

# St Andrew's College

Lowther Adolescent Services, Billing Road, Northampton, NN1 5DG

## Inspection dates

27–29 November 2013

### Overall effectiveness

### Outstanding

1

Pupils' achievement

Outstanding

1

Pupils' behaviour and personal development

Outstanding

1

Quality of teaching

Outstanding

1

Quality of curriculum

Outstanding

1

Pupils' welfare, health and safety

Outstanding

1

Leadership and management

Outstanding

1

## Summary of key findings

### This school is outstanding because

- Leadership and management are outstanding and, as a result, staff are motivated to aspire to their best for all students. Valuable training is on-going and so teaching continuously improves. Staff say that they are proud to work at the college.
- Students' achievement is outstanding because the college leadership places great emphasis on students gaining qualifications and attaining skills. Lessons are tailored very carefully to students' precise needs across a wide range of relevant subjects.
- Teaching is excellent and all staff have very high expectations of students. From the moment a student becomes a member of the college, their knowledge and skills are checked up on carefully and an interesting and highly challenging programme of work is created for them.
- Students are very motivated to support local and national charities, and working in the hospital cafe and garden, developing their social skills in real-life situations. This also helps them to transfer their new skills and behaviour into all aspects of their life and not to be so anxious in new situations.
- Students' spiritual, social and moral development is excellent and they behave well. They concentrate intensely in lessons, because they see the value of the subjects that they study.
- Welfare and care are successfully promoted by staff. For example, every morning teaching staff catch up with what has happened overnight on the wards. Similarly, outcomes of all lessons are recorded. In this way medical and college staff work together very effectively.

### Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets schedule 1 of The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, as amended by The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2012 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

## Information about this inspection

- This inspection took place with one day's notice. The inspectors observed 14 lessons or part lessons taught by 16 teachers and technical instructors. One of these was a joint observation with the headteacher.
- Not enough responses were received by parents on Parent View to show the results. Consideration was given to the views of the small number parents and carers who were able to be spoken to by telephone or who sent in a letter.
- Discussions took place with staff and policies were examined, as was students' work and other evidence about their progress. Records of training were studied. The responses from 17 members of staff who completed questionnaires were taken into account by inspectors.
- Inspectors spoke with students, observed their behaviour and examined the college's safeguarding procedures. A community meeting between students, teaching staff and medical staff was also observed.

## Inspection team

Sheelagh Barnes, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Mary Hinds

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- St Andrew's College is situated in the grounds of St Andrew's Healthcare, which is an independent, charitable, mental health facility in Northampton.
- The college provides education in a secure setting in two buildings, Lowther and Malcolm Arnold, which are attached to nine secure residential wards for male and female adolescent patients.
- The adolescent services provide mental healthcare including therapy, psychiatric nursing and residential care. These services are registered and inspected separately by the Care Quality Commission.
- The students who attend the college range in age from 13 to 19 and are placed by the National Health Service and Health Services Executives. Students come from all over the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland.
- Students have behavioural, emotional and social difficulties, autistic spectrum disorders and moderate learning difficulties. There is no duty to maintain a statement while a student is sectioned under the Mental Health Act (Section 5:62 of the Education Act 1996). For safety reasons, some students are not allowed access to materials that they could ingest or harm themselves or others with, including writing equipment.
- The great majority of students are from White British backgrounds. Twenty three students are in the care of the local authority.
- The college uses alternative providers to provide some vocational courses.
- This is the college's second inspection; the previous inspection was in 2010.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that the college improvement plan measures progress steps as well as outcomes, so that even small successes can be celebrated.
- Develop the quality of teaching so that even more is consistently outstanding by seeking resources that can be safely used to enable students to reinforce their learning in practical ways.

