

INSPECTION REPORT

WOLVERHAMPTON GIRLS' HIGH SCHOOL

Wolverhampton

LEA area: Wolverhampton

Unique reference number: 104402

Headteacher: Mrs D James

Reporting inspector: Brian Rowe
1695

Dates of inspection: 5 – 8 December 2000

Inspection number: 223906

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Grammar
School category:	Foundation
Age range of pupils:	11 - 18
Gender of pupils:	Girls
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr R D Anderson
Date of previous inspection:	October 1995

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Wolverhampton Girls' High is a selective school situated in the town of Wolverhampton. The school caters for pupils between the ages of 11 – 18. It draws pupils from a wide geographical region around Wolverhampton. There are pupils from a wide range of backgrounds, but the proportion from disadvantaged backgrounds is much lower than average. There are 727 pupils on roll, including 191 in the sixth form. The percentage of pupils from ethnic minority groups is higher than average. The proportion of pupils receiving free school meals is very low when compared to the selective school average. An analysis of pupils' attainment on entry shows that levels of attainment are very high compared to the national average. No pupil has a statement and none have been placed on the special educational needs (SEN) register.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Wolverhampton Girls' High School is a highly effective school. It achieves academic standards that are much higher than the averages for all maintained schools nationally and for other selective schools. The attainment of students in the sixth form is very high and achieved on a cost-effective basis. Overall, pupils have positive attitudes about the school and work with an enormous determination to improve their own performance. They are very well behaved and form supportive relationships with each other and their teachers. The quality of teaching and learning is very good and a significant strength in the school. This ensures that pupils make rapid progress and are keen to complete their studies. There is a high level of care and support for pupils and the school has developed a range of procedures to monitor and support pupils' academic and personal development. Most parents regard the school very highly, but there are a significant number who have concerns about aspects of the education the school provides. Parents receive regular information about their daughters' progress and what is happening in school. The school has made good progress since the last inspection and is aware of its strengths and areas for future development. The headteacher, very well supported by the senior management team and the governors, provides very efficient and effective leadership and gives a clear direction for school improvement. The school gives good value for money.

What the school does well

- Sustains very high academic standards, at all key stages, due to the high expectations of staff.
- Ensures a positive work ethos that maintains high standards of personal development, attendance, attitudes towards learning and behaviour.
- Ensures that management is highly effective and efficient.
- The very high quality of teaching, linked to the systems for assessment are continually raising the standards of pupils' attainment and examination success.
- Provides additional curriculum opportunities through maintaining its Language College status.

What could be improved

- Improving the accommodation to enhance the curriculum and learning opportunities for physical education (PE).
- Developing the links, involvement and positive perceptions of parents.
- Managing the arrangements for homework.
- Increasing the provision for pupils with SEN.
- Making greater use of an analysis of assessment results and pupils' performance data for setting targets.

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

At the last inspection, which took place in October 1995, the school was judged to set high standards and achieve them. Since then the school has made good improvements. The key issues identified in the previous report have mostly been addressed. For example, high standards have been maintained, the amount of teaching time has been increased. The school has reduced the amount of written homework given to the pupils and improved the homework system. However, further development is still required. The provision for and use made of information and communication technology (ICT) has been significantly

improved. Review and monitoring systems have been established. There have been significant improvements to the accommodation, but the poor provision for physical education, especially the changing and showering facilities still remains, despite substantial effort by the staff and governors. The school has improved the provision to teach religious education. In addition, other important aspects of school development have been achieved. These other aspects include: improving attainment at a faster rate than the national rising trends at Key Stage 4 and achieving excellent examination results in the sixth form and using information gained from review and monitoring to set targets for school developments. Also, the school has gained and maintained the Language College status. Although there have been improvements to the provision for daily worship, the school still does not meet the statutory requirement to provide daily worship for every pupil. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection and this has ensured a continued rise in standards throughout the school.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 16 and 18 year olds based on average point scores in GCSE and A-level/AS-level examinations.

Performance in:	Compared with			
	All schools			Similar Schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
GCSE examinations	A*	A*	A*	A
A-levels/AS –levels	A*	A*	A*	n/a

Key	
Very high	A*
Well above average	A
Above average	B
Average	C
Below average	D
Well below average	E

By the end of Key Stage 3, over the last six years, pupils' attainment has been very high (in the top five per cent of all maintained schools) against the national average in English, mathematics and science. In 2000, the average points score of 45.6 remained very high when compared to other selective schools. Pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 (at age 16) has been consistently very high (in the top five per cent) compared to the national average for at least the last six years. Pupils' average points score in 2000 was the highest ever at 65.8 against a national average of 38.7 points. Ninety nine per cent of pupils achieved 5+ A*-C grades against a national figure of 49.0 per cent. A high proportion (74 per cent) of pupils achieved A*/A grades. These high grades were achieved in most subjects, but were especially noteworthy in science, French, German, religious studies, Russian and design and technology in which over 80 per cent of pupils gained these top two grades. Attainment is above average when compared to other selective schools and the school was placed high in the 2000 national league tables for grammar schools.

