

Inspection of St Andrew's College

St Andrew's Healthcare, Smyth House, Billing Road, Northampton NN1 5DG

Inspection dates: 4 to 6 March 2025

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Outstanding**

Personal development **Outstanding**

Leadership and management **Good**

Sixth-form provision **Good**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection Good

Does the school meet the independent school standards? **Yes**

What is it like to attend this school?

This unique and bespoke school provides a high-quality education for all students. Staff ensure that the school environment is accessible and welcoming. The friendly, relaxed and calm atmosphere reduces any anxieties students may have. This enables students to attend well. If students are too unwell to attend, staff teach them on the ward. This individual care and attention helps students to feel settled. Structured, well-established routines help students to feel safe. This in turn allows them to engage with their learning.

The school has high expectations for all students. These expectations are matched by equally high levels of support for students. Staff want students not just to attend but to engage and learn. The staff reward and celebrate every 'learning moment'. Students are helped to see how well they are progressing with their education. This in turn builds their self-esteem, self-confidence and resilience.

Students develop strong working relationships with staff. There is a large team of adults to help support students with their learning and their everyday lives. This care and help are a real strength of the school. Students know that staff will listen to them and help them to manage their emotions and behaviour. This support helps students to behave exceptionally well when they are in school.

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

The multi-disciplinary team, including teachers, assess students' needs carefully when they are admitted to the hospital. Staff then offer students an individualised and ambitious 'Active8' curriculum timetable. These timetables meet students' therapeutic, academic and personal development needs. Teachers design learning to help students develop resilience to overcome barriers to learning. Staff use students' interests to inspire them with their learning.

The personal development of students is at the heart of all the school does. It provides an exceptional programme to help students achieve their personal targets. Staff encourage students to take up interests that challenge them in new ways. This can include activities such as horse riding, swimming, circus skills or taking part in the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme. Other aspects of the programme are carefully thought out to motivate and engage students. They learn about different faiths and cultures, which helps them to make sense of what they watch on the news. They debate and discuss different topics, plan events and take part in charitable activities. Students learn how to keep healthy and how to stay safe, both online and in the community. The school has developed an appropriate careers programme using recognised benchmarks. Students receive independent careers advice. They can attend work experience placements within the hospital building, which develop invaluable lifelong skills. Staff work with the clinical team and therapists to help to improve students' mental health. This expert nurture and care means that many students are more positive about their future. The school does all that it can to ensure that students are well prepared for their next steps.

Students are offered a broad range of subjects. Many are supported to gain accreditation for their work. In many subjects, what students should learn and when is clearly and logically planned. However, in other subjects, it is unclear exactly what teachers intend students to know and remember. Teachers have good knowledge of the subjects they teach. They work with students one to one in lessons, which ensures that students receive the precise support that they need. Teachers use different ways to check students' understanding during lessons. They use the information gathered to address any misconceptions or gaps in students' knowledge.

All staff prioritise reading. They use a range of creative ways to regularly communicate to students the importance of reading for enjoyment. The school's reward system builds towards students gaining a token for the much-loved book vending machine. Students look forward to when Trinity, the dog, comes into school to read with them. There is an appropriate phonics-based reading scheme in place for any students who require extra help to become confident readers.

The school's high expectations for behaviour are understood well by students. They uphold these expectations when moving around the building. Students are polite and respectful. They listen to staff and their classmates with respect. They have very positive attitudes to learning.

Staff say that they are well cared for. Their well-being and workload are carefully considered. They are proud to work at the school.

The proprietor and governors have a good understanding of the context of the school. They have regular meetings with school leaders and receive detailed information about the school. They carry out regular checks on the performance of the school. However, systems for monitoring the quality of education do not provide the school with the precise detail it needs to ensure that students are making the required progress through the curriculum. The proprietor has ensured that the school meets the independent school standards (the standards). The premises are well maintained. Students' safety and well-being are central to the decisions that leaders make. The school meets the requirements of schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010. The policies for relationships and health education, and safeguarding, are available on the school's website.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve? (Information for the school and proprietor)

- In some subjects, it is not clear what the important knowledge and skills are that students are expected to know and remember. In these subjects, even though students are following a carefully individualised programme, it is not clear how well they are progressing through the curriculum and developing a secure

understanding of the subject. The school should ensure that the curriculum clearly defines the key content that students will learn over time in all subjects.

- The school's current evaluation process does not provide it with the precise detail that it needs. The school does not have a clear picture of the quality of education. As a result, the school is unable to evaluate how well the curriculum is meeting the students' needs and how well students are progressing through the curriculum. The school should ensure that it has the precise information it needs to fully evaluate the quality of education that it delivers.

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.

School details

Unique reference number	135785
DfE registration number	941/6071
Local authority	West Northamptonshire
Inspection number	10322495
Type of school	Other Independent School
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	13 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	6
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	6
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	St Andrew's Healthcare
Chair	Ruth Bagley
Headteacher	Peter Rainford
Annual fees (day pupils)	Nil (inclusive with placement)
Telephone number	01604 614300
Website	www.stah.org
Email address	college@standrew.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	29 June to 1 July 2021

Information about this school

- The school is located in the grounds of St Andrew's Healthcare, Billing Road, Northampton, NN1 5DG, which is an independent, charitable, mental health facility.
- The school provides education in a secure setting. It is attached to a secure, child and adolescent mental health service residential ward.
- Students have significant mental health conditions, which impact on their behaviour. All students are classed as having special educational needs and/or disabilities. Some have education, health and care plans.
- The school is registered to provide education for up to 45 pupils.
- The school currently has sixth-form students only on its roll.
- Since the previous standard inspection, the school's leadership has changed. A new headteacher and a new chair of the proprietor board have been appointed.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors carried out this inspection under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008. The purpose of the inspection is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

The school meets the independent school standards. These are the requirements set out in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

- 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 the headteacher and subject leaders. The lead inspector met with members of the proprietor body, including charity directors and some governors, including the chair of governors.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English; mathematics and personal, social and health education. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some students about their learning and looked at a sample of students' work.
- Inspectors also looked at materials, students' work and spoke to leaders about some other subjects.
- Inspectors considered a wide variety of school documents, including the school's policies and risk assessments.

- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and students; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts students' interests first.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted's survey of school staff. Inspectors met with students to discuss different aspects of the school's provision.
- Inspectors toured the premises and reviewed the school facilities.

Inspection team

Dave Gilkerson, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Liz Moore

Ofsted Inspector

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