



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

**WREKIN COLLEGE
INTERIM INSPECTION**

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

Wrekin College

Full Name of College	Wrekin College		
DfE Number	894/6001		
Registered Charity Number	528417		
Address	Wrekin College Sutherland Road Wellington Telford Shropshire TF1 3BH		
Telephone Number	01952 265600		
Fax Number	01952 415068		
Email Address	headmaster@wrekincollege.ac.uk		
Head	Mr S G Drew		
Chair of Governors	Mr George Champion		
Age Range	11 to 19		
Total Number of Pupils	432		
Gender of Pupils	Mixed (258 boys; 174 girls)		
Number of Day Pupils	Total: 324	Capacity for flexi-boarding:	Yes
Number of Boarders	Total: 108		
	Full: 98	Weekly: 10	
Inspection dates	25 Jan 2011 to 26 Jan 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 college'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 college's previous inspection was in January 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 college as a whole. The existing report on boarding was produced in February 2008 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 college 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:

- (i) an exhaustive health and safety audit
- (ii) an in-depth examination of the structural condition of the college, its services or other physical features
- (iii) an investigation of the financial viability of the college or its accounting procedures
- (iv) an in-depth investigation of the college's compliance with employment law.

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE COLLEGE

- 1.1 The college was founded in the market town of Wellington in 1880 by Sir John Bayley, philanthropist and businessman, and was linked with the Allied Schools in the 1920s. An Allied Schools' representative is on the governing body, offering further educational and comparative perspective, but the college is self-governing within the Allied group. Girls were admitted into the sixth form in 1975, at age fourteen in 1983, and in 1993 the age of admission for all pupils was reduced to eleven. Day pupils come from a wide area; boarders come from many areas of the United Kingdom and from abroad.
- 1.2 The college's aims are: to create a community where all feel valued and involved; to offer the highest quality of education in the college's Christian tradition; to nurture interesting, self-disciplined and balanced young people in a happy and challenging environment enabling them to fulfil their potential, to gain a clear sense of right and wrong, responsibility and sensitivity towards others; to celebrate individual achievements; to instil a sense of pride in the college's traditions of conduct and courtesy; to foster respect and care for the environment.
- 1.3 Since the previous inspection, governance has merged with Old Hall Prep School to form Wrekin College Old Hall Trust. Saturday morning school has been discontinued but lessons extended to 55 minutes and with some on Wednesday afternoons. A hall of residence has been established for girl boarders.
- 1.4 Currently the college roll is 432 pupils in all (258 boys and 174 girls), including 108 boarders (67 boys and 41 girls) and with 142 in the sixth form (84 boys, 58 girls).
- 1.5 Entry to the college is by examination at ages eleven or thirteen. The ability profile of the college is above the national average, as measured by standardised tests. One pupil has a statement of special educational needs; 85 have been identified as needing learning support and 29 of these receive specialist learning support. English is not the first language of 62 pupils, 33 of whom receive support in English.
- 1.6 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the college. The year group nomenclature used by the college and its National Curriculum (NC) equivalence are shown in the following tables.

College	NC name
First Form	Year 7
Second Form	Year 8
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 COLLEGE

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

- 2.1 As at the previous inspection, pupils are educated very well in accordance with the high aims of the college and demonstrate good achievement overall, with many strengths. Their progress over time is good in relation to their ability profile, which is above the national average. Their attainment against national norms is good. Results in GCSE over the last three years for which comparative statistics are available are good in relation to pupils' abilities, indicating that their progress in Years 7 to 11 is above the average for pupils of similar abilities. For A level, no comparable statistics exist but the work seen in the college by the inspectors was of good quality. The pupils are good learners, with highly positive attitudes to study, who achieve well and are willing to take responsibility for their own learning. They are polite and courteous and take a pride in their achievements and successfully undertake personal responsibilities and initiatives. They manage very effectively to combine academic success with taking part in a wide variety of extra-curricular activities. Pupils are articulate and speak and write very well; they can handle mathematical concepts across the curriculum and use information and communication technology (ICT) effectively.
- 2.2 The curriculum is broad and balanced and offers both enrichment and community involvement. A strength is the flexibility of the curriculum to adapt to the abilities of different pupils; the college is willing to have small groups to accommodate pupils' choices. The college day is a long and busy one, starting, for day pupils, at 8.20 a.m. and finishing at 6.00 p.m. The college provides a wide variety of high quality extra-curricular activities, ranging from a high number of sports, in which pupils win county and national honours, to the arts, and involvement in charities and the community. The Combined Cadet Force (CCF) and the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme are both strong and are linked to enable more pupils to participate. Activities take place every afternoon.
- 2.3 Teaching is good, and is sometimes excellent. Lessons are generally well planned with a good variety of activities which meet the needs of all pupils and promote good learning. Teachers know the pupils as individuals very well and have a high expectation of good classroom behaviour; they encourage pupils to be respectful of others' contributions and efforts, thus enabling a high quality of discussion to flourish. Teachers maintain excellent discipline with just a light touch. Teachers are well-qualified specialists. They make well-chosen use of the helpful facilities available, most of which are of high quality. The teachers have excellent relationships with the pupils and use humour and variation. For instance, a French lesson was conducted in French most of the time but the teacher used English sensibly to explain abstruse points. Teachers work the pupils very hard both during the long college day and also in the work set for prep. Marking is often helpful to the pupils' progress: it is diagnostic and clear. However, marking is uneven and sometimes is cursory and does not always indicate to pupils how they could improve.

