

St Andrew's School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113048
Local Authority	City of Derby
Inspection number	325744
Inspection dates	3–4 February 2009
Reporting inspector	Kathleen Smith HMI

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

Boarding provision	
Social care URN	
Social care inspector	Katarina Djordjevic

The inspection of social care was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000.

Type of school	Special
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	81
Sixth form	33
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Richard Betts
Headteacher	Mr Phil Harrison
Date of previous school inspection	29 September 2005
School address	St Andrew's View Derby DE21 4EW
Telephone number	01332 832746
Fax number	01332 830115

Age group	11–19
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's inspectors, a Children's Directorate inspector and one Additional Inspector. The inspection of the school took place over two days and the boarding provision over three.

Description of the school

St Andrew's is a special school for students with severe learning difficulties and disabilities. This means that attainment on entry is well below the standards expected for their age. They all have statements of special educational needs and there has been an increase in the proportion of students with autism as their primary disability. They now constitute 14 per cent of the total school population. There has also been an increase in numbers attending the sixth form provision, which is now known as the further education (FE) college. The headteacher has been in post since September 2007 and the current managers, comprising of a senior assistant headteacher, two assistant headteachers and head of residential care were in temporary posts from September 2007 and formally adopted in September 2008. Students' family background vary with over a third eligible for free school meals; 17 students are from minority ethnic backgrounds; four students are looked after. The maximum number of boarders is 22. The school was designated as a specialist SEN school in September 2007.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The overall effectiveness of the school is good with some outstanding aspects to its provision. Leadership and management of the sixth form, known as the FE college, is good and boarding provision is satisfactory overall. The headteacher provides excellent leadership and since taking up his post in September 2007, has enabled the school to make rapid improvements to the quality of its provision. He is ably supported by a recently established professional and dedicated senior management team and highly experienced and committed staff team. Students' achievement is outstanding, as is their personal development. Their behaviour is excellent. They enjoy their education and make much better than expected progress academically and in developing independence skills. Teaching and learning are good. Students are provided with interesting and stimulating activities, which engage their interest and help them to make outstanding progress.

The curriculum provides an extensive range of opportunities for students to practise and to develop their life skills and independence. This is greatly enhanced through the extensive use of community facilities, the links with the adjacent secondary school and the local further education college. The support and instruction students receive in their personal skills and independence within the school's boarding provision also contribute substantially to their development. As well as academic subjects, the curriculum is greatly enriched with opportunities for students to participate in creative studies, work experience and sports and leisure activities. The college curriculum is good with activities geared to the needs of young adults. However, students, where appropriate, are not sufficiently prepared for leaving college to take up vocational or work based placements.

Care, support and guidance are good and outstanding in some respects. Staff exhibit high levels of expertise in supporting students with complex needs and an extensive range of specialist support services ensures that all individual support needs are met.

Leadership and management are good and the school demonstrates good capacity to improve. Lessons are now more routinely observed by senior managers and this has resulted in a greater consistency in the quality of teaching and learning. The school knows what actions it needs to take to improve further. Actions taken are well chosen and planned but it is not evident what direct impact these are having on whole school performance. The school promotes equality and diversity along with community cohesion very effectively but does not formally evaluate how well this is being done. The school provides good value for money.

Effectiveness of the sixth form

Grade: 2

The overall effectiveness of the sixth form is good. Students make excellent progress in life skills, which enables them to lead more independent lives. Students achieve relevant entry level qualifications matched to their individual programmes. Teaching and learning in the sixth form are good. Many activities take place off site and programmes are designed to improve students' independence in preparation for the next stage in their lives. Most students' progress onto further education life skills courses at Derby College. However, programmes are not yet sufficiently matched to individual student's destination goals which may include some form of vocational training or supported employment opportunities. Care, support and guidance within the sixth form are good, as is leadership and management.

Effectiveness of boarding provision

Grade: 3

The organisation is satisfactory.

The quality of boarding is satisfactory and the school meets most of the key National Minimum Standards. Judgements have been made for each individual outcome area as follows. Being Healthy, Staying Safe, Making a Positive Contribution and Organisation are judged as satisfactory. Enjoying Economic Wellbeing and Enjoying and Achieving are judged as good.

There were 14 recommendations set at the last inspection and action has been taken to address eight of these. There has been progress on making improvements to the building. Behaviour management plans are now in place and action has been taken to ensure staff are clear about what constitutes bullying. Students' daily recording sheets are more detailed about what actually happened and the outcome of an event.