During the last few years, sixth form students have achieved very well indeed and results have improved steadily. In 2000, students gained an average points score of 31.4, the highest score the school has ever achieved. This is very high compared to the national average and the school gained eighth place nationally when compared to all other state secondary schools. A high proportion of students gained the highest two grades in several subjects. Especially noteworthy were the results in chemistry, physics, French, English, Russian, geography, German, mathematics, history, Latin, music, religious education and general studies. At each key stage, pupils and sixth form students achieve well in relation to their prior attainment and make very good progress. Each year, the school sets itself challenging targets and, in 2000, was very successful in achieving them.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Overall, pupils' attitudes to the school are very positive. During the inspection several mentioned their dissatisfaction about not having any showering or changing facilities for physical education (PE). Pupils work extremely hard and are determined to achieve good examination results.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Excellent. Girls' behaviour in and around school is very mature. They are invariably courteous and friendly.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Relationships between staff and pupils and the pupils themselves are warm and create an environment in which pupils flourish.
Attendance	Excellent. Well above average. Punctuality is also very good.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Aged 11 - 13 years	Aged 14 - 16 years	Aged 17 – 18 years
Lessons seen overall	Very good	Very good	Very good

Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Satisfactory' means that the teaching is adequate and strengths outweigh weaknesses.

Overall, the quality of teaching is very good. Of the lessons observed, 10 per cent of the teaching was excellent, 67 per cent was very good, 18 per cent was good and 5 per cent was satisfactory. There were no unsatisfactory lessons. The quality of teaching is a considerable strength in the school and has improved since the last inspection.

Teachers are providing the pupils with the skills they need to learn effectively. Teaching ensures that pupils learn at a very rapid pace and sustain interest throughout the lesson. Appropriately, the school has prioritised further training for teachers in information and communication technology (ICT) to enhance pupils' learning even further. Teachers build on pupils' high degree of self-motivation to develop their independence of learning. Pupils' learning is very strongly promoted through the teachers' subject expertise and their very high expectations. Teachers set the pupils demanding challenges, both in class and for homework. Relationships between the pupils and teachers are usually supportive in the classroom and this creates a positive learning environment where the girls learn quickly and effectively. Teachers provide pupils with individual support when necessary and make good use of systematic assessment to ensure a good rate of progress is maintained. Homework is used to consolidate learning and develop pupils' enquiry skills. The school is aware that there is a need to monitor homework more closely to ensure that the girls do not spend too much time on its completion. In a few lessons, pupils' interest was not sufficiently capitalised upon in order for them to take initiative and promote an enjoyment of learning. The core subjects of English, mathematics and science, together with literacy and numeracy skills, are taught very well throughout the school.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The quality and range of the curriculum is good. It is well supported by many additional voluntary lessons, visits and extra-curricular activities. There are good opportunities to use computers for learning. The school is designated a Language College and this enhances the curriculum provision. The National Curriculum requirements for PE are not fully met due to the very poor facilities.

Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Unsatisfactory. The school is at an early stage of developing provision for special needs and currently the Code of Practice is not fully met.
Provision for pupils with English as additional language	Almost one fifth of the girls have English as an additional language, but no pupil is at an early stage of language acquisition.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social & cultural development	The school provides good opportunities for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The older students are given positions of responsibility to support younger pupils and this promotes their personal development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good care is provided for pupils. There are good procedures to ensure child protection. Pupils' progress is reviewed regularly and there are good systems to support pupils' academic and personal development. However, there are no facilities for showering and changing for physical education and this, together with the inadequate facilities, constitutes a health and safety issue.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The school benefits from very good leadership by the headteacher and other key staff. It is managed very effectively and operates efficiently. There is a will to embrace change and it is continually striving to improve.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very good. The governing body is well informed about school issues. Governors fully understand their responsibility and contribute very well to the school's strategic development. Currently, they are not fully meeting statutory requirements for teaching PE, supporting pupils with special educational needs (SEN) and providing a daily act of collective worship.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The school has established review and monitoring procedures that help to identify both its strengths and weaknesses and inform about future developments.
The strategic use of resources	Good. Staff are deployed appropriately and the educational resources are used well. In targeting financial resources, the school applies good principles of best value. During the last few years there have been significant improvements made to accommodation. However, one outstanding project remains from the last inspection. The facilities for PE are extremely poor despite strenuous efforts made by the school. The indoor space available is totally inadequate to meet the requirements of the National Curriculum. The girls do not have a dedicated changing room for PE and other activities or facilities to shower. At times, girls have to change in the toilets. This is a disgraceful situation.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils make good progress • Teaching is good • Behaviour is invariably good • High expectations for attainment and behaviour • The school helps pupils to mature and take responsibility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The range of activities outside lessons • Pupils being more positive about going to school • The school setting the right amount of homework • The way the school deals with questions or problems • Providing more information about their daughters' progress. • Working more closely with parents

