



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

ADCOTE SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

**BOARDING WELFARE
INTERMEDIATE INSPECTION**

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

Adcote School for Girls

Full Name of School	Adcote School for Girls		
DfE Number	893/6003		
Registered Charity Number	528407		
Address	Adcote School for Girls Little Ness Shrewsbury Shropshire SY4 2JY		
Telephone Number	01939 260202		
Fax Number	01939 261300		
Email Address	office@adcoteschool.co.uk		
Head	Mr Gary Wright		
Chair of Governors	Lt Col Rtd John Moody OBE		
Age Range	4 to 19		
Total Number of Pupils	216		
Gender of Pupils	Girls		
Numbers by Age	0-2 (EYFS):	0	5-11: 52
	3-5 (EYFS):	4	11-18: 160
Number of Day Pupils	Total:	133	
Number of Boarders	Total:	83	
	Full:	74	Weekly: 9
Inspection dates	11 Mar 2014 to 13 Mar 2014		

PREFACE

This inspection report follows the *ISI schedule* for intermediate inspections, focusing primarily on compliance with the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools (NMS). The inspection occurs over a period of two and a half continuous days in the school.

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Secretary of State for the purpose of inspecting schools belonging to the Independent Schools Council (ISC) Associations and reporting on compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, as amended. From September 2011 the inspection of boarding welfare forms part of the inspection process. This inspection focuses on the school's compliance with the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools. It comments on the progress made by the school in meeting the recommendations set out in the most recent statutory boarding inspection. Boarding inspections were previously carried out by the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted), Children's Services and Skills. The relevant Ofsted report refers to an inspection in March 2010 and can be found at www.ofsted.gov.uk.

The inspection of the school is from an educational perspective and provides limited inspection of other aspects, although inspectors comment on any significant hazards or problems they encounter which have an adverse impact on children. The inspection does not include:

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

Inspectors may be aware of individual safeguarding concerns, allegations and complaints as part of the inspection process. Such matters will not usually be referred to in the published report but will have been considered by the team in reaching their judgement.

INSPECTION EVIDENCE

The inspectors conducted formal interviews with boarders, held discussions with senior members of staff and with a governor, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period and attended registration sessions. Inspectors visited the boarding house and the facilities for sick or injured pupils. The responses of parents and boarding pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined regulatory documentation made available by the school.

Inspectors

Mrs Deborah Forbes

Miss Julie Chatkiewicz

Reporting Inspector

Team Inspector for Boarding (Pastoral Deputy
Head, GSA school)

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Adcote School for Girls is a boarding and day school for pupils aged four to nineteen. The school aims to foster a caring environment and family atmosphere leading to personal pupil happiness and good relationships between all members of the school community including parents. In boarding, the school seeks to provide each pupil with an environment in which she can flourish, develop, and fulfil her potential whilst being away from home. The school became an educational trust in 1964 with a board of governors. The current chair of governors has been appointed since the previous inspection.
- 1.2 Founded in 1907, the school relocated in 1927 to its present site, in a 30-acre rural setting five miles northeast of Shrewsbury. The boarders are accommodated within the main house. Younger boarders share rooms while some of the older pupils have their own study bedrooms.
- 1.3 Since the previous inspection a head of boarding has been appointed. The sixth form common room has been refurbished and more boarding accommodation has been created. Additional classrooms have been built and information and communication technology (ICT) provision has been increased.
- 1.4 At the time of the inspection there were 216 pupils in the school, 52 of them aged 4 to 11 and 160 of them in the senior school. Four children are in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). There are 83 boarders aged from 9 to 18. The pupils come from a wide variety of backgrounds, with UK pupils mainly coming from families with business, farming and professional backgrounds. The boarders come from a number of different countries as well as from the UK. The school has identified 12 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), all of whom receive specialist learning support. A further 61 pupils have English as an additional language (EAL) and all receive support for their English. Two pupils have statements of educational needs.
- 1.5 National Curriculum (NC) nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school. The year group nomenclature used by the school and its National Curriculum equivalence are shown in the following table.

Junior Department

School	NC name
J1	Years 1 and 2
J2	Years 3 and 4
J3	Years 5 and 6

2. SUMMARY

(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements

- 2.1 The school does not meet all the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools 2013, and therefore it must:
- ensure that senior boarding staff have an adequate level of experience and/or training. [National Minimum Standard 13.2, under management and development of boarding.]

