

School inspection report

30 January to 1 February 2024

St David's Prep

Justin Hall
Beckenham Road
West Wickham
Kent
BR4 0QS

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'.

Contents

Summary of inspection findings	3
The extent to which the school meets the Standards	4
Recommended next steps	4
Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance	5
Section 2: Quality of education, training and recreation	7
Section 3: Pupils’ physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing	9
Section 4: Pupils’ social and economic education and contribution to society.....	11
Safeguarding.....	13
School details	14
Information about the school	15
Inspection details	15

Summary of inspection findings

1. St David's Prep is a school which, in accordance with its aim to provide a respectful, safe and inclusive culture, cherishes the individuality of everyone within its diverse community.
2. The proprietorial body is actively involved in quality assuring the work of leaders and managers. Its executive team visit the school regularly and gain a comprehensive oversight of all activities, including specific auditing of safer recruitment and safeguarding procedures, risk management and the appropriate handling of concerns.
3. Leaders throughout the school monitor how pupils acquire new knowledge and skills. All children make good progress. The school curriculum covers all required areas of learning and is enhanced with a diverse programme of recreational activities and sporting pursuits. Children capitalise enthusiastically on the wide range of opportunities made available to them throughout each day.
4. Leaders have developed a wide range of mechanisms for recognising and recording aspects of children's learning and conduct such as achievement data, parental concerns, pastoral matters and parent meetings. These are all effective individually but do not work together efficiently as they are held in separate records. These are not disseminated comprehensively across the staff team. As a result, it takes time to locate information and triangulate findings. This impacts negatively on the way in which staff respond to children's concerns as they may lack a full understanding of what has gone before.
5. Children enjoy their education. They behave well and apply themselves intellectually, physically and creatively. They act responsibly and are highly motivated. Teachers generally plan lessons well and use classroom resources effectively. However, some differences are evident in the planning of activities which result in the effectiveness of teaching not remaining consistent between subjects and across year groups. Consequently, in these lessons some pupils' learning is less effective.
6. Leaders encourage pupils to adopt a sense of responsibility towards others that goes beyond the school. Consequently, pupils show initiative and understand how they can contribute positively to the lives of those living and working in the locality in which the school is situated, and to society more widely.
7. Effective safeguarding procedures, comprehensive risk assessments and detailed health and safety protocols support children's welfare effectively.

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:

- make effective use of pupils' academic and pastoral information in order to ensure that each child's needs are systemically identified and monitored
- monitor the consistency of teaching and learning within and across year groups to maximise the progress of all pupils.

Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

8. Members of the proprietor's executive team with specialist knowledge visit the school formally each term to assure themselves that leaders and managers are fulfilling their responsibilities, and that Standards continue to be met. These visits result in an action plan that is monitored both through additional informal visits and subsequent further formal reviews during subsequent terms. Consequently, all levels of leadership and management in the school fulfil their responsibilities effectively.
9. Staff in all areas of the school benefit from the networking and partnership activities that are arranged between the schools of the group. Skills and knowledge are shared so that effective practice is disseminated. Consequently, children in one school benefit from innovations that have been developed in another. For example, leaders are currently reviewing how it can best assess pupil progress in foundation subjects, and the results will be shared with other schools.
10. Leaders work effectively in partnership with other external agencies in areas, such as safeguarding and supporting pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), to promote the safety of pupils and better learning for pupils.
11. The school's aims and ethos are published on its website alongside all other information required, including those for the early years. Leaders produce informative parent handbooks for all year groups and teachers provide regular and frequent information to parents on their children's progress, including a detailed annual report.
12. The school's aims and ethos are evident through their practical application throughout the school, especially the explicit emphasis which is placed on the wellbeing of everyone involved with the school. This is seen in the ways in which adults and children treat each other, care for each other and provide mutual support.
13. Informed and guided by the executive team, leaders are constantly looking to improve and innovate. Rigorous self-evaluation has resulted in several new initiatives being skilfully implemented by the staff, including the introduction of a revised assessment framework and an approach to mathematics teaching that place increased emphasis on pupil understanding of concepts. Whilst innovation has resulted in a rapid pace of change, all policies and documentation required are thorough and effective.
14. A thorough and effective accessibility plan has been implemented. Combined with the school's clear lesson planning protocols, which ensure activities do not discriminate, and the respect seen for all diversity, the school fulfils its responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010.
15. Appropriate attention has clearly been paid to risk management through a strategic, comprehensive and inclusive approach which keeps children safe whilst capitalising on opportunities for them to learn throughout the school's indoor and outdoor environments. This has been achieved through bespoke training for all employees in the implementation of an appropriate risk assessment policy, supported by helpful documentation templates which are completed well and overseen diligently.

