



Arolygiaeth Ei Mawrhydi dros Addysg a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru
Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales

A report on

**St Joseph's Catholic Primary School
Pontardawe Road
Clydach
SA6 5NX**

Date of inspection: October 2019

by

**Estyn, Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education
and Training in Wales**

About St Josephs Catholic Primary School

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School is in the village of Clydach, in Swansea local authority. There are 196 pupils aged 3 to 11 years at the school, including 19 part-time children in the nursery.

The three-year rolling average of pupils eligible for free school meals is around 7%, which is significantly below the average for Wales (21%). Many pupils are of white British ethnicity, with a few pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds. A minority of pupils speak English as an additional language. A very few pupils speak Welsh as a first language at home. The school has identified around 19% of pupils as having special educational needs. This is slightly below the national average of 21%. A very few pupils have a statement of special educational needs.

Estyn does not inspect religious education or the religious content of collective worship when it is a school with a religious character. Instead, the governing body is required by law to arrange for religious education and collective worship to be inspected separately.

The last inspection was in April 2014. The current headteacher was appointed in January 2013.

Further information is available from the Welsh Government My Local School website at the link below.
<http://mylocalschool.wales.gov.uk/Schools/SchoolSearch?lang=en>

Summary

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School has a warm, caring and nurturing environment for pupils. This contributes significantly to pupils' strong levels of wellbeing and helps them to develop as caring, polite and considerate individuals. Parents, pupils, staff and governors contribute successfully to the strong sense of community that exists in the school.

Most pupils make good progress from their starting points and develop their literacy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills well. They develop their numeracy and Welsh language skills appropriately. Nearly all pupils have positive attitudes towards their learning and behave exceptionally well. Nearly all concentrate purposefully in lessons and persevere with their tasks.

The headteacher promotes a clear vision for the school and receives effective support from the senior leadership team and governing body. Self-evaluation processes are successful in identifying strengths and areas for development.

Inspection area	Judgement
Standards	Good
Wellbeing and attitudes to learning	Good
Teaching and learning experiences	Good
Care, support and guidance	Good
Leadership and management	Good

Recommendations

- R1 Provide more opportunities for pupils to develop their numeracy skills purposefully across the curriculum
- R2 Enhance the opportunities for pupils to use and develop their Welsh oracy skills beyond designated Welsh lessons
- R3 Ensure that key stage 2 pupils have more opportunities to decide how and when to use the skills they have acquired
- R4 Raise the attendance rate

What happens next

The school will draw up an action plan to address the recommendations from the inspection.

Main findings

Standards: Good

During their time in school, most pupils, including those with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language, make good progress and achieve well.

In the foundation phase, most pupils listen attentively to adults and respond sensibly to teachers' questions. By Year 2, most give clear explanations, for example when asked to identify various verbs and adjectives. Most develop their reading skills competently and use their knowledge of sounds well to tackle unfamiliar words. By Year 2, more able pupils read purposefully and predict sensibly what might happen next in stories. Many younger pupils in the foundation phase make good progress in developing their early writing skills. By Year 2, most can write extended sentences successfully. For example, they produce interesting accounts of their holidays and create engaging class dramas. In addition, they enthusiastically research and explain the life and career of Betsi Cadwaladr and compare her achievements with those of Florence Nightingale.

In key stage 2, most pupils have strong listening skills and speak confidently and clearly in class, for example when discussing their projects on the Blitz. Most demonstrate an effective understanding of what they read in texts. They use dictionaries and internet searches well to learn about new words and topics, for example when studying the Tudor kings. Pupils in Years 6 demonstrate a strong interest in books, for example those by David Walliams and Roald Dahl, and they talk enthusiastically about Norse Gods and contemporary figures, such as Malala Yousafzai. Across key stage 2, most pupils write neatly and take care in presenting their work. They plan and redraft their work carefully to produce engaging pieces of writing. For example, in Year 4, they produce interesting research work on Scotland, and older pupils research the lives of Martin Luther King and Rosa Parks. Most use their literacy skills effectively across the curriculum.

Across the school, pupils develop a sound understanding of Welsh words and phrases. Pupils' reading and writing skills develop appropriately. However, many pupils lack confidence to speak Welsh outside of designated Welsh lessons.

