

St Andrew's School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	113048
Local authority	Derby
Inspection number	378633
Inspection dates	11–12 January 2012
Lead inspector	David Muir HMI

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	11–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	85
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	30
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Richard Betts
Headteacher	Phil Harrison
Date of previous school inspection	3 February 2009
School address	St Andrew's View Breadsall Hilltop DE21 4EW
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Age group	11–19
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Introduction

David Muir

Her Majesty's Inspector

Kathleen Yates

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed 16 lessons and all teachers were seen teaching. Meetings were held with a group of parents, three groups of students; two members of the governing body, including the Chair of the Governing Body; professionals who work in partnership with the school and a wide range of staff, including leaders, teachers and teaching assistants. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at a wide range of documentation including self-evaluation documents, strategic plans and other development plans. Inspectors scrutinised 36 questionnaires returned by parents and carers.

Information about the school

St Andrew's is a school for students with severe learning difficulties and/or autistic spectrum disorders. All students have a statement of special educational needs and there has been an increase in the proportion of students with autism as their primary disability since the previous inspection. In addition to the City of Derby, the school takes students from other local authorities. One third of students are known to be entitled to free school meals. The school works in partnership with several external agencies including the local secondary school which is located next door to the school. The school also has a residential department which was not part of this inspection. The residence caters for a maximum of 22 boarders and these places are allocated annually for the coming academic year. The residence was inspected in May 2011 and was judged to be outstanding for the second consecutive time.

The school is a SEN specialist school and holds several awards including; the Inclusion Quality Mark, Healthy Schools Award, International Schools Award, Eco-Schools Award and School Council Bronze Award.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness	1
Achievement of pupils	1
Quality of teaching	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils	1
Leadership and management	1

Key findings

- This is an outstanding school which has improved markedly since the previous inspection. The impressive ethos is strongly based on the values of inclusion, respect and dignity. The whole school community is overwhelmingly supportive of this, as evidenced by the extremely positive response to questionnaires and all meetings during the inspection.
- Leaders, led by the dynamic headteacher, demonstrate an impressive consistency of approach. This ensures that aspirations for excellence are conspicuously successful. Leaders know the school extremely well and have clear plans to develop it further. The curriculum, in all key stages, is highly personalised to meet students' needs very effectively. High expectations permeate all aspects of the school's work and contribute strongly to the rising levels of achievement, teaching and behaviour.
- Strong relationships exist between the staff, students, parents and carers and other professionals which support the high standards evident in all areas of the school.
- Progress is outstanding in all subjects and key stages, including the sixth form, because staff know students extremely well and have the highest expectations. In lessons, students are fully involved in activities which excite, engage and challenge them. Occasionally they do not have enough opportunities to evaluate what they have learnt.
- Teaching is outstanding. Observations by the school's leaders evidence a very high proportion of outstanding lessons. Leaders have a very clear understanding of what outstanding teaching looks like and are very effective at promoting a higher quality of teaching. Inspection evidence supports the view that the quality of teaching is outstanding over time.
- Students behave exceptionally well and their attitudes contribute significantly to the outstanding progress they make in lessons. Students' personal development during their time in the school allows them to manage their own behaviour increasingly effectively.
- Recent improvements to the curriculum and the quality of teaching in the sixth form mean that it is now outstanding.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Consolidate students' involvement in evaluating their own learning at all levels.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Students' attainment on entry to the school is well-below the standards expected for their age. However, they make outstanding progress from their starting points in all subjects and key stages, including the sixth form. The school measures progress based on prior attainment and sets challenging targets for all students for their personal and academic development. The school uses national datasets to benchmark data. During the inspection, close scrutiny found that the school's evaluation of students' progress was accurate and robust. The challenging targets are overwhelmingly met and often exceeded by students. Despite their sometimes negative experiences of education previously, students quickly settle in to St Andrew's and start to make rapid and sustained progress in their personal skills. This in turn allows them to more effectively manage their own behaviour for learning with varying levels of support, which allows them to participate fully in lessons and make impressive gains in their learning. Students who are gifted and talented are identified through the school's 'Challenge' programme and this is used extremely well to promote and monitor the learning of this cohort of students. Students access externally verified accreditation to meet their needs, throughout their time in St Andrew's. These are often via AQA Unit Awards in areas of basic skills and life skills and ASDAN (Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network) in the sixth form.

The progress of all groups of students is outstanding and there are no differences between them. Where there was previously a slightly lower rate of progress for a group of students who are looked after, this was analysed by the school and was found to be the result of the school not being given time to prepare for their entry in to the school at the same time. After a shaky start, the school rapidly helped the students to settle and their progress is now outstanding, in line with all other students. There are no differences in the progress made by students according to their special educational needs and/or disabilities. This was confirmed by the school's data and by first hand evidence of learning during the inspection. All parents agree that their child makes at least good progress.

Quality of teaching

Teaching is outstanding because it meets the needs of all students, exceptionally well and provides them with memorable learning experiences throughout their time in St Andrew's. Outstanding joint working with the residential department also

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provides a consistent approach which consolidates and reinforces the learning gains made during the school day. Outstanding teaching was seen across the full age range and breadth of the curriculum. All students are taught according to their interests and needs and in every lesson seen during the inspection, all students were fully engaged in their learning and enjoying themselves. This enables them to make outstanding progress in lessons.

