



**ISI** Independent  
Schools  
Inspectorate

**EDUCATIONAL QUALITY INSPECTION**

**WOLVERHAMPTON GRAMMAR SCHOOL**

**18 TO 19 JANUARY 2017**



## SCHOOL'S DETAILS

<b>School</b>	Wolverhampton Grammar School			
<b>DfE number</b>	336/6023			
<b>Registered charity number</b>	1125268			
<b>Address</b>	Compton Road Wolverhampton West Midlands WV3 9RB			
<b>Telephone number</b>	01902 421326			
<b>Email address</b>	wgs@wgs-sch.net			
<b>Headteacher</b>	Kathy Crewe-Read			
<b>Chair of directors</b>	Mr Philip Sims			
<b>Age range</b>	7 to 18			
<b>Number of pupils on roll</b>	722			
	<b>Boys</b>	427	<b>Girls</b>	295
	<b>Day pupils</b>	722	<b>Juniors</b>	153
	<b>Seniors</b>	398	<b>Sixth Form</b>	171
<b>Inspection dates</b>	18 to 19 January 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 un-met 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 chair of directors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended form meetings and assemblies. Inspectors visited 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
Mr Robert Chatburn	Team inspector (Head of international students, Society of Heads school)
Mr Andrew Gough	Team inspector (Headmaster, IAPS school)
Dr Michael Ransome	Team inspector (Assistant head, HMC school)
Mr John White	Team inspector (Director of sixth form, HMC school)

## CONTENTS

	<b>Page</b>
<b>1 BACKGROUND INFORMATION</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>About the school</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>What the school seeks to do</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>About the pupils</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Recommendations from previous inspections</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>2 KEY FINDINGS</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>3 THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>4 THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT</b>	<b>5</b>

## **1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

### **About the school**

- 1.1 Wolverhampton Grammar School is an independent day school for boys and girls aged between 7 and 18, governed by a board of directors. Founded in 1512 as a boys' school, it became fully co-educational in 1992. It is set in its own grounds a mile from the city centre. Since the previous inspection, the school has opened a new junior school for pupils aged 7 to 11 years and a sports pavilion. The current head was appointed in 2013.

### **What the school seeks to do**

- 1.2 The school's aim is to provide an education that transforms lives as well as minds and is suited to each individual child within a school community that inspires openness, trust and mutual respect. The objective is that, at each stage, pupils will be challenged and develop a range of skills and values that enables them to make a positive contribution in the world.

### **About the pupils**

- 1.3 Pupils are from white British and diverse ethnic backgrounds and live locally. The school has identified 155 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), which include dyslexia and dyspraxia, 60 of whom receive additional specialist help. One pupil is in receipt of an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan. English is an additional language (EAL) for three pupils in the senior school who receive additional support. A further 130 pupils speak two or more languages at home. The school has identified 74 pupils as being the more able in the school's population. Their needs are met within lessons and through extra-curricular activities. Nationally standardised test data provided by the school indicate that the average ability of the pupils in the junior school, in the senior section up to Year 11 and in Years 12 and 13 is above the national average.
- 1.4 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school.

### **Recommendations from previous inspections**

- 1.5 The previous full inspection of the school by ISI was an interim inspection in March 2011. The recommendations from that inspection were:
- Improve the use of assessment data in Year 6 in order to monitor and track pupils' progress and guide planning.
  - Revise the quality of reporting to the standard of the best to include more subject analysis and related guidance on ways to improve.
- 1.6 The school has successfully met all the recommendations of the previous inspection. Further detail is given in the main text of the report.

## 2. KEY FINDINGS

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

- Pupils make rapid progress within most lessons because they seek challenges, have positive attitudes and work effectively together.
- Pupils' basic skills for learning are at a high level across all the main areas of learning.
- Pupils with SEND or with EAL and those who are more able achieve their potential because their needs are well known by staff and teaching is matched to their abilities and needs.
- Pupils in the senior school achieve high standards in their activities.
- Pupils in the sixth form do not always progress as well as they might because in a minority of lessons they are not given opportunities to use the full range of their study skills.

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

- Pupils work exceptionally well together and make a positive contribution to the school community.
- Pupils are confident and take responsibility for their personal development.
- Pupils have a well-developed sense of right and wrong, exhibit this in their own behaviour and are respectful and polite.
- Pupils respond well to the diversity within their school community and value the opportunities it gives them to understand and appreciate other cultures.

