

# School inspection report

14 to 16 May 2024

## **St Andrew's School**

Buckhold

Pangbourne

Berkshire

RG8 8QA

The Independent Schools Inspectorate is appointed by the Department for Education to inspect association independent schools in England. Our inspections report on the extent to which the statutory Independent School Standards and other applicable regulatory requirements are met, collectively referred to in this report as 'the Standards'.

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## Summary of inspection findings

1. Leaders at St Andrew's have established a school that provides challenge for all whilst also being nurturing and supportive. This follows the school's aim for children to be 'stretched but not stressed' and sees the promotion of pupils' wellbeing at the heart of each decision.
2. The flexible boarding provision offers pupils the opportunity to stay in a caring and safe environment, where the welcoming atmosphere is complemented with a wide range of activities. At the beginning of the inspection, some aspects of the boarding premises required further development to fully ensure the privacy of boarders. These matters were rectified before the end of the inspection. Systems for reviewing boarding policies are not robust enough so some documents were out of date.
3. The leadership culture of the school is supportive. Leaders at different levels work together to promote the wellbeing of all members of the community. Leaders are motivating and encouraging, supporting staff and pupils to use their initiative. Leaders are reflective and have suitable structures in place for evaluating the provision in all its aspects.
4. The broad curriculum offers suitable challenge to pupils of all ages, from the early years to those about to move to their next school. The outdoor provision is a distinctive feature of the school. It is embedded in the curriculum so that pupils develop skills in practical problem-solving and teamwork alongside an appreciation of the natural environment.
5. Pupils' emotional wellbeing is a key focus for the school. Leaders have recently appointed additional staff with specific training in this area. This has increased the range of readily accessible adults to whom a pupil can turn should they have a concern.
6. The effectively designed personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) programme supports pupils to understand topical issues and their own rights and responsibilities. It helps pupils appreciate the need for rules within school and the importance of having laws in society.
7. Safeguarding arrangements across the school, including in the early years, are comprehensive and effective in promoting the wellbeing of pupils. Leaders and staff are diligent, reporting and responding to concerns about pupils promptly. Safeguarding has a prominent profile in the school.

## The extent to which the school meets the Standards

- Standards relating to leadership and management, and governance are met.
- Standards relating to the quality of education, training and recreation are met.
- Standards relating to pupils' physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing are met.
- Standards relating to pupils' social and economic education and contribution to society are met.
- Standards relating to safeguarding are met.

### Recommended next steps

Leaders should:

- ensure that boarding premises provide sufficient privacy for boarders and that there is regular systematic review of the accommodation and boarding documentation so that the Standards are consistently maintained.

## Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

8. Leaders have appropriate skills and understanding and promote pupils' wellbeing effectively. Academic and pastoral leaders at all levels are appropriately equipped and trained. They promote pupils' progress, support their wellbeing and provide them with a range of high-quality opportunities. The school is responsive to the individual needs of each pupil.
9. The school takes great care in managing its support for the physical and sensory needs of its pupils. The accessibility plan ensures that all pupils are able to access both the site and the curriculum. It is audited externally and reviewed annually. Through leaders' oversight of policies, and their implementation and the monitoring of the curriculum, they ensure that the school fulfils its duties under the Equality Act 2010.
10. The school's key aims are embedded across the school. From the kindness awards to themed displays, these aims are evident. The modelling of values by teachers through their supportive relationships with their pupils and their encouragement to think differently plays a key part in this. Leaders prioritise wellbeing in all their work so that pupils are happy, well-rounded and curious learners.
11. Leaders are reflective and have suitable structures in place for evaluating all aspects of the school's work. Leaders regularly evaluate the quality of provision in individual subjects and across the school. A wide-ranging development plan is in place which focuses well on key priorities, including curriculum and facilities development. The plan is implemented effectively, ensuring that the school continually improves.
12. Governors' and leaders' approach to risk management has been subject to substantial change in recent years. A comprehensive system of identifying and managing risk is now in place which addresses how likely a risk is and how effectively it can be avoided. This supports leaders in deciding upon the viability of an activity. Staff training on risk assessment is in place and up to date.
13. School policies are detailed and practical. They are implemented effectively and are easily available to parents. Whole-school policies in the early years and pre-prep are adjusted to be suitable for the requirements of the age group. These are reviewed termly and adhered to by staff.
14. The school provides parents with an extensive range of useful information. Parents receive regular, detailed reports about their children's progress and attainment.
15. The complaints procedure is clear and followed effectively. Records of complaints are detailed and kept securely. Complaints are responded to in a timely fashion and reviewed regularly by leaders.
16. Governors have suitable understanding and experience. They challenge and support leaders well, enhancing their effectiveness. The recent introduction of link governors has focused this support and enhanced governors' knowledge of the workings of the school. The school's merger with Bradfield College at the end of 2021 has added an extra level of governance expertise whilst St Andrew's retains its distinctive character and leadership.

