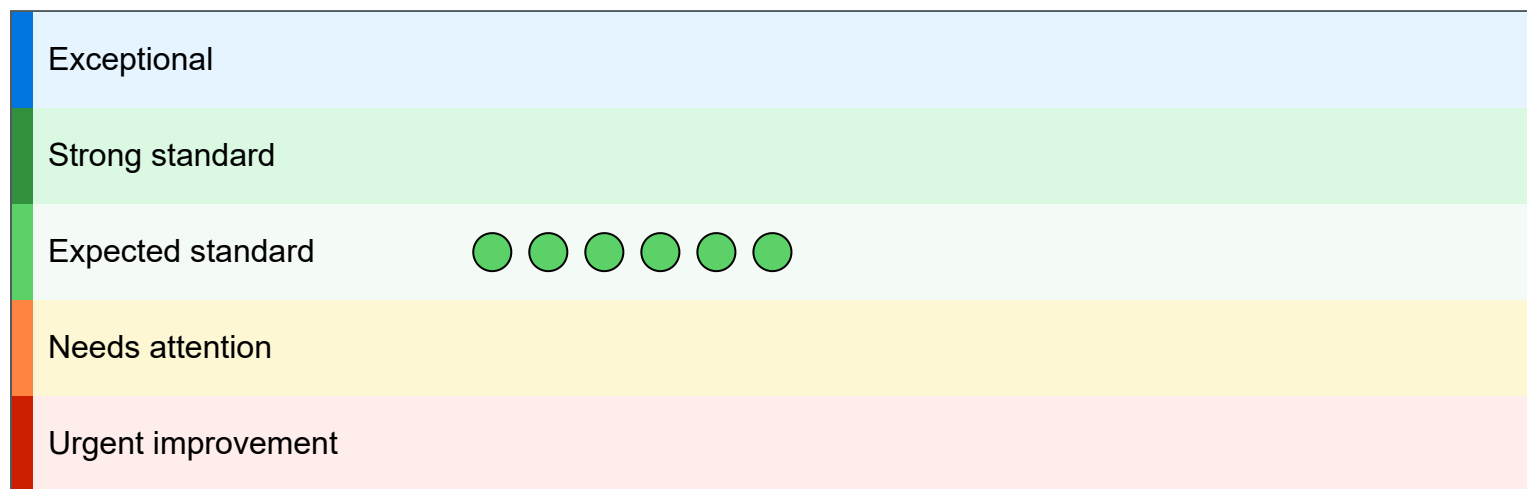


# St Andrew's School

Address: Aylmerton Hall, Holt Road, Aylmerton, Cromer, Norfolk, NR11 8QA

Unique reference number (URN): 121252

## Inspection report: 3 February 2026



### ✔ **Safeguarding standards met**

The safeguarding standards are met. This means that leaders and/or those responsible for governance and oversight fulfil their specific responsibilities and have established an open culture in which safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and concerns are actively identified, acted upon and managed. As a result, pupils are made safer and feel safe.

#### **How we evaluate safeguarding**

When we inspect schools for safeguarding, they can have the following outcomes:

- **Met:** The school has an open and positive culture of safeguarding. All legal requirements are met.
- **Not met:** The school has not created an open and positive culture of safeguarding. Not all legal requirements are met.
- **Insufficient evidence:** Inspectors were unable to gather sufficient evidence to judge whether safeguarding standards are met.

## Expected standard

### Achievement

Expected standard 

Pupils' engagement is consistently high. For many, this represents a significant change compared to their experiences prior to joining the school. This is due to the school's diligent, expert work to help pupils feel safe, settled and ready to learn. Pupils feel and are successful, including in key basic skills such as early reading, where the school supports them to catch up effectively.

Across all subjects, pupils progress securely in their learning. The school also supports pupils to make even greater progress, particularly in subjects where pupils show a special interest, because teaching is tailored carefully to how autistic pupils learn and process information. The school provides emotional and academic support, helping pupils work towards GCSEs wherever possible. Pupils typically leave with recognised qualifications and awards, including GCSEs.

Pupils consistently move on successfully to college or other suitable next steps at age 16. The school has a high success rate in securing appropriate destinations. This is supported by the school's excellent preparation for transition. This includes independent travel training, interview practice and help in understanding what college and working life will be like.

### Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

The school supports pupils to attend regularly. The design of the school environment and the work that staff do ensure that pupils see the school as a place of safety and success. This means that pupils are more willing to make their journeys to school, looking forward to the day ahead. For pupils who still struggle to attend, the school works closely with pupils, parents and carers and professionals to identify and overcome barriers to attendance. As a result, pupils' attendance notably improves over time.