Most pupils make good progress in developing their mathematical skills and knowledge as they move through the foundation phase. In the nursery, most pupils begin to learn numbers up to 10 quickly through a variety of engaging activities. They start to compare measures in practical situations appropriately, for example when deciding which leaves are bigger or biggest. In reception, many pupils begin to work with numbers up to 20. In Year 1, many pupils recognise simple plane and 3D shapes and use this knowledge effectively to make houses from the shapes. By the end of the foundation phase, many pupils have a sound grasp of number. They know the 2, 5 and 10 times tables and use this knowledge in practical contexts well, such as in the addition of money. They reason out problems effectively. For example, they find out the number of different ways the Three Bears can sit on their three chairs.

Most pupils continue to make purposeful progress as they move through key stage 2. In Year 3, many work with number confidently, finding fractions of shapes and solving whole-number problems in multiplication and division. They use standard measures successfully. Many pupils interpret graphs purposefully, for example, when finding out who does the most star jumps from a bar graph. In Year 4, many pupils compare weights in grams and kilograms successfully. They calculate using brackets and convert between decimals and fractions accurately. They begin to use their numeracy skills purposefully, for example when working with a budget to plan a holiday for four in Turkey. By the end of the key stage, many pupils are competent in a broad range of basic skills. They calculate the mean, mode and median of a set of data, and they order, add and subtract negative numbers well. They begin to use these numeracy skills in purposeful contexts, such as estimating the cost of furniture in a new home.

Throughout the school, most pupils develop their information and communication technology (ICT) skills effectively. By the end of the foundation phase, most use a program well to combine pictures and text, for example, when writing a description of a superhero. They save their work successfully. By the end of key stage 2, most pupils present information clearly and imaginatively, using a range of software. For example, Year 6 pupils produce a presentation about the rosary for an assembly and Year 4 pupils create graphs to record the height of pupils in class. Pupils have a very good understanding of e-safety.

Wellbeing and attitudes to learning: Good

Nearly all pupils feel safe and secure in school and know an adult that they can speak to if they are upset or have a problem. They have confidence that staff will address any issues that arise swiftly. Most understand the importance of staying safe online and know what to do if they are worried. Pupils look after each other and care for each other well in school. For example, older pupils provide support and friendship for their younger peers during break times. All pupils participate in a daily meditation session, which helps to promote their social and emotional skills successfully.

Throughout the school, nearly all pupils behave exceptionally well. They are tolerant, polite, caring and respectful towards each other and adults. This creates a calm and purposeful atmosphere for learning. Pupils welcome visitors to school confidently and are eager to talk about their work and the school environment.

Most pupils have positive attitudes to learning and they work very hard. They enjoy their lessons and concentrate very well when faced with challenges. For example, pupils in Year 1 demonstrate great enthusiasm as they plan a party for Princess Dandelion.

Most pupils understand the importance of eating and drinking healthily. They bring healthy lunchboxes to school and eat fruit at breaktimes. Most are aware of the importance of regular exercise and take advantage of the extensive range of extra-curricular activities that promote their physical wellbeing, such as Gaelic football, rugby and dance. Most pupils participate regularly in organised sporting events, such as the all-British competition for Gaelic football in London and Féile Peile Na Nog in Ireland, as well as in cluster sports. This contributes positively to the development of their fitness and social skills.

Many pupils, including those with special educational needs, take on leadership roles in school, such as the 'Mini Vinnies', young apprentices and the digital competence council. The 'Mini Vinnies' raise funds for those less fortunate in the locality and donate food and toys to others in the community. This helps pupils to develop an understanding of others less fortunate than themselves. Pupils have a strong understanding of the importance of rights and values and they have a good knowledge of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Most pupils understand the importance of attending school regularly and they arrive on time. However, pupils' attendance rates over the last three years do not compare well with those of similar schools.

Teaching and learning experiences: Good

There are strong working relationships between staff and pupils, which promote mutual respect, courtesy and trust. Teachers and teaching assistants know their pupils well and manage behaviour in classes and around the school effectively. Teachers deploy teaching assistants successfully to make effective use of their expertise and skills. Teaching assistants provide valuable support and guidance to pupils of all abilities.