Staff are committed to promoting a healthy lifestyle and work closely with parents and other health professionals to ensure students' health needs are met. Good and effective communication systems exist between the school nurse and care staff which helps to monitor and promote the well-being of students. Staff are knowledgeable about students' health needs. However, information regarding health needs is kept in different places and health care plans do not contain all details regarding these needs. For example, health care plans do not always include details about continence management.

Good and effective procedures are in place to ensure that medicines are appropriately handled and stored to safeguard students' welfare. Staff receive training on the administration of medication and regular monitoring of the medication systems helps to ensure practices are safe.

Students receive a varied and nutritious diet and healthy eating is actively promoted.

Staff work with students in a sensitive manner ensuring privacy and dignity is maintained. Staff understand the need for confidentiality and records are kept securely.

Students' welfare is promoted because they have very good relationships with the staff and feel able to approach them with concerns that they have. Students who are able to express an opinion know who to go to if they are unhappy or sad. There are various ways in which students are supported to raise any concerns which take into account their communication difficulties. Parents are very confident that any concerns they may have will be dealt with appropriately. The school's complaints procedure does not contain all the information required in Standard 4.

There are clear procedures for responding to safeguarding concerns in the school. There are links with the Local Safeguarding Children Board; all permanent staff receive child protection training, but not agency staff

Staff are highly committed to supporting and enabling students to develop their skills and socially acceptable behaviour. Students are taught to respect each other and that bullying is unacceptable. Any incidents which may be perceived as bullying are dealt with promptly. Staff receive training in behaviour management and are skilled in managing students' behaviours. There is a low incidence of measures of control and discipline used. However, sanctions used are not always appropriate and records do not always give sufficient detail about the time and duration of the sanction. The internal quality assurance systems have not always identified these shortfalls.

The management of health and safety at the school is good which helps to protect students and staff from the risk of harm or injury.

There are clear procedures for the recruitment of staff. However, gaps in employment are not always explored and references not always verified. The system for verifying that the recruitment checks for agency staff have been undertaken do not take into account the requirements of NMS 27.

Staff work tenaciously to enable students to reach their full potential and to get the best out of life. Staff are skilled in communicating with students, using alternative methods of communications where needed. Students are given opportunities to learn new skills and try out new activities, including accessing community activities and resources which helps to increase students' self-confidence. Students make good progress whilst staying in the residential unit in terms of acquiring independence skills, increasing their self-confidence and learning to integrate with their peers and members of the public.

Care and education staff continue to work closely together resulting in positive outcomes for students.

The promotion of equality and diversity is satisfactory. Students are supported to learn about and respect different faiths and cultures but care records do not always give clear details of students' cultural and religious needs and how to meet these. For example, Halal meat is not provided, which results in some students only accessing vegetarian meals.

There is an excellent working partnership between parents and the school which results in positive outcomes for students. Parents are very positive about the care and education their children receive.

Staff work hard to provide a homely and pleasant environment for students to achieve as much independence as possible, within the limitations of the physical environment. Communal areas are decorated to a good standard and are well furnished. Students are encouraged to personalise their bedrooms.

The school's management team provides clear direction and leadership which results in a well-motivated and committed staff team who feel well supported and valued. All staff except agency staff receive regular supervision. There is good continuity of staff so that students' relationships with them are not disrupted; they receive appropriate training which enables them to meet the needs of students. Induction programmes for new staff do not cover basic instruction in child protection procedures although they do receive full training at the next available opportunity.

Quality assurance systems do not always identify shortfalls, for example, accidents are not monitored to ascertain if there are any health and safety hazards. In addition, Standard 33 visits do not regularly check records of sanctions, complaints and the use of physical intervention

What must be done to secure future improvement?

Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- ensure students' health care plans include all relevant information as detailed in Standard 14.6 and that they include details of how to meet identified needs (NMS 14)

- review the school's complaints procedure to ensure it includes all points detailed in Standard 4.3 (NMS 4)
- ensure sanctions used are appropriate and that records of sanctions give clear details of the time the sanction is imposed and how long it lasted (NMS 10)
- ensure there are robust recruitment practices in line with Standard 27 (NMS 27)
- ensure students' cultural, religious and dietary needs are fully identified and met (NMS 22)
- ensure new and agency staff are given guidance in child protection procedures as part of their induction and that this is recorded (NMS 29)
- ensure all agency staff used receive supervision at the required intervals (NMS 30)
- ensure internal quality assurance systems including Standard 33 visits are robust enough and effective in identifying shortfalls in practice and that remedial action is taken, including the monitoring of accidents (NMS 32)

What the school should do to improve further

- Develop learning programmes for students, which enable them to progress, if appropriate, to vocational or work placements on leaving the college.
- Make target setting for improvement more rigorous to clearly identify how well the actions being taken to improve provision are impacting on student outcomes and the quality of provision.
- Comply fully with current legislation in relation to equality and diversity by formally evaluating the impact of school policies and procedures and the identification of actions to ensure the needs of all students are met fully.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Students' achievement is outstanding. The vast majority of students make much better progress than expected in all subjects and especially in English due to the strong focus given to the development of communication skills, particularly speaking and listening. Students make outstanding progress in their functional literacy, numeracy and life skills. They learn how to handle money, to shop and cook for themselves. Students' independence skills are further enhanced in the residential provision where they make big improvements to their daily living and personal skills. Students gain in confidence and self-esteem, which enables them to integrate successfully into the community and progress on to further education. They also make very good progress in the development of their information and communication technology (ICT) skills, because these are taught as an integral part of their learning. There is no significant variation in the progress of different groups. Students from different cultures and backgrounds are integrated exceptionally well. Students with autism achieve just as well as others because staff have a high degree of expertise and skill. Achievement is good overall for students in the college. Students develop a good understanding of the world of work through work experience and their participation in enterprise activities.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Students thrive because each one of them is highly valued and cherished as an individual. They love coming to school and enjoy the company of staff and their peers. Because of this, attendance is good. Behaviour is exemplary and any challenging behaviour is expertly dealt with. Students are confident in identifying adults who will help them if they have any worries.

They feel comfortable and secure in school. They have very good attitudes to learning and are eager to please their teachers, often enjoying a shared sense of humour. Students quickly improve their self-confidence in their abilities, because of the individual care staff provide. As a result, they are able to learn at a much quicker rate once they have developed confidence in themselves. They are encouraged to express their views and play a role in shaping major decisions. For example, older students are currently campaigning for greater freedom in using their bus passes. Students have an excellent understanding of what it takes to be healthy. They take part in a good number of sports and enrichment activities such as the popular drumming and cheerleading. Students make a good contribution to community life and each class supports an individual charity. They leave having reached their potential as independent adults, capable of functioning in the wider society. Students learn the skills important for their future economic well-being such as handling money, and travelling independently.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Teaching and learning are good. This affirms the schools self-evaluation. Students enjoy their learning and behave exceptionally well in lessons due to the stimulating activities prepared for them by teachers. These are planned very effectively based on thorough initial and ongoing assessment of individual student's needs. Individual learning targets are challenging and integrated into lessons for students to achieve. The teaching of life skills is of a high standard. Students use local shops, cafes, and sports centres to practise their independence and social skills. Individual instruction is provided, where needed, to enable students to travel independently to a local college or to a work experience placement. Students with more complex needs are given high levels of support which enables them to integrate into lessons with other students and to access off site facilities such as the adjacent mainstream secondary school. ICT is used in innovative ways. For example, history was brought to life when in a lesson students enjoyed seeing their own images contained within original photographs of world war two displayed on the interactive whiteboard. Functional literacy, numeracy and communication skills are taught well and integrated into lessons very effectively, but there are missed opportunities to record achievement of these across all subject areas. In most lessons, students are given work to do which is challenging and engages them fully in learning. However, on a few occasions too much support and direction are given to students in the completion of their tasks.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is outstanding across the school provision and good within the college. Life skills provision is outstanding both within the school and college. There are very good links made with the residential provision which contributes very successfully to the students' overall independence and personal development. A significant proportion of curriculum activities take place off site where students benefit from learning social and independence skills within realistic living and working environments. Students have an exceptionally wide range of activities planned to meet their needs and interests. They are actively involved in the life of the local community and participate in many community based activities. The links made with local schools and Derby College has enhanced the curriculum and extended opportunities for students to integrate into mainstream provision. The curriculum is also enriched by a wide range of

