



Inspection Report on

St Davids College

**St. Davids College
Gloddaeth Hall
Llandudno
LL30 1RD**

Date Inspection Completed

23/01/2025

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About St Davids College

Type of care provided	Boarding School
Registered Provider	
Registered places	272
Language of the service	English
Previous Care Inspectorate Wales inspection	07 October 2019 and 17 October 2019
Does this service promote Welsh language and culture?	This service is making a significant effort to promote the use of the Welsh language and culture or is working towards being a bilingual service

Summary

St David's College is an independent co-educational day and boarding school for children and young people aged 9 to 19. It is a registered charity with a Christian ethos, run as a trust by a Board of Governors. It has permission from the Welsh Government to educate up to 300 children and young people. At the time of the inspection there were 272 children and young people on the school roll, 92 of whom were accommodated within the boarding provision.

Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) and Estyn (His Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales) undertook a joint announced inspection. Estyn are producing a separate report. The CIW inspection considered progress made in relation to the previous inspection report recommendations made in 2019, the effectiveness of the boarding provision and current safeguarding systems and procedures.

This inspection confirmed recommendations made during CIW's previous inspection had been addressed. It also highlighted children and young people feel safe, are happy with the boarding provision. We found safeguarding procedures are in place and are being further strengthened by the college following recommendations from both inspectorates. The school's senior leadership team (SLT) has produced an action plan to address the recommendations.

Well-being

Children and young people are supported to have control over their daily life choices and are listened to. They have regular and meaningful opportunities to express their views and are actively involved in making choices, contributing views on the boarding provision, and school governance via the school council and monthly house meetings. They told us *“I feel listened to here,” “I’m involved in making choices”* and *“We can share our views and own ideas.”*

Children and young people are encouraged to make healthy lifestyle choices and have access to excellent on-site health care and support. There are opportunities to participate in a variety of household, social and leisure activities either independently or with peers. They receive prompt medical care and are cared for on-site by a team of registered nurses who are committed to their role. They told us *“We get seen quickly”* describing the on-site health provision and nursing staff as *“Really, really good”* and *“Caring.”*

Safeguarding and operational policies and procedures are in place but require strengthening to support oversight and governance processes and ensure there is full and consistent oversight of all well-being and/or safeguarding matters. Regular support and challenge for these post holders by senior leaders is limited and requires improving. Safeguarding concerns are recorded, and referrals are submitted to the local authority. Safeguarding matters are responded to in a timely manner, and each child and young person we spoke with told us they know how to raise a concern; we saw posters in houses and the school explaining how they can raise concerns and outlining safeguarding roles. They told us *“I feel safe everywhere,” “I am safe and treated well here.”* Enhanced recruitment checks are completed to ensure staff are suitable to work with children and young people.

Children and young people who board at St David’s College have a busy timetable of education, leisure, and recreational activities. There is an inclusive curriculum to support with a wide range of abilities and needs. As well as mainstream classroom teaching, the school has a learning support centre (The Cadogan Centre) which specialises in supporting children and young people who have additional learning needs (ALN). There is an emphasis on participation in outdoor and extra-curricular activities.

St David’s College is working towards the provision of an ‘active offer’ of the Welsh language. Welsh is mainly taught as a second language up to Year 11 (compulsory up to Year 9). Some staff speak Welsh and Welsh speaking children and young people are made to feel comfortable and know they can speak in their first language. Welsh culture and identity are promoted through corridor displays, participation in the Urdd and school Eisteddfod events and competitions and celebrating St David’s Day. Staff can also develop their Welsh language skills by accessing refresher courses and lessons organised within the school.

Boarding accommodation provides an environment where children feel safe, supporting them to achieve good well-being. Houses are clean and suitably furnished. They have access to personal space and privacy, and their bedrooms contain items of personal importance to them. A rolling maintenance programme is in operation and timely health and safety audits and checks are completed.

