

Focused Compliance and Educational Quality Inspection Reports

St David's School

November 2018



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School's Details

School	St David's School			
DfE number	306/6068			
Registered charity number	669613			
Address	23-25 Woodcote Valley Road Purley Surrey CR8 3AL			
Telephone number	020 8660 0723			
Email address	office@stdavidsschool.co.uk			
Head	Miss Cressida Mardell			
Chair of governors	Mr Douglas Brown			
Age range	3 to 11			
Number of pupils on roll	148			
	Boys	68	Girls	80
	EYFS	35	Years 1 to 6	113
Inspection dates	06 to 08 November 2018			

1. Background Information

About the school

- 1.1 St David's School in Purley is an independent day school for boys and girls aged from three to eleven and includes an Early Years Foundation Setting (EYFS). Founded in 1912 by two sisters from Brecon in South Wales, the school was named after their patron saint. The school is a limited company and charity, whose directors are also trustees; they have responsibility for overseeing the management of the school. The school is situated in one building outside Purley town centre, with a nearby playing field including extra all-weather pitch, tennis courts and pavilion added since the previous inspection.

What the school seeks to do

- 1.2 The school aims to provide a good all-round education for pupils within a caring family community where everyone will behave with courtesy, consideration, and tolerance towards others. In addition, it aims to encourage each child to have a disciplined approach to work and to learn the benefits of contributing positively to the school and participating in all it has to offer.

About the pupils

- 1.3 Pupils come from a range of backgrounds living within a five-mile radius of the school. The school's own assessment indicates that the ability of pupils is above average. The school has identified 23 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), which include dyslexia and dyspraxia, for all of whom there is planned provision and/or additional specialist help. No pupil in the school has an education, health and care plan or a statement of special educational needs. English is an additional language for one pupil, whose needs are supported by their classroom teachers. Data used by the school have identified 23 pupils as being the most able in the school's population for whom additional provision is made.

2. Regulatory Compliance Inspection

Preface

The registration authority for independent schools is the Department for Education (DfE), which directs inspection according to a specified frequency or at any time where the DfE has particular concerns about a school. The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Secretary of State for the purpose of inspecting schools which are, or whose heads are, in membership of the associations which form the Independent Schools Council (ISC) and reporting on the extent to which they meet the Independent School Standards ('the standards') in the Schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014. Accordingly, inspection records whether the school meets each of these standards, which are arranged in eight Parts, each of which is divided into separate paragraphs. Additionally, the inspection reports on the school's accessibility plan under Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 and the ban on corporal punishment under section 548 of the Education Act 1996. It comments on the progress made by the school in meeting the compliance action points set out in the school's most recent statutory inspection.

All association independent schools will have an inspection within three years from April 2016, in accordance with the Framework and DfE requirements. The inspection may be of COMPLIANCE ONLY or a combined inspection of EDUCATIONAL QUALITY AND COMPLIANCE depending on a number of factors, including findings from their most recent inspection. Schools judged not to meet the standards may also be subject to a progress monitoring visit before their next routine inspection. The progress monitoring visit will judge whether the school has taken the necessary action to meet any un-met standards identified at their previous inspection.

The inspection was also carried out under the arrangements of the ISC Associations for the maintenance and improvement of the quality of their membership.

This is a FOCUSED COMPLIANCE INSPECTION which was combined with an inspection of EDUCATIONAL QUALITY, the report of which appears later in this document. The COMPLIANCE inspection reports only on the school's compliance with the standards. The standards represent minimum requirements and judgements are given either as **met** or as **not met**. All schools are required to meet all the standards applicable to them. Where the minimum requirements are not met, this is clearly indicated in the relevant section of the report and the school is required to take the actions specified. In this focused compliance inspection, key regulations and standards have been inspected in detail. These are the regulations on safeguarding; measures to guard against bullying; arrangements for pupils' health and safety, arrangements to check the suitability of staff; the provision of information to parents; the handling of parents' complaints; and other related aspects of leadership and management. The remaining standards and requirements are deemed to continue to be met unless evidence to the contrary has been found.

