



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

SHREWSBURY SCHOOL

INTERIM INSPECTION

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

Shrewsbury School

Full Name of School	Shrewsbury School		
DfE Number	893/6009		
Registered Charity Number	528413		
Address	Shrewsbury School The Schools Shrewsbury Shropshire SY3 7BA		
Telephone Number	01743 280500		
Fax Number	01743 243107		
Email Address	hm@shrewsbury.org.uk		
Headmaster	Mr Mark Turner		
Chair of Governors	Mr Richard H Burbidge		
Age Range	13to 18		
Total Number of Pupils	720		
Gender of Pupils	Boys 13 to 16; mixed 16 to 18 (656 boys; 64 girls)		
Number of Day Pupils	Total:	117	Capacity for flexi-boarding: 0
Number of Boarders	Total:	603	
	Full:	603	Weekly: 0
Inspection dates	10 May 2011 to 11 May 2011		

PREFACE

This report is according to the *Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) schedule for INTERIM inspections*. The inspection is a two-day visit with a focus on compliance with regulatory requirements. ISI inspections occur every three years and have two formats, interim and standard, which usually occur in an alternating pattern. The school's next inspection will therefore follow the standard schedule, which includes two visits totalling five days and places greater emphasis on the quality of education and care in addition to reporting on regulatory compliance. The school's previous inspection was in April 2007.

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Government for the purpose of inspecting schools belonging to Independent Schools Council (ISC) Associations and reporting on compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010*. The range of these Regulations is as follows.

- (a) Quality of education provided (curriculum)
- (b) Quality of education provided (teaching)
- (c) Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils
- (d) Welfare, health and safety of pupils
- (e) Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors
- (f) Premises and accommodation
- (g) Provision of information
- (h) Manner in which complaints are to be handled

*These Regulations replace those first introduced on 1 September 2003.

Legislation additional to Part 3, Welfare, health and safety of pupils, is as follows.

- (i) The Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (SENDA).
- (ii) Race, gender and sexual discrimination legislation.
- (iii) Corporal punishment.

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

A specific inspection of boarding was not carried out and the report does not contain judgements on the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools. Any comments on boarding arising from this inspection are in the context of the school as a whole. The existing report on boarding was produced in November 2010 by the Children's Directorate of the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) and can be found at www.ofsted.gov.uk under Children's social care/Boarding school.

The inspection of the school is from an educational perspective and provides limited inspection of other aspects, though inspectors will comment on any significant hazards or problems they encounter which have an adverse impact on children. The inspection does not include:

- (1) an exhaustive health and safety audit
- (11) an in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features
- (111) an investigation of the financial viability of the school or its accounting procedures
- (1111) an in-depth investigation of the school's compliance with employment law.

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Shrewsbury School is a boarding and day school which enjoys an extensive and spacious site overlooking the River Severn. It was founded in 1552 and moved to its present site in 1882. Distinguished former pupils include Charles Darwin. The school educates boys from the age of thirteen to eighteen, and boys and girls in the sixth form. The school aims to provide a rigorous approach to learning, an extraordinary variety of extra-curricular activities, personal pastoral support, and an environment that encourages young men and women to grow in understanding and think beyond themselves.
- 1.2 The school is administered by a board of governors. Since the previous inspection, a new headmaster has been appointed, in September 2010, and in 2008, the co-educational sixth form was introduced, welcoming girls to the school for the first time. There has also been a programme of building and refurbishment of facilities and accommodation, to include a new boarding house for girls and the conversion of the old swimming pool into a sixth-form common room. At the time of the inspection there were 720 pupils on the school roll, of whom 603 were boarders. The sixth form caters for 343 pupils, with 279 boys and 64 girls. A large number of pupils come from Shropshire and adjacent counties but boarders come from across the United Kingdom and abroad, mostly from South East Asia. There is a small degree of cultural diversity within the school; most pupils are of white British background. Most pupils come from professional families, with a significant number from the worlds of business and agriculture.
- 1.3 Ability and progress are monitored using standardised measures of attainment. The ability profile of the school is above the national average. Most pupils are of at least above average ability, with very few having an ability that is below average. Over a third of pupils demonstrate ability that is far above average. Very few pupils leave after GCSE. Of the 202 pupils identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD), 52 receive learning support from the school. There are 90 pupils for whom English is an additional language (EAL) but no extra support is currently required.
- 1.4 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school. The year group nomenclature used by the school and its National Curriculum (NC) equivalence are shown in the following table.

