

Inspection of St Andrew's School

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

Inspection dates: 14 to 16 March 2023

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection Good

Does the school meet the independent school standards? **Yes**

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy at St Andrew's School. Staff welcome pupils warmly as they arrive at school. Staff know pupils' previous school experiences and backgrounds and help pupils settle quickly into school life. This offers pupils stability and reassurance. Many pupils attend more regularly than in their previous school. Pupils like the small class sizes and individual support. On the whole, pupils access a curriculum that is carefully designed around their needs.

Classrooms are calm, quiet places for pupils to learn. Adults support pupils to communicate effectively with each other so that lessons are not disrupted often. Pupils listen to different points of view and are considerate of each other's perspectives. Any disagreement between pupils, including bullying, is sorted out. It is okay for pupils to be different here. Pupils like the 'gotcha' rewards system. It supports a positive community feel as pupils work together to get their prizes or trips.

Regular social trips out support pupils' independence and ability to feel included in society. Pupils learn about a range of different careers and opportunities they can do when they leave the school. Leaders support pupils closely in taking their next steps to college or sixth form.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders have constructed a curriculum that is based on pupils' needs and values their neurodiversity. Pupils, in both the primary and secondary phases, access a range of different academic subjects. In addition, the curriculum covers suitable subjects like 'life skills' and 'social skills', which prepare pupils well for their next steps. In each area of the curriculum, leaders consider carefully what they want pupils to know and do. Key knowledge in subjects such as 'life skills' is outlined and planned logically to build on pupils' differing starting points and prior experiences.

Teachers and support staff work closely with small groups of pupils to bring the curriculum to life. Most staff have secure subject knowledge and know what should be taught and when. Regular checks on what pupils know enable staff to see what should be taught next. Curriculum documents and other resources help staff choose activities that best support learning. Additionally, pupil support plans clearly outline pupils' emotional and academic needs. This helps teachers and support staff adapt and adjust the learning in the classroom. Pupils make progress as they move through the school, with many leaving the school with a range of suitable qualifications.

In some instances, staff do not have the necessary subject knowledge or know the curriculum areas well enough. On these occasions, they move too quickly through the lessons or do not spot if a pupil is having trouble with an idea. In these cases, pupils do not make the best possible progress.

An effective reading curriculum is in place. A well-planned phonics scheme was recently introduced. Staff know the phonics programme well and use the resources effectively to support pupils to plug gaps in their reading knowledge. This helps pupils to read with more confidence. Across the school, many pupils enjoy reading and taking part in reading competitions. A new library complements the other new and well-kept facilities, providing quiet and safe places for pupils to learn and study in.

Leaders' thoughtful strategies to manage behaviour and pupil well-being are working well. Around the school, pupils access quiet spaces or places to take time out when appropriate. Staff know the key approaches outlined in the school's behaviour policy and use them consistently to help pupils if they are finding school tricky. A range of well-chosen support and therapies help pupils manage their emotions and well-being. The pastoral care pupils receive is a strength of the school.

Leaders ensure pupils learn about a range of careers and their next steps. Leaders talk to pupils and use their interests to make thoughtful adjustments to their curriculum, for example providing pupils access to courses such as childcare or mechanics at an alternative provision. The personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education curriculum is embedded in the schools' 'life skills' curriculum. The PSHE curriculum is complemented by a well-planned citizenship and wider programme covering topics such as diversity or teaching pupils about independence, cookery or how to travel safely. The curriculum, as a whole, supports pupils effectively to understand the world around them, preparing them well for adulthood and beyond.

Many trustees have worked with the school for some time. They know the school well and the areas that the school needs to work on. Trustees, for instance, recently strengthened their approach to checking the quality of education that pupils receive. Trustees ensure pupils are kept safe through activities such as closely monitoring the safeguarding systems or by ensuring the school buildings are well maintained. Trustees ensure that the school meets the independent school standards and complies with schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.

Leaders want the best for pupils and work closely with parents and staff. A number of parents appreciate how settled their children are in the school and the lengths staff go to ensure their child's needs are met. Despite the school website containing information parents need, some staff and some parents feel that communication with leaders could be better and leaders could listen more if they have concerns.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure staff know the different risks and vulnerabilities pupils may have. All concerns are reported, no matter how small. Effective training supports staff to identify if a pupil is at risk of harm. Behaviour, attendance and safeguarding information supports leaders to put in place well-judged help and support for pupils.

Safeguarding records show prompt actions to concerns and leaders' determination to make sure pupils get the help and support they need.

Leaders complete appropriate checks on adults that work in the school.

The thorough 'life skills' curriculum is adapted to pupils' needs and teaches pupils about risks in an age-appropriate way. As a result, pupils know about such risks as staying safe online or 'road safety' when out in the community.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- Some staff do not always understand or have not had recent training in the best ways to implement parts of the school's curriculum. This means that there are instances where some activities do not support learning or staff move on before pupils have understood an idea. Pupils do not learn as well as they should when this happens. Leaders should ensure all staff are trained well to use the most effective practices to support learning.
- There are a small number of parents and staff who feel that leaders do not communicate as well as they could. This means some staff and parents do not always feel well supported by leaders. Leaders should improve the way they communicate with all stakeholders so staff and parents feel their concerns are addressed.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

School details

Unique reference number	121252
DfE registration number	926/6145
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	10254641
Type of school	Other independent special school
School Category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	6 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	45
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	St Andrew's School Trust
Chair	John Garner
Headteacher	Carol Keable
Annual fees (day pupils)	£40,000
Telephone number	01263 837927
Website	www.standrewsschool.org.uk/
Email address	office@standrewsschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	25 to 27 September 2018

Information about this school

- St Andrew's School is a small independent special school with a Quaker ethos. It runs under the proprietorship of The St Andrew's School Trust, a registered charity with a board of trustees.
- The school was last inspected in September 2018 when it was graded good. At the same time, the school had a material change inspection which approved an increase in pupil numbers up to 45.
- Since the previous inspection, the school reduced its age range to 16.
- The proprietor body is known as the board of trustees.
- All pupils have an education, health and care plan for autism spectrum disorder and other social or communication difficulties.
- Typically, some pupils have missed significant periods of schooling prior to admission.
- Each pupil is funded by Norfolk local authority.
- The school uses one unregistered alternative provision on a part-time basis to complement the curriculum for a small number of pupils.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors carried out this inspection under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008. The purpose of the inspection is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

The school meets the independent school standards. These are the requirements set out in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: computer science, reading, life skills and mathematics. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors considered curriculum documentation and pupils' work in a range of additional subject areas including art, geography, careers and citizenship.
- Inspectors met with a range of senior leaders, including the headteacher (who is also the special educational needs coordinator), the assistant headteachers and phase leaders.

- Inspectors spoke with a range of staff over the course of the inspection.
- The lead inspector spoke with members of the proprietor body (the trust), including the chair of the trust.
- Inspectors spoke with a range of pupils about their experiences of the school. Inspectors observed breaktimes and lunchtimes.
- Inspectors viewed the school building and facilities to check compliance with the independent school standards.
- To inspect safeguarding, the lead inspector met with the school's safeguarding leaders. He scrutinized safeguarding procedures and processes. Inspectors reviewed safeguarding documentation, including the single central record and other recruitment checks. The inspection team spoke to a range of pupils and staff about safeguarding matters.
- Inspectors reviewed 30 responses to Ofsted Parent View, the online survey for parents, including 30 free text responses. Inspectors also considered 26 responses to Ofsted's staff survey.

Inspection team

Damian Loneragan, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Andrew Hemmings

His Majesty's Inspector

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