



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: September 2022

by

**Estyn, His Majesty's Inspectorate for Education
and Training in Wales**

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, in order 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 250 pupils on roll of whom 90 are boarders. Around half of pupils have a diagnosis of dyslexia or another specific learning difficulty. Around a fifth of pupils have a statement of special educational need (SEN) 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

Teachers across the school know their pupils well, they ensure that pupils' learning activities are adapted well to their individual needs.

The school provides helpful pupil passports, which detail the additional learning needs of pupils. These documents also have a beneficial focus on how pupils are able to help themselves and when they may need staff support. As a result, there is a relevant focus on pupils developing independence skills.

Staff at the school work purposefully with specialist staff and external agencies, such as speech and language therapists, to ensure that pupils' needs are met. As a result of changes to additional learning needs legislation, the school is working proactively to adapt school systems and processes.

The school has developed a range of useful assessments and tracks pupils' progress effectively.

Pupils access a broad range of engaging activities as part of the curriculum, including a strong focus on outdoor education. For example, pupils recently benefited from canoeing and caving activities.

Areas for development

Leaders are in the process of developing a new personal, health and social education (PHSE) curriculum. However, this is in the very early stages of implementation. The co-ordination of important aspects of this subject area, including Careers education, is underdeveloped.

The quality of teacher feedback across the school is inconsistent. Where practice is best, feedback focuses effectively on the learning objectives as well as pupils' individual targets. Pupils do not consistently respond to teacher feedback when required.

Recommendations

The school should:

- R1 Ensure that pupils receive an organised and meaningful PHSE and careers programme across the school
- R2 Strengthen the quality of feedback to pupils to ensure that it moves their learning forward

Progress in addressing recommendations from previous visit or inspection report

R1. Ensure that learning activities provide sufficient levels of challenge for all pupils, particularly the more able

Since the time of the core inspection, the school has had to respond to the challenge of providing learning opportunities throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. The school moved swiftly to online learning and teachers have developed their ability to provide learning opportunities via online platforms. This move to online learning enabled teachers to develop new methods of providing pupils with a range of learning activities.

Departments have taken a range of approaches to their development of online materials. Nearly all departments provide learning activities using an online platform that pupils can access during lessons, as well as for homework. In the best examples, teachers use this platform effectively to adapt activities to the individual needs of pupils.

In the lessons observed during this visit, class work was at least a suitable level of challenge for nearly all pupils.

In addition to the learning activities provided during curriculum time pupils are encouraged to further extend their learning through the opportunity to compete in national competitions and participate in extra-curricular visits, such as to the National Space Museum.

R2. Improve the consistency of teachers' feedback to pupils and the quality of their responses

Teacher feedback remains variable in quality. In the most effective examples feedback focuses clearly on both the learning objective and pupil targets and takes learning forward. However, in other examples there is too great a focus on a specific target. For example, focusing on improving handwriting with little reference to the learning objective. In these examples teacher feedback does not effectively take learning forward.

In addition, pupil response to teacher comments is variable in both quality and frequency.

In a very few subjects, teachers ensure that pupils have opportunities to contribute to their target setting and evaluate their progress towards these targets on a termly basis.

R3. Strengthen quality assurance and improvement planning arrangements

Leaders at the school have made valuable improvements to systems for quality assurance and improvement planning arrangements.

Senior leaders collect a range of relevant first-hand evidence including from pupil progress data, learning walks, lesson observations, book scrutiny, targeted

questionnaires and exam results to evaluate its work. This evidence then informs improvement planning and performance management processes.

Leaders have made worthwhile changes to the performance management systems at the school to ensure that quality assurance processes have a direct impact on the quality of teaching and learning. For example, where leaders identify areas for improvement, staff are supported to complete action plans to improve pupil progress and are provided with relevant professional learning opportunities.

Further, leaders have restructured areas of the curriculum into departments and have implemented departmental reviews of quality. The aim is to focus leaders' evaluation of provision across broad areas of learning. This quality assurance process is in the early stages of implementation and it is too early to evaluate its impact.

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 this visit, Estyn did not inspect Standard 2.

Standard 3: 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.

Standard 4: 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.

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 this visit, Estyn did not inspect Standard 6.

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

On this visit, Estyn did not inspect Standard 7.

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 going to press. Any enquiries or comments regarding this document/publication should be addressed to:

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