



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 Junior School  
Nobel Avenue  
Port Talbot  
SA12 6YN**

**Date of inspection: June 2019**

**by**

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

## About St Joseph's Junior School

St Joseph's Catholic Junior School is in Port Talbot within the Diocese of Menevia, in Neath Port Talbot local authority. The school has 152 pupils on roll, aged from 7 to 11. There are five classes, three of which are mixed-age.

About 13% of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is below the national average of 18%. The school identifies around 36% of pupils as having additional learning needs. This is above the national average of 21%. Around 24% of pupils come from an ethnic minority background and around 17% have English as an additional language. No pupils speak Welsh at home.

The headteacher took up her post in March 2015 after a period of two years as acting headteacher. The school's previous inspection was in October 2012.

Until recently, the school was working with the Welsh Government and other schools to take forward developments relating to education reform in Wales.

Estyn does not inspect religious education or the religious content of collective worship when inspecting 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

Most pupils make strong progress during their time at the school and have positive attitudes to learning. Most behave well and treat each other with respect and courtesy. They have a clear voice in the school and make significant contributions to developing an exciting and engaging curriculum. Learning moves at pace and pupils have good opportunities to apply their skills in real-life contexts across the curriculum.

Leaders provide a clear sense of direction for the work of the school. They have effective processes to evaluate pupils' standards and plan for improvements. They keep governors very well informed about the life and work of the school, who in turn provide robust challenge to leaders. The school is a caring and inclusive community that supports pupils to achieve well.

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

## **Recommendations**

- R1 Broaden systems for self-evaluation to ensure that they consider aspects of pupils' wellbeing thoroughly
- R2 Provide pupils with more effective opportunities to develop their skills in the outdoor environment
- R3 Improve pupils' attendance

## **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 at the school, most pupils, including those with English as an additional language, make good progress from their starting points. Pupils with additional learning needs make effective progress towards their individual targets.

Most pupils communicate articulately and confidently. They listen carefully to the contributions of others and use subject specific language appropriately in lessons. For example, pupils in Year 6 hold a detailed discussion about where their food comes from and the impact of food miles on the environment. Most pupils become confident, fluent readers. Pupils in Year 4 read expressively and pay good attention to the punctuation in a text when reading aloud. Most older pupils skim and scan texts to locate facts quickly, for example when considering a range of information about healthy eating. They use inference and deduction to extract the meaning from texts well. As they move through the school, many pupils produce extended writing of good quality in English lessons and in subjects across the curriculum. They use a wide range of interesting vocabulary and their spelling and punctuation are generally accurate. They use different techniques effectively to make their writing more interesting. For example, in Year 5, pupils vary the way they start sentences when writing persuasive letters to the headteacher about aspects such as having an additional week off school. Most pupils make a concerted effort to present their work neatly and many older pupils develop a legible joined handwriting script.

Nearly all pupils have a positive attitude towards the Welsh language. Across the school, they develop their Welsh language skills well and communicate in Welsh enthusiastically. The Cwriw Cymraeg support other pupils well and encourage them to use the language naturally throughout the day in familiar contexts. Many pupils speak confidently and many older pupils are beginning to maintain extended conversations with their peers, staff and visitors. Most pupils' reading and writing in Welsh is developing very well.

Throughout the school, most pupils make strong progress in developing their numeracy skills. In Year 3, most pupils consolidate their understanding of addition and subtraction well. As they move through the school, they build effectively on these skills and broaden their understanding of a wide range of mathematical concepts. Many pupils explain their mathematical thinking clearly and identify relevant facts to solve written problems. They apply their numeracy skills effectively to tackle real-life problems in areas across the curriculum. For example, pupils in Year 6 consider what they need to know about a new client before designing a health and fitness programme for them. They use conversion tables confidently to change a client's height and weight from metric to imperial measures and then input this information into a formula to calculate their body mass index. In Years 4 and 5, pupils create a menu for Harry Potter that will provide him with 1,000 kilo joules of energy to fight Voldemort without giving him too much sugar.

Across the school, nearly all pupils have very good information and communication technology (ICT) skills. Most pupils use spreadsheets confidently. For example, pupils in Years 4 and 5 create spreadsheets to calculate the distances foods from

across the world travel to arrive in local supermarkets. Most pupils use coding tools correctly to create their own programmes. For example, older pupils animate characters and make games for younger pupils to play. Many pupils make effective databases, collecting information about a range of topics, including statistics on premier league football teams. Nearly all pupils have a very strong grasp of the importance of internet safety. This is a strength of the school. For example, pupils design their own internet safety superheroes to teach others how to stay safe online.

