



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 R.C. Primary School
Brackley Avenue
Colwyn Bay
Conwy
LL29 7UU**

Date of inspection: February 2019

by

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

About St Joseph's R.C. Primary School

St Joseph's Roman Catholic Primary School is a voluntary aided school on the outskirts of Colwyn Bay, in Conwy local authority. There are currently 235 pupils on roll between the age of 3 and 11, including 30 part-time pupils in the nursery. The school has eight single-age classes.

The three-year rolling average of pupils eligible for free school meals is around 12%. This is below the national average of 19%. The school identifies around 20% of its pupils as having additional learning needs, which is similar to the national average of 21%. No pupil has a statement of special educational needs. Around 20% of pupils have English as an additional language. No pupils speak Welsh at home.

The school was last inspected in June 2012. The present headteacher took up his post in February 2017, having been acting since September 2014.

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.

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

As they move through the school, pupils at St Joseph's Roman Catholic Primary School make good progress in developing their literacy and numeracy skills, and they apply them confidently across the curriculum.

Staff know pupils well. They give pupils interesting learning experiences and question them effectively to consolidate their knowledge and understanding. This develops pupils' sense of curiosity and independence well, particularly across the foundation phase. The school creates an exceptionally warm and caring learning atmosphere. As a result, pupils feel valued, and strive to reach their potential. Staff and leaders support pupils with additional learning needs well.

The headteacher provides strong and supportive leadership. Leaders, staff and governors work well as a team to bring about agreed improvements.

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 Improve the ability of pupils to make independent choices and decisions about what and how they learn in key stage 2
- R2 Ensure that teachers' planning enables pupils to develop the full range of ICT skills systematically across the curriculum
- R3 Provide more opportunities for pupils and parents to contribute their ideas to school improvement

What happens next

Not in follow-up

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

Main findings

Standards: Good

As pupils move through the school, most make good progress from their starting points. Most make strong progress in developing their communication skills, including those with English as an additional language and pupils with additional learning needs. However, pupils that are more able do not always achieve as well as they could.

Most pupils listen attentively to other pupils and adults and they speak confidently in a range of situations. For example, Year 1 pupils talk well about the disgusting sandwiches they are creating as part of their work on interesting adjectives. Many use imaginative language to engage the reader. Most key stage 2 pupils express their opinions thoughtfully and give clear explanations. For example, pupils in Year 5 use the features of non-chronological writing effectively to produce informative books on the solar system and the planet Venus.

In the foundation phase, most pupils' reading skills develop well. From an early age, pupils recognise letters and sounds and they are beginning to build words confidently. By the end of the foundation phase, most pupils read with accuracy and fluency. Key stage 2 pupils build well on these skills. They demonstrate positive attitudes towards reading, they can infer meaning from texts and they talk enthusiastically about favourite books and authors. For example, in Year 4, most pupils predict sensibly what may happen in a story and use their reading skills effectively to access information about their topic work.

Most pupils apply their writing skills creatively across the curriculum. In the foundation phase, most pupils use their knowledge of letters and sounds well to spell unknown words phonetically. By the end of the foundation phase, most pupils understand and use basic punctuation with increasing accuracy to reflect the meaning and to add interest to their writing. In key stage 2, most pupils plan, redraft and improve their writing efficiently. They produce extended pieces of writing of good quality across a variety of different contexts.

By the end of the foundation phase, most pupils manipulate numbers confidently up to 20, and more able pupils do this beyond 100 accurately. Most can add and subtract well, for example when they work out the total number of school dinners to order from three classes, or when working out the cost of items in the role-play shoe shop. Many pupils use non-standard and standard measurements with an increasing degree of accuracy. They use and apply their prior mathematical knowledge well to solve simple problems. For example, pupils in Year 2 can double numbers quickly when jumping along a number line outside. By the end of key stage 2, most pupils use all four number operations appropriately to solve complex problems, including the use of decimal numbers. Most pupils show a growing understanding of how to calculate the area and perimeter of rectangles, triangles and circles. Most Year 6 pupils use their mathematical skills across the curriculum in real life situations well, for example when designing an army camp for British soldiers during the Second World War.

