

School inspection report

16 to 18 June 2026

St David's School

23 – 25 Woodcote Valley Road

Purley

CR8 3AL

The Independent Schools Inspectorate is appointed by the Department for Education to inspect association independent schools in England. Our inspections report on the extent to which the statutory Independent School Standards and other applicable regulatory requirements are met, collectively referred to in this report as 'the Standards'.

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Summary of inspection findings

1. Leaders and governors provide effective oversight of the school and ensure that the Standards are met. They know the school well and use a range of evidence to identify where provision should be refined. The school's aims and ethos are understood by pupils and are evident in their positive attitudes to learning and respectful relationships with one another.
2. Leaders make required information available to parents of current and prospective pupils on the school's website, and review key policies so that they reflect current statutory guidance. They seek advice from external agencies where needed and review risks regularly. In the early years, leaders monitor provision, safeguarding and children's development, and use assessment information to inform provision.
3. Leaders provide an ambitious curriculum that covers all required areas of learning and is enriched by creative and practical experiences. Pupils develop confidence in their speaking and presentation skills in externally assessed speaking examinations, debating, drama performance and pupil leadership hustings.
4. Early years leaders provide opportunities for children to learn and play in a supportive environment where children develop language and communication skills, physical confidence and personal and social skills effectively.
5. Teachers use secure subject knowledge, questioning and verbal feedback to help pupils build knowledge and understanding over time. Pupils settle quickly, focus on their work and make good progress. However, staff do not consistently teach pupils how to evaluate their work across all subjects, which limits the extent to which pupils further develop their ability to think and learn for themselves.
6. Pupils develop confidence and positive relationships through assemblies, collective worship, performance opportunities and the wider pastoral programme. They learn to understand and manage their feelings through personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) lessons and initiatives such as 'wellbeing week'. Pupils behave well, show consideration for one another and understand how to report bullying or other concerns.
7. Leaders provide suitable arrangements to promote pupils' health and safety. In PSHE and physical education (PE) lessons and assemblies, pupils learn about healthy lifestyles, personal safety, relationships and online safety. In the early years, staff use practical activities and the outdoor learning environment to support children's physical and social development.
8. Pupils develop respect for others and an understanding of diversity through the curriculum, assemblies, the work of pupil ambassadors, 'international day', food festivals and cultural workshops. They learn about responsibility and democracy by creating their own class rules and electing pupils to leadership roles, and have a range of opportunities to contribute meaningfully to school life.
9. Pupils take on leadership roles, including head pupils, heads of houses, sports ambassadors, school and eco-council representatives. They influence aspects of school life, including the establishment of playground rules and sustainability initiatives. Pupils also contribute to the wider community

through road safety campaigning, harvest collections, foodbank partnerships and the school's link with a local care home.

10. Pupils develop an age-appropriate understanding of work and money with the school's 'classifieds' jobs board and its own currency system.
11. Staff understand safeguarding procedures and leaders and governors review safeguarding arrangements regularly. Pupils know how to raise concerns by speaking to trusted adults and using the digital reporting systems and the 'worry monster'.
12. Leaders teach pupils how to keep themselves safe, including online, through information and communication technology (ICT) lessons, assemblies and internet safety activities. Leaders test internet filtering and monitoring systems, act on alerts and governors check records as part of their oversight.
13. Leaders follow safer recruitment procedures consistently. Suitably trained staff responsible for recruitment complete required checks accurately on the single central record of appointments (SCR), with oversight from governors.

The extent to which the school meets the Standards

- Standards relating to leadership and management, and governance are met.
- Standards relating to the quality of education, training and recreation are met.
- Standards relating to pupils' physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing are met.
- Standards relating to pupils' social and economic education and contribution to society are met.
- Standards relating to safeguarding are met.

Recommended next steps

Leaders should:

- implement strategies across all subjects which promote pupils' reflection on their academic work so that pupils are consistently supported to think and learn for themselves.

Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

14. Leaders understand their responsibilities and ensure that the Standards are met consistently. They review provision regularly and use the views of pupils, parents and staff to inform their school improvement planning. Leaders respond to parents' feedback about communication on pupils' progress and extra-curricular provision, making changes where needed. Leaders communicate the school's aims and ethos effectively, and the school's values of strength, perseverance, ambition, respect and knowledge are reflected clearly in pupils' attitudes to learning and in their relationships with their peers.
15. Governors provide effective oversight of the school. They undertake appropriate training, receive regular information and maintain contact with the school through meetings, visits and discussions with leaders, staff and pupils. Governors seek assurance that the Standards are met consistently in practice, asking questions and challenging leaders appropriately.
16. Leaders make required information available to parents, including via the school's website. Parent consultations and written termly reports and give parents regular information about their child's attainment and progress. Leaders provide curriculum plans and revision booklets so that parents can help support their child's learning at home.
17. Leaders review and follow key policies that reflect current statutory guidance. They handle complaints appropriately and in line with the published policy and maintain suitable records of the actions taken.
18. Leaders seek advice from external agencies where needed, including from safeguarding partners. They understand their responsibilities to report to the local authority when pupils join or leave the school at non-standard transition points. Leaders know they must provide the local authority with information about any pupils who have education, health and care plans (EHC plans), including information related to finance and funding.
19. Leaders and governors review risks regularly, including regular review of safeguarding, health and safety and attendance information. Risk assessments for buildings, activities, visits and individual pupils, alongside detailed record-keeping and regular review, help pupils learn in a safe environment. Staff identify potential risks carefully and take action to reduce them to keep pupils safe. Early years leaders implement appropriate arrangements to promote children's safety through effective supervision and regular review of potential risks.
20. Leaders fulfil their duties under the Equality Act 2010. They maintain a suitable accessibility plan which is reviewed annually and they identify practical actions to improve access including improvements to the physical environment and the use of classroom adaptations to meet the needs of pupils who are unwell.
21. Leaders in the early years provide effective oversight of provision, safeguarding and children's development. They identify priorities for improvement, monitor children's progress and use assessment information to inform provision. Staff support children to develop confidence and independence as they prepare for their next stage of education.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to leadership and management, and governance

22. All the relevant Standards are met.

Section 2: Quality of education, training and recreation

23. Leaders deliver an inclusive and ambitious curriculum that covers all required areas of learning and meets pupils' ages, abilities and needs. Leaders enrich curriculum planning by creative and practical learning, including 'philosophy for children', animation, musical theatre, composing, debating and public speaking. Projects, such as the Year 6 production of *Shakespeare Rocks*, and themed events, including 'Titanic day', broaden pupils' experiences and develop pupils' communication and critical thinking skills.
24. Leaders prioritise pupils' speaking skills. Pupils achieve well in externally assessed speaking examinations, reading aloud from a chosen book, reciting poetry from memory and delivering a prepared presentation to an audience. Pupils in Year 5 participate in hustings for Year 6 leadership roles, presenting speeches before all pupils from Reception to Year 6 have an opportunity to vote for their preferred candidates. Library access, pupil librarians and book club promote reading, and mathematical competitions extend confidence and enjoyment in numeracy.
25. In the early years, children learn and develop in a supportive environment where adults know their needs and positive relationships are evident. A carefully planned balance of play-based and child-initiated activities, teacher modelling and guided learning supports progress across all areas of learning. Purposeful phonics grouping, including targeted one-to-one and small group support, helps children move on promptly to the next stage, while staff training supports effective mathematical questioning. Staff make effective use of the outdoor learning environment to develop children's communication skills, physical confidence and personal and social skills as they explore, experiment and take age-appropriate risks.
26. Purposeful activities and trips help early years children develop their communication and language skills. For example, following a farm visit, children can recall the names of the animals they saw. Staff use questioning, praise and structured conversations to further extend children's vocabulary and understanding. Children share their ideas confidently.
27. Teachers use secure subject knowledge to plan sequences of lessons that build clearly over time. They use classroom displays, known as 'learning walls', to help pupils recall prior knowledge. They use questioning and verbal feedback effectively to assess understanding and extend pupils' thinking effectively. Leaders set clear expectations for classroom routines and manage behaviour consistently, so lessons run calmly. Pupils settle quickly, focus on their work and make effective use of lesson time.
28. Some teachers implement strategies which support pupils to think and learn for themselves. In Year 5 English, for example, pupils assess their own and each other's work against agreed success criteria and, in music, pupils respond positively to feedback from their peers, demonstrating positive relationships and a willingness to improve. Pupils also share and celebrate their learning through assemblies involving different year groups. However, opportunities for pupils to reflect on and evaluate their learning are not consistently embedded across all areas of the curriculum, limiting opportunities for pupils to develop their academic and intellectual independence.
29. Teachers plan well-structured activities that help pupils build on their prior learning, collaborate and apply knowledge in different contexts. In Year 1 history, for example, pupils respond positively to the challenge of recreating the royal family tree and, in Spanish, pupils carefully observe one

another's role play before offering appropriate suggestions for improvement. In Year 5 ICT, clear instruction and targeted individual feedback help pupils refine their video-editing skills, including adding audio and using visual enhancements. As a result, pupils engage positively, take care in their work and make good progress from their starting points.