School	NC name
Third Form	Year 9
Fourth Form	Year 10
Fifth Form	Year 11
Lower Sixth	Year 12
Upper Sixth	Year 13

2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL

The quality of the pupils' achievements and their learning, attitudes and basic skills

- 2.1 The pupils' overall achievements are outstanding and they are extremely well educated, in line with the school's aim to educate the whole person as an individual in his or her own right. They display excellent knowledge, understanding and skill in a broad range of subjects and extra-curricular activity. They have exceptional literacy skills, and are creative and imaginative in their writing, and confident in reading. They are very articulate in their expression of ideas and opinions. In lessons they listen carefully to others, reason well, think logically and debate issues with interest. They question and analyse information after thoughtful reflection and are keen to challenge conventional thinking.
- 2.2 Pupils have sound understanding of mathematics, with competent numerical skills, and they apply scientific knowledge with thorough understanding. Pupils skilfully use a full range of information and communication technology to present their work and to aid research. Creative skills are particularly strong and pupils gain notable success in art and drama festivals, win music scholarships and gain places in the National Youth Orchestra and The National Youth Choir. Team and individual success in a wide range of sport at national and county level is a particular strength of the school. The majority of Year 13 go on to their first choice of university.
- 2.3 The following analysis uses the national data for the years 2007 to 2009. These are the most recent three years for which comparative statistics are available. Results at GCSE have been far above the national average for boys in maintained schools and similar to the national average for boys in maintained selective schools. Results in most International GCSE (IGCSE) subjects have been higher than worldwide averages. A-level results have been far above the national average for boys in maintained schools, and above the national average for boys in maintained selective schools. Results at both GCSE and A level are high in relation to pupils' abilities, indicating that their progress throughout the school is exceptional when compared with the average for pupils of similar abilities. Pupils with LDD or with EAL make progress as well as other pupils due to the personal care and attention given to them across the curriculum and by the learning support department. Gifted and talented pupils make exceptional progress and achieve the highest standards in all examinations. High standards are also achieved in externally recognised examinations and awards, as in music, drama and The Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme.
- 2.4 The school provides an outstanding range of subjects in the curriculum and an extraordinary range of activities in the extra-curricular programme, in accordance with its aims. The academic curriculum is broad and balanced, and is suited to all levels of ability. All pupils are challenged by the extensive use of setting, and IGCSE courses, the Cambridge Pre-U and the Extended Project provide opportunities for the most able to undertake extension work. A wide range of languages is on offer, including Greek and Latin. Pupils have the opportunity to be creative and to develop their individual interests. The curriculum is enriched by a stimulating choice of clubs and societies, from bee keeping to engineering and a full range of sporting and creative pursuits. There is a comprehensive personal, social and health education and life skills programme, and careers education is well represented, especially in

the sixth form. There are many trips and expeditions both at home and abroad to expand further pupils' experiences.

- 2.5 Teaching is outstanding. In the small sample of lessons observed during the inspection, the majority were outstanding and the remainder were good. Teachers have excellent subject knowledge, are enthusiastic about injecting interest into topics, have high expectations, and are clear in their planning and the targets they set for pupils. They have a warm, supportive attitude to helping pupils learn, whilst challenging them to constantly think for themselves and complete their work independently or in pairs and groups. They use good strategies to promote reflective thought and self-evaluation. Assessment is used well to aid progress, and marking is thorough, with good use of supportive comments.
- 2.6 Attitudes to learning are outstanding. Pupils are industrious and display excellent levels of concentration. They are keen learners and smart thinkers, who work at a good pace and question frequently. They enjoy their learning and show respect for their teachers and the views of their peers.

The quality of the pupils' personal development

- 2.7 The quality of pupils' personal development is excellent, and the school is very successful in its aim of educating the whole person and providing a framework within which individuality may flourish. There are many opportunities to develop the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness, and for them to grow in self-confidence in an environment where they feel safe, valued and supported.
- 2.8 Pupils show well-developed spiritual awareness and those of all faiths share their beliefs in an atmosphere of tolerance and acceptance of difference. Across the curriculum and in tutor sessions, pupils demonstrate their ability to explore and discuss moral and ethical issues, develop opinions and reflect on their own place in the world. Moral development is strong. Pupils understand the need for the school's rules and regulations, though they are keen to challenge perceived instances of unfairness. They are self-disciplined and as they become older take the increased opportunities for responsibility around the school. Some pupils commented in the pre-inspection questionnaire that their views about school life are not always listened to. The inspection team found that pupils have a number of forums through which to voice their concerns, although these forums are not always well understood by the younger pupils.
- 2.9 The pupils' social and cultural development is excellent, and strongly promoted through the community spirit and opportunities developed in the house system. Pupils enjoy their involvement in the many social and cultural activities provided for them. They benefit from a stimulating programme of visiting speakers and numerous cultural visits within the local community and further afield. They have excellent links with an international school in Bangkok. Pupils grow into confident and caring members of society with a sound understanding of the world around them through an excellent programme of citizenship, community service and charitable work.
- 2.10 The quality of pastoral care and the arrangements to safeguard the welfare, health and safety of pupils is outstanding and makes a strong contribution to the pupils' personal development. At the heart of the pastoral care is a highly committed team of housemasters and housemistresses supported by senior management and a personalised tutor system. Staff and pupil relationships are relaxed, caring and