Inspections do not include matters that are outside of the regulatory framework described above, such as: an exhaustive health and safety audit; compliance with data protection requirements; an in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features; contractual arrangements with parents; an investigation of the financial viability of the school or its accounting procedures.

Inspectors may be aware of individual safeguarding concerns, allegations and complaints as part of the inspection process. Such matters will not usually be referred to specifically in published reports in this document but will have been considered by the team in reaching its judgements.

Links to the full regulations and requirements can be found here: [The Education \(Independent School Standards\) Regulations 2014, Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework.](#)

Key findings

- 2.1 The school meets the standards in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, and relevant requirements of the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, and associated requirements, and no further action is required as a result of this inspection.

PART 1 – Quality of education provided

- 2.2 The school uses its own framework to determine attainment, instead of the national framework.
- 2.3 The curriculum is documented, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work for the pupils and covers the required breadth of material. The teaching enables pupils to make good progress, encompasses effective behaviour management and is supported by suitable resources. A suitable framework for the assessment of pupils' performance is in place.
- 2.4 **The standards relating to the quality of education [paragraphs 1–4] are met.**

PART 2 – Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

- 2.5 Principles and values are actively promoted which facilitate the personal development of pupils as responsible, tolerant, law-abiding citizens.
- 2.6 **The standard relating to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development [paragraph 5] is met.**

PART 3 – Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- 2.7 Arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils by means that pay due regard to current statutory guidance; good behaviour is promoted; bullying is prevented so far as reasonably practicable; health and safety requirements are met, including those relating to fire safety; provision is made for first aid. Pupils are properly supervised; admission and attendance registers are maintained, as required, and there is a strategic approach to risk assessment. A disability access plan is in place.
- 2.8 **The standards relating to welfare, health and safety [paragraphs 6–16], the requirement of Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010, and the ban on corporal punishment under section 548 of the Education Act 1996 are met.**

PART 4 – Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

- 2.9 The school makes appropriate checks to ensure the suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors and a register is kept as required.
- 2.10 **The standards relating to the suitability of those in contact with pupils at the school [paragraphs 17–21] are met.**

PART 5 – Premises of and accommodation at schools

- 2.11 Suitable toilet and changing facilities, and showering facilities where required by the standard, and appropriate accommodation for their medical and therapy needs are provided. The premises are maintained to a standard commensurate with health and safety; acoustics and lighting are appropriate; water provision is adequate. Suitable outdoor space is provided for physical education and outdoor play.
- 2.12 **The standards relating to the premises and accommodation [paragraphs 22–31] are met.**

PART 6 – Provision of information

2.13 A range of information is variously published, provided or made available to parents, inspectors and the Department for Education. These include details about the proprietor, the ethos of the school and the curriculum, and of the school's arrangements for admission, behaviour and exclusions, bullying, health and safety, first aid, details of the complaints procedure, and the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year, and the provision for any with education, health and care plans or English as an additional language. They also include particulars of the school's academic performance during the preceding school year, inspection reports and (for parents only) a report at least annually of their own child's progress. The safeguarding policy is posted on the school's website.

2.14 The standard relating to the provision of information [paragraph 32] is met.

PART 7 – Manner in which complaints are handled

2.15 Parental complaints, if any, are handled effectively through a three-stage process, (informal, formal and a hearing before a panel of three, one of whom is independent of the school). Each stage has clear time scales, and at the third stage the panel can make findings and recommendations which are communicated to the complainant. Records are kept appropriately, including of any action taken, whether or not a complaint is successful.

2.16 The standard relating to the handling of complaints [paragraph 33] is met.

PART 8 – Quality of leadership in and management of schools

2.17 The proprietor ensures that the leadership and management demonstrate good skills and knowledge, and fulfil their responsibilities effectively, so that the other standards are consistently met and they actively promote the well-being of the pupils.

