

Adams' Grammar School

Adams' Grammar School, High Street, Newport, Shropshire TF10 7BD

Inspection dates	24/01/2017 to 26/01/2017	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people	Good	2
The quality of care and support	Good	2
How well children and young people are protected	Good	2
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good	2

Summary of key findings

The boarding provision is good because

- Pupils enjoy boarding at the school, developing their independence skills and learning how to live as part of a community with their peers. They are encouraged to spend time on activities, which encourages a healthy lifestyle.
- Pupils are proud of their accommodation, which is well maintained and offers a comfortable environment. Consideration is given to the privacy of some pupils.
- The health needs of pupils are responded to through matrons and a local doctor. Meals are nutritious and good medicine management systems help to support the safety of pupils.
- Pupils' welfare needs are clear within plans written for the school environment. These need to develop a little to focus on meeting welfare needs as well.
- Pupils' safety is addressed consistently. Safeguarding procedures are strong and staff are aware of necessary systems to protect pupils.
- Staff encourage positive behaviours at all times and good systems help to encourage this. Records relating to pupils' welfare and their views require improved cross-referencing to enhance management monitoring systems.
- Staff are safe to work with the pupils, and are enthusiastic in their commitment to providing a positive boarding experience. They are trained in a range of areas relating to boarding and have positive relationships with the senior team.
- Some records relating to supervision and training require development to show fully the expertise of the boarding team.

Compliance with the national minimum standards for boarding schools

The school meets the national minimum standards for boarding school

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Consider the use of bedrooms to ensure that pupils do not have to move through others' rooms to get to either a bathroom or another boarding room.
- Enhance the welfare plans that are in place for the school to include information that may affect their time in boarding.
- Record outcomes of actions raised within pupils' meetings to highlight the school's response to their requests.
- Develop the missing persons policy following discussion with the local police regarding responding to missing events.
- Cross-reference concerns raised within sanctions records with welfare records.
- Develop a training programme for boarding staff and ensure that all staff have completed updates of all necessary courses.
- Record supervision meetings held between boarding staff and their seniors.

Information about this inspection

Ofsted carried out this inspection after notice of three hours. Inspection activities included: observation of boarding practice over two evenings in both of the residential houses; formal group meetings with pupils, as well as informal discussion during shared meals; meetings and discussions with boarding staff; contact with the statutory safeguarding authority to gather their views; and scrutiny of a wide range of documentation about boarding.

Inspection team

Andrew Hewston

Lead social care inspector

Dave Carrigan

Social care inspector

Full Report

Information about this school

Adams' Grammar School is a voluntary-aided, selective, day and boarding boys' grammar school, which admits girls to the sixth form on a day basis. The school is operated by the Haberdashers' Federation. Being a state school, all tuition is free. Pupils' parents pay only the costs of boarding, making boarding an affordable attraction of the school. The school is located over two sites providing two boarding facilities. Longford Hall accommodates junior boys. It is housed within a listed Georgian mansion set in 125 acres of fields, woodland and recreational grounds and sports its own fishing lake. Within walking distance from here, the main school campus is unassumingly located in the local town centre. On this main site, senior boarders live in three adjoining 18th century town houses. All classroom education is provided on the school main site, with the grounds of Longford Hall being extensively used for recreational and sporting fixtures.

Inspection judgements

The overall experiences and progress of children and young people

Good

The boarding staff offer a good level of care to the pupils. Staff work well with pupils, encouraging them to be involved in different aspects of the school, including sports, activities and evening prep. These develop pupils' social and emotional well-being as well as improving their physical health. They develop socially and make new friends whom they are able to play with in the evenings. One pupil told the inspectors, 'It is great to be able to spend loads of time with your mates.'

Pupils' safety is of a high priority and effective safeguarding procedures support their welfare. Staff have a good awareness of the different needs of the pupils because of the appropriate school-based plans. This enhances relationships between pupils and staff, as staff work to meet their needs. Pupils enjoy spending time with different members of staff and are positive about the caring nature of individual staff, with matrons being singled out for praise by the majority of pupils.