(ii) Recommendations for further improvement

- 2.2 In addition to the above regulatory action point, the school is advised to make the following improvements.
1. Ensure that rewards and sanctions for boarders are employed in a clear and consistent manner.
 2. Establish more effective means for the boarders to communicate their views about the quality of the food.
 3. Monitor and improve the hot water supply in the showers.
 4. Formalise links between boarding and academic staff.

(iii) Progress since the previous inspection

- 2.3 The previous boarding welfare inspection was undertaken by Ofsted in March 2010. The recommendations, which related to recruitment checks on staff and choice of food at mealtimes, have been met.

3. COMPLIANCE WITH NATIONAL MINIMUM STANDARDS

3.(a) Boarding provision and care

- 3.1 The school meets all of the NMS under this section.
- 3.2 A range of informal induction strategies, supported by a handbook and “buddy” system, is in place for boarders joining the school. Boarders can identify several people in school that they can turn to for help and guidance with a personal problem. The school publishes contact numbers on notice boards in boarding areas for the independent listener and external helplines, including the Director of Children’s Rights. [NMS 2]
- 3.3 Medical and health care is provided by the boarding house staff, and their work is supported by appropriate policies and procedures. Boarders are registered with the local doctors’ practice and they can access other external medical services when necessary. There is a designated sick room for boarders who are unwell. Medication is stored safely, with procedures in place to ensure that it is dispensed correctly. Older pupils considered responsible can self-medicate. Boarders’ rights to confidentiality on medical matters are appropriately respected. [NMS 3]
- 3.4 In interviews, boarders stated that they have several methods of communicating with friends and family including the use of email, mobile and landline telephones, but in their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire and in interviews some commented on the poor quality of the wireless internet provision which did not meet their expectations. The inspection team confirmed this view but noted that boarders have other ways to communicate with their parents. [NMS 4]
- 3.5 Boarding accommodation has been extended and a programme of refurbishment is in progress. Rooms are suitably furnished. Not all have an appropriate space for study but the library and ICT room are available for the completion of prep in the evenings. Pupils can personalise their areas of the rooms but they do not have individual pin boards. During tours and in interviews pupils highlighted a lack of consistency in water temperature in the bathrooms and poor upkeep of these areas. During the period of the inspection, inspectors found these areas to be acceptably clean. There are common room areas suitable for social and recreational use. The boarding accommodation is protected from access by unauthorised persons. Security arrangements do not impinge unduly on the boarders’ privacy. [NMS 5]
- 3.6 Kitchens and serving areas are hygienic and clean. The dining room is pleasant and allows pupils to socialise as they eat. A large majority of those pupils who responded to the questionnaire expressed dissatisfaction with the food. The inspection team found that, although there is a choice of food at meals, what is offered does not satisfy the needs of the diverse pupil body. The school has no structured way of gathering boarders’ views on catering matters. Drinking water is always available. The boarding house has facilities for making snacks but there is a limit to what can be prepared. [NMS 8]
- 3.7 Laundry arrangements are appropriate. Pupils can visit the local town to buy any day-to-day items they require, and additional supplies of food and stationery are available in school. Lockable lockers are available to pupils for the storage of food items but in interviews pupils expressed concerns that they were not sufficiently secure for the storage of money or valuables. Inspectors noted that they can all be opened by a master key which may be borrowed, although boarders can give valuable items or money to the house staff for safe-keeping. [NMS 9]

- 3.8 There is a suitable range of extra-curricular activities available throughout the week and at weekends including sports, plays, trips and concerts. In interviews the younger boarders spoke enthusiastically about craft and bubble bath evenings. Boarders have sufficient free time to organise their own informal games and activities or just relax. Through access to television news and the internet, boarders maintain an awareness of events in the outside world. [NMS 10]