2.18 The standard relating to leadership and management of the school [paragraph 34] is met.

3. Educational Quality Inspection

Preface

The EDUCATIONAL QUALITY inspection reports on the quality of the school's work. It focuses on the two key outcomes:

- The achievement of the pupils, including their academic development, and
- The personal development of the pupils.

Since the school was last inspected, the framework for inspection has changed. The current inspection framework uses different criteria and arrangements for grading from those used in previous inspection frameworks. The judgements made on this inspection are, therefore, not directly comparable to judgements made on previous inspections.

All independent schools are required to meet the requirements of the Independent School Standards. However, different inspectorates apply different frameworks that are suited to the different types of schools they inspect. The ISI terminology reflects quality judgements that are at least equivalent to those used by the national inspectorate, Ofsted. ISI reports do not provide a single overarching judgement for the school but instead give a clear judgement about key outcomes for pupils and information on the quality of the school's work.

The headline judgements must include one of the ISI descriptors 'excellent', 'good', 'sound' or 'unsatisfactory'.

Where necessary, National Curriculum nomenclature is used to refer to year groups in the school.

Key findings

3.1 The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements is excellent.

- The creative writing of all pupils, including those with SEND, is excellent, and sometimes exceptional. They develop strong numerical skills and are excellent communicators.
- The standard of pupils' art is excellent, and they refine their drawing and painting skills as they move through the school.
- Pupils have excellent attitudes towards learning, high levels of concentration and a willingness to work collaboratively.
- Pupils and parents highly value the impact of teaching on their progress, but sometimes pupils are over-reliant on teaching and hence do not naturally take leadership in their own learning.

3.2 The quality of the pupils' personal development is good.

- Pupils are unquestioning in their natural respect for and value of diversity within society; and show respect for, and an appreciation of, their own and other cultures
- Pupils are socially aware, empathetic and sensitive, and they work effectively with others.
- Pupils' behaviour is exceptional, they have a good moral understanding and they know they must take responsibility for own actions.
- The school has already recognised that, in the context of the strong pastoral care and family support they receive, pupils have too few opportunities to show resilience or to make their own decisions.

Recommendations

3.3 The school is advised to make the following improvements:

- In the context of, and in parallel to, the school's excellent preparation for the pupils' next stage of their education, encourage pupils to show more leadership in their own learning, and develop their opportunities for initiative and independent research beyond examination expectations.
- In the context of the exceptional support that pupils receive from both school and home, explore further ways to develop both their resilience and their opportunities to make decisions.
- Develop the higher order thinking skills of all ages and abilities by drawing on the teaching approaches more prevalent in the older years.

The quality of pupils' academic and other achievements

3.4 The quality of pupils' academic and other achievements is excellent.

3.5 Pupils very successfully meet the school's aim to fulfil their maximum potential and to be educated academically through a broad and balanced curriculum. All parents who responded to the questionnaires stated that the range of subjects was suitable for their children, and pupils contextualise and so strengthen their learning in the many trips and visits undertaken.

3.6 In the EYFS, pupils build quickly on their experiences both inside and outside the classroom. Younger pupils have excellent recall, for example when discussing the different authorship and language of the Old and New Testaments. They have a good geographical knowledge, accurately identifying position, climates and physical characteristics of major countries; older pupils applied this knowledge to predict the consequent environmental and social issues caused by climate. Their written work shows a detailed understanding of the transition in government from the late middle ages to Tudor England. Pupils speak French with confidence from an early age, adding vocabulary and developing accent, and in their final year they confidently begin to study Latin. Pupils have good scientific knowledge and

develop investigative skills. Younger pupils logically predicted which materials might absorb more sound, and in a science club the same age group hypothesised that air trapped in an indigestion pill was released when it dissolved and hence caused the lava tree to erupt. In the playground, pupils were keen to show evidence that animals live wild in the school's urban habitat.