### Recommendations

2.3 In the context of the excellent outcomes, the school should consider the following improvements:

- Ensure that teaching in all sixth form subjects employs a wide variety of approaches so that pupils are challenged and able to reach their full potential.
- In the senior school, improve the overall standard of marking so that pupils consistently gain a full understanding of what they have achieved and how they might improve their work.

### **3. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS' ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS**

- 3.1 The quality of pupils' academic and other achievements is excellent.
- 3.2 Pupils contribute fully to the school's aims because they respond positively to academic challenges, develop a wide range of skills and, as a consequence, achieve highly.
- 3.3 Pupils' attainment in Years 3 to 6, on the evidence available, is judged to be above the national average. They achieve well because the teaching recognises their needs and provides them with stimulating activities supported by relevant resources. They benefit from the careful tracking of their progress by teachers, management and senior leadership which ensures that any underperformance is quickly identified and remedied, meaning that a recommendation of the previous inspection in relation to Year 6 has been met.
- 3.4 Using the most recently available nationally standardised data, results at GCSE for Year 11 pupils have been higher than the national average. Results at A level have been above the national average. This reflects the pupils' positive attitudes and their ability to work exceptionally well together. Over the previous three years, school data show that on average most pupils have gained places at university, with the majority achieving their first choice.
- 3.5 In the junior school, using the evidence of standardised measures, pupils' progress is good and in some individual instances high in reading and mathematics relative to the average for pupils of similar abilities. In the senior school from the results at GCSE available, standardised measures and the evidence from lessons observed, progress is never less than good and is rapid where pupils receive challenging activities. Standardised measures and results at A level, indicate that pupils in the sixth form make progress that is appropriate in relation to the average of pupils with similar abilities. Using tracking data provided by the school, results in 2016 showed some improvement in progress. In responding to the pre-inspection questionnaire, a small minority of pupils stated that they did not find their lessons interesting. Inspectors found that in the great majority of lessons pupils enjoyed and responded positively to the teaching. In a few lessons in Years 12 and 13 there was a lack of variety of approach, pupils were unable to employ the full range of their skills, they were less engaged and their progress was slower. Pupils' learning and progress is positively supported by helpful reports which clearly describe their achievement in their lessons, identify areas for improvement and give challenging targets, thus meeting a recommendation from the previous inspection. In the junior school, pupils gain a clear understanding of their achievement and know how to develop further because marking is detailed. In the senior school, pupils do not always have such understanding because some of the marking of their work is cursory and limited to summative judgments, and this does not show them how to improve.
- 3.6 Data provided by the school show that pupils with SEND make progress that is in line with their peers. In some cases, such as in GCSE and A-level art, they exceed their peers. They make this rapid progress because teaching identifies their individual needs and gives appropriate support, guided by the school's learning support department. Some pupils further benefit from tutorials which provide individualised numeracy and literacy support. Three pupils identified by the school with EAL, who have all been learning English for fewer than four years, achieve broadly in line with their peers. They receive appropriate support in lessons as a result of careful analysis of their needs and tracking of their performance. Pupils of all ages who are identified as more able achieve highly and as expected in view of their abilities. All pupils achieve well because teaching understands their individual capabilities and limitations and accommodates these within lessons through appropriate and challenging tasks suited to their individual needs.