30. Leaders use assessment information from Reception onwards to identify pupils' starting points and monitor their progress over time. In the early years, baseline and ongoing assessments, including early years profile information, help staff plan children's next steps. From Year 1, nationally standardised assessments are used alongside unit tests, formal assessments and teacher assessment. Leaders record standardised scores in a whole-school tracking document, which helps them identify trends and provide additional support where needed. The school's tracking information shows that pupils make good progress.
31. Leaders monitor teaching by visiting lessons and looking at pupils' work. They use the information gathered to improve provision where needed. Early years leaders monitor children's progress and identify priorities appropriately.
32. Leaders identify and assess pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) appropriately and share information with staff through individual pupil profiles to support them in meeting the pupils' needs. Regular communication with parents helps staff and parents understand pupils' needs and progress. Teachers support pupils through focused support from teaching assistants, adapted tasks and resources, and the use of technology, digital readers and coloured overlays. One-to-one sessions provide further support where needed.
33. A small number of pupils speak English as an additional language (EAL). At the time of the inspection, there were no pupils in the early stages of learning English. However, leaders have thorough approaches to early identification of pupils who speak EAL and provide support to any pupils who need it. Staff are well trained and have a range of strategies and resources that they can use, when required. Leaders' approach is supported by a well-considered policy.
34. The extra-curricular programme includes a wide range of activities including coding, creative writing, chamber choir, drama, chess, archery and sport. These activities help pupils develop their intellectual, creative, physical and social skills, and encourage them to participate more widely in school life. The programme responds to the views of pupils, with activities such as creating a school newspaper and tag rugby reflecting pupils' suggestions.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to the quality of education, training and recreation

- 35. All the relevant Standards are met.**

Section 3: Pupils' physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing

36. Pupils and staff show respectful relationships across the school. Pupil ambassadors, known as 'unity dragons', help promote equality, diversity and inclusion. They take an active role in raising awareness of important issues, including collaborating with pupils from another school to deliver assemblies and lead whole-school initiatives. Pupils understand the importance of respecting all people.
37. Assemblies, collective worship, singing and philosophical discussion help pupils think about spiritual and moral questions. Pupils participate respectfully in collective worship and listen carefully to the views of others. Through philosophical discussion, pupils learn to reason, build on one another's ideas and consider questions from different perspectives.
38. Performance opportunities, including the annual Eisteddfod, school productions and informal music concerts, help pupils develop self-confidence. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 sing and act confidently in the school production and pupils perform in front of an audience at music concerts. In weekly celebration assemblies, leaders further promote pupils' self-confidence by recognising their achievements and efforts.
39. Early years staff identify children's social, emotional and fine motor needs and adapt support accordingly. Targeted activities help children develop the physical control needed for early writing. Early years leaders also promote children's confidence and resilience through practical challenges that encourage them to persevere, complete tasks and recognise their achievements. This supports children's independence and helps prepare them for the expectations of Year 1.
40. PSHE lessons and wider school life teach pupils to understand and manage their feelings. Pupils learn to identify and communicate their feelings so that staff can provide support when needed. Pupils can also use the quiet area in the playground when they need time to relax. During 'wellbeing week', pupils take part in activities such as mindfulness and wellbeing walks, including opportunities for families to participate in shared events. Early years leaders create a calm environment where children show consideration for others and move sensibly between activities.
41. Leaders provide suitable PE and health education. Pupils develop their physical skills in PE, swimming and competitive matches. PSHE and PE lessons help pupils to learn about healthy lifestyles and how to keep themselves safe and well, including age-appropriate teaching about alcohol, drugs and smoking. Pupils learn about balanced diets and the importance of sleep by carrying out sleep studies and making instructional videos about healthy lifestyles that they share with their peers.
42. Leaders deliver effective relationships and sex education (RSE) as part of the PSHE curriculum. In lessons, assemblies and form periods, pupils learn about important topics such as respectful relationships, personal safety and puberty. Older pupils also receive age-appropriate teaching about menstruation and non-statutory sex education.
43. Leaders set clear expectations for pupils' behaviour and staff apply these consistently. Pupils respond positively to the well-developed system of rewards and sanctions. Leaders encourage pupils to identify and celebrate acts of kindness by their peers which are subsequently recognised in

assemblies. As a result, pupils behave well across the school and show consideration for one another.

