everton, which the school supports. All pupils may contribute ideas to the student council through their day and boarding house councils. In this way the views of pupils of all ages are represented, thus meeting a recommendation of the previous inspection. The student council contributes to the running of the school, for example in identifying the need to recognise achievement at all levels, from which the award scheme, *Floreat*, was set up, and recommending different queuing arrangements for lunch.
- 4.8 Pupils mix readily; they appreciate their own and other cultures, and demonstrate sensitivity and tolerance to those from different backgrounds and traditions. They respect all members of the school community regardless of background, race or belief. Boarding houses have international students who between them represent 23 countries and pupils value the insights into different cultures that they bring. Pupils appreciate the opportunity to debate current affairs with tutors and fellow pupils, and strongly oppose the view that they are subject to constraint on the free exchange of opinion. Inspectors found no evidence of bias in lessons or pupils' written work.
- 4.9 Pupils lead active and healthy lives at school and take full advantage of the plentiful opportunities for sport and exercise. They understand the importance of eating healthily and are provided with ample choices of food that is nutritious at meal times. They know how to maintain their own mental well-being. Within the busy day, they try to find times for reflection and they value the support they receive from staff and their peers, some of whom are trained as mentors. Pupils recognise that the school helps them to achieve a balanced lifestyle by offering advice, for example, through the personal, social and health education programme for younger pupils and a 'mindfulness' programme. Some pupils said that they do experience tiredness but that staff watch over them and they have adults both within boarding and in school to whom they may turn to in times of need. Responding to the questionnaire, nearly all pupils said that they knew how to stay safe online and those questioned by inspectors confirmed this.
- 4.10 Pupils are thoughtful, mature and reflective and aware of the spiritual dimensions of their lives. They care for one another, appreciate the non-material aspects of life through their art and music and value the opportunities to access facilities for quiet moments of creativity. Through the varied work of the chaplaincy, philosophy and theology lessons and charitable work, pupils develop the ability to reflect upon themselves and their place in the world.
- 4.11 Pupils mature into independent and self-motivated students during their time at the school so that they are not only well prepared for the next stage of their lives but also ready to make a most positive contribution to society.