The school therefore takes all appropriate measures to keep the children safe, and regular oversight in this area is provided by the ownership group.

16. The school handles complaints in line with an appropriate policy. Due emphasis is placed on resolving concerns as early as possible so that they do not escalate and records are kept of these. However, pastoral records are held in various separate logs and consequently are not all shared effectively throughout the school team.

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

All the relevant Standards are met

Section 2: Quality of education, training and recreation

17. Leaders have developed suitable curriculum plans and schemes of work which enable all pupils to learn and make good progress. Teachers demonstrate good knowledge and understanding of the subject matter being taught and make skilful use of class time. They apply resources well and capitalise on opportunities for appropriate targeted interventions, including the use of teaching assistants. Consequently, pupils are self-motivated and interested in their work as they apply intellectual, physical and creative effort.
18. However, on some occasions there are differences between pupils' experiences in two parallel classes within a year group. These discrepancies in lesson planning and pupils engagement with what was being taught meant that some lessons were more effective than others.
19. The early years classes experience programmes of activities which are appropriate to each child's educational needs in communication and language development. They make clear reference to the Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework and enable almost all children to achieve the early learning goals. Teachers and other staff promote curiosity through the astute use of stimulating classrooms and outdoor areas. For example, some of the very youngest children were developing their abilities to explain their emotions by exploring colour-coded monster toys in their classroom, whilst others were increasing their awareness of public services by discussing questions they would like to ask firefighters on an imminent trip to a fire station.
20. Leaders have recently revised the assessment framework to give more detailed analysis of pupils' progress. Results show that teaching informed by assessment data, with focused support from teaching assistants when deemed necessary, is successful in enabling pupils to acquire new knowledge and consequently make good progress according to their age and ability. Almost all pupils achieve places at senior schools in line with the predictions made by the school, informed by assessment information and discussions with parents.
21. Leaders have ensured that pupils are not discriminated against and have paid due regard to all the protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010. For example, children with SEND are supported in lessons by additional staff who provide targeted, structured additional teaching that includes appropriate use of additional resources so that good progress is made by all pupils. Teachers have a thorough knowledge of the needs of pupils with education, health and care (EHC) plans and ensure that approaches and resources are provided. For example, linking pupils IT (information technology) devices with teacher's software to provide text in a suitable font, both within the classroom and in the assembly hall. Pupils for whom English is an additional language (EAL) are supported by trained staff, and typically make rapid progress with their fluency in English.
22. Generally, teachers plan lessons to reflect the ability and particular learning needs of all pupils in the class. In most lessons teachers show a knowledge of subject that stimulates pupils' engagement. They manage behaviour well and keep pupils interested. However, in some lessons teachers do not use language or approaches that reflect the knowledge and ability of the pupils. For example they do not give enough structure or detail or are not aware of areas that pupils are finding difficult. In these lessons, pupils do not learn as effectively as they could. This is particularly noticeable within a year group when two classes are taught the same content simultaneously. Where tasks are planned to

meet the ability of the pupils, their progress is more rapid.

23. Teachers use technology effectively in their lessons, so that pupils engage in enthusiastic creation, evaluation and improvement of their work before taking evident pride in presenting it to others. Children in the early years learn to control electronic devices, and the oldest pupils in the school build, program and debug their own robots in preparation for entry into a national competition.
24. Pupils apply themselves wholeheartedly to what they are being asked to do. Many teachers set academically ambitious and sophisticated tasks, for example investigations comparing and contrasting how sound travels indoors and outdoors, a skilful banana run on the hockey pitch and performance poetry.
25. Pupils are offered a wide variety of optional recreational activities which take place throughout the day. Children take great enjoyment from exploring the variety of pursuits which they can follow outside core timetabled lessons to identify and develop their individual interests and passions. These include extremely enthusiastic 'Mini Singers' for the youngest pupils, through to diligent teamwork and co-operation in tap dancing, German, philosophy and coding for the older ones, alongside a variety of sports.