- 3.7 Responding most positively to the ethos of the school which aims to challenge and develop a range of skills, pupils of all ages develop high levels of knowledge, understanding and skills across all areas of learning. In the junior school they speak and read fluently; pupils, including those with SEND, are confident in using numbers, and their information and communications technology (ICT) skills are particularly well developed. Senior school pupils readily apply their knowledge in new situations. The great majority communicate confidently in foreign languages and have well-developed understanding of their structures. Their mathematical skills are robust and employed effectively in other subjects, such as geography, economics and science. Pupils are efficient users of ICT, using it in the presentation of their work, in design and in research. Those with SEND make sophisticated use of a wide variety of applications to extend their learning capabilities. More able pupils are quick to hypothesise, ask perceptive questions and find solutions to problems using sophisticated research skills. Pupils throughout the senior school display a wide range of highly creative skills in subjects such as drama and music, and their abilities in art are exceptional. They are confident and enthusiastic in sport and display well-developed physical skills in team games, which become even more versatile in the older pupils.
- 3.8 Pupils achieve high levels of success in their activities. Junior school pupils perform well in graded music, speech and drama examinations. They have achieved national recognition in mathematics challenges, and in sport the girls have had success at regional level in cross-country. Individual senior school pupils have received national recognition in mathematics, linguistics, engineering and physics. They are regional competition winners in engineering. Pupils have considerable success in sport at city, regional and national levels. The U19 and U14 football, U13 cross-country, U12, U14, U15 netball, and U13 and U14 rounders are all city champions. Two girls' netball teams are regional champions. Pupils have gained representative honours at county or regional level in boys' football, cricket, cross-country, athletics and girls' hockey and netball. Pupils have been selected for the national rounders squad, the U15 ISFA team and for representative honours in a national rugby club.
- 3.9 Pupils have decidedly positive attitudes in learning. Even the youngest in the junior school recognise that they must take responsibility for their learning. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 engage in challenging, independent reading and participate enthusiastically in the accelerated reading scheme which has been put in place by the school to improve pupils' reading and recognises and encourages their efforts. They are diligent with homework, and engage enthusiastically in the extra-curricular and enrichment opportunities. The great majority relish collaborative working; some prefer individual study, but they are all highly effective at both. Pupils in the senior school demonstrate initiative and independence; for example, Year 11 pupils described how they would research topics they had not initially understood and reinforce their understanding with independent exercises from the internet. Year 13 language pupils were observed going well beyond the demands of their A-level syllabus in their oral responses. The prevailing attitude among them is that they will take leadership in their learning. As a consequence, they value the teaching that guides, supports and suggests how they may accomplish tasks, but then gives them the opportunity to develop their own individual response, such as in art. They think for themselves and can synthesise information from a variety of sources encouraged by the resources provided for them in the school pupil portal and the school libraries.

#### **4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT**

- 4.1 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 4.2 Pupils make a full contribution to a school community that inspires openness, trust and mutual respect, thus keenly reflecting the school's aims. Pupils understand these aims because they are carefully explained by senior leadership and upheld and modelled by the staff.
- 4.3 Pupils display high levels of self-knowledge and take responsibility for their personal development. Junior school pupils make considered decisions in choosing enrichment opportunities and can evaluate their likely impact upon their development. Year 5 pupils can analyse their own traits and understand how these might help them fulfil their ambitions, and the youngest pupils are aware of the benefits of becoming independent, such as during their residential visits. Junior school pupils are confident they are being well prepared for the next stage of their education through lessons taken in the senior school. Encouraged by an ethos that expects pupils to take responsibility and be honest about their own progress and achievements, senior school pupils are self-aware. Those with SEND in particular have considerable understanding of their strengths and vulnerabilities. Year 11 pupils are confident that their skills are developing appropriately for the challenge of sixth form. Pupils from Years 10 to 13 stated that an emphasis in lessons on class discussions and thinking critically had made them self-aware, and that extra-curricular activities, such as the coast to coast run in Year 10 had developed their resilience. Year 12 and 13 pupils were well prepared for application to university and were confident in their ability to make decisions, but some felt less certain about the practicalities of life after school. Senior school pupils expressed unanimously to inspectors the view that they must take responsibility for their actions. They understood that they would need to work hard to achieve success and many of them said that they were helped by teaching which would guide them while allowing them freedom to make decisions, such as in choices of subjects from Year 10.
- 4.4 Pupils of all ages are socially aware and work exceptionally well together; as a consequence, they make a most positive contribution to their school community. Junior school pupils are proud of the role they play as monitors, and are enthusiastic about opportunities to work together. Through the junior school council and fundraising committee, all pupils choose charities to support at local, national and international levels and make a keen contribution to all fundraising events, such as those for a partner school in Uganda. Pupils in the senior school willingly undertake responsibility, such as Year 8 pupils within the library. Year 11 pupils are trained as peer mentors and help younger pupils with specific problems. Pupils in Years 12 and 13 take responsibility for a wide range of activities, such as competitions, the fundraising committee and clubs. They gain the respect of their peers as they undertake responsibly their formal duties as sports captains and, within Year 13, as prefects. Senior school pupils are proud of their Student Parliament and its democratic forum, which they believe is highly successful in improving the school experience for the pupil body. Inspectors agreed with them. For example, Year 9 pupils were observed working together to address a need raised previously in the Student Parliament. In groups they gave presentations on revision skills, thus demonstrating the willingness to address and aim to solve their own problems. Collaboration is a natural way of working in the senior school. Pupils support one another in lessons. Older pupils offer advice and support to younger pupils. The encouragement of collaborative working and of making a positive contribution is strongly supported by the wide provision in school of extra-curricular activities and opportunities. For example, from Year 10 some pupils experience service through the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme, such as in umpiring games for younger pupils. Sixth form pupils participate in service in the community for example, volunteering at a local hospice.