supportive. Necessary commonality of purpose and consistency where it is required is provided through regular meetings and training, and monitoring by senior staff. Pupils reported that they feel happy, safe and secure in their houses and about the school. Behaviour is good, and rewards and sanctions are clear and understood by pupils. A small number of pupils reported in the pre-inspection questionnaire that instances of misconduct are not always treated fairly and consistently. The inspection team found no evidence to support this view during interviews with pupils. Pupils report that bullying is rare and is handled quickly and effectively when it is detected. With the introduction of co-education in the sixth form, necessary adjustments to promote the welfare of girls have been made effectively.

- 2.11 The school has trained all staff in child protection matters, and arrangements to ensure that pupils are safe and healthy are effective and include excellent medical facilities and care. There is an effective curricular healthy living programme, and the extensive school grounds and facilities provide daily opportunities for exercise. Detailed risk assessments for health and safety and for the prevention of fire are undertaken regularly. The school has an appropriate three-year accessibility plan and facilities for those with disabilities are good. The admission and attendance registers are suitably maintained and stored.
- 2.12 The provision for pupils who board is outstanding and contributes very successfully to their achievements and personal development. In the pre-inspection questionnaire, they reported that boarding is enjoyable and that there is good provision of facilities and activities.

The effectiveness of governance, leadership and management

- 2.13 The quality of governance is outstanding. The governing body has a strong vision for the school's future and plans accordingly to maintain high educational standards and further develop the school's ethos and aims. Governors have a wide range of experience and skill, and provide excellent support for the headmaster and senior management team. Responsibility is delegated to a number of specialist committees that maintain good oversight of financial matters, educational standards and provision, facilities, and health and safety. Governors oversee the effective implementation of school policies, and a designated governor for health and safety and for safeguarding has undertaken the necessary checks that policies in these areas are being implemented. Governors' good communication with parents and pupils is maintained through frequent attendance at school events, and with the staff through a designated staff common room governor.
- 2.14 The quality of leadership and management is excellent. All senior managers have clearly defined roles and work well together in an open, collaborative and supportive manner. They share their vision for the school successfully with the staff, and through good staff development and self-review, maintain high academic standards and promote excellent pastoral care. The excellent quality of medium- and long-term strategic planning provides a clear focus for discussion and the development of new initiatives. The strong and open leadership provided by the headmaster is revitalising middle management; these managers feel valued for the contributions they are encouraged to make to the planning process. Monitoring of school standards and pupil progress is conducted very efficiently by the senior management team, the housemasters and housemistresses, and the heads of faculty. Management is successful in recruiting well-qualified and highly motivated staff, and safe recruitment procedures are rigorously implemented. The campus and accommodation are well maintained.

- 2.15 The school maintains excellent links with parents. Its website is updated frequently and contains all the required information for parents, including a weekly newsletter with news and events. Informative reports on their children's progress are sent to parents every half term and there is an annual parents evening for all year groups. Parents have access to staff and senior managers on a daily basis through email communication, and most concerns are handled quickly through the house staff and tutors. Parents have access to a comprehensive procedure for more formal complaints, which are handled appropriately.
- 2.16 Parents responding to the pre-inspection questionnaire were overwhelmingly positive about almost all aspects of school life. They particularly valued the academic progress of their children, the curriculum and activities provided and the standards of pastoral care. A small number of parents expressed concern that due consideration is not always given to their children's needs in respect of learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Evidence seen by the inspectors did not support this view. A number of parents felt that they are not always encouraged to be involved in the life of the school but they acknowledged that this is due mostly to their children boarding some distance from their home.

3. ACTION POINTS

(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements

(The range of the Independent School Standards Regulations is given in the Preface)

- 3.1 The school meets all the requirements of the Independent School Standards Regulations 2010.

(ii) Recommendation for further improvement

- 3.2 The school is advised to make the following improvement.
1. Consider ways to raise the profile of the school council so that the views and concerns of the younger pupils can receive closer attention.

INSPECTION EVIDENCE

The inspectors observed a small sample of lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with senior members of staff and with the chair of governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registration sessions and assemblies. Inspectors visited the facilities for sick or injured pupils. The responses of parents and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined regulatory documentation made available by the school.

Inspectors

Mrs Maureen Bradley

Reporting Inspector

Mr David Forster

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