- 3.7 The creative writing of all pupils, including those with SEND, is excellent, and sometimes exceptional. Their skills start to emerge in the Nursery, and younger pupils used sophisticated adjectives for their ages when devising a script about the First World War. Pupils write vividly in a range of genres, adapting their style, for example between newspaper reports and diary entries. Their autumn poetry displays show an exceptional understanding of rhythm and extensive use of poetic techniques such as alliteration and personification. Pupils' well-developed vocabulary is underpinned by the school's emphasis on reading and, in discussion, pupils spoke enthusiastically about their current book. Their ability to read and speak language develops quickly. By the end of the EYFS, almost all pupils are articulate and express themselves clearly, whether talking about their work or about themselves and their interests. Their progress is accelerated in those lessons that provide greater opportunity for pupils to present their own thoughts and share the approaches they prefer. By the time they leave the school, pupils are showing excellent communication skills in lessons, conveying their ideas with clarity, and listening carefully to others.
- 3.8 The standard of pupils' art is excellent, and they refine their drawing and painting skills as they move through the school. Older pupils avoided over-complication in quick pencil sketches of 15th century timber houses and had developed good perspective in charcoal drawings. Others had mastered image manipulation software to create sharp and colourful photographs of the natural neighbourhood. Pupils of all ages regularly gain awards in art competitions. Pupils have good, and some excellent, ability in the performing arts, and all pupils rehearse with enthusiasm for concerts. Pupils' singing is excellent: they harmonise well, their sense of pitch and tone is good, and their descants are precise. Pupils demonstrate the well-developed gymnastics and ball-coordination skills which underpin the school's sporting successes. Pupils use information and communication technology (ICT) effectively, and have mastered basic coding to a level appropriate to their age.
- 3.9 Pupils quickly develop confidence in manipulating numbers. By the end of the EYFS, children can add and subtract single digit numbers, and the most able can progress to two- or three-digit calculations. Younger pupils had mastered converting verbal into numerical problems. Pupils show strong numeracy application in, for example, the sequencing of a dance to Ariana Grande and in ordering the events of the Spanish Armada. Pupils of all ages answer quickly and accurately mental arithmetic questions, but their progress is limited because these sometimes lack the complexity needed to fully challenge the pupils' ability.
- 3.10 Every pupil responding to the pre-inspection questionnaires reported that teachers help them to learn and make progress; and in discussion they identified the particular influence of individual help and the setting of specific annual targets. An analysis of the school's own data shows that the rate of pupils' progress in mathematics and English is maintained at above national expectations throughout the school and is considerably above those expectations in the final two years. There is no difference in the progress of different groups, such as the more and less able, or those from different ethnic backgrounds. Data shows that pupils with SEND make excellent progress, and almost all those identified as the most able of the school's population make progress in the highest band of the system used by the school. This data correlates strongly with the quality of the work seen in lessons and in written work. In the EYFS, data supports the evidence from observation of children's understanding and skills in indicating that the rate of development is in line with other years. The school does not take part in National Curriculum tests, but the available evidence shows attainment in mathematics and English to be well above national age-related expectations. Most pupils achieve places at a range of selective schools when they leave.