## The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to leadership and management, and governance

**17. All the relevant Standards are met.**

## Section 2: Quality of education, training and recreation

18. Pupils in the school experience a broad curriculum which is appropriate to their age and ability. Pupils make good progress across the curriculum. The pre-senior baccalaureate, introduced in September 2023, provides older pupils with an academically challenging curriculum, alongside the development of a range of skills which prepare pupils well for their senior schools and their lives beyond.
19. The pre-prep delivers an appropriately balanced range of subjects. Pupils benefit from specialist teaching in subject areas such as physical education, music, dance, French and forest school. This helps pupils develop a wide breadth of experience and skills.
20. The early years provision successfully covers the required seven areas of learning. Teachers have suitable subject knowledge, and their lessons are well planned. As a result, children's knowledge, skills and understanding develop alongside their self-confidence. They are supported by key workers, who observe, record, monitor and regularly identify next steps for each child, at a suitable level of individual challenge, which helps them to make good progress.
21. Pupils make good progress in literacy at all levels. The pre-secondary project qualification sees pupils complete sustained and fluent essays in response to a topic of their choice, with subjects ranging from chocolate to Napoleon. Pupils, including those in the pre-prep, develop effective linguistic skills as a result of well-planned teaching and the routine use of taught languages for instructions and conversational exchanges.
22. Pupils' skills in mathematical and scientific reasoning develop well. This is, in part, as a result of the open-ended activities teachers plan for them, such as when they are required to design their own experiments. Teachers provide opportunities for pupils to develop their reasoning skills wherever possible, such as when responding to sources in history. Pupils become confident users of technology in many formats, including early coding in the pre-prep.
23. Pupils at all stages make good progress in their aesthetic and creative education. Well-planned and engaging teaching helps pupils develop appreciation of, and skill in, a variety of genres from African patterns to surrealist collage. They reflect thoughtfully about their creativity across a range of subjects.
24. Teachers ensure that all pupils are fully involved in their learning, including those who speak English as an additional language (EAL). Effective targeted questioning stretches all, including the more able pupils.
25. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are identified early in their life at the school. Targeted support is provided for them, as needed. The guidance provided by the learning support department is highly specific and is shared effectively with teaching staff. Teachers apply this guidance about individual pupils in their planning and delivery, which helps pupils who have SEND to make good progress.
26. Teachers plan effective lessons and show good levels of subject knowledge across the curriculum. They manage the learning environment well, including pupils' behaviour, so that classrooms are calm and productive. Pupils are confident and enjoy their learning opportunities.

27. Pupils work well both collaboratively and independently. They develop key skills such as reflecting and building upon previous learning, 'thinking outside the box' and essay writing. These skills are honed as pupils move up through the school.
28. A robust assessment framework is in place which tracks pupils' outcomes in a way which enables pupils to understand their own progress. Pupils respond well to opportunities for them to edit and improve their own work. Pupils value the guidance they receive from their teachers. This support and feedback has a positive impact on their learning and progress.
29. The school's co-curricular provision is extensive and enables all pupils, including boarders, to have a varied all-round educational experience which supports their broader abilities and personal development. These activities are delivered by well-informed and committed staff. Requests from pupils are acted upon, when practical, prompting additions to the programme such as the introduction of girls' touch rugby.