Most teachers have high expectations of pupils, pitch the work at the right level and ensure that lessons move pupils' learning forward at a suitable pace. Teachers in the foundation phase manage the indoor classroom environment well and provide stimulating experiences for pupils through a wide range of activities. These help to promote pupils' oracy skills well. Throughout the school, the wide range of valuable learning experiences successfully motivates pupils to succeed and to improve their knowledge and understanding. The school effectively promotes pupils' literacy and ICT skills across the curriculum. There is a strong emphasis on developing pupils' creative skills through art and music. For instance, the school choir competes regularly both locally and nationally. However, teachers do not always plan well enough to ensure that pupils develop their numeracy skills purposefully in other subjects or have enough opportunities in key stage 2 to decide what and how they learn.

Teachers give pupils valuable oral feedback on the quality of their work during lessons and ensure that pupils have time to reflect on their work. Teachers' written comments on pupils' work help them to identify appropriate areas for improvement. Most staff use questioning skills competently to promote pupils' learning and to enable them to explain their thinking purposefully.

There is a strong Welsh ethos across the school and a very clear emphasis on promoting pupils' understanding of Welsh heritage and culture. A comprehensive range of educational visits, linked to topics and themes, stimulates pupils' interests well. For example, visits to a local museum help to extend pupils' understanding of life in wartime Swansea. The school holds its own annual Eisteddfod and a Welsh week when pupils have opportunities to study Welsh authors and artists. Additional strategies, such as the development of the Criw Cymraeg and the contributions of Helpwyr Heddiw, provide worthwhile opportunities for pupils to develop their Welsh language skills. However, opportunities for pupils to use and improve their Welsh skills outside of designated Welsh lessons are limited.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The school has a caring, welcoming and inclusive ethos within a safe, secure and stimulating environment. Staff and pupils show considerable respect, care and concern for each other.

The school has effective arrangements in place for pupils to develop their understanding of healthy lifestyle choices, for example through healthy lunchboxes and healthy snacks at playtimes. The school provides valuable opportunities for pupils to learn about how to stay safe by inviting guest speakers, such as the local police officer, to talk about internet safety. The school's arrangements for safeguarding meet requirements and give no cause for concern.

The school uses a comprehensive range of robust systems for tracking pupils' progress and attendance. Teachers use a wide range of information and test results appropriately to provide appropriate support for pupils. Staff know their pupils well and work successfully with parents to deliver effective learning programmes.

The school's provision to support pupils with special educational needs is strong. Staff identify pupils' needs from an early age and ensure that they receive the necessary support to succeed in their work as they move through the school. A purposeful range of intervention programmes and strategies enables pupils to make good progress in their learning. Individual education targets for pupils with special educational needs are specific and measureable, and pupils and parents play an active part in the process.

The special needs co-ordinator works well with a wide range of specialist agencies and uses their expertise to train and support staff appropriately. In addition, the school uses a designated support programme well to promote pupils' self-esteem, confidence and resilience.

The school has established a successful partnership with parents and gives them regular information about many aspects of school life. This includes the school website, text messages, newsletters and a calendar of events. The school helps parents to support their child's learning through a range of useful online applications, such as Hwb. Parents feel well informed about their child's progress and consider that the school seeks their views carefully. There is an active parent and teacher association, which organises a wide range of activities and raises funds in order to provide additional resources for the school.

The school gives pupils opportunities to undertake leadership roles that have a positive impact on their wellbeing and on the day-to-day life of the school. For example, pupil voice forums, such as the senedd, school councillors and 'Mini Vinnies', contribute successfully to decisions about school improvements.

The school provides opportunities of high quality to promote pupils' creative skills through art and music. For example, a local artist works with Year 6 pupils to produce a mural of St Joseph's school. In addition, staff encourage pupils to take an active part in the school Eisteddfod and work on collaborative projects, such as producing a fiction book.

The school's provision for developing pupils' social, moral and cultural development is good. Staff make effective use of the 'peace mala' to help develop pupils' strong understanding of other cultures.

The headteacher has introduced a range of purposeful strategies to promote attendance, including working very closely with the local authority and celebrating regular attendance through a weekly class competition, a termly raffle and a non-uniform day. However, this has yet to improve pupils' average attendance enough over the last four years.

Leadership and management: Good

The headteacher receives effective support from senior leaders. Together they promote a powerful vision for the school that celebrates the value of every pupil. The head teacher leads by example and communicates a strong moral purpose in her leadership. The senior leadership team work effectively together. They act as positive role models and manage the school well. The headteacher devolves leadership purposefully. For example, the acting deputy headteacher drives the effective analysis and use of performance data by classroom teachers and senior managers.