In the foundation phase, many pupils use computer tablets confidently when playing games to consolidate their numeracy and literacy skills. In key stage 2, many pupils are beginning to use a broader range of ICT skills well to support their work in other areas of learning. For example, in Year 3, pupils use their research skills to locate Cefn Hengoed and to make comparisons with Colwyn Bay. Many pupils in upper key stage 2 use e-mail appropriately. They record and edit a rap song about global warming as part of their topic work skilfully. However, pupils' ability to create spreadsheets and databases is limited.

Most pupils develop appropriate skills in Welsh. In Year 2, most use simple spoken phrases and language patterns accurately and can read and answer simple questions confidently. Many pupils are beginning to use everyday greetings in Welsh around the school and they respond quickly to routine instructions in lessons. Most key stage 2 pupils' Welsh writing is developing well. In Year 4, they write an interesting comparison of breakfast now with Tudor times, and, by Year 6, many write accurate recounts of their activities using the past tense. Most pupils respond well to questions and instructions, and older pupils talk to others confidently, for example when talking about their interest and hobbies.

Wellbeing and attitudes to learning: Good

Most pupils have positive attitudes to school and engage well with their learning to complete tasks. Many display strong levels of perseverance and resilience. For example, older pupils in the foundation phase apply their knowledge of doubling confidently when making fruit smoothies. Pupils in Year 5 persevere well when explaining the different properties of triangles successfully in a mathematics lesson.

Throughout the school, most pupils have a solid understanding of what they need to do to improve their work. Older pupils respond positively to teachers' comments and suggestions by editing or adding to their work. This notably improves the quality of their extended writing. Most pupils are considerate when listening to the views of others and confident in sharing their own thoughts and ideas. Most work co-operatively and effectively in class and in groups. Pupils are well mannered and welcoming to visitors. Most pupils feel safe in school and believe that all staff treat them fairly and with respect. As a result, pupils are confident that staff will deal promptly with any concerns they raise.

Pupils are beginning to have a voice and to influence school matters through their involvement in pupil representative groups. For example, the digital leaders support pupils in developing new ICT skills effectively. Most pupils in the foundation phase make a valuable contribution to directing their own learning. In Year 1, following a visit to a rescue centre, pupils set up an owl sanctuary as a role-play area. Many foundation phase pupils work purposefully and independently from a young age. Older key stage 2 pupils make suggestions readily about what they would like to investigate at the start of their topic. For example, pupils wanted to know more about how palm oil manufacture affects the habitat for orang-utans. As a result, many pupils are able to discuss global issues around sustainability maturely. However, levels of independent working are not consistent across key stage 2. As a result, pupils do not always take enough responsibility for their learning in all classes.

Most pupils have a good understanding of how to live a healthy life. They are active at break times and enjoy using the adventure trail and climbing apparatus. Older pupils take responsibility for the school fruit tuck shop at break time and many pupils purchase fruit. They discuss the importance of diet and exercise maturely. Most pupils take advantage of a range of visits and residential experiences, which enhances their wellbeing and enriches their learning well.

Teaching and learning experiences: Good

Nearly all teachers and teaching assistants develop strong working relationships with pupils. This creates a warm and purposeful atmosphere in the school where most pupils are confident and engaged learners. Most teachers make sure that pupils understand the purpose of learning activities clearly. This helps pupils to focus on what they need to do in their work and moves their learning on successfully. Nearly all teachers ask suitably challenging questions that encourage pupils to make effective links between what they are doing and their prior learning. In most classes, teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve, and they provide practical and stimulating learning opportunities. They allow pupils to make independent choices about how and what they want to learn. For example, older foundation phase pupils made a superhero base. This develops pupils' creative, oracy and writing skills successfully. On a very few occasions in key stage 2, when teaching is less effective, adults direct tasks for too long and do not challenge pupils at a high enough level.

The school provides a wide range of extra-curricular visits to support the curriculum. For example, Year 3 visit St Winefride's Well and Year 4 attend a residential outdoor education centre to develop their problem solving and team building skills.

Most teachers provide useful and positive feedback to pupils about their work that helps them to move their learning forward quickly and effectively. Teachers use information from regular assessments purposefully to plan the next steps in pupils' learning and to pitch most of the work at an appropriate level.

Improvements in planning ensure that the curriculum builds systematically on pupils' existing literacy and numeracy skills as they move through the school. However, teachers do not address all aspects of the national curriculum for ICT well enough.