Approximately 30 per cent of parents returned the parent questionnaires. In addition, about 40 parents wrote at length to the registered inspector expressing their concerns over various aspects of the education provided. A significant number of parents hold a negative view about some aspect of the school. The issues identified in the right hand text box above represent the views of at least 10 per cent of parents who returned the questionnaire. The inspectors fully agree with the positive views identified above. The inspectors found that for many of the negative issues reported above the views are over-stated and inspection evidence does not fully support the concerns. Other issues raised by parents at the meeting were not substantiated by the inspection. The negative perception of the parents does not reflect the positive effort and recent developments achieved by the school. For example, with regard to the areas that the parents would like to see improved, the inspectors found that the school has already made significant improvements to the provision of homework. However, the school is aware that further developments are still needed. Evidence indicates that the school already provides a substantial amount of information to parents. Also, there is a good range of extra-curricular opportunities including clubs, visits and support lessons. The school has sound systems for dealing with concerns and issues raised by parents and many stated their satisfaction with this aspect of the school's communication. The school is also aware that it needs to find ways to involve parents more closely and already has some initiatives underway. The inspectors found that, overall, girls were happy to come to school, although some found the demands of work stressful at times. The school is aware of the importance for girls to feel fully supported by the school and that the balance of their personal and social development, together with the drive for academic success, is maintained.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN FINDINGS

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

Sustains very high academic standards, at all key stages, due to the high expectations of staff

1. Pupils enter school (age 11) with levels of attainment that are well above those expected for their age nationally. These high standards of attainment on entry are maintained and extended by the end of Key Stage 3 (age 14) when very high proportions of pupils achieve levels 6 – 8 in the national tests. By the end of Key Stage 3, during at least the last six years, pupils' attainment has been very high (top five per cent of all maintained schools) against the national average in English, mathematics and science. Overall, attainment is also very high when compared to other selective schools.
2. Pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 (at age 16) has been consistently very high (top five per cent of all maintained schools) compared to the national average for at least the last six years. Pupils' average points score in 2000 was the highest ever at 65.8 against a national average of 38.7 points. 99.4 per cent of pupils achieved 5+ A*-C grades against a national figure of 49.0 per cent. In 2000, a high proportion (74 per cent) of pupils achieved A*/A grades. These high grades were achieved in most subjects, but were especially noteworthy in science, French, German, religious studies, Russian and design and technology in which over 80 per cent of pupils gained these top two grades. Attainment is above average when compared to other selective schools and the school was placed highly in the 2000 national league tables for grammar schools.
3. During the last few years, sixth form students have achieved very well indeed and results have improved steadily. In 2000, students gained an average points score of 31.4, the highest score the school has ever achieved. This is very high compared to the national average and the school gained eighth place nationally when compared to all other state secondary schools. This is an outstanding achievement. A high proportion of students gained the highest A level grades in several subjects. Especially noteworthy were the results in chemistry, French, English, Russian, geography, German, mathematics, history, Latin, music, religious education and general studies.
4. At each key stage pupils and students achieve well in relation to their prior attainment and make very good progress. Levels of literacy and numeracy are very high throughout the school. Pupils make very good use of these skills in all subjects. Each year the school sets itself challenging academic targets and, in 2000, was very successful in achieving them. High expectations, very good teaching, extremely positive pupils' attitudes, relationships, attendance and the pupils' capacity for sustained hard work are all significant factors in this very high level of academic success throughout the school.
5. In English, during the last three years, pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 has been very high compared with the national average. In 2000, the average points score declined a little compared with the previous year, but was still very high when compared both with the national average and that of selective schools.
6. In GCSE examinations for English language and literature, the standards achieved, based on the average points, score are very high compared to the national average and well above that of selective schools. In 2000, 71.8 per cent of pupils obtained A* or A in English language and 61.2 per cent of pupils obtained A* or A in English literature compared to 44.1 per cent and 44.8 per cent respectively in similar schools in 1999 (the last figures available). At GCE A level, standards of attainment are very high and well above the average for similar schools.

Although less good than the previous year, in 2000, 68 per cent of pupils attained grades A-B compared with 54.4 per cent in similar schools in 1999.