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

All the relevant Standards are met

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

26. Pupils' self-knowledge, self-esteem and self-confidence are all developed effectively through the implementation of schemes of work that reflect the St David's aims and ethos. Leaders place the wellbeing of all at the heart of their school improvement and decision-making processes. This is respected and echoed by the staff and, consequently, is appreciated by the school community as a whole.
27. In the early years, children experience an appropriate programme of activities which promotes their personal, emotional and physical development. The early years staff use positive language to support pupils' behaviour, with visual images of rainbows and thinking clouds evident in all foundation stage classrooms as reinforcement of appropriate conduct. Consequently, children behave well and empathise well with each other.
28. Leaders and teachers use the 'St David's Prep language of learning' vocabulary throughout the school to embed the nine key concepts of perseverance, resilience, self-motivation, independence, curiosity, creativity, responsibility, respect and kindness, and reliability. Pupils often use these words as they talk about their work and associate those concepts directly with what it means to be at school. Consequently, their self-belief and good behaviour towards others is shaped by this clear explanation of leaders' expectations, including an effective anti-bullying policy. This highly effective approach to ensuring appropriate conduct between pupils is regularly reinforced by teachers during their appropriate supervision of all school activities.
29. Leaders ensure that the school's physical education curriculum extends beyond core timetabled lessons to capitalise on additional opportunities before school, after school and during breaktimes. Pupils show great enthusiasm to participate in optional additional activities such as lacrosse, hockey, tap dance, karate, football and netball. They speak passionately about both their enjoyment of sport and their appreciation of the physical and mental benefits of exercise.
30. A school-wide initiative that promotes regular running around the school grounds as a healthy complement to indoor classroom activity is clearly a highpoint of many pupils' days. They are enthusiastic to participate and are appreciative of the many advantages attributable to a healthy lifestyle.
31. Promotion of pupils' wellbeing, including the benefits of eating healthily, is delivered through a comprehensive programme of personal and health education. This includes assemblies, which emphasise pupil participation through effective sharing of insights beneficial to others, celebrate individuality and encourage calm inward reflection to initiate resolutions for self-improvement.
32. A programme of lessons in relationships education supports the school's aims and ethos. It complies with all aspects of the latest relevant statutory guidance. A programme of age-appropriate activities throughout the school enables pupils to consider what is appropriate and inappropriate in friendships and relationships. This includes how they can keep themselves safe, both in the environment around them and when online. However, leaders and teachers do not methodically

and systematically identify or record some of the older children's anxieties and concerns. Consequently, issues are not always fully resolved, or discussed sufficiently comprehensively to prevent them being repeated. Trends and patterns are not fully analysed nor made available to staff members dealing with subsequent incidents and, as a result, some pupils do not have complete confidence in the effectiveness of the school's pastoral care.

33. Leaders ensure that the school premises and accommodation are well maintained: leaders take a rigorous oversight to ensure a safe physical environment for pupils. Health and safety practices are implemented effectively, including regular fire evacuation drills.
34. The school has basic accommodation in place to care for pupils who become unwell. Whilst current arrangements meet the requirements, leaders have appropriate plans in place for their development.
35. The attendance and admission registers are maintained and stored appropriately. Immediate checks are made if pupils are absent and appropriate reports to the local authority are made when pupils join or leave the school.