Staff have identified extremely positive strategies to engage students and manage their behaviour. This is achieved through an in-depth knowledge of their needs and interests and a strong promotion of independence. High levels of challenge are evident for all students in lessons. Students are able to discuss the learning that has taken place; although in good lessons, this is sometimes less consistent. The highly personalised curriculum allows students to prepare very successfully for the next stage of their lives. This is achieved through high quality teaching of basic and life skills, careers advice and excellent access to a range of cultural activities to prepare them for life in the wider community. Further curricular opportunities are also provided through strong partnerships with local schools and colleges. Although the school has a strong emphasis on basic skills and life skills, it also promotes art, music and activities such as yoga and gymnastics, which provide outstanding opportunities for teachers to further challenge students in other areas. In the sixth form, students receive outstanding support in planning their futures and have ample time to source courses to meet their personal and academic needs. Of the parents and carers who returned questionnaires, 84% strongly agree that their child is taught well in this school with no negative responses.

An inspiring activity seen during the inspection was the school choir. It is extremely effectively led by the outstanding music teacher and it is well attended by students who chose to be there. Students were confident enough to sing as a group and also to give solo performances, and all were enthused by the activity and extremely excited by the prospect of performing at a local care home in the near future.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Behaviour and safety are outstanding as staff are entirely consistent in the promotion of well-planned, individual behaviour management strategies over time. This enables students to become increasingly skilful at managing their own behaviour and needs or accepting support in this from others. The school's data shows that over time, improvements in individual students' behaviour have a significant impact on the quality of learning taking place in lessons. It is also evident from the inspection, that disruption to learning through challenging behaviour is rare. All parents and carers agreed in their questionnaire returns that there is a good standard of behaviour in this school. No parents or carers had the view that learning was disrupted in lessons. These views were also confirmed in the meeting with parents and carers. Many of them were able to testify how improvements in behaviour initiated in the school had had a significant impact on the families as behaviour had also improved at home. This is supported by the high quality advice and input which they received from the school, the residential department and other professionals.

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Nearly all responses, by questionnaire, said that bullying is handled well. However, on further scrutiny in face-to-face meetings, all respondents agreed that there is no bullying in the school. No students said that they do not feel safe in the school. This is reflected in the warm and open welcome extended to visitors by all members of the school community.

Leadership and management

Since the previous inspection, leaders, including the governing body, have made significant progress in establishing systems to raise standards further across the school and the residence. There is increasingly joined-up working with the residential department to promote higher achievement and personal outcomes. The nurturing of staff is impressive and there are many examples of how potential has been identified and used to establish highly positive initiatives. School improvement groups allow everyone to participate in school improvement and ideas for development are keenly implemented and evaluated for their success. During the inspection, staff were keen to share how they have been supported in devising projects or improving their own practice within the classroom to an outstanding level. The ethos encourages staff to support each other and share best practice. This is undertaken enthusiastically in the spirit of improving the school for students and their families. Mentoring systems are strong and mentors are chosen for their suitability to work with the mentees. This has been done with excellent success. Due to the well-established systems for school improvement, the capacity for further improvement is impressive.

As a result of leaders' awareness of the strengths of staff, teaching has continued to improve and as new staff have come in, they have been assimilated rapidly in to the high expectations of the school. The resulting improvements in achievements are significant. The large majority of lessons seen during the inspection were jointly observed with members of the school leadership team. These observations showed that leaders have an accurate view of what constitutes outstanding teaching and follow-up discussions, and scrutiny of school records, confirmed the management's view that teaching is outstanding over time. There is no discrimination in the school and equality of opportunity is a central tenet of the school's ethos. Leaders are adamant that every student is entitled to an individualised education which meets their needs, and this is achieved successfully, through the well-planned curriculum, high quality support and the outstanding teaching. The school promotes spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development to an outstanding level through a range of activities and initiatives, including; visiting musicians, World Arts Day, World Food Day, World Peace Day and World Homeless Day. The high quality SMSC is also evident in students' attitudes and ability to reflect on their behaviour and friendships. All aspects of safeguarding, including recruitment records and staff training are fully compliant. Additionally, exceptional working with other agencies to safeguard individual students is a significant strength of the school's work.

Comments by a parent and a staff member, respectively, were typical of the views expressed throughout the inspection by all members of the community; 'the school's

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support both for (my son's) learning and well-being, as well as support for us as parents has been exemplary' and 'St Andrews is a very happy, caring place where students are encouraged to lead fulfilling, exciting lives. It is a pleasure to work here.'

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



13 January 2012

Dear Students

Inspection of St Andrew's School, Breadsall Hilltop, Derby, DE21 4EW

On behalf of the two inspectors who visited your school recently, I would like to thank you very much for giving us such an enjoyable and memorable experience and sharing your experiences in your school.

We found St Andrew's School to be outstanding. The headteacher and leadership team are determined to ensure that you receive the best possible education that you can. It was clear during our visit, from your questionnaires and your comments how much you appreciate them, their hard work and how much you enjoy school. Your behaviour and attitudes to your learning are exemplary and are clear strengths of the school. The improvements that you make in your learning and your personal development during your time in St Andrew's are outstanding. The teaching and support that you receive in the school are excellent and adults know in fine detail how to support you and make your time there as successful as possible. This means that by the time you leave school, you are as well prepared as you can be and have developed a level of confidence and independence with which to go forward.

You should be very proud of yourselves and the contribution that you make to the school. I particularly enjoyed watching the choir practice for the concert which is due to take place in February.

I have asked the headteacher to improve one thing as the result of the inspection and that is to make sure that you are all more consistently involved in judging how much you have learnt in all lessons. You can help with this, by reminding your teachers that you want to discuss your learning with them all the time.

Once again, sincere thanks to you all for the time you spent with us during the visit and I would like to wish you all the best for the future.

Yours sincerely

David Muir
Her Majesty's Inspector

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