

School inspection report

10 to 12 October 2023

Adcote School for Girls

Little Ness
Shrewsbury
SY4 2JY

The Independent Schools Inspectorate is appointed by the Department for Education to inspect association independent schools in England. Our inspections report on the extent to which the statutory Independent School Standards and other applicable regulatory requirements are met, collectively referred to in this report as 'the Standards'.

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Summary of inspection findings

1. Leaders effectively promote the school's aims and ethos so that it is a welcoming and inclusive community. The proprietor ensures that leaders have the knowledge and skills to ensure the Standards are met and provides support for the school's leadership team. The advisory board has recently recruited to increase the range and experience of its members.
2. The newly appointed school leaders have accurately identified the need for a more rigorous oversight of teaching and learning in order to identify any inconsistencies and plan to make any necessary improvements. They plan to obtain feedback from pupils to support this process. Their plans in this respect have not been implemented.
3. Throughout the school most pupils make good progress from their starting points. Pupils attain well at GCSE and A level. Standards are high in the creative and performing arts with much pupil involvement and good progress across subjects. Through a wide range of extra-curricular activities, leaders provide pupils with many opportunities to be involved in music, sport, drama and other clubs, which contribute effectively to their individual skills and personal development. Relationships education in the prep school and the relationships and sex education (RSE) in the senior school cover the required areas. However, some RSE teaching provides limited opportunities for pupils to ask questions or review a particular topic if required. This can limit pupils' understanding and progress.
4. Overall, teaching meets the needs of pupils. Progress for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is good overall but can be uneven when some teaching does not take into account the recommendations of pupils' individual education plans (IEP). As a result, pupils sometimes struggle to complete the work set by teachers and when this happens, progress slows.
5. Pupils with English as an additional language (EAL) are effectively supported and make good progress because of the effective support in place.
6. Pupils are polite and confident. They welcome new pupils to their school and respect the diverse nature of their community. Pupils sometimes feel their views are not heard as they do not receive feedback from the school surveys they complete.
7. Pupils are keen to support and raise funds for charities including through competitions and sponsored activities. They also support the local community by collecting for local foodbanks and charities.
8. Leaders guide pupils in making appropriate subject choices as they transition through the school. They also provide helpful guidance for pupils as they move on to university or other career choices.
9. Leaders ensure effective supervision procedures are in place. Behaviour is positive throughout the school. Safeguarding procedures are effective. Staff and volunteers are trained to carry out their roles and know how to respond to concerns and support pupils. Staff work effectively with local agencies when required.

The extent to which the school meets the Standards:

- Standards relating to leadership and management, and governance are met
- Standards relating to the quality of education, training and recreation are met
- Standards relating to pupils' physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing are met
- Standards relating to pupils' social and economic education and contribution to society are met
- Standards relating to safeguarding are met.

Recommended next steps

Leaders should:

- strengthen the progress of pupils who have SEND by ensuring that teachers follow the recommendations in pupils' individual learning plans
- ensure that the teaching in relationships and sex education is tailored to the needs of pupils, ensuring they make consistent progress.

Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

10. The proprietor communicates regularly with leaders and ensures that the Standards are met.
11. Leaders fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the Standards are met. The new leadership team has identified some inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and learning which impact on pupils' progress and has instigated measures to address this.
12. Leaders promote pupils' wellbeing through a suitable personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme. Pupils are well prepared for transitions within the school and in later life. Leaders have recently introduced opportunities for pupils to feed back on their learning, including in RSE lessons. However, the outcomes of this consultation have not been fed back to pupils. Changes to strengthen the consistency of teaching, including to improve the consistency of progress for pupils who have SEND, are not yet in place.
13. Leaders have high expectations for behaviour including a clear anti-bullying strategy. As a result, behaviour is positive, and pupils are respectful of one another.
14. Leaders and teachers effectively promote mutual respect and an understanding of the democratic process. Pupils are confident and responsible and have an appropriate understanding of and respect for differences between people. They can discern and discuss complex moral issues.
15. Leaders are readily accessible to parents, either by email for international parents or in person for parents of day pupils. Any concerns are recorded and handled by leaders appropriately, in keeping with the complaints' procedures and timescales.
16. The safeguarding policy provides the latest statutory guidance and is implemented effectively. All staff are trained appropriately for their roles. Leaders work effectively with external agencies as and when required to support pupils and boarders. Staff keep accurate records of their actions.
17. Leaders have a suitable awareness of risk and manage it effectively. A suitable risk assessment policy is effectively implemented. Risk assessments are carried out for the school premises, including for fire safety, educational trips, recruitment procedures and staffing, and for the storage of potentially hazardous materials or activities. Leaders have a suitable accessibility strategy to improve access for pupils and fulfils its responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to leadership and management, and governance

