



Annual monitoring inspection report on:

St David's College

Date of inspection: March 2014

by

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

Estyn's annual monitoring visits to independent and independent special schools in Wales are required to report on whether the National Assembly for Wales (NAW) registration standards regulations for independent schools are met and, where they are not met, what they need to do in order to comply.

Further information regarding the regulations governing this monitoring visit can be found in the following documentation:

- Welsh Assembly Government: *Independent Schools Information and Registration Handbook*, April 2004; and
- Welsh Office Circular 37/94: *Independent schools which admit pupils with special educational needs*:
 - paragraphs 1-8: granting/removing approval;
 - paragraph 42: changes in character, management or control of the school; and
 - 37/94 paragraph 43: significant differences from approved number.

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Publication Section

Estyn

Anchor Court

Keen Road

Cardiff

CF24 5JW or by email to publications@estyn.gov.uk

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Context

St David's College is an independent day and boarding school that educates boys and girls from age 9 to 18 years. The main school building is Gloddaeth Hall, a sixteenth century mansion set in 34 acres of 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". The school is administered by a board of governors.

There are currently 238 pupils on roll. In 2009, the school opened a Year 6 class that currently has nine pupils. In 2013, the school was granted a material change to accept Year 5 pupils where appropriate. There are 174 pupils aged from 11 to 16 years in the senior school, and a further 59 in the sixth form. Of these, 82 pupils are boarders.

St David's College educates pupils with a broad range of different abilities, including those who are more able academically. Around 55% of pupils have a diagnosis of dyslexia or another specific learning difficulty. Nineteen per cent of pupils have a statement of special educational needs and their placements are funded by their home local authorities.

The last full inspection was in October 2012. The present headteacher was appointed in January 2009. A new special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) was appointed in September 2013.

Main findings

Strengths

The school's strengths are that:

- the school has made very good progress in addressing the recommendations of the 2012 S163 inspection;
- pupils engage very well in their learning and make good progress across all key stages;
- the school offers an outstanding range of extra-curricular and off-site activities, which provide pupils with opportunities to achieve success;
- the school has a broad range of very useful partnerships that extend the learning experiences of all pupils;
- teaching is well planned;
- the school is led and managed well by senior staff and governors who give clear

- strategic direction and have high expectations of staff and pupils; and
- leaders and managers identify clear priorities for school development, plan in detail and can show the impact of their work in making improvements to the school over time.

Areas for development

The school's area for development is that:

- although it has made progress in addressing all of the recommendations from the previous inspection, work relating to two of the recommendations is at an early stage.

Recommendations

- R1 Continue to develop strategies to support the development of literacy and numeracy across the curriculum
- R2 Further refine lesson observation processes so that managers can gather and evaluate first hand evidence about the quality of teaching and learning
- R3 Make sure that where teaching is excellent, teachers share their good practice across the school
- R4 Continue to develop the role of specialist staff within mainstream lessons

Progress in addressing recommendations from previous note of visit or inspection report

Recommendation 1: Monitor the provision for literacy across all subjects to ensure that, in particular, more able pupils have enough opportunities to develop extended writing skills

This recommendation has been largely addressed.

The school has made very good progress in addressing this recommendation. Scrutiny of books and lesson observations during the visit demonstrated examples of extended writing in most subjects, in particular for more able pupils.

To support the development of literacy across the curriculum, the school recently organised training days for all staff to develop an understanding of the Literacy and Numeracy Framework (LNF) and to identify areas of the framework that they could adopt at key stage 3. As they start new topics, individual departments now consider

ways in which they can incorporate strands of the Literacy and Numeracy Framework in their schemes of work and this is recorded at a whole school level.

The focus on the Literacy and Numeracy Framework is a good feature that has already started to have an impact on the development of literacy skills. However, this is at an early stage.

Recommendation 2: Ensure that all lessons have enough pace and challenge

This recommendation has been largely addressed.

In all sessions observed during the visit, there was evidence of a good range of well-planned activities that resulted in appropriate pace and challenge to meet the needs of all pupils. This meant that all pupils engaged well and remained on task.

However, lesson observations have not consistently focused on this aspect of teaching, and therefore managers are not yet able to be sure that all lessons have appropriate pace and challenge.

Recommendation 3: Ensure more active support for pupils from specialist learning support staff, when in subject lessons

This recommendation has been partly addressed.

The new SENCO has made very good progress in addressing this recommendation, over a short period of time.

Since the last inspection, the school has developed a system where specialist support staff work with pupils within the classroom situation where appropriate. This enables them to work more closely with subject teachers in order to share strategies and teaching resources. The SENCO has adapted the departmental policy and handbook to reflect these changes.

Another positive feature is the developing use of assistive technology to support pupils within lessons and increase their independence.

As a result of these changes, subject staff have a better understanding of the individual needs of pupils and specific strategies to support their learning. The active in class support is in the early stages of development, although the school has appropriate plans to develop this further.

Recommendation 4: Evaluate the current system of individual education plans and their impact to ensure that they are useful to both specialist and subject staff

This recommendation has been largely addressed.

The new SENCO has made very good progress in addressing this recommendation, over a short period of time.

The school has produced a new format for individual education plans (IEPS), which includes targets that are specific and measurable and can be used by subject and specialist staff across the school. The new IEPs provide useful information for classroom teachers regarding individual pupils' needs and strategies to support them.

Staff evaluate the quality of the IEPs continuously, and have identified areas for development which they are addressing. The SENCO is working closely with subject teachers and specialist staff to further improve the quality and use of the IEPs.

Recommendation 5: Continue to strengthen staff appraisal and further develop opportunities for staff to share good practice

This recommendation has been partly addressed.

The school has strengthened its staff appraisal processes. Heads of department now carry out termly formal lesson observations, in addition to those carried out by the senior management team. The information from all lesson observations is taken into consideration during formal appraisal meetings. However, these appraisal meetings, which are held bi-annually, are too infrequent.

The school has produced a new lesson observation form, which provides appropriate guidelines for the evaluation of teaching and standards. However, these forms are not yet used consistently across the school. The school is planning training sessions for all heads of department to carry out lesson observations effectively.

The introduction of more frequent lesson observations has enabled heads of department and senior managers to identify good practice. Teachers are encouraged to observe each other's lessons in order to increase their knowledge and improve their teaching strategies across the school.

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, social 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 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 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 registration

When considering this school's registration the National Assembly for Wales 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 annual monitoring inspection should not prejudice the findings of a future full Section 163 inspection.

School information

School	St David's College
School number	662 6017
Purpose of visit	Annual monitoring visit
Date of visit	19 and 20 March 2014
Proprietor	St David's Trust
Staff	8 full-time houseparents 38 full-time and 23 part-time teachers 2 classroom assistants: 1 full-time, 1 part-time Occupational Therapist (5 hours a month) Speech and Language Therapist (5 hours per week during term time)
Number of pupils	238 Day pupils: 120 Boarding pupils: 118
Provision	Day and term-time boarding
Type of special educational need (SEN) catered for by the school	Specific learning difficulties, moderate learning difficulties and autistic spectrum disorder
Last Section 163 inspection	October 2012
Last annual monitoring inspection	3 and 4 November 2010
Last CSSIW inspection	6 September 2012

Team information

Reporting Inspector	Caroline Rees
Team Inspector	Meinir Rees