## Inspection judgements

### Pupils' achievement

### Outstanding

Many students start at the college with lower than expected levels of skill, sometimes because of years of missed schooling. All groups of students, including those who are disabled or who have special educational needs, vulnerable and previously disaffected students make outstanding progress and achieve exceptionally well because of outstanding teaching. As a result, they make up for lost time and gain a good range of qualifications so that they are able to reach their potential. In recent years, some more able students have gained GCSE qualifications in English, mathematics, statistics and science. Some students have gained the Duke of Edinburgh Award, including a few who have attained Gold. Those parents and carers who expressed a view were full of praise for the college and said that they were extremely pleased with their children's progress and achievements.

Students are well prepared for the next stage of education or the world of work because of the excellent range of subjects taught. A significant proportion of students who are discharged to community placements continue with their education. In college they learn to think carefully about the effect of their actions, because staff expect a great deal of them and encourage them to be thoughtful. This develops their personal skills extremely well. Students make excellent progress in learning to read, write, and use mathematics; and in developing skills in science, information and computer technology, sport, dance, drama, music, horticulture and citizenship.

Students develop their basic skills successfully because a broad range of subjects are taught. When they join the college, their levels of knowledge are accurately assessed. Individual programmes of work are created linked to need and interest. Records are carefully maintained so that everyone is clear about what each student is learning and the progress that they are making. Opportunities to gain extra qualifications are maximised, so that interests such as animal care and drama also lead to accredited qualifications. Each student's progress is recorded after each lesson in key areas of learning and interests. This all has a very positive impact on students' outlook and feelings of self-worth. It ensures equality of opportunity for each student to flourish.

### Pupils' behaviour and personal development

### Outstanding

Students' behaviour and their personal development are outstanding. This is because their personal needs are managed exceptionally well by the multi-disciplinary team of professionals. The college records and case studies show that all students make outstanding progress in managing their behaviour and in developing positive attitudes to their learning. This is because staff not only have high expectations of students but also model appropriate behaviour. There is a collective responsibility for student behaviour. Students respond very positively to the support and guidance they receive in lessons and in more informal situations.

The college monitors and analyses student behaviour at key points in the day and after school, and records this meticulously. This provides information on how best to support students, as well as providing an up-to-date evaluation of the effectiveness of the behaviour support plans. These individualised plans provide a seamless support programme between education and medical staff and unlock students' barriers to learning. Students' behaviour is further enhanced through the well-focused personal, social, emotional and health education programme. This ensures that they take more responsibility for their behaviour, as well as providing them with opportunities to make choices.

Students have many opportunities to become involved in college life and in the broader community, because of the many interesting things that they do together in college, in the hospital and in the outside community. The college works very hard to find the ways in which everyone can

express their views and choices. Students contribute to the regular community meetings, where they share their experiences of the week and what has gone well for them to date. They are central to the decision-making of the college and their local community. For example, several expressed concerns about some pathways being dark and, as a result, additional lights were installed on the campus.

Students' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development is outstanding. They appreciate how the college identifies their strengths when they join and quickly begin to have greater self-belief and confidence. One student said, 'They soon realised that I am good at sport and so I play football almost every day.' Students soon appreciate that they need to be aware of the needs of others and how their behaviour affects others. As a consequence, the learning environment is harmonious and cohesive.

Initiatives, such as the Duke of Edinburgh Award and voluntary work, support students' understanding of citizenship and the different institutions of modern Britain, and how to influence them. Business and enterprise activities, such as the making of bracelets and cards for sale at different fairs run by the hospital trust, enable older students to practise skills for life after school. The college courses they take also contribute greatly to personal development and academic progress.

Students say they feel safe and that there is no bullying in the college. They feel that staff are highly supportive and care for them exceptionally well. The multi-disciplinary team works hard to minimise disruptions, providing clear boundaries and structured procedures which reduce students' anxiety levels immensely. As a result, they attend regularly, enjoy college and have positive attitudes to their learning.

### Quality of teaching

### Outstanding

Teaching is outstanding because staff use individual programmes of study extremely well to ensure that students' develop their key skills and achieve excellently. Any gaps in students' learning are tackled systematically, and are filled effectively and at a very swift pace.