7. In lessons, girls are responsive and sustain concentration for long periods. In class and group discussion, they listen carefully to each other and are articulate and confident in presenting their views. In Year 9, guided by their teacher, pupils were able to discuss stylistic devices, structure and change of mood in a poem by Seamus Heaney with obvious interest and enjoyment. In Year 12, students showed insight and perception during a lively discussion concerning relationships between characters, style and meaning in a Tennessee William's play.
8. Pupils take a pride in their work and their writing is almost always carefully presented. At both Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 standards of punctuation, grammar and spelling are generally very good. Pupils are given many opportunities to write for a range of different purposes and audiences. There was evidence of high quality written work in a Year 9 lesson on Coca-Cola advertisements using the language of persuasion. Also in a Year 10 lesson pupils used extended metaphors in Valentine poems. Year 11 pupils used vivid descriptive writing of a journey and in the completion of short stories using their own endings in the style of the author. There is very good analytical writing, particularly in project work.
9. Year 7 book reviews indicate that pupils are already enthusiastic readers and as they move up the school they become more critical, discerning readers. At an early stage, pupils are introduced to the library and they work well independently, using reference sources including the Internet and CD ROM's for research purposes.
10. In mathematics, pupils' attainment in the end of Key Stage 3 National Curriculum tests has been very high in comparison with the averages for all maintained schools over the last three years, and in 1999 it was significantly above the average for similar schools. The results in 2000 were similar to those achieved in 1999 as are the standards being reached by pupils in the current Year 9. Pupils' achievement at Key Stage 3 is very good when compared to their attainment at Key Stage 2.
11. Attainment is also very high at the end of Key Stage 4. The GCSE results are very high in relation to national averages and are above those for grammar schools. The proportion of pupils reaching the highest grades of A and A* is well above grammar school averages. The standards reached at GCE Advanced level in mathematics are also very high in relation to national averages and are well above the averages for grammar schools. The standards seen during the inspection reflected the GCSE and GCE Advanced level results.
12. Pupils achieve very well at both Key Stages 3 and 4 and in the sixth form. They develop very high levels of mathematical skills that they apply very effectively in all aspects of their work. They achieve significant strengths in mental and written calculations, sequencing, the use of algebraic expressions and formulae, investigation, problem solving, collecting and interpreting data, the ability to check their methods and to explain and judge the validity of their solutions. Higher attaining pupils reach exceptionally high levels of attainment throughout the school. The relatively lower attaining pupils are enabled to reach their full potential.

13. In science, pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 National Curriculum tests has been very high in relation to averages of all maintained schools over the last three years, and in 1999 was very high in comparison with similar schools. The results in 2000 show that the steadily improving trend since the last inspection has been maintained. Pupils' results at Key Stage 3 are good compared with their attainment at Key Stage 2.
14. This high level of attainment is maintained at Key Stage 4 and standards achieved at GCSE Double Award in 1999 and 2000 are again very high compared with national averages and with similar schools. At GCE A Level, biology, chemistry and physics levels of attainment are also very high in relation to national averages, and in the case of chemistry and physics, well above those of similar selective schools. However, the 1999 and 2000 results in biology, while being high in relation to national averages, are below those for selective schools. Standards seen during the inspection reflect the GCSE and GCE Advanced level results.
15. Throughout the school, pupils are articulate in class discussions and explain scientific phenomena clearly in technical terms, as shown by a Year 10 class consolidating their knowledge of light and lenses. Pupils confidently explain the nature and colour of light and terms such as reflection and refraction. There is a steady development of investigative skills such as planning experiments and the analysis and evaluation of experimental data. Samples of Year 11 coursework show a high level of attainment in these skills with good accompanying use of ICT. Good predictive skills were shown by a Year 8 class relating structure to function in studying heart anatomy and also by a Year 13 class working out equations for the reactions of various species of transitional metal ions.

Ensures a positive work ethos that maintains high standards of personal development, attendance, attitudes towards learning and behaviour

16. There is a positive work ethos in school and students arrive each day knowing that there is a clear emphasis on achieving high academic standards. Relationships between staff and pupils and between the pupils themselves are supportive, creating a positive atmosphere where pupils can flourish. These positive relationships and the high level of care ensures high standards of personal development. Good support is provided to pupils, but the school is aware that the arrangements for those with learning difficulties need to be more structured and formalised. Staff know the pupils well as individuals and make good use of the systematic records they keep on pupils when offering support and guidance. They are sensitive to pupils' needs and use their comprehensive knowledge of pupils to ensure they are placed in the most appropriate teaching group. Pupils are polite, friendly and proud of their achievements. Many are extremely loyal to the school. When they are older, they are given considerable levels of responsibility that include the senior students being attached to form groups, trained as counsellors and organising activities for younger pupils. Pupils are admitted into the school building at lunch and break times and they show a great deal of respect to the building and furniture.
17. Pupils are keen to attend school. For the last few years, attendance has been very high when compared to the national average and well above the selective schools' average. Unauthorised absence is very low. These very high levels of attendance ensure uninterrupted learning for pupils which contributes to their high achievement.

18. Pupils are generally enthusiastic about their lessons and praise the teachers for the additional effort they make to ensure they complete all their work. Many pupils indicated that there was at least one teacher in school they could turn to with either an academic or pastoral problem. Pupils are mature and come to school well prepared and very keen to learn. Behaviour around the school and in lessons is excellent. Pupils settle quickly to work and sustain concentration throughout lessons. In recent years, there have been very few exclusions.