### **The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to the quality of education, training and recreation**

- 30. All the relevant Standards are met.**

## Section 3: Pupils' physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing

31. Pupils enjoy positive relationships in school. They treat adults and each other with respect and courtesy. Respectful behaviour is modelled to them by staff. Pupils of all ages, including children in the early years, are considerate and polite. They appreciate the need to behave this way in order to maintain the positive, friendly learning environment.
32. Spirituality is actively promoted through weekly chapel services, assemblies and RE lessons. In addition, pupils visit places of worship, which helps them to reflect on the spiritual aspects of their lives. Pupils appreciate the spaces, both natural and constructed, in which they play and learn.
33. Pupils develop self-esteem and self-confidence through the care shown to them by staff and their peers. They know that they are listened to and, as a result, are adept at talking to adults without arrogance or inappropriateness. The pupil-led 'mind your head' committee sees Year 7 pupils leading projects to promote good mental health across the community.
34. Through the PSHE curriculum, school assemblies and groups such as the 'respect, inclusion, diversity and equality' committee, pupils learn about the importance of respect. The school teaches pupils the importance of respect for everyone regardless of gender, age, race or other aspects of identity. This has included visits from external speakers, such as a visitor who introduced pupils to the daily reality of blindness. As a result, pupils develop their understanding of the range of human experience and are supportive of each other.
35. In addition to the weekly physical education and daily games lessons, pupils have additional opportunities to participate in a range of extra-curricular sporting and enrichment activities. These promote pupils' appreciation of the importance of leading a healthy, active lifestyle and being confident and happy in themselves. Leaders have designed an effective physical education curriculum which, along with the numerous opportunities for pupils to participate in fixtures, promotes the sense of 'sport for all'.
36. The relationships and sex education (RSE) curriculum encourages pupils to reflect and to develop a deeper understanding of themselves and the people they meet. Pupils value the opportunities to discuss a wide range of topics, including the importance of consent and of making appropriate choices in their relationships with other people.
37. Pupils recognise that rules are in place for their safety. As they understand and appreciate the rules, they do not feel the need to break them. A clear system of sanctions is implemented, as needed. Leaders monitor behaviour records closely and respond effectively to address any negative trends in pupils' behaviour.
38. The school has an effective anti-bullying strategy and actively seeks to prevent and minimise bullying. Should bullying be found, it is dealt with promptly and effectively. Pupils are helped to overcome its impact and those who perpetrate it are encouraged to reflect and change their ways. All staff receive suitable training on how to manage bullying should it occur.
39. The health and safety of all members of the school community is prioritised and effective risk assessments are in place throughout the school. These documents are continually referred to and

updated. Staff recognise and act on their own responsibility to keep themselves and pupils safe. The school's premises are well maintained and leaders in this area ensure the safety of the learning environment.

40. Pupils are always supervised appropriately, both during the school day and while boarding. Suitable supervision arrangements allow pupils to make use of the school's woodland setting during break times. Boarders know how to contact a member of staff if needed.
41. Admission and attendance registers are completed appropriately and meet regulatory requirements. Leaders monitor attendance closely and take appropriate action, when necessary, in response to absences.
42. There are effective systems in place for the administration of first aid. Staff are trained in both paediatric and general first aid and the training is carefully monitored and kept up to date so that pupils' needs can be effectively supported.
43. Leaders of boarding have established a setting where flexi-boarding is welcoming, safe and adaptable. Well-designed activities are integral to the boarding experience. However, systems for checking the quality of the accommodation are not methodical enough. A small number of aspects of the setting were found to be in need of modification during the inspection, including to enhance the privacy of boarders. These matters were resolved before the end of the inspection.

