

Education and boarding school inspection summary for The Thomas Adams School

Low Hill, Wem, Shrewsbury, Shropshire SY4 5UB

Inspection dates: 12 to 14 September 2023

Outcome

The education overall effectiveness judgement is: good

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

What is it like to attend this school?

- Thomas Adams is a warm, friendly and vibrant school. This is evident in the positive relationships that exist between staff and pupils. The school sets high expectations for what it wants pupils to achieve and works hard to help nurture individual talents and interests.
- Many pupils enjoy coming to school and behave well. In lessons, pupils listen attentively to their teachers and engage purposefully in tasks that are set for them. At social times, pupils play together sensibly or chat politely to visitors.
- Pupils feel safe around school and are confident that teachers will take decisive action to deal with any issues, should they occur. Students, who attend the school's sixth form, act as positive role models for those in younger years.
- Pupils study a wide range of subjects across the curriculum. In many subjects, pupils make good progress in their learning and achieve well. Alongside this, the school offers an extensive range of extra-curricular activities. Many pupils participate in sport, music and drama clubs.
- Parents and carers are highly positive about the school and the support it provides. As one parent commented in response to Ofsted's survey, 'this is an excellent school that encourages children to learn and be confident.'

The inspectors made **three** recommendations to help the school improve, covering the quality of education and leadership and management.

What is it like to board at this school?

- Students at this school are strongly encouraged to develop their individuality. They grow personally, academically, and socially in boarding with the strong support of staff. Staff are committed to students, and this is reflected in the positive relationships that exist between students and staff.
- Students settle in to boarding life quickly and build friendships. The boarding house has a catchphrase of being the 'biggest family in Shropshire'. Students and staff refer to this family feeling in the house that helps students to feel at home.
- Staff empower students to share their views. Students are confident that staff will listen to them and take action or explain why they cannot take action. For example, students raised with staff that the evening meals were not of a good quality. Senior leaders have addressed this with the catering company and students note the quality of food has significantly improved.
- Students understand and respect the rules. As a result, boarding is calm and orderly. The school independent visitor attends the school weekly. This means that students know her well. The visitor has a good understanding of safeguarding and raises even small concerns with staff as needed.
- Students live in a clean, well-maintained environment. Communal areas are bright and spacious, and students personalise their rooms and personal space. Staff complete regular checks, so the environment remains a safe place for students to live.
- The prefect system in boarding is effective. Prefects are proud to take on the role and are happy to support other students. Staff support prefects into this role by offering training and guidance. Other boarders see them as role models, as well as a support.
- Students make progress with their academic studies and develop socially under the guidance of staff. However, students' records of their time in school and of their non-academic progress are not well collated. This is a missed opportunity for students to have a record of their personal development over time.
- Students can access a full after-school programme and numerous trips out of school on evenings and weekends. These include sports, cinema trips, meals out and shopping, as well as hobbies. These opportunities all contribute to students' development while they are boarding.

The school **does not meet the national minimum standards for boarding schools** relating to standard 2 – Management and development of boarding, and 19 – Staff recruitment and checks on other adults.

AND

The inspectors made **two recommendations** to help the school improve, covering ensuring children’s records include all required information and record progress and ensuring that investigations are shared with appropriate statutory partners as appropriate and without delay.

- View the full inspection report for the education provision:
<https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/provider/23/147508>
- View the full inspection report for the boarding provision:
<https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/provider/1/SC02078>



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