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

All the relevant Standards are met

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

36. Leaders have designed a curriculum and promote a school ethos that focus on the present and future wellbeing of pupils, including their social and economic welfare. Consequently, teachers prepare pupils effectively for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life in British society.
37. Teachers of the early years classes emphasise the importance of children empathising, co-operating and collaborating with others. They provide a range of experiences, opportunities and choices to the children, who are guided into making appropriate choices and resolving conflicts when they arise. In this way, a society of friendly, empathetic individuals develops. Children understand leaders' expectations and are well-prepared for the challenges and opportunities they will face in the older years.
38. Leaders provide opportunities for pupils to gain understanding and respect for other people, including those from different national backgrounds and those with different religious faith or gender. This is emphasised throughout all aspects of the school's programmes of study but especially within PSHEE (Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education) work, assemblies, and activities involving members of the local community. Pupils speak with interest and pride in the work that they have done in partnership with others at national, local and individual levels to make the world a better place for all involved. Visitors to the school have included those who talked about their dyslexia, which pupils reported had given them confidence in tackling specific challenges that they face.
39. British values such as respect and tolerance are actively promoted by the school. A simulated election showed pupils appreciate the significance of the democratic process, as they explained how democracies 'use law not violence'. Teachers introduce an awareness of laws, public services and institutions from an early age, when children learn to discriminate between right and wrong, understand the rule of law and know about the role of the police and fire service in our society. The respectful tone and language used by pupils as they explained how they had written and delivered their annual Remembrance Day assembly shows that they appreciated the significance of the self-sacrifice recalled by the event. Their understanding of the importance of individual liberty was shown in their work on children's rights.
40. Leaders provide structured opportunities through which pupils can demonstrate initiative and understand how they can contribute positively to others. These include house and sports captains, charity monitors, a 'Happy Place' ambassador and members of the eco and school councils. Pupils capitalise on the opportunities that this provision makes available to them, such as working with senior leaders to set up a mental wellbeing club. Activities beyond the school have included charity fundraising, the junior travel ambassadors meeting with the local authority's mayor, and close liaison between the older children and the occupants of a residential home nearby: pupils talked fondly about their regular visits to read with the residents and, on special occasions, to sing and perform music. They were clearly proud of the differences they were making in the lives of others.

41. Teachers have successfully introduced ways in which pupils can develop their economic wellbeing. Early years children were seen role-playing in a cafe. Slightly older pupils complete entrepreneurship projects and the oldest year, whose PSHEE work has included bank accounts and making wise choices about money, had recently volunteered to co-ordinate a coffee morning for a national cancer charity. They realised that holding this simultaneously with a cross-country event would maximise proceeds. Similarly, some pupils ran their own accessories enterprises at the school's Christmas Fair. This involved pitching ideas to the school's business manager.

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

All the relevant Standards are met

Safeguarding

42. The arrangements made by the school to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils, including those in the early years, are effective. They are overseen diligently by representatives of the executive team and advisory group. As a result, all aspects of safeguarding in the school are effective in promoting the wellbeing of pupils.
43. Leaders ensure that they keep up to date with local safeguarding requirements. They seek advice from, and work effectively with, external agencies to manage concerns. Safeguarding leaders receive training at an appropriate level from both local partners and the group's safeguarding leads.
44. Leaders provide regular training for all staff, who understand their roles in keeping children safe, including their responsibilities for online safety and the risks posed by radicalisation and extremism. They understand how to recognise and report signs of abuse, including child-on-child abuse. Very recent developments, including the introduction of a dedicated electronic platform for recordkeeping, have led to improvements in the speed, clarity and sharing of information. Safeguarding records are detailed and kept securely.
45. Pupils know who they can turn to if they feel in need of support. In response to older pupils' requests for opportunities to talk in greater privacy, additional provision has been put in place.
46. Pupils feel safe in school and explained the appropriate and effective processes that they have been taught which keep them safe online. Appropriate measures to filter and monitor electronic materials being accessed on school systems and devices are in place.
47. Safer recruitment procedures are followed for all appointments. A suitable single central record and set of personnel files is maintained by the school and overseen and scrutinised regularly by the executive team.

The extent to which the school meets standards relating to safeguarding

All the relevant Standards are met

School details

School	St David's Prep
Department for Education number	305/6066
Address	Justin Hall Beckenham Road West Wickham Kent BR4 0QS
Website	www.stdavidsprep.com
Proprietor	St David's Prep Limited
Chair	Sam Antrobus
Headteacher	Julia Foulger
Age range	3 to 11
Number of pupils	195
Number of children in the early years	51
Date of previous inspection	18 – 20 June 2019

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.
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