Boarding is managed effectively, with a good level of staffing available to care for pupils. Regular records of pupils' development are kept, with behaviour management systems encouraging positive behaviours throughout their time in school and boarding. Pupils' views are sought regarding the development of boarding and they are encouraged to be involved with different forums to improve their experiences throughout school.

Pupils are proud of their accommodation, enjoying the individualised nature of their rooms and talking positively about sharing rooms with their peers. Different areas are available to pupils to both spend time with their friends and spend time on their own if they wish to. The extensive grounds of the junior boarding give pupils a chance to spend time in the open. They told the inspectors exciting stories about building dens and exploring the woodlands.

The quality of care and support

Good

Staff listen to pupils and understand their needs through individualised plans that are shared throughout the school.

Good introductory systems are in place to allow pupils to have a taste of boarding. This is followed up with a weekend visit when young people are able to take part in some of the varied activities. Once pupils have started at school, a buddying system and a high level of tutor support helps them to settle and to decrease any anxieties. Pupils who are due to leave the school have increased privileges. These include being able to spend more time in the local community to develop their independence skills.

The staff team is sensitive and responsive to pupils' identities. This extends to respecting ethnicity, ability and sexual orientation. Computer records include a tracking tool to highlight when concerns relating to diversity are raised. This allows staff to challenge pupils who regularly display behaviours relating to identity. Cultural events are

celebrated, including a celebration of Chinese New Year during the inspection.

Accommodation is warm, comfortable and well-liked by pupils. Due to the age of the two boarding premises, the school has made the most of the layout of the bedrooms and facilities. This has resulted in a quirky, yet pleasant, residential environment. Some aspects of this layout do not consistently support pupils' privacy. This is because a small number of rooms can only be accessed through others' bedrooms. Pupils were asked if they were happy about this arrangement and no concerns were raised. The school has responded well to some concerning building maintenance issues. Senior staff are excited by plans for a new boarding house, which is due to come into operation in September 2017.

Pupils enjoy a wide range of activities, which although sports-focused, also include after-school clubs, such as bridge club, music and drama. One pupil told the inspectors that they are, 'Always kept busy, there is always something that you can do, either with your friends or on your own.' A recent initiative to encourage pupils to take part in a local 'park run' has not only improved their physical health but also strengthened their involvement in the local community.

Pupils' basic health needs are responded to well by a team of matrons. A GP visits the school weekly to respond to more specialist health concerns and is also available through the usual appointment system, with an expectation that all boarders are registered with the local surgery. This helps to make sure that pupils' health needs are responded to swiftly. Medication administration is completed well, with regular monitoring of records to keep pupils safe. Some pupils are able to administer their own medication following a thorough risk assessment. This promotes their independence at the same time as keeping them safe. The GP also acts as one of the independent visitors, whom pupils are able to contact if they wish to talk to someone in confidence. Contact information relating to the two independent visitors is displayed in the boarding provision. This means that pupils can access this information independently.

The school caters well for pupils' individual dietary needs. Mealtimes are good social occasions and pupils have an input into the creation of menus through the food committee. Pupils give different views relating to meals served, with some praising the variety and quality and others wanting improvements.

Pupils' welfare plans relate well to how individual needs are to be responded to within the educational environment. These do not consistently contain information regarding how these are to be met within boarding. Plans also do not always show that pupils are involved with their development, including securing their review.

Pupils are encouraged to keep in touch with their families, with good use of different electronic communication systems. Parents report that they are kept in touch with issues that occur in boarding. This includes letters, emails and newsletters. Staff gain the views of pupils through different meetings within both the junior and senior homes. The minutes of these meetings show a range of areas are discussed. However, there is a lack of clarity relating to the outcomes of areas that have been raised by pupils at the previous meetings. This hinders the pupils being formally assured that their views are taken seriously.