Ensures that management is highly effective and efficient

19. The headteacher, very well supported by the senior management team and the governors, provides very efficient and effective leadership and gives a clear direction for school improvement. She has a clear vision for the future of the school and is determined to ensure a continual improvement to the quality of education provided for the pupils. The school is well served by hard working and dedicated senior managers. They work effectively as a cohesive team. Since the last inspection, there have been good improvements in many important aspects of school life. The senior management team is aware of weaknesses that have to be addressed.
20. The management structure is effective and the school has established clear roles within the senior and middle management team. The work of all academic and pastoral managers is supported through an appropriate structure of meetings that ensures good communication. The heads of department are efficient and have ensured improvements have taken place within their departments. The pastoral heads of year know the girls very well and provide a good level of care by helping them to manage their work and supporting them personally. The school has been successful in gaining and maintaining the Language College status.
21. The governors are aware of their responsibilities to meet statutory requirements and for the overall performance of the school. With the exception of not complying with the National Curriculum requirements to teach physical education (due to inadequate accommodation), meeting the Code of Practice for special educational needs and providing a daily act of collective worship, the governors fulfil their statutory requirements. The governing body has a strategic view of the school's development due to the review and monitoring procedures. They are committed to the school's improvement and work hard in a well-organised committee structure to ensure continuous development. The governors are well informed about the school's successes and areas for development. The governors maintain close monitoring of finances and make informed decisions based on accurate budget information. Both senior managers and governors are clear about the cost of developments and the identified targets in the development plan. The school applies best value principles very effectively.
22. The quality of the school's development planning and the systems for monitoring have improved since the last inspection. The school development plan has been written after a process of review involving the staff, governors and a questionnaire sent to all parents. The school's development plan identifies appropriate targets based on detailed review procedures. The planning is linked to staff appraisal and their training needs. The school is in a good position to implement the forthcoming performance management requirements and sustain improvements.

The very high quality of teaching, linked to the systems for assessment are continually raising the standards of pupils' attainment and examination success

23. Overall, throughout the school, the quality of teaching is very good. Of the lessons observed, 10 per cent of the teaching was excellent, 67 per cent was very good, 18 per cent was good and 5 per cent was satisfactory. There were no unsatisfactory lessons. The quality of teaching is a strength in the school and has improved since the last inspection. Examples of effective teaching were observed in many subjects and these included English, mathematics, science, geography, history, French, German, Russian, Japanese, design and technology, physical education, religious education and personal, social and health education. There is no significant variation of teaching between the key stages.
24. Teachers are providing the pupils with the skills they need to learn effectively and gain success in public examinations. Appropriately, the school has prioritised teacher training in ICT to enhance pupils' learning even further. Teachers are building on pupils' self-motivation to develop an independence of learning. Pupils' learning and achievement is very strongly promoted through the teachers' subject expertise and high expectations. They set the pupils demanding challenges. However, at times the content is not presented in a sufficient lively manner. Good relationships between the pupils and teachers in the classroom create a positive learning environment where pupils learn effectively and quickly. Teachers provide pupils with individual support when necessary and make good use of systematic assessment to ensure a good rate of progress is maintained. Homework is used to consolidate learning and develop pupils' enquiry skills. The amount of homework set was criticised by over one-quarter of the parents who returned the parent questionnaires and this remains a key issue from the last inspection for the school to resolve fully. In a few lessons, pupils' interest was not sufficiently capitalised upon to take initiative and develop their own ideas. The core subjects of English, mathematics and science, together with literacy and numeracy skills, are taught very well throughout the school.
25. Teachers assess the progress made by pupils through regular testing and the marking of class and homework. Teachers make good use of assessment to set realistic but challenging targets for pupils to achieve. The marking of work is usually diagnostic and informs pupils about how to improve their work and understanding of the topic. Pupils who are not making sufficient progress are quickly identified and action to support pupils or sixth form students is taken. A few parents stated that the school imposes sanctions on pupils who fall behind with their work rather than provide them with support, but this view was not fully supported by evidence during the inspection. Departments also monitor the progress of pupils by undertaking reviews of pupils' work and analysing the results of tests throughout the year. The use made of assessment and monitoring, linked to very good teaching, is supporting the continual rise in academic standards and examination success.
26. The standard of teaching in English is very good. Teachers have excellent subject knowledge and, by sensitive questioning in class, bring out the best in their pupils. Lessons are always carefully planned and structured with clear aims and objectives. Pupils are made aware of the requirements of examinations. Examiners' reports are made available to pupils and schemes of work are modified in light of examiners' comments. Pupils, in turn, are extremely hardworking and keen to do well. Homework is set regularly and pupils frequently spend a long time in order to produce work of a very high quality.
27. In mathematics, learning is very well supported by the very high quality of the teaching. Pupils are enabled and often inspired to work at a very high intellectual level by the skilful sharing of the teachers' very good subject expertise. Pupils' learning is very well supported by the good pace and challenge of the teaching. There is encouragement for them to think deeply and to experiment. Lower attaining pupils visibly gain in confidence by teaching that is

enthusiastic and well designed to meet their needs. Homework is regularly set and often is given a time limit to guide pupils on how long they should spend on a particular task.

28. In science, learning is well supported by the high quality of teaching and the strong commitment of pupils to achieve high standards. The pace of lessons, the excellent interaction of pupils with one another, and with their teachers, together with the use of suitably challenging questions in class discussion and written work, ensure that high potentials are fulfilled. Homework is generally used effectively to support teaching, but on occasion, the open nature of some tasks can lead to an excessive time commitment on the part of the pupil.