All the relevant Standards are met

Section 2: Quality of education, training and recreation

18. Leaders ensure a broad curriculum covers the required areas of learning. Effective planning ensures pupils make progress in a wide range of subjects. Leaders and staff effectively promote British values. These are evident in the positive attitudes of pupils to each other.
19. Pupils make good progress overall and acquire new knowledge and skills. Almost all pupils attain grades at GCSE and A Level which are in line or above those expected from their starting points. Leaders have increased the monitoring and support for teachers this term.
20. Pupils work hard in lessons and apply themselves to the tasks and activities that teachers provide. Pupils are engaged in their learning because of teachers' subject knowledge and effective teaching strategies.
21. In the prep school most pupils make good progress in their learning. They increasingly develop their linguistic, literacy, numeracy and scientific skills. Pupils read widely and develop strong linguistic and writing skills. This continues as pupils move through the school, including when pupils can effectively describe the subject of a piece of prose. Pupils develop practical skills such as coding and design as well as their theoretical knowledge in ICT.
22. Pupils who have SEND are supported through their individual learning plans. However, teachers do not always follow the recommendations of the plans, which means on occasion pupils do not receive the support they need to enable them to access learning effectively. This slows progress for some of these pupils.
23. Pupils with EAL are well supported in lessons either individually or in small groups and make good progress.
24. Leaders ensure a clear framework is in place to evaluate pupils' work in each subject. Teachers provide useful feedback so that pupils know how to improve in their work.
25. Pupils and boarders take part regularly in a broad and varied range of activities that develop their skills and interests and support their personal development. For international boarders, trips and outings enhance their understanding of British culture and values. Boarders have a suitable balance of free time, recreation and work.
26. Pupils enjoy the opportunities provided by leaders to focus on music and the performing arts. Pupils are enthusiastic performers in school drama, in the annual school musical and in the many music groups and choirs. They achieve high standards and attain well in national examinations in these subjects.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to the quality of education, training and recreation

All the relevant Standards are met

Section 3: Pupils' physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing

27. Leaders provide an age appropriate PSHE programme which includes provision for relationships education in the prep school and RSE in the senior school. However, the limited use of pupil feedback and assessment to plan future teaching means that pupils do not have opportunities to embed their learning, for instance by revisiting a topic to reinforce their understanding, if required.
28. All pupils take an active part in a wide range of sports or fitness activities on a weekly basis which support their physical health and wellbeing.
29. Leaders and staff set high expectations for pupils' behaviour and positive attitudes to others. They challenge any unkind use of language or behaviour and follow up any incidents so that pupils feel safe in the school. Pupils are well-behaved, accepting of each other, respectful and polite. As they move through the school, pupils are increasingly aware of their responsibility as positive role model to younger pupils. This sets the tone for a convivial community.
30. Leaders increasingly give responsibility to pupils as they move through the school, such as when they become wellbeing champions. Senior pupils benefit from the experience of organising and leading clubs for younger pupils and acting as role models. For example, they run a coding club for younger pupils.
31. Leaders support pupils spiritual and moral development including through regular assemblies, the PSHE programme and the expectation that pupils should treat others as they wish to be treated. Topics in PSHE lessons help pupils explore moral issues such as the challenges posed by social media and the dangers of the internet. As a result, they understand moral dilemmas, learn right from wrong and know how to stay safe both physically and online. Bullying is rare and any unkind behaviour is managed effectively.
32. Leaders provide appropriate oversight of boarding, ensuring that boarders are well looked after and cared for. Accommodation is comfortable and well-furnished, with common rooms and outdoor space for boarders to meet. Boarders know that they can go to a member of the house team or to the medical centre if they become unwell or are injured.
33. Boarding staff help pupils to settle in well to their boarding house and ensure it provides a welcoming environment. Boarders enjoy varied, nutritious meals and healthy snacks in their houses. Boarders' views are sought through boarding meetings or individually so that they feel safe and secure in their house and quickly become familiar with the routines for their day at school and in the boarding provision.
34. Admission and attendance registers are maintained accurately and the school follows up any absence promptly.