How well children and young people are protected

Good

Pupils live within a safe environment where they state that they feel safe due to the way that the staff look after them. For example, one pupil told the inspector, 'The staff check on all of us through the evenings and at weekends and make sure that we are OK.' Risks relating to pupils' well-being, and health and safety are considered and assessments are completed to enhance their safety further. Child protection and safeguarding is prioritised by the school. Staff are able to refer to clear policies and procedures, and are suitably trained and understand how to act on a concern. Consequently, pupils' welfare is protected.

All pupils can identify an adult whom they are able to turn to if they have a concern about the way that they are cared for. Complaints are primarily responded to through an informal system, in which pupils are able to discuss how issues, such as laundry, have been dealt with. There is a formal process and information is available to both parents and pupils from the point of their admission and throughout their time at the school.

A policy is in place to respond to incidents of pupils going missing. Although this has been updated recently, there has been no consultation with the police to develop a greater awareness of the differences between missing and absence without permission. A system of signing in and out of the boarding houses and regular registers increases staff's awareness of where pupils are.

Pupils' behaviour is consistently positive and staff encourage them to respect their peers. Different behaviour management strategies are used in the two boarding areas, including a points and status system. When behaviours require additional sanctions, these are based on restorative practices as well as the withdrawal of privileges. These help pupils to understand the effects of their behaviours on others. However, incidents requiring sanctions are not consistently cross-referenced in the welfare record. This means that trends and patterns in behaviours are not able to be monitored effectively.

Recruitment procedures ensure that all adults working, or in unsupervised contact, with pupils are safe to do so. References are secured and then verified to ensure that the applicant is suitable to work with children before they start employment.

The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers

Good

The boarding provision is led by an enthusiastic and forward-looking headteacher. There has been a significant change in senior boarding staff since the last inspection, with all keen to develop the service further and a culture of high expectation, both for the development of the service and the outcomes of the pupils.

Boarding houses are well staffed, with a diverse range of staff, who show an interest in the lives of the pupils. Consistently positive interactions were seen throughout the inspection, with pupils highlighting those staff that they get on best with.

The senior leadership team, has regular meetings with the housemasters, and completes

monitoring of the boarding provision. This inclusive approach ensures that all views are secured to help improve the boarding provision.

Staff feel that they are well qualified and there are records of different courses completed. However, there is no defined 'core training' that all boarding staff must complete regularly to stay up to date with practice. This could affect their awareness of pertinent changes in boarding practice and necessary competencies.

The school has a development plan that examines a range of areas of necessary progress. Boarding forms part of this plan and ensures that the provision is continually improving.

Staff are supported well by senior staff, with annual appraisals which include giving staff development targets for the coming year. Supervision discussions are held regarding the pupils and how their needs are to be met. However, these discussions are not formally recorded. This means that it is difficult to monitor the staff's effectiveness in supporting pupils.

What inspection judgements mean

The experiences and progress of children and young people are at the centre of the inspection. Inspectors will use their professional judgement to determine the weight and significance of their findings in this respect. The judgements included in the report are made against 'Inspections of boarding and residential provision in schools: the inspection framework'.

Judgement	Description
Outstanding	A school where the experiences and progress of children and young people consistently exceeds the standard of good and results in sustained progress and achievement. The outcomes achieved by children and young people are outstanding and the impact the boarding/residential provision has had in supporting this progress and achieving these outcomes is clearly evidenced.
Good	A school providing effective services which exceed minimum requirements. Children and young people are protected and cared for and have their welfare safeguarded and promoted.
Requires improvement	A school where there are no serious or widespread failures that result in children's and young people's welfare not being safeguarded or promoted. However, the overall outcomes, experiences and progress of children and young people are not yet good.
Inadequate	A school where there are serious and/or widespread failures that mean children and young people are not protected or their welfare is not promoted or safeguarded or if their care and experiences are poor and they are not making progress.

School details

Unique reference number

Social care unique reference number SC020589

DfE registration number

This inspection was carried out under the Children Act 1989, as amended by the Care Standards Act 2000, having regard to the national minimum standards for boarding schools.

Type of school Boarding school

Number of boarders on roll 88

Gender of boarders Boys

Age range of boarders 11 to 18

Headteacher Gary Hickey

Date of previous boarding inspection November 2013

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