### **The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to pupils' physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing**

- 44. All the relevant Standards are met.**

## Section 4: Pupils' social and economic education and contribution to society

45. The effective PSHE programme successfully promotes fundamental British values, developing pupils' appreciation of and respect for laws, public institutions and the role of democracy. Pupils are taught about different cultures, religions and ethnic backgrounds. Pupils fully accept individual differences, whatever they may be, and appreciate how diversity enriches modern British society. Through their oversight of policy implementation and the design of the curriculum, leaders are proactive in ensuring there is equality of opportunities and experiences for every pupil.
46. Pupils develop a strong moral compass and deep understanding of right from wrong through lessons on topical issues and through the application of an effective rewards and sanctions system. This system is understood by pupils, who contribute to its development by completing a questionnaire.
47. Leaders have established a culture where charitable activity plays a key part in school life. Pupils understand the importance of contributing to the lives of others. This can be seen by the pupil-led charities committee's fundraising to support local causes, such as a local hedgehog hospital, through bring and buy sales and bug hunts. From the youngest children onwards, pupils take the initiative and show a commitment to helping others in any way they can. Sponsored haircuts and a sleep-out to raise funds to support local homeless people are typical examples.
48. The pre-prep curriculum focuses well on the social development of the youngest pupils. Pupils are encouraged to accept responsibility for their behaviour and set good examples to those they are working with. In lessons such as forest school and science, pupils are entrusted to be creative, show initiative and collaborate with others.
49. The school has a suitable policy for the teaching of careers and pupils are prepared well for their next steps in life. A careers fair gives pupils an introduction to many professions and the skills those jobs require. External speakers visit the school and tell pupils about their career journeys. The Gatsby Benchmarks are covered through the PSHE curriculum and in the St Andrew's skills programme. Leaders ensure that presentations and schemes of work are impartial as they inform pupils about potential choices in the future.
50. Pupils develop their economic knowledge and understanding through the PSHE and St Andrew's skills programmes. This includes a 'growing business' project where practical examples help pupils learn about entrepreneurship. A visiting workshop from a bank helps pupils learn about money matters, such as savings, loans, interest rates and budgeting. Pupils understand the difference between wants and needs. They take advantage of opportunities for enterprise and use their own economic initiative to raise money, such as the school council's hat design competition where pupils had to consider market forces. Planning and organising charity events helps pupils to understand the concept of profit and loss.
51. In keeping with the school's emphasis on education in the outdoors, pupils are provided with a range of opportunities to help them develop a socially responsible understanding of environmental matters. For example, to support their understanding of recycling, pupils in the pre-prep upcycled clothes and the Eco committee organised a community clothes swap event while older pupils hold a "trashion" show, featuring clothes created from a broad range of reused materials.

52. Senior pupils have opportunities for leadership in many different areas of school life, including sports leaders, house captains, school councillors, as members of the eco committee or with the chapel or choir. In the pre-prep, Year 2 pupils have specific responsibilities as monitors at breaktimes, supporting and helping the staff on duty. Pupils value these opportunities to contribute to their school community.

### **The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to pupils' social and economic education and contribution to society**