The school culture, environment and curriculum design are deliberately calibrated to have a positive impact on pupils' behaviour. Pupils are keen to get things right and to impress the staff. The school equips pupils with strategies to help them manage their emotions and behaviours. Furthermore, staff are always on hand with swift, calm and effective behavioural support. The school uses multiple approaches to teach pupils the kinds of social norms that develop in others naturally. For example, there are 'pupil voice' meetings, where pupils learn and practise key sentence stems for polite debate. This means that pupils learn to listen, focus on their school work and accept others' differences.

### Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Since the last inspection, leaders have improved and strengthened the curriculum. These changes are helping pupils to make better progress and aim high. The curriculum is well planned and sequenced, ambitious and covers a wide range of subjects.

Staff have had training so they can deliver the curriculum confidently. They understand what helps autistic pupils feel calm, safe and ready to learn. Lessons follow clear routines and

teachers explain new ideas in simple, manageable steps. This helps pupils know what to expect and reduces any anxiety.

Teachers adapt work so that each pupil can learn at the right level for them. They design tasks that help pupils practise, remember and build on key ideas. For example, in art, staff give pupils clear, step-by-step guidance on how to prepare for their project. This means pupils feel successful from the very start. In a small number of subjects, the school's new approaches are still embedding.

Staff understand that many pupils arrive with gaps in their learning because of their earlier school experiences. They use careful assessments to find out exactly what each pupil needs. All pupils, no matter their age, receive additional support to catch up in reading, writing and mathematics. Early reading is taught in a clear, structured way so pupils quickly learn the sounds letters make and grow in confidence in their reading.

## **Inclusion**

**Expected standard** 

The school has established a culture in which pupils' needs are front and centre of every interaction with staff. The school works closely with experts as well as parents and carers to gain a greater understanding of how to reduce pupils' barriers to learning. Staff know pupils well. The training they receive supports them to apply this understanding effectively in their teaching approaches. They adapt the curriculum to meet pupils' specific needs. They have a calm but high aspirational approach for all pupils.

Strengthened systems to identify and review the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are disadvantaged support the school to provide high-quality teaching and personalised support. These systems are embedding well. The school provides a core offer of additional support for all pupils, alongside tailored adjustments. For example, the school provides counselling sessions to support pupils' mental health or interventions to help pupils catch up with reading. This approach supports pupils to engage and make the most of their lessons. Over time, due to the school's approach to reducing barriers, pupils learn to manage their own behaviours and find they need less sensory support as they become more independent.

## **Leadership and governance**

**Expected standard** 

School leaders and the proprietor body share a clear vision for delivering high-quality education. Leaders model high expectations through their behaviour, their leadership and the way they design the curriculum. Since the previous inspection, the school has seen changes in leadership and a complete refresh of the curriculum and its oversight. Leaders have invested in staff and provide regular, evidence-based training. This includes support and guidance to subject leaders, some of whom are new to their subject leadership role. This has happened quickly. It has been the right thing in the best interests of pupils. It is already making a noticeable difference, such as the fact that lessons now have more structure and a focus on key concepts.

Staff understand their roles clearly and contribute positively to improving and maintaining high standards across the school. Communication with parents and carers has improved

significantly. Parents say they are pleased and often pleasantly surprised by how well their children are achieving and flourishing.

Leaders gather and analyse information in a systematic way. This gives the proprietor a clear understanding of the school's development and how it benefits pupils. This also supports stronger challenge and support. The proprietor ensures that all aspects of their statutory duties, including relating to the independent school standards, are consistently met, for example through weekly discussions about pupils' successes, needs and reasonable adjustments. Every aspect of the school, from the physical environment to routines and teaching approaches, is designed around the needs of autistic pupils. This unified approach ensures that pupils receive the support, structure and ambition they need to blossom.

## **Personal development and wellbeing**

**Expected standard** 

The school provides pupils with regular opportunities to pause, reflect and take stock of their surroundings, feelings and thoughts. These opportunities are a key part of the school day. They support pupils to appreciate differences in thought and belief. The school is rightly proud of its pastoral offer. This includes use of counselling and therapy administered by in-house experts.

The curriculum supports pupils effectively to learn about their own and others' cultures and religions. Pupils also learn about how society works and the part they will need to play as future voters and adult citizens who can make a positive contribution. A range of extra-curricular activities and trips support pupils to engage with the community and participate in cultural events, such as sharing their artwork at a local exhibition. This gives pupils confidence and reinforces their understanding of personal responsibility.

