

# Inspection of Thorpe St Andrew School and Sixth Form

Laundry Lane, Thorpe St Andrew, Norwich, Norfolk NR7 0XS

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Inspection dates:	29 and 30 April 2025
The quality of education	<b>Good</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Good</b>
Personal development	<b>Good</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Sixth-form provision	<b>Good</b>
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

The principal of this school is Penny Bignell. This school is part of Broad Horizons Education Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Owen Jenkins, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Chris Snudden.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils at Thorpe St Andrew are proud of their school. Many pupils enthusiastically represent the school in competitions, where they are regular participants in regional and national finals. Pupils value the changes the school has made to the culture and behaviour since the last inspection. Pupils now enjoy learning in calm and purposeful classrooms. They socialise around the expansive site respectfully. There are warm relationships that foster trust and confidence. As a result, pupils enjoy coming to school, where they feel valued and safe.

The school has high ambition for all pupils. Pupils respond to this ambition with positivity and a determination to succeed. They enjoy learning. Sixth-form students become passionate advocates for their subjects. Pupils' work is of high quality, and they can explain their learning in detail. They learn well and achieve highly in examinations.

Pupils' access to a wide extra-curricular offer helps them foster existing talents and explore new ones. The impressive sporting offer gives pupils a chance to experience traditional sports like football and rugby, as well as new games such as pickleball. Pupils also keenly take up other interests. They learn how to crochet, tend an allotment or design and build their own model racing car.

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

The school's ambitious curriculum reflects its commitment to provide excellence for all. Subject experts have carefully identified what pupils should learn. They have defined a logical order for pupils to learn this knowledge, from Years 7 to 13. Pupils confidently use what they already know to build an increasingly complex understanding of each subject.

Teachers have a strong understanding of their subjects, and how best to teach them. This helps them to clearly describe new concepts. In the sixth form, teachers break complex and often highly abstract information down in a way that is accessible to students. The school delivers on its priority of embedding reading and the accurate use of language throughout the curriculum. Consequently, many pupils develop a rich bank of subject-specific vocabulary. In the sixth form, students use academic and technical language with precision and confidence. The school uses a range of interventions to support pupils who struggle with reading. Consequently, most of these pupils catch up and access the curriculum as intended. However, sometimes these interventions lack the sharp focus necessary to address individual pupils' needs. A few pupils are removed from the support too soon. Here, pupils do not secure fluency in reading as quickly as they could.

Teaching provides well-thought-out exemplar written responses. These show pupils how to structure their work. Teachers accurately check what pupils understand. This helps spot where pupils have misconceptions. Teachers quickly address these misconceptions before they take root. When teachers are confident that pupils are ready, they are moved on. Pupils complete activities that help them secure new knowledge. As a result, many pupils develop a deep understanding of the subjects they study.

The school quickly identifies the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). In the main, teaching adapts to help pupils with SEND learn well. However, some adaptations lack precision. This means that some pupils with SEND do not learn the curriculum in the same depth as their peers. The school has recently opened the 'SAIL' centre. This provision for pupils with cognitive and learning difficulties provides access to bespoke learning and support. This is already having a positive impact. Pupils quickly catch up, before rejoining learning with their peers.

Pupils understand the school's high expectations for their conduct. This means learning usually proceeds without disruption. The majority of pupils focus on their learning. In the rare cases where staff need to intervene, they do so consistently. As a result, pupils have confidence that they will be treated fairly.

The school has redesigned its programme to support pupils to be ready for life beyond school. Pupils understand and display important values such as respect and tolerance. Opportunities through the school senate or sixth-form council support pupils' understanding of democracy and leadership. Pupils understand the value in being a positive contributor to society. The careers programme provides a wealth of information about different careers and study routes. This helps pupils make informed choices, with many successfully going on to their next stage.

The trust board and local governors use their extensive knowledge and experience to hold leaders to account. Trust executives support school leaders to refine and implement their strategic thinking. As a result, the school has secured significant and sustained improvements since its last inspection. Staff are positive about these improvements. They feel valued and listened to as the school continues to develop its provision.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- Occasionally, the adaptations to teaching for pupils with SEND are not as refined and precise as they need to be. This means that sometimes pupils with SEND are not able to access the depth of learning they could. The school should ensure that staff have the expertise to adapt their teaching approaches to enable pupils with SEND to access the full richness of the curriculum.
- Sometimes, the programmes for those pupils who struggle with reading do not address their specific barriers to reading, or are not sustained for long enough. This means that some pupils do not catch up quickly enough to learn the curriculum as intended. The school should ensure that programmes to support those in the early stages of learning to read are designed and implemented to enable those pupils to quickly become confident and fluent readers.

## 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.

## Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	143278
<b>Local authority</b>	Norfolk
<b>Inspection number</b>	10345451
<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1,843
<b>Of which, number on roll in the sixth form</b>	347
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Chris Snudden
<b>CEO of the trust</b>	Owen Jenkins
<b>Principal</b>	Penny Bignell
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.thorpestandrewschool.org.uk">www.thorpestandrewschool.org.uk</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	5 and 6 July 2022, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

## Information about this school

- The school is part of the Broad Horizons Education Trust.
- The school uses three unregistered providers of alternative provision.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

## Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements

(quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school’s education provision.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held meetings with leaders, including the principal, vice principal, and special educational needs coordinator. The lead inspector also met with the chair of the board of trustees, the chair and a member of the local governing committee and the CEO of the trust.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, science, history and physical education (PE). For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to staff, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils’ work. An inspector met with pupils to discuss their reading and listened to a sample of pupils read.
- To further inspect the curriculum, inspectors looked at examples of pupils’ work, reviewed curriculum documentation and visited lessons in health and social care, psychology, sociology, geography, and art, and reviewed documentation setting out support for pupils with SEND.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils’ interests first.
- Inspectors considered the responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments submitted. They considered the responses to Ofsted’s questionnaire for staff. There were no responses to Ofsted’s questionnaire for pupils. Inspectors spoke to groups of pupils about their experiences of school life and their learning in lessons to understand what it is like to be a pupil in their school.

## Inspection team

Dave Gibson, lead inspector	His Majesty’s Inspector
Sue Smith	Ofsted Inspector
Jess Pearce	Ofsted Inspector
Tessa Holledge	His Majesty’s Inspector
Catherine Wilson	Ofsted Inspector

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