3.(b) Arrangements for welfare and safeguarding

- 3.9 The school meets all of the NMS under this section.
- 3.10 The school has a written policy on health and safety which complies with current legislation. It is monitored by a health and safety committee which reports to the governing body. The premises and grounds are maintained with due regard to the safety of the pupils. Maintenance staff are appropriately trained to carry out their work. There are suitable risk assessments for all areas of the school and for activities and trips. [NMS 6]
- 3.11 A fire risk assessment has been carried out for the school buildings; equipment is regularly tested, and drills are held each term, including at least one practice during boarding time. The boarders said that they felt very familiar with the procedures they needed to follow in the case of fire. [NMS 7]
- 3.12 Child protection and safeguarding procedures have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State. The school's policy is published on the website, and all staff are conversant with it and with the need to follow procedures correctly. New staff are trained as part of their induction and training for all is updated every three years. The governing body holds an annual review of the policy and procedures. [NMS 11]
- 3.13 The school has a suitable policy for promoting good behaviour, with rewards and sanctions clearly set out. The policy also sets out the protocol for searching pupils and their possessions, although it has not been necessary to implement it recently. Similarly the policy on restraint of pupils has not had to be put into practice. In responses to questionnaires and in interview, boarders reported that house sanctions are not fairly applied or always proportionate. Inspectors found that the school code of behaviour, including school sanctions, is understood by the pupils, but that the complicated nature of the system of boarding sanctions means they are not always fully understood, and this restricts their usefulness. There is an anti-bullying policy and although a minority of boarders, in questionnaire responses, said that they did not feel the school handled bullying well, in interviews, boarders said that if bullying occurs, it is dealt with firmly by the school. [NMS 12]
- 3.14 All the required recruitment checks are carried out by the school before staff appointments are finalised. Safer recruitment practices are followed and checks are recorded on the single central register in line with regulatory requirements. The school has responded fully to the recommendation made in the previous inspection report about completing all checks. Visitors to the school are required to sign in at reception and visitors to the boarding house are closely supervised so that they do not have substantial unsupervised access to boarding accommodation. The school does not appoint guardians for the boarders. [NMS 14]

3.(c) Leadership and management of the boarding provision

- 3.15 The school does not meet one NMS under this section.
- 3.16 The school's principles and practices of boarding are displayed on the school website and house notice boards. They are published in handbooks for boarders and their parents and are understood by the boarders. They are seen to work in practice. [NMS 2]
- 3.17 Management and leadership in the boarding house are developing but senior boarding staff have had no previous experience or training in boarding. The management of boarding has not been supported well enough by the senior leadership team. Links between academic and boarding staff are informal and not systematic. The records specified in Appendix 2 of the NMS are maintained and monitored, although not formally. [NMS 13]
- 3.18 Boarding staff all have job descriptions reflecting their duties and receive induction training. A handbook of more detailed written guidance for boarding staff is being compiled but it is not yet complete and staff do not have their own copies of it to refer to when uncertain of a procedure. There is an appraisal process for all staff and some training opportunities are provided for them in child protection, first aid and administration of medicines. They are able to participate in training provided for all staff and have opportunities to discuss their boarding practice. The staff supervising boarders outside teaching time are sufficient in number and experience. Boarders are at all times under the responsibility of an identified member of staff who is suitably experienced. The boarding house has a strictly enforced system of boarders signing out if they leave the house and of signing in again. Boarders confirmed that they must do so. Staff keep a record of boarders' mobile phone numbers and use them to contact boarders if they are not where they are expected to be. There is a procedure to follow if a boarder is missing but staff have not had to implement it beyond the early stages. At least one member of staff is resident on each floor of the boarding house at night and boarders know how to contact them if need be. The staff have separate accommodation from the boarders with their own bathroom and toilet facilities. The matrons are not normally resident in the school but, when on duty, have use of a staff flat. Boarders' access to staff accommodation is properly supervised. [NMS 15]
- 3.19 The boarding community is comprised of pupils of a number of different nationalities who learn understanding and tolerance of each other's traditions and customs. Boarders did not report experiencing any discrimination from staff or other boarders. [NMS 16]
- 3.20 In responses to questionnaires, the majority of those boarders who responded felt that the school does not ask for or listen to their views. In interview, boarders said that they can make their views known to staff and they can also raise issues through the boarding committee which meets regularly. There is representation from all year groups on this committee. Meetings are minuted and the minutes are submitted to senior boarding staff. In interviews, boarders said that they do not always get feedback on the outcomes of the meetings. Inspectors found that there is no written summary of those outcomes to demonstrate to boarders how their concerns have been addressed. [NMS 17]
- 3.21 The school has a complaints policy which meets regulatory requirements. However, the school aims to deal with concerns promptly and no complaint in recent years has reached a formal stage. [NMS 18]

- 3.22 There is a pupil head of boarding and a deputy but there are no other house prefects. The head of boarding and deputy assist the matrons in their duties and their role is supportive to other boarders. [NMS 19]
- 3.23 The school does not arrange lodgings for boarders. [NMS 20]