

Education and boarding inspection summary for Reading School

Erleigh Road, Reading, Berkshire, RG1 5LW

Inspection dates: 21–23 November 2023

Outcome

The education overall effectiveness judgement is: outstanding

The judgement for the experiences and progress of children in the boarding provision is: outstanding

What is it like to attend this school?

- This school inspires pupils to be the best versions of themselves. Impressively high aspirations for academic excellence are matched by those for pupils' holistic development. Pupils rise consistently to meet and exceed these expectations, achieving very well academically by the time they leave the school. Those who join the school in the sixth form do equally well. Just as importantly, pupils develop into kind and thoughtful young people who are keen to make their mark on the world.
- The school's work focuses clearly on developing people of character. The Floreat programme gives pupils deliberately planned opportunities to learn deeply about relationships, resilience and leadership. The effectiveness of this work is constantly evident, through how pupils interact with each other, respond to challenges and lead aspects such as house events and a broad range of clubs and activities. They extend this work successfully beyond their own school community, such as through engaging pupils from local primary schools in the 'Future Stories' programme.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are consistently positive. Their enthusiastic engagement with learning matures into determined commitment to their studies. They are equally committed to the broad range of enrichment activities provided by the 'electives' curriculum, which all pupils benefit from.

The inspectors **did not make any recommendations** to help the school improve.

What is it like to board at this school?

- Children thrive because of the warm and caring relationships that they have with staff. They are enthusiastic when talking about the staff who care for them, the social aspect of boarding, and the extra support they have for their academic studies. Staff support children to become rounded individuals academically and socially.
- Staff know each child extremely well. Parents praise the support, commitment, and dedication of the boarding staff. They are pleased with the level of care that their children receive and how much progress their children make.
- Children feel heard by staff. If they raise an issue, they know it will not be disregarded. As well as talking to staff, children can share their ideas through 'student voice', the opinions and suggestions box, and the student led survey. Children say that school leaders respond positively to any requests that they make.
- Children enjoy a wide range of activities both on site and in the community. They learn new skills, such as cooking and how to share communal kitchens in preparation for going to university. Half termly 'big trips' are particularly enjoyed. Children talked excitedly about canoeing and going to France, among many other experiences.
- The staff are flexible in their approach to meeting the children's individual needs, with a highly effective transition process prior to children moving in. While places are allocated on merit, there is some flexibility regarding who can access the boarding provision. Children say that they know exactly what to expect when they arrive, and are welcomed by other children. Children's experiences are valued and they learn from their older peers. Year 8 children help to prepare the new year 7 children, and they relish this responsibility.
- Children enjoy supporting community projects, charities and visiting local primary schools to help other children realise what they can achieve. The boarding provision is part of the community. Leaders have helped the neighbouring hospital by offering emergency helicopter landing space.
- Children's health and well-being needs are well met. Matrons are central to understanding and meeting the health needs of the children. Children are well looked after and supported to understand healthy lifestyles and what this means for them. Medication is appropriately stored and monitored. Links with emotional well-being specialists are excellent, including the school's counsellor. Children with specific health needs are all known to staff who have training in how to respond should there be a medical emergency.

The school **meets all the national minimum standards**.

- View the full inspection report for the education provision: <https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/provider/23/136449>.

- View the full inspection report for the boarding provision:
<https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/provider/1/SC054201>.



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