

A report on

St David's College

Date of focused visit: January 2025

by

Estyn, His Majesty's Inspectorate for Education

and Training in Wales

This report is also available in Welsh.

About St David's College

Name of provider	St David's College
Proprietor status	Registered charity
Language of the provider	English
Type of school	Independent special
Residential provision?	Yes
Number of pupils on roll	273
Pupils of statutory school age	197
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	01/11/2023
Start date of visit	23/01/2025
Type of event	Announced

School context:

St David's College is an independent co-educational day and boarding school that educates pupils from the age of 9 to 19 years. The school is situated in extensive grounds, just south of Llandudno in North Wales.

The school opened in 1965, as an educational charity established by Trust Deed, to provide secondary education within a Christian framework. The school's mission is to 'develop the whole person through a broad education founded on Christian principles, a wide choice of interest and activity, and an achievable personal programme for each pupil'.

There are currently 273 pupils on roll of whom 92 are boarders. Around two-thirds of pupils have a diagnosis of dyslexia or another specific learning difficulty. Around a fifth of pupils have an individual development plan (IDP) or an education, health and care plan (EHCP).

The current headteacher took up his post in October 2017.

The last inspection was in November 2023.

This focused visit was undertaken jointly with Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW), who will be producing a separate report.

Main findings

The well-being of pupils is a priority for staff throughout the school. At regular staff meetings important information about pupil well-being is shared, to enable staff to support pupils. Safeguarding concerns are recorded accurately and responded to in a timely manner by the staff with responsibility for this area of the school's work. In addition, pupils are taught how to stay safe in global and social education (GSE) lessons within the curriculum.

Current safeguarding systems and processes are being reviewed and strengthened where necessary. The school's child protection and safeguarding policy requires updating to ensure it reflects current practice.

Staff with responsibility for safeguarding have received suitable training, have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities and sufficient time to fulfil them. The pastoral officer and lead nurse meet weekly to discuss well-being issues and agree actions. However, formal arrangements for the whole safeguarding team to meet and discuss actions and review progress are less established. This reduces their ability as a team to have full oversight of all well-being or safeguarding matters. Regular support and challenge for these post holders by senior leaders is limited.

The school has a rolling programme to provide opportunities for all staff to receive appropriate safeguarding training. A recently introduced system records the completion of safeguarding training for all staff, both teaching and non-teaching. In addition, presentations from external providers further develop staff's understanding of how to keep learners safe, for example on the topics of drug misuse and knife crime. Helpful training is provided to older pupils to help them support their younger peers effectively. However, processes to evaluate the impact of the range of training are not well established.

The link between the school and the governing body has strengthened with a newly appointed safeguarding governor. However, the full governing body, including the chair of governors, do not have a robust oversight of safeguarding and therefore cannot effectively support the school or hold staff to account. The information in safeguarding reports does not help governors to understand trends and key issues affecting the well-being of pupils. This prevents governors being proactive in their challenge and response to any issues raised.

Safe recruitment processes meet requirements. A few areas that would benefit from further strengthening were identified and the school is working to address these. Overall, the school is developing a suitable safeguarding culture.

As a result of the findings of this focused inspection, the school meets Standard 3 of the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2024, that refers to the welfare, health and safety of pupils, and Standard 4, relating to the suitability of staff and proprietor.

The school is required to complete a post inspection action plan to show how it will address areas that require strengthening.

Compliance with the regulations for registration

Independent school inspections are governed by the Education Act 2002 and related regulations: the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2024. These regulations require an independent school to meet an appropriate standard in the following areas:

The quality of education provided by the school

On this visit, Estyn did not inspect this standard.

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

On this visit, Estyn did not inspect this standard.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

On the basis of this visit, there is no evidence to indicate that the school does not meet the regulatory requirements for this standard.

The suitability of proprietors and staff

On the basis of this visit, there is no evidence to indicate that the school does not meet the regulatory requirements for this standard.

Premises of and boarding accommodation at schools

On this visit, Estyn did not inspect this standard.

The provision of information

On this visit, Estyn did not inspect this standard.

The manner in which complaints are to be handled

On this visit, Estyn did not inspect this standard.

Recommendation regarding registration

On the basis of this visit, there is no evidence to indicate that the school does not meet the requirements of the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2024.

Inspectors' judgements on this limited inspection should not prejudice the findings of a future full Section 163 inspection.

Evidence base of the report

During an inspection, inspectors normally:

- meet the headteacher, governors/proprietor(s), leaders and individual teachers to evaluate the impact of the school's work
- meet pupils to discuss their work and to gain their views about various aspects of their school
- meet groups of pupils in leadership roles, such as representatives from the school council and eco-committee
- visit lessons and undertake a variety of learning walks to observe pupils learning
- look closely at the school's self-evaluation processes
- consider the school's improvement plan and look at evidence to show how well the school had taken forward planned improvements
- scrutinise a range of school documents, including information on pupil assessment and progress, records of meetings of staff and the governing body (where appropriate), information on pupils' well-being, including the safeguarding of pupils, and records of staff training and professional development

After the on-site inspection and before the publication of the report, Estyn:

- review the findings of the inspection alongside the supporting evidence from the inspection team in order to validate, moderate and ensure the quality of the inspection

Appendix 1: Numbers – quantities and proportions

The report makes references to different quantities and proportions e.g. '*most pupils...*' or '*very few pupils...*'. We use these terms to describe quantities and proportions as outlined in the table below:

nearly all =	with very few exceptions
most =	90% or more
many =	70% or more
a majority =	over 60%
half =	50%
around half =	close to 50%
a minority =	below 40%
few =	below 20%
very few =	less than 10%

Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from the school and from the Estyn website (<http://www.estyn.gov.wales/>)

The report was produced in accordance with section 163 of the Education Act 2002. The main purpose of inspection under this section is to report on compliance with the Independent Schools Standards (Wales) Regulations 2024. In schools that provide non-maintained nursery education, this report also satisfies the requirements of Schedule 26 of the School Standards and Framework

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