All teaching is at least good and most is outstanding. The best teaching uses practical activities to make learning memorable. This was seen in one very effective lesson when a student was learning about pathogens, using modelling materials to make models of antigens. In another excellent session, small plastic cubes were used to represent electrons to clarify the combining of atoms to create a salt molecule. In a small number lessons, where learning was good, practical activities were limited, mainly because of teachers' regard for necessary safety and security.

Staff use questions extremely effectively to successfully develop students' understanding. For instance, in one lesson the student made excellent progress in learning about different types of sentences. This was because the teacher used questioning effectively to draw out what the student already understood and which bits were still unclear. Teachers use a variety of methods to teach computer skills, despite the restrictions placed by the necessary security requirements. As a result, students gain relevant knowledge and awareness of risks of the internet.

Assessment is used excellently and staff regularly record on the internal computer system when students' individual learning objectives are met. Comments explain what has been achieved and also record students' current state of mind. Links between the wards and the college are extremely good and updated throughout the day. Information is then used well to maximise learning opportunities and ensure security is always at the level required. Staff give students positive oral feedback which raises their self-esteem. They take every opportunity to let students know what they have done successfully and what needs to be tackled next. Students are fully involved in these evaluations and so know how to make their work better. Assessment is used effectively to establish what the student needs to work on in the next session.

**Quality of curriculum****Outstanding**

The curriculum is excellent in its provision of an exceptionally wide range of experiences for students to study and take part in. As a result, they make at least good and usually outstanding progress academically, as well as excellent progress in developing their social and emotional skills. The range of subjects taught promotes students' personal development and spiritual, moral, social and cultural development extremely well. It is planned with an exceptionally good focus on students' interests and is relevant, bringing learning to life. The college makes excellent use of numerous academic pathways and provides significant opportunities for students to develop literacy, numeracy and communication skills alongside social life skills in an extremely wide range of activities. These include gaining a wide range of qualifications, such as GCSE, BTec, AQA, Entry Level qualifications and unit awards. A few students access colleges elsewhere to take part in more practical courses, such as bricklaying.

Enrichment is provided by extra-curricular activities such as workshop days, visits and visitors, including artists, authors and famous sports people, national orchestras, work in the community and the Duke of Edinburgh Award, to name just a few.

The college works closely with the wider nursing and multi-disciplinary team. Those involved include occupational therapists, physiotherapists, speech and language therapists, art therapy, music therapy and peripatetic musicians. Planning for each subject ensures that students build up their basic skills carefully. High levels of engagement successfully build students' self-esteem and self-belief, as well as developing greater tolerance and responsibility. The curriculum ensures effective challenge in all required areas of learning and prepares students very well for the next steps in their lives.

**Pupils' welfare, health and safety****Outstanding**

All staff support students' welfare, health and safety extremely well. All the independent school regulations are met. Reports on students' behaviour, attitudes and state of mind are recorded several times a day and shared by the college and the medical wards. This system lets any concerns or successes be shared with all staff who work with each student. Reviews on each student are conducted at least monthly and written reports are sent to parents and carers twice yearly, outlining how much progress a student has made in key areas of learning including their social skills. Staff supervise students extremely effectively and they involve them in a wide range of activities.

All staff work extremely effectively to keep students safe and healthy. The college's safeguarding and prevention of bullying policies are rigorously implemented. Students emphatically state that there is no bullying in college. Incidents of inappropriate behaviour are responded to swiftly and all staff wear tags to call for assistance if required. All staff are trained to manage incidents of aggression and violence and will always respond to assure the safety of either student or teacher. Staff have completed appropriate first aid training and medical assistance is always swiftly available on the wards. Care is taken to ensure hygienic preparation of any foods and snacks. There has been a significant reduction in the proportion of students who are overweight during the past year, because of the focus the college has put upon healthy eating. Health and safety issues are dealt with extremely efficiently. Fire drills are carried out regularly and safely in a way that does not compromise security.