Provides additional curriculum opportunities through its status as a Language College

29. Standards of attainment in modern languages are overall very high at both key stages and in the sixth form. Results at GCSE and at GCE A level are very high compared with national averages and with similar schools. Since the last inspection, the range of modern languages has been widened to include Japanese. All girls now study three languages in Year 7 from Japanese, French, German, Russian and Latin. School time has been extended to accommodate the additional languages. All pupils study at least two languages to GCSE level. All study at least one language in the sixth form. In Key Stage 5, Japanese and Italian are offered as Foreign Language at Work courses (FLAW). Pupils have excellent attitudes towards language learning and enthusiastically rise to the challenge of learning Japanese or Russian. One student commented 'studying Japanese is easier than I thought and makes me feel special'. To facilitate the study of Japanese, the school is benefiting from the services of a Japanese intern for the present year.
30. Other developments since the last inspection include an increase in the use of ICT with the acquisition of a dedicated classroom with 14 computers. Students make frequent use of the computer suite for project work and research using CD ROM's and the Internet. A full time technician is available to give assistance. An international ethos is evident in the school. An imaginative visits programme enriches the curriculum and has included German exchanges, trips to Russia and to France and participation in a World Challenge expedition in Tanzania for one month in 2000. At present, 20 students are eagerly looking forward to a two-week stay in Japan at Easter. In addition, the school maintains and raises the profile of modern languages by organising events such as a language arts evening with 100 participants presenting poetry, songs and playlets and a well supported poetry reading competition in seven languages and Latin. The school timetable is also suspended for one day each year for a programme of international events and themes.
31. Since the last inspection, the school has established links with four primary schools. Pupils in Years 5/6 are offered language lessons and use the computer suite. Other initiatives include French classes for parents and more recently Spanish classes attended by 18 parents. There are weekly master classes for Year 9 pupils from three local secondary schools. Links have also been established with secondary schools through staff sharing their experience of teaching FLAW courses. Sixth form students help younger students in their language learning and edit a language magazine informing parents and girls about language events. The school provides an exciting range of language curriculum initiatives.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

Improve the accommodation to enhance the curriculum and learning opportunities for PE.

32. The quality of the accommodation and facilities to teach PE are extremely poor. They comprise a small gymnasium, the size of one badminton court, built in 1916, an assembly hall, time-tabled use of the dining room, a hard play area with an inferior playing surface and a field that is waterlogged for much of the winter and, therefore, unsuitable for games.
33. Over the years, the floor of the gymnasium has badly deteriorated; it is unfit for activities requiring bare feet such as dance and gymnastics. The ceiling is low and, therefore, the gymnasium is not appropriate for activities such as badminton, basketball or volleyball. There is not a separate storage area and any equipment has to be stacked at one end of the gymnasium, thus reducing the available floor space even further. In effect, the gymnasium does not provide an adequate area for physical education and is not a safe environment in which to work.
34. The assembly hall has a polished woodblock floor and is little larger than a badminton court. It is not appropriate, or indeed safe, for games type activities. At times, lessons have to be conducted when chairs or other items are being moved into or out of the hall. This was the case during a Year 8 dance lesson. The assembly hall is not an adequate facility in which to teach physical education.
35. As indoor facilities are so limited, at times the girls are required to learn dance in the dining hall. The canteen staff are extremely co-operative over this arrangement, but some lessons are time-tabled to take place directly after lunch and before the canteen has been cleaned. Consequently, dance activities take place in an environment that is not conducive to creative or sensitive work and lack an acceptable level of hygiene.
36. The quality of outdoor facilities is also poor. There are four tennis courts which restricts the teaching strategies given the number of pupils in many classes. Much of the grassed area cannot be used as the drainage is totally ineffective. As a direct consequence of the poor indoor and outdoor facilities, the school is not able to offer the full range and breadth of practical activities to meet the requirements of the National Curriculum.
37. In order to overcome the poor provision, the school makes some use of a local sports hall. However, access to the sports hall is limited. Also, the girls have to walk across a wet field with no path to reach the sports hall. This journey severely restricts the teaching time available and also results in the girls having to wear wet and muddy footwear for the rest of the day.
38. In addition, the school does not have any dedicated changing room space or any showering facilities. The girls are required to change in cloakrooms that are already full with other pupils' coats and bags. Space is extremely limited and, at times, some girls are required to change in the toilets. There are no showers so consequently, girls cannot wash or adequately clean themselves after either muddy outdoor activities or strenuous indoor lessons. The girls have to operate in conditions that are demeaning to their dignity, self-esteem and personal development. The PE curriculum is aimed at engendering a positive attitude for the girls' participation in life long physical activity and recreation. Unfortunately, given the poor facilities, this is not a realistic objective for the school.

39. Three years ago the school was successful in gaining a substantial grant to build a sports hall with changing and showering facilities, but planning permission has repeatedly been turned down by the local authority. The conditions and facilities for PE at Wolverhampton Girls' High School are appalling, despite the school's extensive efforts, and a key issue that was highlighted during the last inspection. This is a disgraceful situation and one that should not be allowed to continue further. Undoubtedly, this is the school's most pressing issue to resolve.