- 3.11 Pupils' study skills are excellent for their age and are exceptional for some of the school's less able pupils. Pupils draw and compare information from a range of sources and from it create independent work. In history, pupils used Victorian census data to give real examples of how people lived. Their powers of analysis are strong, and in discussion they present balanced and informed arguments about a range of issues. The most able older pupils synthesised information to solve difficult mathematical challenges outside the examination curriculum.
- 3.12 Pupils achieve high standards in a variety of pursuits and hence successfully fulfil the school's aim to develop their potential beyond the classroom. The school choir has been placed first in a regional festival, the mathematics team defeated 16 other schools in a local competition, and individual pupils have won awards in English and in the speaking of modern foreign languages. The governors have invested in the development of the sports facilities on the school's playing field. This contributes to the success enjoyed by its sports teams: reaching national finals in cross country and athletics, and winning regional tournaments in football and korfbal.
- 3.13 Pupils have excellent attitudes towards learning, showing high levels of concentration and a willingness to work collaboratively. In many lessons they discuss different approaches: for example in mathematics the most accurate method of dividing four-digit by two-digit numbers, or in art the effect of differing techniques in sketching Tudor houses. The EYFS resources are well planned so that children are imaginative in their play. Teaching allows children to evolve their ideas and show initiative and hence, in the context of their age, children take some leadership in their learning. The school has already identified that pupils beyond the EYFS are not naturally inquisitive and do not spontaneously take that same leadership in their own learning, nor show the initiative outside lessons that would deepen their own understanding. They are highly reliant on their teachers to provoke questions and investigation. In the questionnaires, all pupils said that feedback and marking help them to improve their work, but discussion about the routes to that improvement is almost exclusively limited to conversations in class with younger children rather than as a recorded dialogue in pupils' books.
- 3.14 Pupils of all age and ability take enormous care over the presentation of written work. Handwriting is neat, and work is well illustrated when appropriate. Pupils' excellent creative writing skills are applied to other areas, for example in the production of a curriculum vitae for Henry Tudor in history. Pupils fervently answer questions of fact in lessons or assembly, but sometimes the central role of teaching in lessons curtails the freedom to roam intellectually that is needed by pupils whose abilities are well above the national average. However, the planning of lessons for older pupils allows them to start experimenting intellectually. For example, in English, pupils used dictionaries and other resources to create their own newspaper front page. In mathematics the most able pupils opted for a series of challenges drawing on different skills: for example, solving multi-dimensional number puzzles or investigating the possible permutations in the arrangement of dominoes. Much teaching strives to encourage pupils to focus their learning more widely than the demands of senior school entrance examinations, but in discussion pupils maintained that concentrating on practice papers was the sole route to academic success.

The quality of the pupils' personal development

- 3.15 The quality of the pupils' personal development is good.
- 3.16 Most pupils develop good self-knowledge, self-esteem and self-discipline that is appropriate for their age. Through the personal, health and social education (PHSE) programme, pupils begin to explore their own strengths and weaknesses and recognise these traits in others. Older pupils showed empathetic skills in writing self-profiles of English kings. In discussions, others of the same age conjectured that if pupils had been assigned to houses on the basis of their character, those in Aquila house would be active and observant; those in Cygnus graceful and delicate and in Leo would be found the leaders. Nearly all parents and pupils who answered the questionnaires reported that the school helped pupils to be confident and independent. Pupils are confident when working in groups and feel secure in a school environment where there is a ubiquitous adult presence. The school's leadership recognises that pupils can be over reliant on the considerable support they receive from both school and home, and consequently has initiated opportunities for them to develop resilience and independence. In discussion, pupils reported that as a result of these opportunities they had recognised the benefits of being challenged, of working together and of perseverance. In that context they related that whilst they identified target setting as contributory to their progress, they depended on teachers to suggest how they might be achieved.
- 3.17 In the free-flow environment of the EYFS, children show good confidence in making choices of activities and in initiating imaginary scenarios. Beyond this age, pupils have limited opportunity to demonstrate decision making, although in residential and some other activities opportunities are more widespread. However, pupils have a clear understanding that the academic choices that they make play an important part in determining their success in gaining entry to their senior schools. In the questionnaires, all pupils and almost all parents felt that the school prepared pupils well for the next stage of their education, as is reflected in the number of first choice places offered.
- 3.18 Younger children identify spiritual understanding with an awareness of others' religions, but skilful approaches in some lessons draw out the potential to appreciate non-material aspects of broader life, whether religious, philosophical or other. In a discussion of the role of angels in the Christmas story, pupils silently created their own images of angels and asked whether they were still alive. Others enquired if something that has never been seen can be drawn. In their written work two pupils collaborated in writing a prayer seeking support for the care of the natural world, and older pupils showed an excellent understanding of the role of prayer in a description of the Qur'an. In discussions, pupils enthusiastically contemplated the absence of time, humans and hence God in a black hole, but such reflections are rare and not spontaneous.
- 3.19 Children in the EYFS gain a sense of wrong and right from observing respectful and supportive behaviour in relationships between the school and families, children and teachers, and management and staff. This culture is powerfully reflected in the way children respond to each other and in the empathy shown to children with SEND by their peers. Pupils' behaviour is exceptionally good, an observation endorsed by all parents in the questionnaire. Pupils exemplify the assembly themes of fairness, compassion and empathy in their treatment of each other, have a good moral understanding and know they must take responsibility for own actions. In discussion, pupils described how they had learnt from visits to the Houses of Parliament that there was not always agreement about what is right or wrong.

