

Inspection of St Wilfrid's School

25–29 St David's Hill, Exeter, Devon EX4 4DA

Inspection dates: 1 to 3 October 2024

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Outstanding**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection Good

Does the school meet the independent school standards? **Yes**

What is it like to attend this school?

St Wilfrid's School is a calm, harmonious place to learn. Caring relationships exist between pupils and staff. Staff support pupils to reach their goals and achieve success, both academically and pastorally. A bespoke, personalised approach to each pupil is evident. As a result, pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), flourish in this highly inclusive school.

Pupils value their learning and have very positive attitudes. They contribute widely to the school. They are happy, safe and attend well. The school's well-established ethos and consistent approach of togetherness and participation ensure that across the school, pupils' behaviour is exceptional. This helps pupils develop their character and a sense of belonging within the school community.

The school has developed its enrichment offer with pupils' needs firmly in mind. Residential visits and trips out of school to local theatres help pupils develop their independence and broaden their experiences. Sports clubs, such as rugby and running, help pupils learn how to keep healthy.

Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about the care and attention that their children receive. They appreciate the school's relentless drive to improve life experiences for all.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

The school has designed an ambitious curriculum. Subject plans are well organised. The curriculum is carefully sequenced so that knowledge builds up step by step through the years. This means that new knowledge connects to previous learning. For example, in art and design, pupils in key stage 2 learn colour mixing and overlay. In Years 7 and 8, pupils build on this knowledge and can control light and dark tones when using water colours.

In most subjects, the school has an accurate understanding of how well pupils learn important knowledge. Subject leaders use this information to review and strengthen the curriculum. However, the checks that teachers make on what pupils learn in a few areas is not as clear. In these areas, teachers do not make suitable adaptations to the teaching of the curriculum. This means that pupils do not build their knowledge as well.

Reading is prioritised across the school. Pupils read books across a range of genres and authors. They quickly gain the knowledge and skills they need to become confident and fluent readers. As pupils move up through the school, reading is taught both in English lessons and through additional guided reading sessions. This helps pupils develop their understanding of new vocabulary and comprehension. In key stages 3 and 4, pupils read regularly and develop further their inference, analysis and evaluation skills.

The school uses a range of bespoke approaches, including working effectively with external agencies, to secure the help pupils, including those with SEND, need. Some have personalised approaches or 'windows' that staff build seamlessly into daily routines. This helps pupils overcome their anxieties and has transformed their experience of school because they can learn the curriculum more readily.

The school has exceptionally high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Pupils live up to these and around the school, their conduct is exemplary. For the small number of pupils who struggle with their behaviour, there is strong pastoral support, which helps them to make lasting changes for the better.

The personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme is wide-ranging. Pupils learn about healthy relationships, consent and respect. The school enhances the PSHE curriculum with assemblies, as well as through religious education and other subjects. Pupils are well prepared for British society as they learn about the importance of democracy, equality and mutual respect. Pupil leadership is fostered through the school council, which is highly active. They have introduced ideas for enrichment clubs, purchased new books for the library and have improved recycling procedures at the school.

Careers education is woven into the curriculum so that pupils are supported to think about their own career pathways. In key stage 4, pupils benefit from impartial careers advice. A range of workshops, careers events, work experience and strong links with local colleges ensure that all pupils who left the school at the end of Year 11 have moved on successfully into further education or training.

The proprietor demonstrates an effective balance of support and challenge in overseeing the provision. The proprietor ensures that all the independent school standards are met. The school complies with schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.

Staff are proud to work at the school. They feel that they are well supported by leaders, including in managing their workload.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- In some subjects, checks on pupils' knowledge are not as precise as in other areas. As a result, staff do not have the most accurate information with which to adapt their teaching of some areas of the curriculum. The school should ensure that checks on pupils' knowledge are precise so that staff can adapt the curriculum and pupils can learn well in all areas.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

School details

Unique reference number	113567
DfE registration number	878/6004
Local authority	Devon
Inspection number	10341997
Type of school	Other independent school
School category	Independent day school
Age range of pupils	7 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	40
Proprietor	Alexandra MacDonald-Dent
Headteacher	Ross Bovingdon
Annual fees (day pupils)	£13,187 to £15,059
Telephone number	01392 276171
Website	www.stwilfrids.devon.sch.uk
Email address	admin@stwilfrids.devon.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	5 to 7 October 2021

Information about this school

- The school does not currently use alternative provision.
- The previous full standard inspection took place from 5 to 7 October 2021.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors carried out this inspection under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008. The purpose of the inspection is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

The school meets the independent school standards. These are the requirements set out in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held discussions with the headteacher and members of the leadership team.
- An inspector held discussions with the proprietor.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, mathematics, and art and design. In each subject, inspectors met with senior and curriculum leaders, talked to pupils, visited lessons, spoke to teachers and looked at examples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also looked at curriculum plans and spoke to leaders about some other subjects.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View. They also took into consideration the responses to the staff and pupil surveys.

Inspection team

Gavin Summerfield, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Susan Aykin

His Majesty's Inspector

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