



Arolygiaeth Ei Fawrhydi dros Addysg a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru  
His Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales

**A report on**

**St David's College**

**Date of inspection: November 2023**

**by**

**Estyn, His Majesty's Inspectorate for Education**

**and Training in Wales**

**This report is also available in Welsh**

## About St David's College

St David's College is an independent co-educational day and boarding school that educates pupils from age 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 265 pupils on roll of whom 100 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 June 2017.

The last core inspection was in November 2019.

## Main findings

### Strengths

St. David's College is a welcoming and nurturing school. Pupils are confident and engage positively with staff and visitors. Staff build positive working relationships with pupils based on mutual respect and understanding. They provide sensitive guidance to support them to develop important skills, such as resilience. As a result, pupils engage purposefully with their learning.

School leaders are committed and caring. They are heavily invested in the pupils and the life of the school. They have a clear understanding of the needs and aspirations of pupils.

Staff at the school work in pupils' best interests and have high expectations of them. As a result, nearly all pupils, including those with additional learning needs (ALN), make positive progress during their time at the school. During this visit, pupil behaviour and engagement were good.

The recent appointment of the new chaplain has further strengthened the pastoral provision within the school. The chaplain provides spiritual guidance and support, providing opportunity for reflection on Christianity and other religions.

Teachers' questioning of pupils within lessons is effective and pupils greatly value the verbal feedback they regularly receive. Teachers are highly accessible, including during break times, via electronic communications, and during boarding time. Pupils value these less formal opportunities to discuss their work and have great respect and trust for staff.

Teachers integrate the use of digital technologies into pupils' learning fluidly. For example, within lessons pupils collaborate to produce a group presentation on global warming and the environment.

In addition to the core curriculum, the school provides an extensive range of engaging, enriching and authentic learning experiences. For example, there are regular and interesting educational visits, pupils participate in a wide variety of team sports and musical productions, and pupils up to Year 10 have regular timetabled outdoor learning days.

### Areas for development

Since the last inspection, leaders have strengthened the curriculum and embedded a consistent approach to feedback across the school successfully. This approach is understood by pupils, who engage positively with the process. However, leaders' approach to quality assuring these new features is at an early stage of development and has not identified inconsistencies in the quality of teachers' written feedback.

## Recommendations

### The school should:

- R1 Refine quality assurance processes to ensure that feedback to pupils is sharply focused on improving their skills and knowledge

## Progress in addressing recommendations from previous visit or inspection report

### **R1. Ensure that pupils receive an organised and meaningful PHSE and careers programme across the school.**

The school has made appropriate and purposeful progress against this recommendation. Throughout the school, there is effective oversight of PSHE and careers education.

The Personal Social and Health Education (PSHE) programme is organised and covers relevant topics affecting pupils. For example, discussion in PSHE lessons about the dangers of vaping is reinforced in recent assemblies. Through the PSHE programme, pupils have good opportunities to acquire skills in keeping themselves healthy, forming positive relationships and staying safe.

The school has put valuable measures in place to improve careers guidance for pupils. The school has introduced 'careers lunches' where external speakers are invited in to talk about their jobs. The speakers come from varied roles, which represent the military, hospitality industry, human resources, midwifery and creative design. The careers programme has been strengthened for pupils in Year 11 and Year 12 with individual discussion about careers and appropriate pathways.

Pupils in Year 10 and 11 study entrepreneurship with topics such as financial literacy covered. Pupils in the sixth form have the opportunity to complete an external qualification in entrepreneurship. Pupils in Year 5 discuss potential jobs, how to prepare for the future and the pros and cons of their online profile, which potential employers may see.

### **R2. Strengthen the quality of feedback to pupils to ensure that it moves their learning forward.**

Since the last inspection leaders have embedded a clear and coherent approach to using feedback from teachers to encourage pupils and to help them identify ways in which they can improve. Pupils' work is reviewed regularly, and together pupils and teachers reflect on 'what went well' and what would be 'even better if'. Pupils engage positively with this process and, as they move through the school, self-reflect with greater maturity and accuracy.

In the best examples, teachers' analysis of pupils' work is sharply focused on the skills, knowledge or techniques of the pupil. They evaluate how successfully these

were applied to the task or activity and clearly signpost pupils towards the ways and means to improve their work. However, in a minority of cases, teachers' comments are too generalised or do not identify clearly what pupils need to do to improve.

## **Compliance with the standards for registration**

### **Standard 1: The quality of education provided by the school**

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

### **Standard 2: The spiritual, moral, and cultural development 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.

### **Standard 3: Welfare, health and safety of pupils**

On this visit, Estyn did not inspect Standard 3.

### **Standard 4: The suitability of proprietors and staff**

On this visit, Estyn did not inspect Standard 4.

### **Standard 5: Premises of and boarding accommodation at schools**

On this visit, Estyn did not inspect Standard 5.

### **Standard 6: The provision of information**

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

### **Standard 7: The manner in which complaints are to be handled**

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

## **Recommendation regarding continued registration**

When considering this school's registration the Welsh Government may wish to have regard to the following recommendation:

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 2003.

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

## 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 Regulations 2003. In schools that provide non-maintained nursery education, this report also satisfies the requirements of Schedule 26 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

Every possible care has been taken to ensure that the information in this document is accurate at the time of publication. Any enquiries or comments regarding this document/publication should be addressed to:

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**This document has been translated by Trosol (English to Welsh).**