44. Leaders implement an effective anti-bullying strategy. Assemblies, workshops, PSHE lessons and 'anti-bullying week' help pupils understand what bullying is and how to report concerns. Bullying is rare with pupils reporting that staff respond fairly when concerns arise.
45. Leaders provide well-maintained premises and accommodation which staff use effectively to support pupils' learning, play and wellbeing. Staff monitor entrances and exits carefully to promote pupils' safety. Leaders deploy staff effectively to maintain suitable supervision arrangements throughout the school day, including during breaktimes, transitions between lessons and movement between the school and the sporting facilities and outdoor learning area.
46. Early years leaders maintain the required adult-to-child ratios and ensure that children are always within sight or sound of an adult. Early years staff supervise children appropriately when moving between the school and the outdoor learning area, including when crossing the road, and clear routines and expectations help children develop independence and safe habits.
47. Leaders maintain suitable admission and attendance arrangements and act promptly and supportively if there are concerns about any pupil's attendance. Leaders engage actively with parents through newsletters, email communication and in-person meetings to raise the importance of high levels of school attendance, taking steps to promote regular attendance. Leaders engage with the local authority when necessary.
48. Leaders maintain suitable health and safety arrangements. They keep detailed records of fire safety, water safety, electrical checks and risk assessments for the school site, activities, trips and visits, and individual pupils. Leaders display fire instructions throughout the school, ensure fire equipment is serviced regularly and that staff receive appropriate training. Regular fire evacuation drills help ensure that staff and pupils know how to respond in an emergency.
49. Leaders ensure that pupils have access to suitable accommodation to support their medical needs. Staff qualified in first aid, including paediatric first aid, provide appropriate medical care to any pupils who are injured or unwell. Staff maintain medical information appropriately and store medicines securely.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to pupils' physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing

- 50. All the relevant Standards are met.**

Section 4: Pupils' social and economic education and contribution to society

51. Pupils learn about respect and inclusion through the curriculum and wider life of the school. Pupils develop an age-appropriate understanding of equality and the importance of respecting others, including those who are different from themselves. This is supported by the work of the pupil ambassadors who help raise awareness of equality and inclusion through assemblies and whole-school initiatives. Pupils demonstrate respectful attitudes towards others and describe the school as a community where pupils know and support one another.
52. Through 'international day', food festivals and cultural workshops, including bhangra dancing, pupils broaden their understanding of cultures, traditions and communities beyond their own lives. Religious studies lessons, visits to places of worship and assemblies led by religious leaders further develop pupils' understanding of different faiths and support their respect for diversity in British society.
53. Leaders help pupils to develop a sense of responsibility through the curriculum and routines of school life. Pupils learn why rules matter, collaborate to create their own class rules and, in Year 6, consider what might happen when rules or laws are absent.
54. Leaders provide a wide range of opportunities for Year 6 pupils to contribute to school life and develop leadership skills. Roles such as head pupils, heads of house and sports ambassadors enable pupils to take responsibility and contribute to their school community.
55. Early years leaders provide suitable experiences that support children's social development. Children learn to communicate, co-operate and build positive relationships with others. Adults use questioning and praise to extend children's language and encourage them to listen carefully, share, and take turns. As a result, children in early years demonstrate positive social skills and can co-operate and resolve minor conflicts with minimal adult intervention.
56. Leaders enable pupils to gain practical experience and understanding of democracy. Pupils seeking election as head pupils and heads of houses take part in hustings, when they speak to the whole school about how they would contribute. Pupils then vote for their preferred candidates using ballot papers and a ballot box.
57. Leadership roles enable pupils to influence aspects of school life. Elected environmental leaders successfully promote initiatives such as 'sustainability week' and 'walk to school week' and calculate the school's carbon footprint to help identify ways to reduce waste and energy use. The pupil leadership team contributes to the creation of playground rules, the establishment of a designated quiet reading area and the selection of new playground equipment.
58. Pupils take part in activities to help others and contribute to the community. They campaign for a zebra crossing outside the school, engaging with the local MP and police and learning how individuals can seek change through public institutions. Pupils initiate support for local foodbanks and work in partnership with a local care home. Pupils join with residents of the care home to plant sunflowers together and maintain the garden.