Care and Support

There is a clear admission process which considers compatibility, education, physical, and emotional health to ensure well-being needs can be met. A wide range of views and information is reviewed prior to a placement commencing to ensure needs can be met, alongside personal outcomes. Many children and young people have an 'individual development plan' or an 'education, health, and care plan.' We viewed a selection of 'pupil passports' and 'individual health care plans,' which contained comprehensive information and are regularly reviewed.

Boarding provision creates positive experiences and a sense of belonging. Children and young people told us *"It's pretty good"* and *"It's class."* They are supported through their transition and speak positively about the peer mentoring available to them. They have opportunities to complete surveys about their boarding experience, have regular, private contact with their parents/guardians and have access to a pupil handbook. Overseas boarders have education guardians who are registered with an accredited organisation and regulatory body. Children and young people told us having their teacher as a house parent has been a positive experience as *"We've got to know them better as a person,"* *"They listen to us and make sure we're happy and safe."*

Children and young people are supported to lead a healthy lifestyle with varied and nutritious meal choices; kitchen staff are aware of food allergies. Extra-curricular activities provide opportunities to develop their skills, knowledge and self-esteem, there are a variety of clubs and sporting activities.

Children have access to appropriate advice and support to promote their physical health and emotional well-being needs. They are registered with local primary health care providers and receive prompt medical care and treatment. Parents are contacted and relevant health and medical questionnaires and consent forms are completed. Health records are kept; there is excellent communication between the medical and pastoral teams. School-based and private counselling is available. There has been outstanding change to the medical centre since the last inspection, resulting in positive improvements to staffing levels, policies, the recording and storage of medication and personal health information. There are good auditing processes and pastoral procedures.

Safeguarding and whistleblowing procedures are in place however the college is working to further strengthen and formalise processes. Children and young people's safety and well-being is a priority for all staff. There are designated safeguarding practitioners (DSP's) who understand their roles and responsibilities. All staff complete safeguarding training with the DSP's receiving additional training relevant to their role. Reporting processes are defined, and records of significant events are maintained on a new electronic system. Weekly meetings between the lead nurse and pastoral officer ensure identification of significant concerns and referrals to health and social care services. Children and young people have participated in talks and workshops by external providers on personal safety, risks, and

criminal offences. The school has established a connection with the North Wales Police for the 'Prevent' Programme. The governing body receives a safeguarding report each term, although we found this report does not contain sufficient detail to support analysis of patterns and trends. An experienced safeguarding governor has been appointed and is clear on their role and responsibilities.

Environment

Children and young people reside in boarding accommodation that is suitable, supporting them to maximise their independence and achieve a sense of well-being. Situated within extensive grounds in a semi-rural location close to a large town. There is easy access to public health services, shopping amenities, and recreational facilities. The boarding accommodation is split into separate boarding houses, each overseen by a house master or house parent. Houses provide ample space for children and young people to have their own living accommodation, secure from public intrusion.

Bedrooms are clean, and comfortable, with space to study. There are communal spaces within each of the houses for children and young people to spend time communally, or privately. There is some personalisation of bedrooms. We saw examples of fairy lights, and photographs adorning spaces. Children and young people told us they feel happy in their accommodation stating, *"It's like a family."* They have access to toilet and washing facilities with appropriate privacy. In some of the renovated bathroom spaces, baths have been fitted to provide an alternative to showers. There has been an update to a kitchen space in one of the houses which has enabled increased opportunities for cooking activities, as well as socialising after school. Each home has a dedicated laundry space where children and young people are encouraged to develop independent living skills to manage their laundry. Support is also available from a dedicated team to ensure children and young people are well cared for.

Living accommodation is well maintained and children and young people are protected from all avoidable safety hazards. Health and safety checks of the premises are completed. There is a rolling schedule of maintenance within the boarding houses. St David's College benefits from a team of skilled and qualified people to oversee the maintenance and upkeep of boarding facilities. There is good oversight of the maintenance work carried out within the boarding houses, inclusive of records of action taken, and any additional required information. The medical centre has been refurbished since the last inspection.

