

# St. Andrew's Academy

St. Andrew's Academy, St. Andrew's View, Derby DE21 4EW

Residential provision inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this residential special school

St. Andrew's Academy is a residential special school. All children and young people have autism spectrum disorder and/or learning disabilities. Twenty children and young people can access the residential service, which operates from Monday to Friday. A maximum of 12 children at any one time stay in residence.

The residential accommodation is provided in an annex attached to the main school, and there is a bungalow for older young people that is on the school grounds.

Due to COVID-19 (coronavirus), at the request of the Secretary of state, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers on 17 March 2020.

We last visited this setting on the 26 to 28 November 2019 to carry out a full inspection. The report is published on our website.

### Inspection dates: 25 to 27 May 2021

<b>Overall experiences and progress of children and young people,</b> taking into account	<b>good</b>
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	outstanding
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The residential special school provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

**Date of previous inspection:** 26 November 2019

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** good

## Inspection judgements

### **Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good**

School leaders have ensured strict adherence to government guidance in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic. They have remained focused on the safety of children, families and staff. Despite the inevitable disruption to education for children, leaders at this school have kept this to a minimum. Children have continued to have a positive experience in the residential provision.

Staff develop very good relationships with children. Staff understand children's needs well. Staff are patient and make sure that each child, irrespective of their levels of communication and comprehension, are listened to and given the respect and consideration they deserve.

Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about the care their children receive. One parent said, 'staff are fantastic,' while other parents commented on the developmental progress their children make in terms of communication, social skills and confidence.

Children make good progress educationally, emotionally and in developing life skills. The school implements a 24-hour curriculum. This means that the work in the classroom is transferred to the residential provision to continually develop children's education, communication and practical skills. The school is currently developing cloud-based technologies to further enhance learning and development.

A real strength at this school is the way transitions are managed. Good internal handovers of information between education and residential staff mean that effective care and support are provided. Likewise, for children leaving the residential provision, staff work in advance to prepare children for this significant move to give them the greatest chance of success in the future.

Children are encouraged to share their views about the residential provision through a variety of means, and these include:

- children's voice meetings. These meetings enable children to talk about the issues important to them and have their say on the residential provision
- individual key-work sessions, which focus on specific areas of development for children
- involving children in the day-to-day activity-planning meetings with staff to jointly agree activities.

## **How well children and young people are helped and protected: good**

Children who stay in the residential provision are safe. Staff have a good understanding of the risks and vulnerabilities faced by children. Staff complete comprehensive risk assessments and individual behaviour plans. These plans and assessments include contributions from families and involved agencies. Staff read, understand and adjust these plans as required, and this helps them to provide safe and effective care.

Staff manage children's behaviour well. There have been no incidents of worrying behaviour, and staff do not have to physically intervene to manage challenging behaviour. Good communication from school means that the residential staff can identify potential problems in advance and put measures in place to prevent potentially difficult situations. Staff are adept at using conversation, negotiation and loving care to help children to become calm and to prevent their behaviour deteriorating.

Staff have undertaken the relevant training to help them safeguard children. This training includes topics such as child exploitation and effective behaviour management.

The risk to children of being cared for by unsuitable adults are minimised because staff are recruited using safer recruitment protocols. Leaders and managers make sure that a full range of checks are undertaken on new staff before they work with children.

Leaders and managers make sure that the environment is maintained to a high standard and is safe. The provision is secure, and all the required health and safety checks are carried out in a timely manner.

Leaders and managers take their safeguarding responsibilities very seriously. There is a culture in the residential provision whereby the safety of children takes precedence. Consequently, leaders continually update their safeguarding policies and procedures to make them accessible to staff, and they provide staff with clear guidance on what they should do to keep children safe.

## **The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding**

Leaders and managers in this school are highly aspirational and ambitious for children. They show real commitment and ambition for the children and families who use and depend on the residential provision.

The school has recently moved to academy status. This has meant a period of some change and development. Leaders have managed this exceptionally well, and the residential provision has remained stable and has continued to provide very good care.

Leaders are excited for the future, with several developments taking place. These include research projects to inform care practice, the use of technology to help children's educational development and improved working with partner agencies.

The head of care, leaders and managers are dedicated to children and families. Their work in supporting families during the COVID-19 pandemic has been excellent. They maintained contact with families throughout, offering guidance and support.

The staff team is very stable, highly motivated and they greatly enjoy their jobs. Staff members spoken to said, 'We love working here and caring for the children.' Staff praise the support from managers and hold leaders in high regard. Staff receive regular supervision and their care practice is subject to regular review. All staff have the required qualifications, and they undertake training and development to enhance their knowledge and skills.

Leaders are visible in the residential areas, and staff know they can turn to any of the senior leadership team members. Leaders know the residential provision well and have a commendable desire to promote the quality of care. They have a range of measures to evaluate the quality of care. Regular audits take place, and a new independent visitor provides insightful and helpful suggestions for improvements. Leaders are also keen to re-establish, post-COVID-19, peer challenge and auditing processes.

Leaders talk proudly of the residential provision, of the achievements and of the children that make it so special. Leaders have developed a culture of a 'one school' approach to care and support. The residential provision in this school provides very effective care and is on an improvement trajectory.

## **Information about this inspection**

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people using the 'Social care common inspection framework'. This inspection was carried out under the Children Act 1989 to assess the effectiveness of the service, how it meets the core functions of the service as set out in legislation, and to consider how well it complies with the national minimum standards.

## **Residential special school details**

**Social care unique reference number:** SC053344

**Type of school:** Residential special school

**Headteacher/teacher in charge:** Melsa Buxton

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## **Inspector**

Phillip Morris, Social Care Inspector

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