The personal, social, health and economic education and relationships and sex education curriculum supports pupils to learn about healthy relationships, personal safety and healthy living in a way that meets pupils' needs. Discussions with parents and carers, careful curriculum adaptation and bespoke staff support ensure that pupils learn about important topics, such as puberty and online safety, with minimal anxiety.

The school excels in preparing pupils for adulthood. Practical life skills, such as how to pack a bag, travel independently, manage money or prepare for a college interview, are taught with the same care and importance as academic subjects such as English and mathematics. Staff listen closely to pupils' thoughts about the future and respond with thoughtful guidance and support. The careers programme is detailed, carefully sequenced and continually adapted to meet pupils' individual needs. It greatly expands pupils' ideas about what they could do with their skills and interests in their future adult lives. The school successfully works with a range of employers, securing purposeful work experience for all pupils.

## **What it's like to be a pupil at this school**

Pupils blossom here. This is because leaders have created an orderly and peaceful school environment and staff use patience and expertise to notice and respond to pupils' emerging

needs. Every part of the day, including in lessons, is planned with seamless transitions. Each pupil has their own personalised 'workstation'. This is a place they can work undisturbed, yet comforted by the fact that there are always knowledgeable staff nearby who can help. The school's approach to autism-friendly education helps pupils to feel and be safe, calm and at ease. It unlocks pupils' potential because pupils can concentrate on and enjoy their lessons. They know that their questions will be heard and answered by caring staff who give clear explanations.

Pupils look forward to coming to school to see their friends and their teachers. Reported incidents of bullying are rare. Any friendship issues are handled with care, so that pupils learn to forgive and make amends. Pupils attend school regularly because they want to and because the school helps pupils to overcome anxiety. The school also works closely with parents and carers and professionals to promote high attendance.

Pupils typically achieve well in all their endeavours. They become more social, knowledgeable and skilled. They successfully complete awards and qualifications, including GCSEs. This is due to the precision planning and expert teaching of the school's broad and ambitious curriculum. It unlocks pupils' potential and includes opportunities to learn about life beyond the school's 4 walls, for example how to have polite conversations and how to navigate public transport.

The school plans extra-curricular trips and activities with pupils' needs and interests in mind, such as gardening to help pupils get in touch with nature and weekly 'social visits' so that pupils can feel and be part of the local community. Regular 'pupil voice' sessions provide a friendly forum for pupils to contribute their ideas to improve the life of the school.

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## Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that highly effective curriculum and teaching approaches are embedded across all subjects, so that pupils can consistently achieve well.
- Leaders should continue to strengthen subject leadership so that lessons are consistently well sequenced and purposeful.

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## About this inspection

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

This school has a Quaker ethos.

All pupils have an education, health and care plan for autism spectrum disorder and other social or communication difficulties.

The school uses the services of one unregistered alternative provision.

The school operates from Aylmerton Hall, Holt Road, Aylmerton, Cromer, Norfolk NR11 8QA.

The headteacher joined the school in September 2024.

The school is registered to admit up to 60 pupils.

Headteacher: Adrian Crossland

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## Independent school standards

Independent school standards are either met or not met for each category.

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### 1. Quality of education provided

Standards met

All standards have been met.

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### 2. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

Standards met

All standards have been met.

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### 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Standards met

All standards have been met.

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### 4. Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

Standards met

All standards have been met.

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### 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

Standards met

All standards have been met.

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### 6. Provision of information

Standards met

All standards have been met.

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**7. Manner in which complaints are handled**

Standards met

All standards have been met.

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**8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools**

Standards met

All standards have been met.

**Lead inspector:**

Hannah Stoten, His Majesty's Inspector

**Team inspector:**

Tessa Holledge, His Majesty's Inspector

## Facts and figures used on inspection

This data was available to the inspector at the time of the inspection.

 This data is from 3 February 2026

**Total pupils**

48

**School capacity**

60

**Pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan**

48

# 0

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## Our grades explained

### Exceptional

Practice is exceptional: of the highest standard nationally. Other schools can learn from it.

### Strong standard

The school reaches a strong standard. Leaders are working above the standard expected of them.

### Expected standard

The school is fulfilling the expected standard of education and/or care. This means they are following the standard set out in statutory and non-statutory legislation and the professional standards expected of them.

### Needs attention

The expected standards are not met but leaders are likely able to make the necessary improvements.

### Urgent improvement

The school needs to make urgent improvements to provide the expected standard of education and/or care.

### Insufficient evidence

Inspectors were unable to gather reliable enough evidence to grade an evaluation area. This is rare and normally only happens if there are no pupils on roll at the school.

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