Developing the links, involvement and positive perceptions of parents.

40. Wolverhampton Girls' High is a highly effective school and achieves excellent examination results. The girls are keen to come to school and they form positive relationships with their peers and teachers. Whilst at school their behaviour is excellent, they work very hard and are determined to succeed. Given this extremely positive context it is surprising that such a significant number of parents hold a negative view about some aspect of the school. During a meeting held before the inspection for parents to express their views, there was little consensus or agreement amongst them on many aspects relating to the quality of education provided. During the inspection, inspectors found that many of the negative views expressed by parents were not substantiated by evidence.
41. The perception of the parents does not reflect the positive effort and recent developments achieved by the school. With regard to the areas that the parents would like to see improved, the inspectors found that the school has already made significant improvements. For example, in the case of homework the school has already enhanced the management and provision for homework. However, the school is aware that further developments and constant monitoring of the situation are still needed. Many of the girls are keen to achieve at a high level and, at times, complete additional homework because they enjoy the work. At other times, the pupils were anxious to do more than the allotted time to ensure they received a good grade when compared to the rest of the class.
42. Some parents expressed a concern that they were not sufficiently informed about the progress their daughters were making. Evidence indicates that the school already provides a substantial amount of information to parents and is in line with many other schools in this respect. From an analysis of the questionnaires returned by the parents it appears that several felt that the school does not provide a sufficient range of activities outside of lessons. Inspection evidence indicates that there is a good range of extra-curricular opportunities including clubs, visits, field study trips and additional support lessons.
43. A few parents raised concerns, supported by anecdotes, about the way in which the school responds to their problems. Inspection evidence indicates that the school has sound systems for dealing with concerns raised by parents and, indeed, many stated their satisfaction with this aspect of the school's communication. The school is aware that it needs to find ways to involve parents more closely and already has some initiatives underway.
44. Ten per cent of the returned questionnaires indicated that girls were not happy at school. The inspectors found that, overall, girls were happy and keen to come to school, they made good friendships and were well supported by teachers, although some found the demands of work very stressful at times. The school is aware of the importance for girls to feel fully supported by the school and that the balance of their personal and social development, together with the drive for academic success, is maintained. The school now needs to find more ways to share and celebrate the positive elements to be found in school with the parents and the local community.

Managing the arrangements for homework

45. Over one-quarter of parents returning the questionnaires indicated a level of dissatisfaction about the amount of homework set. During the inspection, many pupils were interviewed, both formally and informally, about the time they were expected to complete for homework. The majority stated they coped well with the amount set but some girls in Key Stage 4 explained that the deadlines set for the completion of examination coursework was the reason for the pressure of work. The amount of written homework set was criticised during the last inspection. Since then the school has made significant improvements to the management of homework, the nature of the tasks given and has reduced the amount of written work to be completed. The school has established a system of homework diaries in which the girls record the homework set and the amount of time taken to complete the tasks. Form teachers and heads of year monitor the time spent on homework. Several girls admitted to spending more time on their homework than they recorded in their diary, partly because they enjoyed the work and also because they wanted to achieve a high grade.
46. Evidence gathered during the inspection indicates that the situation has improved since the last inspection. However, at times the homework set is too open-ended and does not sufficiently specify the extent of the task. There was also a variation in the regularity with which the diaries were checked by form teachers as pastoral time is also used for other activities. The school makes good provision to support the girls completion of homework by ensuring use of computers and the library at lunch times and after school.

Increasing the provision for pupils with SEN

47. No pupil has a statement for special educational need (SEN). The school has recognised that it needs to enhance the provision for pupils with SEN and recently a special needs co-ordinator has been appointed. The co-ordinator has already begun to establish more systematic procedures to diagnose pupils who develop difficulties with their learning and ensure that appropriate support is given. The school has systems to assess pupils' progress and identify when girls are not achieving to their full potential. Staff are kept informed about developments, but there is now a need to formalise this process and improve the records of support given and the action to be taken in future. The compilation of individual education plans (IEPs) is at an early stage of development. The school has produced a policy on providing support for gifted and talented pupils. As with the development for pupils with SEN, the arrangements for gifted and talented pupils need to be more systematically planned, implemented and reviewed within the line management structure.
48. With regard to meeting the Code of Practice, the school now needs to appoint a named governor, establish practice and write a policy that matches statutory requirements. Individual education plans should be devised, circulated and used to inform curriculum and lesson planning and be a focus for pastoral support. The governors are also required to publish the progress of pupils with SEN in their annual report to parents. There has been insufficient improvement since the last inspection.

Making greater use of an analysis of assessment results and pupils' performance data.

49. The school makes use of assessment results and undertakes an analysis of performance data to indicate trends in achievement. Teachers use assessments well to identify when girls are not achieving to their highest potential. Currently, there is a lack of uniformity between departments on assessments and the use made of them. The school has recognised this issue and is soon to use a commercial database to store, retrieve and analyse performance data in greater detail. It is also considering making use of a local authority resource to help develop its own systems. The inspectors endorse these developments and agree that the whole process should now become more rigorous. This process would be used to assist departments in setting appropriate individual pupil targets. The use of data analysis and target setting should also be a focus for line management review.