**53. All the relevant Standards are met.**

## Safeguarding

54. The management of safeguarding in the school is effective. Appropriate arrangements are made to promote the welfare of all pupils, including boarders. A detailed and appropriately contextualised policy is in place and implemented effectively by staff. Safeguarding is on all meeting agendas for staff, leaders and governors, ensuring it is a priority for the school.
55. The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and the wider safeguarding team are well qualified. Their training is kept up to date and in line with statutory guidance. Leaders across the school, including in the early years, undertake an annual review of safeguarding, supplemented with termly updates, amending procedures as required. All staff receive regular training from induction onwards. This includes training on issues specific to the school and the local area and any emerging themes. Staff know what to do, and who to contact, should they have a concern and do so promptly when concerns arise.
56. Governors exercise effective oversight of safeguarding. The linked safeguarding governor visits the school regularly and makes termly reports to the board. The safeguarding governor meets with pupils and groups of staff, alongside attending meetings of the safeguarding committee, which helps to strengthen governors' understanding of current issues.
57. Pupils know the various ways in which they can seek advice, including via 'bother boxes' and an online reporting option. They understand the importance of sharing a concern and know there is a range of adults to support them, including an independent listener.
58. Safeguarding records are kept appropriately using an online system. Staff with responsibility for safeguarding monitor ongoing situations effectively. They take timely and decisive action to protect pupils when necessary. Leaders look for trends and patterns and take appropriate action in response to any that are identified.
59. Leaders work effectively with external agencies, as necessary. Leaders refer to, and seek advice from, local authorities should an incident occur.
60. A single central register of appointments is kept and maintained well. All recruitment checks are conducted as required. Staff trained in safer recruitment are involved in all aspects of the employment process.
61. Pupils are regularly taught how to stay safe online, including recognising hazards, at a level appropriate to their age. An effective filtering and monitoring system identifies any issues efficiently. Safeguarding leaders respond promptly when an alert is raised.
62. Leaders have a strong understanding of risk management. They are proactive in responding to possible risks to pupils, including self-harm. There are appropriate risk assessments for individuals, alongside those for external visits and the site.

### The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to safeguarding

**63. All the relevant Standards are met.**

## School details

<b>School</b>	St Andrew's School
<b>Department for Education number</b>	869/6001
<b>Registered charity number</b>	309089
<b>Address</b>	St Andrew's School Buckhold Pangbourne Berkshire RG8 8QA
<b>Phone number</b>	0118 9744276
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:schooloffice@standrewsberkshire.co.uk">schooloffice@standrewsberkshire.co.uk</a>
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.standrewsberkshire.co.uk">www.standrewsberkshire.co.uk</a>
<b>Proprietor</b>	The Warden and Council of St Andrew's College, Bradfield
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Philip Waite
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Edward Graham
<b>Age range</b>	2 to 13
<b>Number of pupils</b>	329
<b>Number of boarding pupils</b>	29
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	28 November 2023

## Information about the school

64. St Andrew's School is a day and boarding school set in rural Berkshire, near Pangbourne. It was founded in 1934 as a boys' school and, beginning with its pre-prep school, became co-educational in 1971. In December 2021, the school merged with Bradfield College to form the Bradfield Group. Since the last inspection a new headmaster has joined the school, in September 2021. A new chair of governors was appointed in September 2023.
65. There is one co-educational boarding house within the main school building. Pupils can board as flexi-boarders from Monday to Thursday nights. The school has capacity for 29 boarders per night.
66. There are 49 children in the early years comprising two Nursery and two Reception classes.
67. The school has identified 41 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). No pupils in the school have an education, health and care (EHC) plan.
68. English is an additional language for five pupils.
69. The school states its aims are to nurture happy, grounded and kind children who are stretched but not stressed, and who leave the school with a zest for learning and for life. Its values are: be kind, be your best self, dare to think differently.

## Inspection details

### Inspection dates

14 to 16 May 2024

70. A team of five inspectors visited the school for two and a half days.

71. Inspection activities included:

- observation of lessons, some in conjunction with school leaders
- observation of registration periods and assemblies
- observation of a sample of extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection
- discussions with the chair and other governors
- discussions with the headteacher, school leaders, managers and other members of staff
- discussions with pupils
- visits to the learning support area and facilities for physical education
- visits to boarding houses accompanied by pupils and staff
- scrutiny of samples of pupils' work
- scrutiny of a range of policies, documentation and records provided by the school.

72. The inspection team considered the views of pupils, members of staff and parents who responded to ISI's pre-inspection surveys.

**How are association independent schools in England inspected?**

- The Department for Education is the regulator for independent schools in England.
- ISI is approved by the Secretary of State for Education to inspect independent schools in England, which are members of associations in membership of the Independent Schools Council.
- ISI inspections report to the Department for Education on the extent to which the statutory Independent School Standards, the EYFS statutory framework requirements, the National Minimum Standards for boarding schools and any other relevant standards are met.
- For more information, please visit **[www.isi.net](http://www.isi.net)**.

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For more information, please visit [isi.net](http://isi.net)