The quality of the pupils' personal development

- 2.4 As at the previous inspection, the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils is outstanding and a major strength of the college. The college achieves its high aims, which have a strong spiritual and moral dimension, very successfully. The pupils talk easily about spiritual values and say that the fine chapel is central to the college, and the headmaster calls it 'our most valuable classroom'. Pupils say that they appreciate having a full-time chaplain, whom they find very approachable, and they take part with enthusiasm in the various daily services in the chapel. Spiritual ideas are embedded in much of the curriculum, especially through the arts curriculum. Pupils' moral development is excellent. They have a well-developed sense of right and wrong. They exhibit behaviour in class and around the college that shows concern for others not least in their generous contributions to charities. The pupils' social development is very strong. They relate well towards each other and are supportive and helpful. They are polite and courteous. They also develop excellent relationships with staff and with each other. Pupils experience participation and democracy through the college council and other bodies. They use well the opportunities to show leadership, for example, in the CCF and by holding office in the college or house. The pupils are well aware of their own culture, and that of others, especially through the strong extra-curricular provision in the arts and by their involvement in charities. Pupils of different origins and background come together in The Wrekin International Group to celebrate their differences and learn from them. Pupils participate strongly in the college's charity committee, especially in relation to the Malawi Orphanage, and they take part in exchange visits with schools in South Africa and Australia.
- 2.5 The pastoral care of the pupils is outstanding, and is a major strength of the college as at the previous inspection. Pupils are cared for very well. All staff, teaching and support staff, contribute to the excellent care, support and guidance for the pupils. The college has clear formal structures but applies them flexibly, always considering the individual pupil. The quality of relationships between staff and pupils and amongst the pupils themselves is outstanding, promoting a positive and nurturing atmosphere. The provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety is excellent. Secure measures to ensure the safeguarding, protection, health and safety of children are in place and are implemented successfully. The college has all the required policies and procedures but its care of the pupils goes beyond that which is statutory. Carefully thought out procedures are all overlapping and based upon proven practice in the college.
- 2.6 The quality of boarding provision is good, ensuring outstanding care for each individual. The boarding staff are accessible and attentive. Pupils speak of a warm atmosphere in the boarding houses. Boarders especially speak gratefully of the very strong support given to those whose parents are at great distance from the college. Pupils appreciate the flexible nature of the various arrangements for boarding, full time, weekly or part time. Weekend activities are praised by the pupils: they say that they are plentiful, interesting, of good quality and accessible.

The effectiveness of governance, leadership and management

- 2.7 As at the previous inspection, the work of the governors is of high quality. The governors are well aware of their responsibilities and give good strategic leadership while supporting the headmaster and the staff in the running of the college. They are the guardians of the college's aims. The long-term and short-term planning is effective. The chairman of governors keeps himself aware of what is going on in the college by, among other ways, occasionally shadowing a pupil for a college day. He meets regularly with the head and senior staff. Some governors have a specific responsibility for staff liaison and meet regularly with staff.
- 2.8 The college is led and managed well. The headmaster and other senior staff give clear leadership and effective management. They have a vision of what the college is about and lead the teachers and support staff to work for the pupils' benefit. The previous inspection recommended that the college promote consistent oversight of academic performance by heads of departments. Clear improvement has been effected here, for instance in the college's adoption of the 'high flyers' scheme to improve the performance of the most able and to facilitate individual learning. However, marking is still uneven.
- 2.9 Teachers are well qualified, hard working and committed to their pupils' development. The college has thorough arrangements for the recruitment of staff, volunteers and governors, and for checking and recording their suitability, all fully in accord with legal requirements. The chairman of the governors makes spot checks on the central register of those appointed. Support staff make an outstanding contribution to the college through their cheerful efficiency, dedication, loyalty and care. The college's premises and accommodation are outstanding and are very well maintained. The beautiful, spacious site and fine buildings daily constitute a positive and beneficial influence on the pupils. Links with parents, carers and guardians are good. The college has a complaints procedure which meets all of the requirements. In recent years, no complaint has gone beyond the preliminary informal stage. The college website has a useful list of all the information that is available from the college. Very few parents completed the on-line questionnaire but of those that did, the vast majority were positive. The same is true of the pupils.

3. ACTION POINTS

(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements

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

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

(ii) Recommendation for further improvement

- 3.2 The college is advised to make the following improvement.
1. Ensure that all work is marked thoroughly in a way that is most helpful to pupils in future improvement.

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 chairman 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 college.

Inspectors

Mr Eric Hester

Reporting Inspector

Mrs Harriett Granville

Deputy Headmistress, GSA school.