Safeguarding arrangements are second to none and systems to recruit staff are rigorous. All the necessary checks are made on staff and a central register is suitably kept of these checks. All staff receive regular basic child protection training and are alert to ensure situations do not arise where unfounded accusations could be made. Detailed risk assessments are made for all activities. Students learn about internet safety but do not have open access to use it except in very

controlled situations. Similarly, there is no use of mobile telephones on the site for staff or students.

Registers of attendance at the college and the admission of students are kept efficiently. Senior leaders and medical staff monitor these carefully. However, most students take great pleasure in attending their lessons in college and are enthusiastic learners. On a few occasions, where students' health or medication prevents them attending a session, lessons are conducted on the ward.

## **Leadership and management**

## **Outstanding**

Leadership and management are outstanding and place a high priority on students' learning skills to prepare them for their future lives. This means that students are successfully encouraged to study for a wide range of relevant qualifications to become valuable members of society. Senior leaders have an accurate view of the college's performance and the quality of teaching. Monitoring of teaching takes place regularly. The college's development plan sets challenging and measurable targets which include students gaining accredited qualifications. However, progress towards targets is not always calibrated in a way that allows the college to celebrate each small step. All staff are proud to work at the college and say that it meets the different needs of all students very effectively. Senior leaders inspire staff with their high expectations for what every student can achieve and so all are relentless in their pursuit of excellence. Staff also have many valuable opportunities to develop their skills through regular training.

Significant improvements have been made since the previous inspection. An example is the refinement of methods of tracking of students' progress in their education plans. Careful assessments are made when each student joins the college and these are updated daily, so that staff are clear about each student's level of skill and knowledge. The progress students make is shared with them in such a way that they are able to clearly understand what they need to accomplish next. Even greater opportunities are provided for students with regard to vocational education. There are a very wide range of experiences to promote students' cultural awareness, especially in music, art and drama. All the independent school standards are met.

The purpose-built accommodation provides extremely well for all of the activities of the college. It has in-built safety features, such as air-lock entrances. The rooms vary in size and so are very suitable for single lessons as well as group sessions. All are light, airy and comfortable, which has a positive impact on students' learning and attitudes.

Parents and carers who contacted the inspectors value what the college does for their child and say they are making excellent progress. Information for parents, carers and others, together with the procedures to handle complaints, meets requirements.

## What inspection judgements mean

| School  |             |   |
|---------|-------------|---|
| Grade   | Judgement   | Description   |
| Grade 1 | Outstanding | A school which provides an exceptional quality of education and significantly exceeds minimum requirements. |
| Grade 2 | Good        | A school which provides a high quality of education that exceeds minimum requirements.                      |
| Grade 3 | Adequate    | A school which meets minimum requirements but needs to improve the quality of education it provides.        |
| Grade 4 | Inadequate  | A school where minimum requirements are not met and/or the quality of education has serious weaknesses.     |



## School details

|                                |          |
|--------------------------------|----------|
| <b>Unique reference number</b> | 135785   |
| <b>Inspection number</b>       | 420173   |
| <b>DfE registration number</b> | 928/6071 |

This inspection was carried out 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.

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>Type of school</b>                      | Special – behavioural, emotional and social difficulties, autistic spectrum disorders, and moderate learning difficulties. Secure adolescent mental health. |
| <b>School status</b>                       | Independent School  |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                 | 13–19   |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                    | Mixed   |
| <b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b> | 84  |
| <b>Number of part time pupils</b>          | 0   |
| <b>Proprietor</b>                          | St Andrew's Health Care   |
| <b>Chair</b>                               | Professor Philip Sugarman   |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                         | Richard Walker  |
| <b>Date of previous school inspection</b>  | 19 January 2010   |
| <b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>            | £Nil (inclusive within placement)   |
| <b>Telephone number</b>                    | 01604 614331  |
| <b>Fax number</b>                          | 01604 614362  |
| <b>Email address</b>                       | Rwalker2@standrew.co.uk   |

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk). If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit [www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk), or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store St  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

© Crown copyright 2013