creative subjects which students particularly enjoy such as art, drama, music and sport and leisure. The college curriculum is developing but already provides a full range of work-related and enterprise activities. Links with the local college provides a progression route for students on leaving the sixth form and further opportunities for students to gain entry level qualifications are developing. However, the school recognises that further personalisation and more progression opportunities for FE students need to be explored. Most students access courses in life skills on leaving the school. However, there are less opportunities for them to progress onto, for instance, vocational courses or supported employment.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Whilst this aspect of the school's work is good overall, a significant strength is the outstanding levels of care and support provided. This helps students to quickly learn important life skills that stand them in good stead for the rest of their lives. This is typified by the guidance they receive whilst in the residential part of the school. By painstakingly encouraging them each step of the way, such as when learning how to make a bed, these programmes make an exceptional contribution to their development. Students develop as well-rounded young people because of the exhaustive support they are given to work hard and succeed at their learning. Encouragement and rewards are key, and the school uses these expertly. Links with an extensive range of specialist support services are well established which means that individual support tailored to the individual student is expertly delivered.

Staff are extremely good at tracking and involving students in their progress. Parents are kept informed and communication between them and members of staff is very good. Parents are very positive about the support they receive and the attention given by the school to the safety of their children and young people. Procedures for child protection are satisfactory. The person with responsibility is experienced and well supported by the school nurse. Training is planned to bring more staff up to the required level of expertise, but whole staff training is not carried out systematically. This has been correctly identified by the school as needing improvement. Systems for keeping students safe and secure are in place, but some record keeping lacks rigour.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The leadership provided by the headteacher is outstanding, ably supported by the senior management team. Although relatively new in post, their dedication and commitment enable students to make outstanding progress in their achievements and personal development. Staff are extremely motivated, experienced and show high levels of expertise in meeting the needs of students with a wide range of complex learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Staff feel valued and morale is high due to the encouragement and support given to them by senior managers. They are fully involved in self-evaluation and school improvement planning. Many take on responsibilities for new initiatives which contributes greatly to the ongoing improvements made since the last inspection. The headteacher has been instrumental in developing the highly successful partnership work with local schools and colleges. The school is held in high regard within the local community and is at the forefront of working to improve specialist skills and provision within the local authority. The school has very recently gained specialist status, which has enabled it to secure funds for further resources and improvement. This is already impacting positively on pupils' achievements. Staff are able to

access a wider range of staff development and training to provide high standards of support to students with complex needs. Governors play a more effective role than at the time of the last inspection and provide good levels of critical support. The financial management of the school is sound, resources are good and accommodation is adequate for the numbers of students who attend the school.

The school's capacity to improve is good. Senior leaders are successful at identifying what to do to improve further. The monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning is effective and assistant headteachers have recently undergone training to extend this further and refine their judgements in relation to the quality of teaching and learning. Actions being taken to address areas identified in school improvement plans are closely monitored. However, school improvement plans do not contain sufficient success criteria or measurable targets to enable the school to clearly evaluate how well actions are impacting on outcomes for students and the overall quality of provision.

Equality of opportunity and community cohesion are promoted well. As well as ensuring all students are valued and their disabilities and cultural backgrounds are respected, the work the school does in raising the profile of students with complex needs in the community is highly commendable. However, the school does not yet formally evaluate sufficiently how well this is being done and has not identified what actions to take to ensure compliance with equalities legislation.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	1	1
The effectiveness of boarding provision	3	
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	1	

¹Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1	
The attendance of learners	2	
The behaviour of learners	1	
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1	

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	1	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	2

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2	
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2	
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2	
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No	
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No	

Annex B

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

5 February 2009

Dear Students

Inspection of St Andrew's School

Thank you for talking to me when I visited with my colleagues Ann and Katarina. We were made to feel very welcome and were very impressed by your excellent behaviour and how well you talked to us about your school.

We found that your school is good with some outstanding things going on. You make excellent progress in your education and life skills. You are taught and supported well by the staff who have your best interests at heart. Your headteacher is outstanding and, together with the other senior managers and staff, works very hard to ensure you get the best. You really enjoy being at school and take advantage of the many things you can take part in. You learn the skills you need to become more independent in your future lives but we would like to see more of you having the opportunity to go on to vocational courses or supported jobs on leaving the school.

You feel safe in school and your parents are very pleased with your progress. The school is continuing to improve which means your achievements are outstanding. However, the school needs to tighten up on its record keeping, especially in the residence. Also, the school needs to be clearer about how well the actions it is taking are bringing about further improvements.

Thanks again for your contribution to the inspection

Yours sincerely

Kath Smith

Her Majesty's Inspector