WHAT COULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER

50. In order to continue to raise the levels of achievement further the governors and staff should focus their attention on implementing the following:

Improving the accommodation to develop the curriculum and learning opportunities for physical education by:

- Continuing to work closely with the local education authority and other relevant agencies to provide adequate facilities for physical education.
(paragraphs 32 - 39)

Developing the links, involvement and positive perceptions of parents by:

- Developing strategies to explain in detail to parents the level of care provided to the pupils;
- Providing for parents additional positive feedback about their daughters;
- Providing more opportunities for parents to express their views about the quality of education provided.
(paragraphs 40 - 44)

Managing the arrangements for homework by:

- More consistently setting homework tasks which can be completed within a given time period;
- More rigorously monitoring the homework set and completed and the implications for pupils;
- Making use of the Year 13 students attached to forms to support the homework process.
(paragraphs 45 - 46)

Increasing the provision for pupils with SEN by:

- Complying with all aspects of the Code of Practice;
- Appointing a link governor for SEN;
- Establishing a formal structure for diagnosis of pupils' learning needs and their personal development;
- Ensuring that individual education plans are fully incorporated into curriculum and lesson planning;
- Establishing a more formal structure to support gifted and able pupils.
(paragraphs 47 - 48)

Making greater use of an analysis of assessment results and pupil performance data by:

- Delegating a whole school responsibility for data analysis to a specified person;
- Ensuring a more detailed process of tracking pupil performance;
- Setting individual subject attainment targets and sharing these with the pupils and parents.
(paragraph 49)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	40
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	33

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
10	67	18	5	0	0	0

The table gives the percentage of teaching observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y7 – Y13
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	727
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	17

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Y7 – Y13
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	82

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	2
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	1

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	2.8
National comparative data	6.0

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.4

Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	N/a	107	107

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	N/a	N/a	N/a
	Girls	107	107	107
	Total	107	107	107
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	100 (100)	100 (100)	100 (100)
	National	63 (63)	65 (62)	59 (55)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	99 (100)	100 (100)	100 (100)
	National	28 (28)	42 (38)	30 (23)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	N/a	N/a	N/a
	Girls	107	107	107
	Total	107	107	107
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	100 (100)	100 (100)	100 (100)
	National	64 (64)	66 (64)	62 (60)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	100 (100)	100 (100)	100 (100)
	National	31 (31)	39 (37)	29 (28)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4

Number of 15 year olds on roll in January of the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	N/a	102	102

GCSE results		5 or more grades A* to C	5 or more grades A*-G	1 or more grades A*-G
Numbers of pupils achieving the standard specified	Boys	N/a	N/a	N/a
	Girls	101	102	102
	Total	101	102	102
Percentage of pupils achieving The standard specified	School	99.4 (100)	100 (100)	100 (100)
	National	47.4 (46.6)	90.6 (90.9)	95.6 (95.8)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score	School	65.8 (64.7)

per pupil	National	38.7 (38)
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Figures in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Attainment at the end of the sixth form

Number of students aged 16, 17 and 18 on roll in January of the latest reporting year who were entered for GCE A-level or AS-level examinations	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	N/a	77	77

Average A/AS points score per candidate	For candidates entered for 2 or more A-levels or equivalent			For candidates entered for fewer than 2 A-levels or equivalent		
	Male	Female	All	Male	Female	All
School	n/a	31.4 (29.8)	31.4 (29.8)	n/a	n/a	N/a
National	17.7 (17.7)	18.6 (18.1)	18.2 (17.9)	n/a	n/a	N/a

Figures in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	11
Black – African heritage	2
Black – other	0
Indian	99
Pakistani	2
Bangladeshi	3
Chinese	13
White	586
Any other minority ethnic group	11

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	2	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

This table gives the number of exclusions of pupils of compulsory school age, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y7 – Y13

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	44.8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	16.2 : 1
Average class size	24.1

Education support staff: Y7 – Y13

Total number of education support staff	5
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Financial information

Financial year	99/00
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	£
Total income	1,881,978
Total expenditure	1,839,527
Expenditure per pupil	2,681

Total aggregate hours worked per week	121
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Balance brought forward from previous year	6,930
Balance carried forward to next year	49,381

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	728
Number of questionnaires returned	213

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	45	45	9	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	64	34	1	0	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	65	33	1	0	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	22	49	16	10	1
The teaching is good.	50	43	4	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	32	45	17	2	4
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	39	40	14	3	4
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	89	11	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	21	47	26	3	2
The school is well led and managed.	44	44	4	1	6
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	54	37	5	2	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	40	46	9	3	2

Other issues raised by parents

- Poor accommodation for physical education.
- Limited resources – especially for the library, computers and text books.
- Lack of emphasis on performing arts – especially drama.
- Limited range of subject options at Key Stage 4 and the sixth form.