



Inspection Report on

St Davids College

**Gloddaeth Hall
Llandudno
LL30 1RD**

Date Inspection Completed

17/10/2019

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Description of the service

St. David's College is registered by the Welsh Government as an independent boarding school and Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) is appointed to carry out inspections of its boarding provision. It is an independent co-educational school offering boarding and day places to pupils between the ages 9 and 19 years of age with a wide range of abilities and needs with a particular emphasis on supporting pupils with dyslexia. The college is a registered charity with a Christian ethos, run as a trust by a Board of Governors. The college is situated within extensive grounds in a semi-rural location close to the town of Llandudno in North Wales.

There are five boarding areas; one currently providing accommodating for younger pupils, one for girls and three are for boys. There were 95 boarders and 159 day pupils at the time of the inspection. The Headmaster is Andy Russell and the Head of Boarding is Mrs Sue Davies.

Summary of our findings

1. Overall assessment

Children and young people receive a good quality of care and support when boarding at St David's because they are protected from abuse and their well-being is promoted by all the staff working at the college. Leadership and management are effective with the Headmaster and Head of Boarding knowing each child who boards well and making the effort to create a sense of community. The leadership team are keen to address any issues arising and develop a culture of continuous improvement to the service they offer. The boarding culture is inclusive and supportive with feedback from boarders indicating their experience of boarding is positive.

2. Improvements

- The documents parents are required to complete and sign before their child arrives at the school now includes a well-being checklist to alert staff to any particular medical and physical needs their child has.
- There is now a dedicated human resource officer to ensure the recruitment of staff is robust, safe and timely.
- Areas of the boarders' environments had been improved with further improvements planned on a rolling basis. An extension to one of the boarding houses was also in progress.
- The service has reviewed its missing pupil policy and procedure and consulted with Children in Wales to ensure it is fit for purpose.

3. Requirements and recommendations

Section five of this report sets out our recommendations to improve the service. These include the need to review the medication policy and procedures to ensure they are

aligned to current legislation and national guidance. Other recommendations include the need to make the school's whistleblowing procedure more clear and the need to follow up on issues raised by pupils in the school council and in their boarding house meetings.

1. Well-being

Our findings

Children and young people are happy, fulfilled and safe. We spoke to 30 children either in groups or individually and we spoke to a parent of a day pupil who wanted to board part time. All the young people we spoke with told us they “*No concerns about the school or the houses*”; “*no bullying in the school, not seen it here. Staff are really supportive and really good*”; “*Support, good understanding – speak with each other, someone is always here – listen to us*”; “*staff listen to us. Treat us with respect*”; and “*Enjoy it here. I like it. Well looked after. Alright. It’s good*”. Overall comments from the pupils we spoke with showed young people are very positive about boarding at St. David’s and their well-being is enhanced by the quality of education, their care and support, and the experiences they enjoyed.

Children can access the right information, when they need it, in the way they want it and use it to manage and improve their well-being. We saw there was a pupil handbook for the college with a separate Boarding Specific document. This was extracted from the pupil information for the college but we recommend some improvement to inform boarders how they are consulted and had their say about such matters as the normal boarding house routines, how to raise a complaint, how often they have house meetings and who to go to with any worries. The Head of Boarding told us that House Masters were planning house information booklets and would recommend children and young people are involved in the creation of these so they are relevant to them. We saw notice boards in each Boarding House with details of the Child Line, a ‘Need to talk’ poster and the Children’s Commissioner for Wales amongst the examples of information displayed. Children have a voice and are able to express their views and opinions but an improvement is needed to ensure they are fully aware of what to expect from boarding and how to exercise their rights.

Children are safe and are protected from abuse and neglect. There is a Designated Senior Safeguarding Lead for the school and boarding houses and a designated deputy with the Headmaster and Deputy Head stepping in if both safeguarding leads were unavailable. The Safeguarding Lead is also the Assistant Head of Pastoral Care and Head of Boarding. There is a safeguarding policy and procedure for the school and boarding and we heard the Headmaster asking parents who had come for an open information event to please stay with their tour guide as it was an important part of safeguarding. The Safeguarding Leads had both attended safeguarding training and provided safeguarding training to all staff (including maintenance, catering and cleaning staff as well as teachers and boarding staff) on an annual basis and it was also incorporated within staff induction training. They had also developed a link with the North Wales Police regarding the ‘Prevent’ Programme and regularly met with the police school liaison officer. They had additionally provided a session for parents on internet safety and subsequently sent a safeguarding newsletter on safeguarding to parents with five or six key points to raise their awareness. We found all staff we spoke with were aware to keep pupils safe and the boarders we spoke with said

they had not witnessed any incidents of bullying and would know who to talk to about their concerns. Children are safe and protected from abuse and emotional harm.

