

St Andrew's School

Independent school standard inspection report

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Reporting inspector	Heather Yaxley HMI

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Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.^{1, 2}

Information about the school

St Andrew's is a small independent special school with a Quaker ethos. It is affiliated to the Sheringham Local Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) and runs under the proprietorship of The St Andrew's School Trust, a registered charity with a board of trustees. The school opened in 1988 in East Runton to admit 16 students between the ages of six and 12 years. In September 2011, the school moved to the current premises, a former school, and is now seeking approval from the Department for Education to increase the number of students to 20 and to extend the age range to 16 years.

The school caters for students of average ability who have autism or social and communication difficulties. There are currently 10 students on roll and four attend part-time with a view to attending full-time. Characteristically, students have missed significant periods of schooling prior to admission, and transition to full-time education takes place over an extended period. All students have a statement of special educational needs and are funded by their local authority, either Norfolk or Suffolk. One student is in the care of a local authority.

The school's motto is 'I do and I understand'. The vision is to be 'a caring school where children feel safe, where each child is treated as an individual and all children fulfil their potential in all fields of experience and learning amongst adults and other children who treat them with respect so that their school life is happy'. The school was previously inspected in December 2008, when the quality of education was judged as good and all regulations were met.

Evaluation of the school

St Andrew's School provides its students with a good quality education. Students' learning is given high priority, their behaviour is managed well and they enjoy their education. The welfare, health and safety of students is satisfactory rather than good because of a lack of attention to detail in monitoring and revising policies and procedures. One regulation is not met. All requirements are met for safeguarding children. Almost all parents and carers are completely happy with their child's experiences at the school. It is recommended that the age range be extended to 16

¹ www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/32/contents.

² www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2005/18/contents.

years and the number of students for which the school is registered be increased to 20.

Quality of education

Students make good progress from their starting points as a result of a good curriculum and good teaching. The longer they have been at the school, the more accelerated progress they have made. This is particularly the case for students' ability to read, as a result of the high priority that the school places on it.

The curriculum is good because it is well planned to cover a full range of subjects according to clear objectives for what will be learned. Learning through practical experience is given appropriately high priority. This meets students' particular needs well so that they enjoy their learning and develop good attitudes to work. It also helps new students to appreciate the importance of learning as part of their induction. The social skills and life skills curriculum serves students particularly well in gaining new skills and engaging with others with increasing confidence and enjoyment. Frequent educational trips help to develop the skills students need to be part of wider society as citizens as well as to take advantage of social opportunities, albeit to use a bank or to enjoy a snack at a local café.

The proportion of independent work is appropriately balanced with whole-class activities each day. This ensures that students learn well through their individual programmes as well as benefitting from learning as part of a group. Detailed curriculum plans support the staff in planning lessons and provide continuity through each key stage effectively, particularly as teaching is shared between a large group of teaching and non-teaching staff. Although students' individual work in literacy and numeracy is well planned, whole-class and individual teaching input for English and mathematics is less well planned and an area of current development. Additionally, planned opportunities to extend literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects are limited.

Teaching and assessment are good. The strong focus on learning ensures that students complete the work and this provides staff with accurate and useful information about what each student can do and where the gaps in their learning lie. Added to this, students' behaviour and anxieties are managed well, ensuring that learning generally takes place in a calm and orderly manner. 'Mini-breaks' help students to sustain concentration and move from one activity to the next successfully. Students make most progress when they are given sufficient time to consider what is being asked of them before responding and when staff then help them to extend their thinking through sensitive questioning and getting them to reflect on previous learning. This worked well in a lesson on electricity and another where students gave oral presentations. Less progress occurs when students are given too much help, low-level disruptive behaviour is not challenged sufficiently and when their learning is not moved on fast enough because they are working through pages in textbooks, workbooks or worksheets.

Staff have been developing more precise ways to assess students' work between National Curriculum levels. Annual reviews of statements and individual education plans provide some of this information but there is scope for further improvement in communicating a clear picture of the progress that students make given their starting points.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, as is their behaviour. They have a good understanding of the school's system of rewards and sanctions and work hard to gain points for learning and for behaviour. Conduct in lessons and around school generally is calm because students take increasing responsibility for own behaviour and develop an understanding of fairness. Students attend well. They enjoy learning and have good relationships with staff. Relationships with one another take longer to establish but in time students show consideration, tolerance and respect. This was seen when one student sensitively encouraged another who was having difficulty settling and on another occasion where two students performed a short gymnastic routine together. Opportunities for reflection during daily worship are taken seriously.