- 3.20 Pupils are socially aware and work effectively with others. In the questionnaires, all pupils and almost all parents agreed that the school develops strong teamwork and social skills. Pupils described playtime as a time that everybody plays with everybody, and nobody is left out. Assemblies and lessons reaffirm a school aim to educate pupils morally and socially, promoted by a focus on the *St David's Way*, the school's key values. Pupils summarised one session as "when you fight neither side gets what they want, but when you cooperate you solve the problem". Pupils work productively together in lessons, for example solving percentage problems, writing scripts, or mirroring movements in physical education. In discussions they described how team roles had evolved in a mini-engineers challenge. Pupils are highly supportive of each other, whether through buddy systems, routinely listening to younger pupils read, or through helping them in mundane areas such as scraping plates after lunch.
- 3.21 Pupils talked passionately about the effect of the Eco Council, whose members collect recycled paper, turn off lights, and read gas and electricity meters. An assembly focusing on the environment drew out a plethora of ideas from pupils of all ages. In their written work, older pupils have made detailed comparisons of types of renewable energy and passionately argued for limiting the use of plastic. Pupils stated that they had good ideas about the "small steps we can make to make a big difference" to the environment. In contrast the School Council earnestly debated areas of school life, but few suggestions had been made by other pupils. As a result, the discussions were under-researched, and pupils had little opportunity for leadership. However, pupils seized the opportunities they had to contribute to others in the local community. Senior pupils take on responsibilities with ease, fulfil them effectively and contribute positively to the lives of others within the school. They talked avidly and articulately about the Paint Purley Purple event, and the many other concerts and recitals in which they take part, and of visits where the elderly had shared memories of Remembrance Day. Pupils raise respectable amounts of money for both national and international ventures. However almost all such activity is initiated by adults.
- 3.22 Pupils are unquestioning in their natural respect for, and valuing of, diversity within society; they show respect and appreciate both their own and other people's cultures. In lessons, pupils work well with each other, regardless of ethnic, gender or other difference: they demonstrate tolerance to those from different backgrounds and tangible sensitivity to those with different needs. In the questionnaire, all parents and pupils agreed that the school promotes and encourages these attitudes. Older pupils explored the relative status of Greek men and women and their training to become citizens and, in that context, they learned to respect the equality of each other's gender. Pupils of all and no faiths were able to discuss the meaning of Diwali and, in discussions, were quick to remind each other of the multiplicity of world religions.
- 3.23 Pupils know how to stay safe and understand how to be physically healthy. Children in the EYFS learn the basics of a balanced diet and several years later can argue for and against vegetarianism. They are physically active and speak about the positive impact of regular exercise on physical health, although their awareness of mental health issues is still embryonic. They are alert to the issues around personal safety arising from living in an urban environment.

4. Inspection Evidence

- 4.1 The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with members of staff and with several groups of governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended house meetings and school assemblies. Inspectors visited the facilities for the youngest pupils, together with the learning support and educational resource areas. The responses of parents, staff and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined curriculum and other documentation made available by the school.

Inspectors

Mr Stephen Cole	Reporting inspector
Mr Brian Hays	Compliance team inspector (Deputy Head, IAPS school)
Mrs Caroline Birtwell	Team inspector (Head, ISA school)