Children's physical, intellectual, emotional, social and behaviour development needs are met whilst boarding at the college. We saw children had a busy timetable of education, leisure and recreational activities. The college specialised in supporting children with dyslexia and their need for specialist educational input was recognised and supported by teachers who had completed dyslexia training at Diploma level of study and some were nearing a Masters level of qualification. Children's whole development is promoted by the founding ethos of the service which works to ensure their potential is developed and achieved.

Children live in accommodation which is suitable to meet their needs. Sleeping accommodation was satisfactory and met the space requirements of School Premises Regulations 1999. Rooms comprised a mix of dormitory style rooms and single or double rooms and were adequately furnished, well maintained and clean. Young people are able to request a change to their bed or dormitory and whenever possible this was granted. Accommodation was safe from unauthorised public access and CCTV was in operation around the school buildings, school grounds. Health and safety considerations were met and fire precautions and prevention was properly addressed. A programme of refurbishment, we saw was on-going. The living accommodation for children who board is satisfactory.

2. Care and Support

Our findings

Children receive proactive, preventative care and their wide range of needs is fairly well anticipated. We saw parents attended an open day at the college when considering placing their child at the college and whether they wished the child to board there. Parents were required to provide all the relevant background information for the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO). A feedback form for prospective pupils was completed which outlined the way in which a child's special educational needs would be met. For example additional literacy, speech and language (SaLT), and the social use of language programme (SULP) requirements of a child along with enhanced pastoral or enhanced boarding and counselling support. A one page profile highlighted the child's main needs in relation to communication, making decisions, their aspirations and goals, what was important to them, and how best to support them. We also saw letters from the Headmaster to parents offering their child a place subject to them a successful taster session. The college considers a wide range of views and information to confirm it is able to meet the children's needs and support them to achieve their personal outcomes.

Children and young people are encouraged to be creative, to follow their interests, explore new challenges and experience a sense of achievement. They have access to the arts, sports and recreational activities. We saw there were a variety of activities available to both day and boarding pupils. The activities formed an integral part of the overall philosophy of the college in developing 'the whole person' through a broad education based on Christian principles, a wide choice of interest and activity and an achievable personal programme for each pupil. We saw 4x4 driving range, archery, football, netball, jazz practice, weightlifting, strength and conditioning, Welsh afternoon tea and Duke of Edinburgh award were examples of the activities on offer in one week. House activities included outdoor education, sports, games, arts and crafts. In 2018, the college was the winner of the UK Independent Schools Association '*Best Extra-Curricular Activity Programme*' and we saw parents were provided a summary of events and activities for the forthcoming week. We saw from Boarding House meeting notes that children and young people were consulted about ideas for house activities and had come up with for example cinema and panto, house cooking, raising money, apple bobbing, climbing, and trips to other nearby towns. Children and young people can do the things that matter to them and have access to a variety of activities.

The college's emphasis on the quality of relationships and sense of belonging supports children and young people to engage and make a contribution to their community both within the college and within their local society. We were informed pupils had recently been involved in collecting for their local community food bank and saw they were then participating in Christmas 'shoe bags' for local young children locally. We also saw the

Headmaster informed parents that the Harvest Festival and Macmillan's Coffee afternoon proceeds had been donated to local hospices and the local food bank. We additionally saw pupils and boarders had good relationships with their teachers and other young people within school and their boarding houses. We saw they easily approached their teachers in the dining room, in their offices and in their boarding houses. We saw notes of their boarding house meetings which demonstrated children and young people had a say and notes were taken. We recommend, however, feedback on actions taken as a result of their views expressed at either the boarding house meetings or at the meetings of the school council are reported back to them at subsequent meetings so they know their views have been acted on where appropriate. Children and young people have good relationships with the staff supporting them and are encouraged to share their views.