35. Leaders ensure health and safety procedures, including fire safety and evacuation procedures, are implemented effectively. All safety checks are carried out to ensure and that the premises are secure.
36. Pupils are well supervised at all times, including in the boarding houses. There is always a member of staff to go to both during the day and at night, if required.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to pupils' physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing

All the relevant Standards are met

Section 4: Pupils' social and economic education and contribution to society

37. Pupils are prepared well for their next steps in education and future careers as part of their PSHE programme. Pupils are supported in making subject choices for GCSE and A level and with their applications for university. A careers higher education fair provides pupils with suitable information to begin to think about subject choices at GCSE and A level. Work experience days and careers fairs promote pupils' understanding of possible next steps in career choices. Older pupils visit workplaces of interest to them, which supports their decision making for their chosen career path.
38. As part of the PSHE programme, pupils learn about British institutions and their responsibility to be a positive force in British society. Pupils in Year 9 visit the Houses of Parliament, reinforcing their learning about British institutions and democracy.
39. The PSHE programme includes a section on, 'Living in the wider world'. This covers a broad range of topics related to British values, the rule of law, the need for rules, individual rights and responsibilities. Pupils also learn about finance and how to manage money in preparation for life after school.
40. Leaders make pupils aware of their responsibilities within the local community. As a result, pupils are prepared to give of their time and energy to support those who are in need, which enhances their understanding of social responsibility and develops pupils' organisational skills. Through the day house system, pupils organise and raise funds as part of their Harvest festival to provide for local charities and foodbanks. Pupils see Christmas as a time of giving and organise to raise funds for local charities and sing at various Christmas events in the local community.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to pupils' social and economic education and contribution to society

All the relevant Standards are met

Safeguarding

41. The proprietor and leaders ensure arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils are effective. The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) works closely with external agencies when concerns arise. Referrals to children's services, the local authority designated officer (LADO) and the police are made promptly when required. There is always a member of the school safeguarding team or staff member to go to, if pupils have any concerns.
42. The safeguarding policy has been updated to include the latest statutory guidance and is published on the school website. It is supplemented by related policies such as whistleblowing and staff code of conduct, which staff understand and follow.
43. Leaders ensure that all staff and volunteers receive safeguarding training as they join the school and this is updated at regular intervals. Those with designated safeguarding lead responsibilities receive appropriate training and keep this updated.
44. Staff are knowledgeable in child protection procedures, including those for online safety and the risks posed by radicalisation and extremism. They understand how to recognise and report a safeguarding concern and are alert to the need to monitor pupil attendance. Through their training, teachers realise the importance of online safety and ensure that pupils are equipped with the knowledge to know how to stay safe online. Suitable monitoring and filtering processes are in place.
45. Safeguarding records are kept up to date, detailed and securely stored. Any safeguarding concerns are acted upon promptly.
46. Safer recruitment checks are completed for all staff, volunteers, advisory board members and the proprietor, and an accurate record of appointments is kept.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to safeguarding

All the relevant Standards are met

School details

School	Adcote School for Girls
Department for Education number	123602
Address	Little Ness Shrewsbury Shropshire SY4 2JY
Email address	schoolsecretary@adcoteschool.co.uk
Website	adcoteschool.co.uk
Proprietor	Adcote School Ltd
Chair of Advisory Board	Mrs Maggie Langdale
Headteacher	Mrs Victoria Taylor
Age range	7-18
Number of pupils	216
Number of boarding pupils	64
Date of previous inspection	27 to 29 November 2018

How are association independent schools in England inspected?

- The Department for Education is the regulator for independent schools in England.
- ISI is approved by the Secretary of State for Education to inspect independent schools in England, which are members of associations in membership of the Independent Schools Council.
- ISI inspections report to the Department for Education on the extent to which the statutory Independent School Standards, the EYFS statutory framework requirements, the National Minimum Standards for boarding schools and any other relevant standards are met.
- For more information, please visit **www.isi.net**.

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