- 4.5 Pupils have a highly-developed sense of right and wrong, exhibit this in their own behaviour and are invariably respectful and polite. They accept responsibility for their own behaviour and are courteous in their dealings with one another. Junior school pupils are glad to have opportunities to behave responsibly, such as walking to their senior school lessons without direct supervision. They receive clear messages about what is morally acceptable in assemblies and they agree with them. For example, junior school pupils not only admired the art of William Morris but also his treatment of his workforce. Pupils in the senior school care deeply about social issues, for example, they were observed in lessons considering thoughtfully issues relating to drug-taking in sport, acid rain and gene technology. In responding to the questionnaire, the great majority of pupils agreed that the school encourages them to behave well and that they understand the sanctions for poor behaviour. A minority of senior school pupils did not agree that their teachers treated them fairly. Inspectors found that the recently developed system of rewards and sanctions is applied fairly. Scrutiny of school records showed that instances of serious misconduct are rare and that sanctions applied are reasonable. The school's aim is always to educate pupils in appropriate behaviour, and the responses of pupils in interviews with inspectors indicate that this has been successfully achieved. Furthermore, inspectors witnessed exemplary levels of courtesy and behaviour throughout the inspection.
- 4.6 Pupils respond well to the diversity within their school community and value the opportunities it gives them to understand and appreciate other cultures. The school encourages them to debate difficult issues openly and as a result pupils reach an appreciation not only of one another's differences, but also of the contribution such differences make to their community. Pupils work and play harmoniously together. Junior pupils enjoy exploring different religious views with one another and were keen to point out to inspectors that they upheld British values of fairness. In responding to the questionnaire, a minority of pupils in the senior school did not agree that teachers always give a balanced view. Inspectors found no evidence of this either in lessons or from discussions with pupils. Sixth form pupils stated that in their lessons there would be debate and the teacher would act as arbiter. Other senior school pupils said that they could easily express opinions and that teachers were balanced in presenting views in personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) lessons. Inspectors found in lessons that pupils responded positively to the encouragement they are given by the teachers to give their view and that there was no evidence of bias in the teaching.
- 4.7 Pupils develop spiritual understanding and an appreciation of the non-material aspects of life. Junior school pupils enjoy listening to music saying that it helps them to feel calm and imaginative. They reflect upon matters arising from world events described in their assemblies and their careful consideration of deeper messages is evident in their writing in English, PSHE and religious studies. Senior school pupils show great appreciation of art and for the works of their fellow pupils which are a significant presence throughout the school. They express their understanding of human motivation in drama and in their understanding of poetry. They reflect upon spiritual issues in their religious studies lessons. They appreciate opportunities and places to reflect quietly, and the messages in school assemblies designed to encourage them to be reflective and thoughtful.
- 4.8 Pupils know how to stay safe and understand how to be physically and mentally healthy. They are well supported by formal programmes, such as PSHE and also by the staff who know and respond to their individual needs. The maturity and understanding shown by pupils reflects the care taken by governance and leadership which places the safety and well-being of the pupils at the centre of all decisions taken. Pupils feel safe in school and even those as young as Year 3 understand the importance of e-safety. All pupils recognise the value of eating healthily and are appreciative of the healthy options provided with their school lunch. They enjoy the opportunities within the curriculum to play sport and many are further involved outside

lessons. Pupils in the senior school said that they had many opportunities for recreational sport even if they did not play in a school team. Pupils of all abilities are welcomed in activities such as dance, squash and badminton and enjoy participating.

- 4.9 By the time they leave school pupils are well equipped for their future lives. They are effective learners, keen participants, socially aware and keen to make their positive contribution in the world ahead.