Children and young people are supported to be as healthy as they can be and are encouraged to have a balanced and nutritious diet. We saw pupils who board had their meals in the college's dining room where a variety of healthy and nutritious meals were available to them with food allergies accommodated and when appropriate young people in some boarding houses receiving allergy awareness raising. There were kitchens in each of the boarding houses for young people to make their own food and enjoy snacks when they chose. We saw from house meeting notes that the cleanliness and tidiness of house kitchens needed managing with kitchen books and 'food managers' being used to ensure the area remained in good order and food money budgets being used to provide more choice for young people and promoting its effective use. Some young people were using what they had learnt from the meals they cook as a house activity to recreate their recipes when they went home. We saw that children and young people were consulted in their boarding house meetings about the food in the college with some responding they would like more variety in the salad options available and more of a continental breakfast in the summer. Children and young people are provided with choice in the food they ate in the college and in their boarding accommodation.

Young people's physical health needs are met. The college requires boarders to be registered with the School Medical Officer, a local General Practitioner. There is a medical centre on site staffed by qualified nurses which is open daily. The GP visited the school every week and appointments were made if required. Pupils requiring urgent treatment were seen immediately. There was a sick bay available for use by day and boarding pupils so their health can be monitored if they are unwell and parents were contacted. We saw that medical questionnaires and consent forms were kept in the medical centre and prescribed medication was administered for boarders according to the college's medicine policy and procedure on administering prescribed and non-prescribed medicines. We recommended that the medication policy and procedure be reviewed to ensure it was aligned to current legislation and national guidance and that health staff had access to the British National Formulary (BNF) either in hard copy or electronically. Medicine Administration Records (MAR) were maintained for all pupils and controlled drugs were recorded correctly. We saw, however, examples of errors and omissions within the MAR records and discussed these with the staff in charge. We saw that the issues highlighted

within the MAR had been rectified by our second visit and arrangements were in place to further improve the MAR charts and medication storage. We heard at our second visit that improvements to support staff at the medical centre and closer liaison with college staff had been put in place. We saw examples of the nursing team's diligence in ensuring college staff were aware of children and young people's health needs for example in managing food allergies and medical conditions. Children and young people receive the right physical and medical care at the right time.

Young people's emotional health needs are met. We were informed the college continued to foster their links with the local Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) Early Intervention and Recovery Programme. This arrangement supported boarders with their emotional and mental health needs. School based counselling had been available from CAMHS and we saw referrals had also been made to another appropriate service such as a private independent counselling service, when needed. An Independent Listener was available to children to contact directly about any personal problems or concerns at school. We spoke to them and they told us they had never been consulted by any young person in over three years. We recommended the service reviews the way they met the requirement in the NMS 14.4 for children and young people to be able to directly contact a person independent of the school. Children told us they had personal tutors and young people volunteered they would talk to their teachers or personal tutors or health care staff if they had any concerns or worries. One young person told us they *"Feel very safe here. Teachers are really supportive – get things done. Really good counselling here"*. A young person also told us how the staff team had really got them over a period of emotional distress in the last year. Children's emotional ill health is recognised and they receive appropriate support to help them recover.

3. Leadership and Management

Our findings

Leadership and management arrangements are in place including systems for monitoring the quality of the boarding provision. Arrangements to safeguard boarders were well established and resources to support their well-being were comprehensive. A new Headmaster had been appointed since the last inspection and they had previously been the Head of Boarding at the college until 2017. The executive management team consisted of the Headmaster, the bursar, the registrar, the deputy head-teacher and the chaplain with the SENCO (Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator), the Assistant Head (Pastoral) and Assistant Head (Academic) identified as the leadership team. A board of Governors supported the operation of the school and we saw designated governors had responsibilities for specific policies within the college. The Headmasters' reports were submitted to the Board of Governors and we saw three that included reports from the boarding service and welfare matters for the college. We discussed with the Headmaster that the ones we viewed contained information that could compromise the confidentiality of boarders mentioned within them. We recommended that reports are properly anonymised to ensure this is not the case in future reports. Children told us the Headmaster *"was nice, wants to know everyone – friendly, approachable. Will sit with the younger people in the canteen"*; *"asks us if we are alright.He's understanding, likes to see us happy"*. A housemaster told us the Headmaster was *"very personable. Wants the best for children here"*. We recommend the current arrangements the Headmaster has to monitor the welfare of the children is formalised within a quality assurance framework that seeks to include the views and comments of all staff, parents, pupils and external stakeholders. Leadership and management of the service is effective though improvements to seeking the views on the quality of the boarding provision would enhance its quality assurance processes.