Opportunities for students to understand and use public services include visits to the library and the bank. Students know about the work of the police and health services. The curriculum provides planned opportunities for developing citizenship and an appreciation of cultural and religious difference.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

This aspect of the school's work is satisfactory because although day-to-day pastoral support is a strength, weaknesses lie in the attention to detail for some health and safety procedures. For example, records of incidents are not sufficiently detailed or robust. Some policies and practices are not reviewed frequently enough to ensure their effectiveness, although staff's vigilance on a day-to-day basis ensures good attention to the safety of students, staff and visitors. Risk assessments for individual students and for educational trips are thorough although an audit of risk for the new premises has not been done. Other checks for the new premises are up-to-date such as those for fire, electricity and electrical appliances. A revised action plan to take account of the new premises is in place to fulfil the requirements of the Equality Act 2010. The needs of students in relation to autism are catered for well because of the high priority given to staff training. Training for staff in child protection is up to date and day-to-day child protection procedures have high priority. All staff are trained in first aid and permissible forms of restraint, and their skills are updated at the required times. Particular attention given to the security of the new site and to establish a calm, organised environment for learning and play, contributed significantly to the relative ease with which students managed the move to the new premises.

Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors

The school has carried out the appropriate checks on staff and trustees to make sure that suitable staff are employed. The relevant details are held on a single central register.

Premises and accommodation at the school

The new premises provide good accommodation for a safe and purposeful learning environment. Prior to moving in, the school was completely refurbished and redecorated to provide a bright, clean and welcoming space. A range of large and small rooms in three separate blocks provide ample classroom space and specialist rooms for science, art, design and technology, life skills, a computer suite and a library. A separate, small gym is suitable for physical education for small groups of students and there is an enclosed play area with a hard surface. A small area of grass provides suitable space for break times. Administrative areas are in an adjacent block. The main house is not yet suitable for use as part of the school premises.

Provision of information

Annual reviews of statements and an annual report in the summer for parents and carers provide information on students' attainment and the work that has been covered. The school prospectus contains all of the required information.

Manner in which complaints are to be handled

The school's complaints procedure meets the requirements.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The proprietor has ensured that the school meets The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, schedule 1 ('the Regulations'), with the exception of those listed below.³

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of provision for welfare, health and safety of pupils (standards in part 3) and must:

- ensure that the records of sanctions imposed upon students for serious misbehaviour are sufficiently detailed (paragraph 16).

³ www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2010/1997/contents/made.

What the school could do to improve further

While not required by regulations, the school might wish to consider the following points for development:

- continue the development of assessment and target setting procedures in line with best practice in other similar school contexts, so that progress for each student can be more precisely tracked and monitored
- review all policies and practices regularly to check their effectiveness and compliance with current guidance
- in the event of approval to change the school's registration, develop the curriculum for Key Stage 4 students.

Inspection judgements

outstanding	good	satisfactory	inadequate
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The quality of education

Overall quality of education		✓		
How well the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of pupils		✓		
How effective teaching and assessment are in meeting the full range of pupils' needs		✓		
How well pupils make progress in their learning		✓		

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Quality of provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development		✓		
The behaviour of pupils		✓		

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The overall welfare, health and safety of pupils			✓	
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School details

School status	Independent special school		
Type of school	Special school for pupils with autism or social and communication difficulties		
Date school opened	1 September 1988		
Age range of pupils	6–14 years		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll	Boys: 8	Girls: 2	Total: 10
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs	Boys: 8	Girls: 2	Total: 10
Number of pupils who are looked after	Boys: 1	Girls: 0	Total: 1
Annual fees	£42,000		
Address of school	Aylmerton Hall, Holt Road, Cromer, Norfolk NR11 8QA		
Telephone number	01263 837927		
Email address	head@standrewseastrunton.wanadoo.co.uk		
Headteacher	Gilly Baker		
Proprietor	The St Andrew's School Trust		

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.



22 March 2012

Dear Students

Inspection of St Andrew's School, Cromer NR11 8QA

I am writing to say thank you for talking to me, for letting me see your work and for filling in the questionnaires when I inspected your school. Please thank your parents and carers for completing their questionnaires too.

I am also writing to tell you what I found out. I have written a report and hope that you will read it with your parents and carers but here are the main things that I found out:

- St Andrew's School provides you with a good education
- you enjoy school
- you are making good progress in your learning and in managing the things that you find difficult
- you behave well most of the time and like the points and rewards that you get for good behaviour and good learning
- staff know you well and take good care of you
- the move to the new school has gone well because Gilly and the staff worked hard to get things in place so that you settled in quickly
- staff do not always record incidents of inappropriate behaviour in enough detail and I have asked that this is improved.

Thank you again and I wish you well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Heather Yaxley
Her Majesty's Inspector