

David Game College

31 Jewry Street, London EC3N 2ET

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this boarding school

David Game College is an independent boarding school that prepares children for entry into higher education. The school is based in the City of London and provides urban boarding.

The school opened as a day school in 1974. It previously occupied a site in the Notting Hill area and moved to its current premises at the end of May 2017. The school expanded its registration to become a boarding school in June 2022. A new head of boarding was appointed in December 2022.

At the time of the inspection, the school had 348 children on the school roll, 46 of whom were boarding. All boarders are from countries other than the United Kingdom and speak English as an additional language.

The school's education facility was last inspected in 2020 and it was judged to be outstanding.

At this inspection, the inspectors only inspected the social care provision. This was the school's first inspection of the boarding facility.

Inspection dates: 6 to 8 June 2023

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	outstanding
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The boarding school provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children receive good care and support from boarding staff. All children talked highly about their boarding and learning experiences at this school. One child said that boarders miss their families but the school is like a second home for them. Children have developed positive relationships with staff members.

The boarding accommodation is safe and of a very high standard. Children have privacy in their own bedrooms as well as opportunities for sharing their school life with other children. Many children said that developing friendships is one of the best things about the school.

Children enjoy being part of an international community. They make friends from all over the world and learn about different cultures. The diversity in the school's leadership helps children to feel secure about their own identity and motivates them to aspire towards having leadership roles themselves. The seriousness in which boarding ambassadors take their roles is an example of this.

The voice of the child is strong at this school. Children feel listened to and know that their opinions are valued. This has a positive impact on their confidence, engagement and communication skills.

Staff make sure that children receive encouragement and praise for their good work. This helps children to develop self-esteem and a belief that they can achieve. One child said that knowing that the school staff genuinely cared about his progress motivated him to engage fully in his learning for the first time in his life. Another child said that staff praised him just for being himself, and he really appreciated this.

Staff carefully support children's welfare and emotional well-being. Children know that they can reach out to many safe and competent adults if they need help. One child talked about staff always being able to find solutions for any problems. Children have access to the school's mental health lead and the counsellor for additional support. Children can also contact an independent person if they want to talk in confidence to someone outside the school and their own network of family and friends.

The school's full-time nurse and a visiting doctor monitor and promote children's health. One child talked about the nurse always responding to messages, even when not on duty. The school has a thorough procedure for dealing with children's medication, including children who administer their own medication. The school's action plan that aims to secure better records in relation to medication and health matters is new and not embedded. This is work in progress.

Staff help children to develop healthy lifestyles. The school has a gym and children attend sport clubs. Meals follow healthy principles and meet children's cultural needs

and preferences. Children said that the quality of food has improved after their negative feedback and a petition. This shows that the school listens to children.

Staff help children to develop life skills, such as planning for safe journeys, cooking, tidying and doing their own laundry. The arrangements for laundry have recently improved following children's negative feedback. As some dissatisfaction continues, this is an area for further improvement.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: good

The school's leadership team, which includes the head of boarding, has a strong safeguarding focus. Weekly safeguarding meetings ensure that all relevant staff are aware of any emerging concerns. Comprehensive safeguarding strategies are agreed and implemented, and their impact on children's safety is monitored and reviewed.

The school's culture of transparency enables effective safeguarding of children. Staff share information appropriately and work well together with other professionals in safeguarding roles, such as the police, social workers and prevent officers. They attend strategy meetings and make valuable contributions to children's welfare within the multi-disciplinary professional network.

Staff receive training on a wide range of safeguarding topics and have a good understanding of children's vulnerabilities. Weekly reviews of risk assessments for each child ensure that any signs of risks are captured early and that steps are taken swiftly to minimise the risks. The small number of safeguarding incidents have been managed well. No child has gone missing from the school.

Children feel safe at the school and in the surrounding areas. Staff help them to understand risks and keep themselves safe. As part of children's induction to the school, they attend a presentation that was developed with the local police on how to be safe in London.

Staff have created an environment that is free of bullying, harassment and intimidation. Children help each other with their learning and keep each other safe. For example, one child raised staff's awareness when another child became very unwell.

Although some children do not like all of the boarding rules, they understood that the rules have helped them to keep safe, engage in education and make academic and personal progress.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The leaders and managers are exceptional in the way they approach their work with children. They know children very well and carefully monitor their progress. For example, all leaders receive daily reports on individual children's well-being, including at weekends.

The leaders and managers have done extremely well in their first year of providing boarding. They have taken a challenge of starting international boarding in an urban environment with great thoughtfulness and determination to make it a success.

The excellent leadership is providing a clear ethical direction. Diversity, equality and inclusion are promoted exceptionally well at the school. There is a culture of high respect and value of differing views and ways of life.

The leaders and managers have successfully translated their ambitious vision in good boarding practices. The high-calibre staff across different levels of the school work together tirelessly to help children to flourish and fulfil their potential. Academic and boarding staff work closely together to support children's positive experiences and progress. How staff support children's learning is one of many examples of excellent joint working in the best interests of children.

The school's highly developed systems, policies and procedures guide staff to achieve excellence in their work. Leaders and managers keep abreast with current research and make sure that staff have up-to-date and relevant knowledge. Leaders support staff very well and help them to develop further in their roles.

Some of the school's initiatives and emerging boarding practices are innovative and worthy of a wider dissemination. For example, the school has helped to create a safeguarding application and is pioneering its use by staff, children and their parents. This application provides one-stop information on a wide range of safeguarding topics and makes reporting of any concerns easy. Other examples of excellent work relate to the high quality of some of the boarding records. The induction of children to the boarding facility is very sensitive, thoughtful and effective.

The governance advisory committee adds scrutiny to the school's internal monitoring. This committee acts as a critical friend and holds the school's leaders and managers to account. The committee members are highly experienced and knowledgeable in their areas of expertise relating to schools. The members visit boarding regularly and speak to children about their experiences. This is another example that shows that children and their experiences are at the centre of the school's leadership.

The school's established culture of high expectations and continued learning and improvement in education has successfully been extended to the boarding facility. The leaders and managers have refined their admission procedure on a basis of their insight into what worked well in the first year of providing boarding and what could work better in the future.

What does the boarding school need to do to improve?

Points for improvement:

- School leaders should ensure that the recently created action plan for improved oversight of the health and medication records is fully embedded.
- School leaders should continue to improve the ease in which children can access laundry facilities.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people using the social care common inspection framework. This inspection was carried out under the Children Act 1989 to assess the effectiveness of the service, how it meets the core functions of the service as set out in legislation, and to consider how well it complies with the national minimum standards.

Boarding school details

Social care unique reference number: 2689714

Headteacher/teacher in charge: John Dalton

Type of school: Boarding school

Telephone number: 0207 221 6665

Email address: j.dalton@davidgamecollege.com

Inspectors

Seka Graovac, Social Care Inspector (lead)

Dorothy Thompstone, Social Care Inspector

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