59. Staff organise moving-up days at the end of each academic year so that pupils can visit their new classroom and meet their new form teacher, so they become familiar with new routines and expectations before they move on. Older pupils receive suitable guidance about senior school choices. In Year 6, practice interviews with governors and visits to senior schools, where pupils speak to older pupils about their experiences, support preparation for the next stage of their education.
60. Leaders provide opportunities for pupils to develop an awareness of the world of work. The school's 'classifieds' jobs board encourages pupils to gain experience of applications, interviews and enterprise. The school's bespoke currency system helps pupils understand money, earning rewards for the jobs they do. They can spend the currency earned in the school shop at the end of each term or deposit it in the school bank, which is run by Year 6 pupils, and where they earn interest. This helps pupils make links between effort and reward, and learn about spending and saving.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to pupils' social and economic education and contribution to society

- 61. All the relevant Standards are met.**

Safeguarding

62. Safeguarding policies and procedures reflect current statutory guidance and staff follow these procedures in practice. Governors maintain oversight through regular reviews of safeguarding practice, procedures and records. They approve the safeguarding policy and receive direct reports from the safeguarding team at board meetings. They also meet pupils directly to gather their views and share their findings at board level.
63. Appropriately trained leaders with responsibility for safeguarding provide thorough, comprehensive training for all staff, including at induction. They support this training through regular updates. They ensure that information about pupils is shared promptly at regular staff meetings. As a result, staff, including those in the early years, respond promptly to any concerns about pupils, or allegations against adults working in the school.
64. Leaders with responsibility for safeguarding maintain comprehensive records. They liaise effectively with external agencies, including the local authority and children's services. The safeguarding team makes any required referrals to these agencies promptly to secure early help for pupils and families. Leaders respond appropriately to child-on-child abuse concerns and provide support for the pupils involved.
65. Pupils know how to raise concerns. They can speak to trusted adults, use digital reporting systems or share worries through a visible 'worry monster'. Posters around the school identify members of the safeguarding team and remind pupils, staff and visitors how to report concerns. Children in the early years know who they can speak to if they are worried.
66. The ICT curriculum, assemblies and additional internet safety activities support pupils to keep themselves safe online. Pupils understand firewalls, safe use of technology and how to report concerns. Leaders review online safety arrangements regularly. Leaders test internet filtering and monitoring systems regularly, act on alerts and ensure that governors check records as part of their oversight.
67. Appropriately trained leaders implement safer recruitment procedures consistently. They ensure that all required employment checks are completed before any adult begins work at the school. Leaders record these accurately on the SCR. Governors maintain oversight of recruitment arrangements, including checks on the SCR and personnel files.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to safeguarding

- 68. All the relevant Standards are met.**

School details

School	St David's School
Department for Education number	306/6068
Registered charity number	271907
Address	St David's School 23 – 25 Woodcote Valley Road Purley Surrey CR8 3AL
Phone number	020 8660 0723
Email address	office@stdavidsschool.co.uk
Website	www.stdavidsschool.co.uk
Proprietor	Russell School Trust
Chair	Mr Andrew Merriman
Headteacher	Mrs Sarah Syradd
Age range	3 to 11
Number of pupils	146
Date of previous inspection	14 to 15 June 2023

Information about the school

69. St David's School is a co-educational day school in Purley, Surrey. It forms part of the Royal Russell Family of Schools and is governed by the Royal Russell School Trust Board of Governors. The current headteacher was appointed in September 2024.
70. There are 32 children in the early years comprising one Nursery and one Reception class.
71. The school has identified 31 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities. No pupils in the school have an education, health and care plan.
72. The school has identified English as an additional language for 12 pupils.
73. The school states its aims are to provide an all-round education in a supportive and happy environment that will challenge every child to fulfil their maximum potential, educating the whole child academically, socially and morally through a broad and balanced curriculum so that they are able to integrate and flourish with confidence in their next school.

Inspection details

Inspection dates

16 to 18 June 2026

74. A team of three inspectors visited the school for two and a half days.

75. Inspection activities included:

- observation of lessons, some in conjunction with school leaders
- observation of registration periods and assemblies
- observation of a sample of extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection
- discussions with the chair and other governors
- discussions with the headteacher, school leaders, managers and other members of staff
- discussions with pupils
- visits to the learning support area and facilities for physical education
- scrutiny of samples of pupils' work
- scrutiny of a range of policies, documentation and records provided by the school.

76. The inspection team considered the views of pupils, members of staff and parents who responded to ISI's pre-inspection surveys.

How are association independent schools in England inspected?

- The Department for Education is the regulator for independent schools in England.
- ISI is approved by the Secretary of State for Education to inspect independent schools in England, which are members of associations in membership of the Independent Schools Council.
- ISI inspections report to the Department for Education on the extent to which the statutory Independent School Standards, the EYFS statutory framework requirements, the National Minimum Standards for boarding schools and any other relevant standards are met.
- For more information, please visit **www.isi.net**.

Independent Schools Inspectorate

CAP House, 9-12 Long Lane, London, EC1A 9HA

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