The school promotes pupils' use of the Welsh language successfully. There are beneficial daily opportunities for pupils to practice language patterns and this reinforces their learning and enjoyment of using the Welsh language well. The school provides suitable opportunities for pupils to learn about the culture and heritage of Wales. For example, Year 6 pupils compare Hokusai's painting 'The Great Wave off Kanagawa' with works by Welsh artists Rob Piercy and Kyffin Williams.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The school is a nurturing and caring community with an inclusive and warm ethos. Arrangements to ensure pupils' care and wellbeing are a strong feature of the school.

Staff use detailed tracking and monitoring systems to measure pupils' progress effectively. Teachers and teaching assistants work closely together to ensure timely identification and guidance for pupils with additional learning needs. As a result, individuals who receive support make good progress towards meeting their specific targets. Intervention sessions that focus on pupils' wellbeing are highly effective. They enable most pupils to participate in lessons successfully. These sessions develop pupils' self-esteem and their co-operation skills well.

There is a supportive and co-operative relationship with parents. The school communicates well through social media, and its open-door policy enables parents to feel confident to approach staff at any time. Staff share helpful information with parents to support them with their child's learning. For example, a pre-school meeting provides opportunities for staff to give practical advice on helping the youngest pupils to settle quickly into school.

There are appropriate arrangements to promote eating and drinking. Most pupils talk confidently about healthy lifestyles and understand the importance of a balanced diet. There is also the opportunity for pupils to work with the school cook to develop healthy options for school dinners. There are good opportunities for pupils to learn about substance misuse, sex and relationships and online safety through the school's personal and social education programme.

Staff provide purposeful opportunities for pupils to be responsible citizens who are willing to help others. For example, the 'growing in faith together' group works with pupils across the school to promote caring and tolerant attitudes to each other.

The school offers worthwhile opportunities for all pupils to take on active roles and responsibilities within the school. These provide useful opportunities for pupils to develop their confidence and sense of self-worth. However, these do not provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to contribute more fully to whole-school matters.

The school has effective procedures to foster pupils' knowledge of diversity within the school and the wider community. For example, the school held an international day, which included food tasting and listening to music and songs from different cultures. Pupils also benefit from a wide range of cultural experiences, such as theatre visits and working with a local orchestra. Many pupils regularly attend a wide range of clubs which, widen their experiences and skills. These include art, cookery, music, netball, choir and sports clubs.

The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements and give no cause for concern.

Leadership and management: Good

The headteacher has high, professional expectations of staff and is effective in driving the school forward enthusiastically. Leaders have established a clear vision for the school based on developing pupils to the best of their ability within a happy and supportive school community. Overall, leaders at all levels are successful in establishing positive attitudes to learning among the pupils within an environment that supports their wellbeing effectively.

Arrangements to distribute leadership roles are developing appropriately. There is a strong team ethos and staff are clear about their specific roles and responsibilities. Staff take responsibility for the quality and impact of their work in classrooms appropriately.

The school's processes to evaluate its effectiveness are well organised and draw upon a suitable range of first-hand evidence. These include listening to learners, the tracking of pupil outcomes, and classroom observations. As a result, leaders have a clear, up-to-date picture of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. They use this information effectively to identify a manageable number of appropriate priorities with clear monitoring procedures. These priorities focus sharply on maintaining and improving pupils' standards. However, the role of parents and pupils in contributing to the self-evaluation process is limited.

Leaders take purposeful account of local and national priorities. For example, teachers plan a range of interesting tasks and activities to support pupils' numeracy skills. This well-structured approach has been successful in engaging pupils and has improved their mathematical skills successfully.

Performance management procedures for all staff are effective. Leaders ensure that there is access to relevant learning opportunities that link closely with school improvement priorities. For example, feedback to pupils about their work now has a positive impact on their ability to improve work as a result of actions identified within the school development plan.

The school uses the pupil development grant purposefully to improve the wellbeing and achievement of specific pupils through a range of worthwhile intervention and nurture programmes.

The governing body is very supportive and knows the school and the community it serves well. Governors are knowledgeable about the overall performance of pupils. They make valuable contributions to the school's self-evaluation process. Staff provide governors with informative reports and governors meet regularly to discuss progress and the impact of actions on school targets. This knowledge enables governors to challenge leaders effectively to improve pupil outcomes and the quality of provision further. Governors monitor school finances and expenditure robustly.

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:

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