Children can be confident that the staff teaching, supporting, and looking after them are safe to do so. The colleges' Recruitment and vetting follows safe and robust processes and follows the requirements in the national minimum standards for boarding schools issued by the National Assembly Government in 2003. The college had a checklist in the three staff files we read to ensure all the requirements were met and in place. We saw that Disclosure and Barring Service certificates were in place and in date. The bursar told us they had appointed a person specifically to undertake the human resources function for the college. The bursar oversaw the recruitment process and ensuring safe recruitment of staff, including ancillary staffing, was in place. We saw the safer recruitment policy for the college that was reviewed in September 2019 had a nominated governor and covered both teachers and ancillary staff. Children can be confident that staff employed by the school, whether teachers or ancillary staff are safely recruited and properly vetted.

Children and young people and their parents are able to access a wide range of information about the college. The college and boarding facilities had a comprehensive computer system and website which could be accessed at differing levels by pupils, parents, staff and management. We found that as a result of the inspection in 2016 the information being asked of parents regarding non-academic aspects relating to their child had been improved with the introduction of a well-being document which captured a wider range of academic and non-academic information. We discussed the inclusion of questions relating to adverse childhood experiences likely to affect a child's emotional well-being and recommended alternative wording be given to elicit such information relating to, for example, bereavement. A parent of a day pupil who had requested to board one night a week told us how effective communication was between the college and parents. They told us they received weekly e-mails which they stated was clearly personally written about their child. They told us there was a secure 'phone App' and staff "*shared photos which was great and they could send instant messages*". We heard and saw from the Governor's report the Head of Boarding had similar contact with parents of overseas pupils. We saw a number of policies, such as child protection and safeguarding and bullying on the public face of the web-site. We recommended the staff whistleblowing policy was reviewed as it did not make the protection for staff who whistle-blowed and staff who were the subject of allegations clear enough. Staff we spoke with were very clear on their responsibility to 'blow the whistle' and report issues relating to children's safety. Children and young people are safe at the college where staff supporting them are vigilant to matters affecting them.

4. Environment

Our findings

Young people who board at St David's college live in accommodation that is suitable for their needs. We saw they are cared for in comfortable, clean surroundings and are able to personalise their immediate environment around their bed space whether that was in shared 'dormitory' type bedrooms or in single bedrooms. Most sixth formers had single rooms unless it was their expressed wish to share with their friend. Shared rooms, were large and accommodated no more than five young people. All houses had suitable provision for prep and private study whether that be in study rooms, the provision of desks or in some rooms, cabin style beds. All boarding accommodation was fully separate by gender and in respect of all but the youngest boarders appropriately by age. Floor space was adequate in single and shared rooms and beds were seen to be in acceptable condition and appropriate to the boarders' needs. All boarding accommodation was secure from unauthorised public access as all boarding houses could only be accessed by a key fob security system unique to each of the boarding areas. All boarding accommodation was on the college campus and we were asked to sign in as visitors and wear a 'visitor' lanyard throughout our visit. Young people live in suitable accommodation which is suitable for their needs where they are safe from unauthorised public access.

Young people can be confident that repairs and maintenance of their living environment is completed in a timely manner. The college has a maintenance team of eight people to maintain the school, boarding houses and large grounds. We were told that an extensive programme of refurbishment was on-going with an extension to one of the boarding houses in progress. A governor's report completed in June 2019 highlighted the first full year maintenance cycle of the boarding houses had been completed with the renewal of 15 dorms (26 beds) and a kitchen and bathroom replaced. Issues we raised on our first inspection visit relating to window restrictors had been rectified by the time of our second visit and we saw portable appliance testing (PAT) taking place in one of the boarding houses. Pupils' personal electrical appliances had to be reported in order for them to be PAT tested. The school bursar told us the medical centre was due to be refurbished in the Easter (2020) holidays but the medication storage facilities, particularly the controlled drugs cabinet, would be replaced immediately following us raising our concerns it was not fit for purpose. We spoke with the Estates Manager who told us the system for repairs was computerised and that the team met daily to prioritise daily requests for repairs and the pre-planned maintenance tasks. We saw a House Master undertook the fire emergency evacuation drills and saw they kept a record of drills and the fire alarm being triggered resulting in evacuation. Overall, the home environment is maintained and that staff ensure all health and safety checks, routine maintenance and emergency repairs are conducted with due diligence and attention.

