

# **Report summary for parents and carers on St David's High School**

**Date of inspection: May 2025**

# Summary

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St David's High School is an inclusive caring community with a clear focus on equity and supporting pupils' well-being. Pupils benefit from a broad range of support and most feel safe at school and know where to seek support if needed. Staff know their pupils well.

The majority of teachers establish effective classroom routines and offer pupils suitable learning activities. In a very few lessons, pupils make strong progress, and teachers include skilfully planned activities that capture pupils' imagination and use probing questions that encourage independent thinking. In a significant minority of cases, there are shortcomings in teaching that mean pupils make limited progress and often become passive in their learning. Too often, teachers accept brief and underdeveloped verbal responses to questions and these lessons lack challenge. A few pupils display negative attitudes towards learning, talking over the teacher and failing to listen respectfully.

The school has recognised the importance of improving pupils' writing skills and made it a whole-school priority. Overall, opportunities for extended writing are purposeful. However, the school's provision for developing pupils' speaking and advanced reading skills is underdeveloped. More than a half of pupils have weak numeracy skills, and they do not receive enough opportunities to develop these skills in mathematics and other relevant subjects. Too often, numeracy tasks lack sufficient challenge, limiting pupils' skill development. In addition, there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to develop their Welsh-speaking skills in lessons and across the school.

The headteacher has developed a strong sense of teamwork amongst staff and considers pupil and staff well-being carefully. Although leaders work well together, there is a lack of clear, strategic leadership and they do not hold staff to account fully. They do not have a sufficiently rigorous approach to gathering evidence from activities such as learning walks and book reviews and are therefore unable to plan for improvement effectively. While leadership has had a positive impact on communication with parents and pupils' well-being, it has not had enough impact on the quality of teaching, the development of pupils' skills and curriculum design.

# Recommendations and next steps

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## **We have made six recommendations to help the school continue to improve:**

- R1 Strengthen leadership to ensure that leaders at all levels are able to carry out their roles more strategically and be held to account for securing improvement
- R2 Strengthen self-evaluation processes so that leaders have an accurate view of the school's areas for development and plan for improvement precisely
- R3 Improve the quality of teaching
- R4 Improve provision to develop pupils' numeracy skills progressively
- R5 Increase opportunities for pupils to practise and develop their speaking, advanced reading and Welsh language skills across the curriculum
- R6 Strengthen curriculum provision and strategic planning for the Curriculum for Wales, mathematics and Welsh

In accordance with the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that special measures are required in relation to this school. The school will draw up an action plan to show how it is going to address the recommendations. This is the most intensive level of statutory follow-up. Estyn will monitor the school's progress on a termly basis following the publication of the inspection report.

## Full Report

If you would like to read more about Estyn's evaluation of the school, please follow this link to the [full report](#)

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