The boarding houses are periodically updated and renovated. This work is carried out outside of term time whilst children and young people are off-site. Where updates have been made to houses, they have enhanced the quality of fixtures and fittings, as well as furniture. This has helped to create a more homely and comfortable atmosphere. In some areas of the houses there is little separation between the home furnishings and the school environment, which could impact children and young people's well-being. The SLT have assured us this is being considered as part of the ongoing renovation work.

Secure visitor safety checks are completed. All visitors requiring access to the school report to the reception area. Houses are secure with CCTV cameras in operation for communal and external areas. The installation of CCTV cameras is considered as part of the rolling maintenance programme.

Leadership and Management

Governance arrangements are in place to support and challenge the SLT. There is an experienced SLT who meet regularly and provide the governing board with reports regarding the school's performance. The governing board is kept updated of operational matters. The governing board supports the operation of the school and boarding provision and governors undertake relevant training for their role and responsibilities.

Governors have responsibilities for policies and key areas such as safeguarding, equality and additional learning needs. Policies can be viewed on the school's website and information regarding the school's boarding principles and practice are available to parents, children, and staff. Overall, the policies are monitored and reviewed in a timely manner, however we saw examples whereby some were not. This was highlighted to the SLT and they have a plan in place to review and update the relevant policies to ensure they are in line with latest statutory guidance and best practice.

Arrangements are in place for the effective oversight of the boarding provision through ongoing quality assurance processes, although we found these are not always documented. Improvements have been made since the last inspection regarding obtaining the views of children and young people in relation to the quality of the boarding provision. New systems have been developed for children and young people to complete surveys about their happiness and well-being. They told us their views are listened to and considered, and they participate in monthly house meetings which are documented, identified actions are addressed. The Head Boy and Head Girl meet regularly with the school's governing body and report to the school council. They also have a weekly meeting either with the Headmaster and/or the Deputy Headmaster.

Children and young people are looked after and supervised by staff who have specific boarding duties and have received an adequate induction and receive training. All full-time teachers complete boarding house duties which reinforces strong connections between the education and pastoral provision. Staff model respectful, professional behaviour and values. They told us they feel well supported by the head of boarding and the SLT.

Processes are in place for the safe selection and vetting of all staff and volunteers working with children. We viewed a selection of staff files and saw they met the necessary requirements. The recruitment process is completed by the human resources department (HR) to ensure the safe recruitment of the whole staff team, including ancillary staffing. The bursar oversees the process and manages the HR department. Staff spoke positively about the support and understanding the Bursar brings within their role. The safer recruitment policy was reviewed in September 2024, is reviewed annually and has a nominated governor. We saw enhanced staff recruitment checks and employment references are verified and Disclosure and Barring Service certificates were in date. While the current safe recruitment process complies with requirements, the school has acted pro-actively in ensuring that all future internal appointments have appropriate character references applied (this includes temporary and volunteer roles).

Summary of Non-Compliance	
Status	What each means
New	This non-compliance was identified at this inspection.
Reviewed	Compliance was reviewed at this inspection and was not achieved. The target date for compliance is in the future and will be tested at next inspection.
Not Achieved	Compliance was tested at this inspection and was not achieved.
Achieved	Compliance was tested at this inspection and was achieved.

We respond to non-compliance with regulations where poor outcomes for people, and / or risk to people's well-being are identified by issuing Priority Action Notice (s).

The provider must take immediate steps to address this and make improvements. Where providers fail to take priority action by the target date we may escalate the matter to an Improvement and Enforcement Panel.

Priority Action Notice(s)		
Regulation	Summary	Status
N/A	No non-compliance of this type was identified at this inspection	N/A

Where we find non-compliance with regulations but no immediate or significant risk for people using the service is identified we highlight these as Areas for Improvement.

We expect the provider to take action to rectify this and we will follow this up at the next inspection.

Area(s) for Improvement		
Regulation	Summary	Status
N/A	No non-compliance of this type was identified at this	N/A

	inspection	
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