5. Improvements required and recommended following this inspection

5.1 Areas of non compliance from previous inspections

5.2 Recommendations for improvement

We recommended

- The college considers building on the 'one page profile' document gathered as part of the admission process for the college is available as Personal Plans (or Welfare Plans) for Boarders in their boarding houses and they are involved in identifying 'what matters to them'.
- The college considers reviewing the well-being checklist completed and signed by parents to include emotional issues a child may need support with.
- The Headmaster's reports to the Governors are suitability redacted to preserve the confidentiality of boarders.
- The service concludes its consideration of Boarding House specific information booklets and this includes information for pupils about for example the 'rules' of the house, the way and how often they are consulted, how to voice their concerns, and who they can talk to who is independent of the college.
- Consider involving the nursing/health care staff in any in house training re autism, mental health, anxiety, depression, and diabetes, self-harm and any other specialised individualised and identified training need specific to individuals.
- Consider the benefits of health care staff linking in to the regular CAMHS session every four to six weeks with the Safeguarding Leads.
- The controlled drugs cabinet needs to be immediately replaced and moved to a more secure area.
- The medication policy and procedures are reviewed to ensure they are aligned to legislation and national guidance.
- Actions identified in House meeting notes are given a timescale to be completed or followed up at future meetings so young people know when issues they raised have been dealt with.
- The college considers the need to review its policy of whistleblowing to make it more clear how both whistle-blowers and staff who have an allegation made against them are both supported and protected.

6. How we undertook this inspection

This was a full inspection undertaken as part of our inspection programme. Two inspectors made an unannounced visit to the college on Monday 7 October 2019 between 09:05 a.m. and 6:25 p.m. and an announced visit on Thursday 17 October 2019 between 08:00 a.m. and 7:15 p.m.

The following standards were considered as part of this inspection:

- The National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools published by the Welsh Assembly Government 2003

Information for this report was gathered from:

- Information held by CIW
- Consultation with one student boarder who came to a drop-in session we held.
- We observed a residents meeting of housemasters, the chaplain and the Headmaster.
- We had meetings with groups of boarders mostly in private and three in private, totalling 30 children and young people, including the Head Boy and Head Girl.
- We spoke with
 - the Headmaster
 - the deputy Headteacher
 - the Head and deputy head of Safeguarding
 - the School Bursar
 - the Admissions Manager
 - the Estates Manager
 - the Catering Manager
 - the College Chaplain
 - the College's Nurse
 - the SEN Co-ordinator

- a parent of a day pupil
- teaching staff during breakfast, lunch, and dinner.
- We read a sample of children's files.
- We toured the Boarding Houses, observed a sample of rooms and spent time in the sanatorium. We also viewed the outdoor areas and sports facilities.
- We viewed a sample of records, reports, policies and procedures.

Feedback on the inspection was given to the Housemaster by telephone and to the Head of Boarding throughout the inspection.

Further information about what we do can be found on our website:

www.careinspectorate.wales

About the service

Type of care provided	Boarding School
Registered Person	St David`s College Trust
Head Teacher	Andy Russell
Registered maximum number of places	170
Date of previous Care Inspectorate Wales inspection	4 th ,5 th ,10 th & 22 nd February 2016
Dates of this Inspection visit(s)	07 October 2019 & 17 October 2019
Operating Language of the service	English
Does this service provide the Welsh Language active offer?	No
Additional Information: This is not a registered care service and is regulated only by CIW as an independent boarding school. It has a statement of Boarding Principles which does not refer to the Welsh language but we did see a Welsh cream tea for pupils wishing to use their Welsh in conversation.	

Date Published 30/12/2019

No noncompliance records found in Open status.