Leaders take good account of national priorities. For example, the school is implementing the digital competence framework successfully. Leaders consider the long-term needs of the school well, for example, by prioritising the implementation of the new curriculum in the school's development plans. Leaders and managers plan purposeful opportunities for pupils to develop their Welsh language skills in formal situations, but they do not encourage pupils enough to use the language outside of designated Welsh lessons.

Governors understand the school's strengths and weaknesses well. They gain useful first-hand knowledge by scrutinising pupils' books prior to governing body meetings. They receive valuable reports from the headteacher that keep them well informed about the progress of the school development plan. They maintain a helpful balance between support and challenge. Governing body committees function effectively and enable the governing body to fulfil its statutory obligations appropriately.

Leaders and managers use a valuable range of strategies to evaluate how well pupils are progressing, such as book scrutinies, lesson observations and purposeful analysis of performance information. Leaders use these strategies to identify key areas for school improvement. For example, book scrutiny revealed that pupils need to apply their numeracy skills purposefully in subjects other than mathematics. Outcomes of the self-evaluation process determine the priorities for school improvement successfully. For example, analysis of national test results led appropriately to a priority to improve pupils' reasoning skills in numeracy.

The school development plan includes helpful long-term priorities that indicate clearly the future direction of travel for the school. The priorities link to actions for improvement purposefully. These action plans identify appropriate staff responsibilities, timescales and costs. The school has a sound track record of improving teaching and learning. For example, in recent years, the school has focused on improving the teaching of reading and pupils' standards in reading have risen as a result.

Leaders create a strong culture and ethos to support the professional learning of all staff. They make good use of partnerships with other schools to develop staff expertise. For example, the local cluster of schools has arranged training in how to teach science more effectively. Staff share new learning with one another readily. For example, as a result of training, a member of staff supported teachers in developing new approaches that enable pupils to have more of a say in what they are going to learn.

The school's spending decisions link well to its plans for improvement. For example, the school has invested in new ICT hardware to help staff to implement the digital competence framework effectively. The school takes good account of short-term needs so that there are sufficient staff and learning resources to deliver the planned curriculum effectively. The school uses the pupil development grant well to help to fund valuable catch up programmes in literacy. The pupils targeted make good progress as they move through the school.

Evidence base of the report

Before an inspection, inspectors:

- analyse the outcomes from the parent and pupil questionnaires and consider the views of teachers and the governing body through their questionnaire responses

During an inspection, inspectors normally:

- hold a meeting with parents to hear their views on the school and its effectiveness
- meet the headteacher, governors, senior and middle leaders (where appropriate) and individual teachers to evaluate the impact of the school's work
- meet pupils to discuss their work, to listen to them read and to gain their views about various aspects of their school
- meet groups of pupils in leadership roles, such as representatives from the school council and eco-committee
- visit a broad sample of classes, including learning support groups and undertake a variety of learning walks to observe pupils learning and to see staff teaching in a range of settings, including classrooms, support groups and in outdoor areas
- where appropriate, visit the specialist resource base within the school to see pupils' learning
- observe and speak to pupils at lunch and break times and at a sample of after-school clubs, where appropriate
- attend assemblies and daily acts of collective worship
- look closely at the school's self-evaluation processes
- consider the school's improvement plan and look at evidence to show how well the school has taken forward planned improvements
- scrutinise a range of school documents, including information on pupil assessment and progress, records of meetings of staff and the governing body, information on pupils' wellbeing, including the safeguarding of pupils, and records of staff training and professional development

After the on-site inspection and before the publication of the report, Estyn:

- review the findings of the inspection alongside the supporting evidence from the inspection team in order to validate, moderate and ensure the quality of the inspection

Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from the school and from the Estyn website (www.estyn.gov.wales)

Estyn evaluates a provider's effectiveness using a four-point judgement scale:

Excellent	Very strong, sustained performance and practice
Good	Strong features, although minor aspects may require improvement
Adequate and needs improvement	Strengths outweigh weaknesses, but important aspects require improvement
Unsatisfactory and needs urgent improvement	Important weaknesses outweigh strengths

The report was produced in accordance with Section 28 of the Education Act 2005.

Every possible care has been taken to ensure that the information in this document is accurate at the time of going to press. Any enquiries or comments regarding this document/publication should be addressed to:

Publication Section
Estyn
Anchor Court, Keen Road
Cardiff
CF24 5JW or by email to publications@estyn.gov.wales

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