### **Wellbeing and attitudes to learning: Good**

Most pupils feel safe, cared for and happy. They feel confident that adults and other pupils will help them if they have a problem. However, a minority of pupils feel frustrated by a very few pupils whose behaviour falls below the school's expectations. Most pupils are keen to attend school and enjoy the exciting and wide variety of learning experiences provided for them. They are friendly and welcoming and show courtesy towards visitors and each other.

Most pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. They settle to work quickly, collaborate well and show respect and care for the ideas of others when working in pairs and groups. Most pupils play co-operatively, take turns, and enjoy playing games and socialising with each other at break times.

Most pupils understand the importance of eating and drinking healthily. They take part in physical exercise activities enthusiastically. For example, nearly all pupils participate in the daily mile around the school playground each morning.

Across the school, most pupils develop positive attitudes towards learning and have a strong work ethic. They have a strong voice in helping to develop the curriculum. For example, they suggest ideas for topics that are highly engaging and motivate them to learn. As a result, pupils show a real interest in their work, are keen to participate and sustain concentration in lessons well. Many pupils are ambitious, speak confidently and engage in conversations readily. Most pupils work independently, both individually and in small groups. For example, pupils in upper key stage 2, work collaboratively as a highly effective team when making digital news reports on natural disasters.

The school has several pupil voice groups who make a positive contribution to the life and work of the school. For example, the Criw Cymraeg work effectively to raise the profile of Welsh and, as a result, most pupils use Welsh frequently around the school.

Most pupils understand the importance of attending school regularly and arrive at school punctually. However, in the last two years, pupils' rate of attendance has declined slightly.

### **Teaching and learning experiences: Good**

Through its work pioneer work to develop a new curriculum for Wales, the school has reflected on the effectiveness of its own curriculum and looked to improve aspects of its teaching, particularly in terms of numeracy. Teachers have embraced the opportunity to be at the forefront of curriculum design and have involved pupils particularly well in curriculum planning. Pupils are enthusiastic about learning

because of the key role that they play in the planning process. Teachers make very good use of the contributions from pupils to plan interesting activities that develop pupils' literacy, numeracy and ICT skills progressively.

The school makes good use of a wide range of visits and visitors to enhance the curriculum. For example, pupils visited a popular tourist attraction when considering their own designs for an adventure theme park. They enjoyed the visit by their local Member of Parliament and formed searching questions to find out more about aspects of his life and work.

Teachers make good use of the available indoor space to provide areas for practical activities, such as art and cookery. However, opportunities for outdoor learning are underdeveloped and the outdoor area does not provide pupils with a stimulating learning environment.

Across the school, teachers deliver imaginative and exciting lessons to stimulate pupils' interest in learning. For example, pupils in Year 3, enjoy the challenges of trying to draw upside down, as Michelangelo would have done, and talk about the difficulties of this, such as overcoming vertigo.

Adults question pupils skilfully to extend their understanding and knowledge. They take care to ensure that all pupils understand the purpose of the lesson and its expected outcomes. In a minority of classes, teachers develop pupils' thinking skills particularly well through techniques such as presenting a stimulus for the lesson and asking the pupils what they think the associated task could be. Generally, learning moves with pace and activities provide a suitable level of challenge for pupils of all abilities. All staff develop positive and supportive working relationships with pupils. They employ a good range of effective strategies to manage pupils' behaviour and to keep them engaged in their learning.

Most teachers provide pupils with purposeful feedback during activities that helps them to improve their work. Adults encourage pupils to reflect on their work and to self-assess how well they have completed tasks. Most pupils develop useful skills to look at their own work and that of others to identify areas for improvement. In general, pupils take good account of feedback from their classmates and this helps them to improve their work.

The school's provision for developing pupils' Welsh language skills is good. Many teachers and teaching assistants use Welsh phrases frequently in class and are effective language role models. Teachers promote pupils' understanding of the culture, history and geography of Wales very well. For example, the school celebrates St. David's Day with an eisteddfod and pupils visit places of interest, such as Caerleon and St. Fagan's. As a result, pupils have a strong awareness of their Welsh identity.

The school's provision for ICT is very strong and it is planning successfully for the digital competency framework. Nearly all teachers provide pupils with many interesting and varied opportunities to use a wide variety of ICT skills purposefully in real-life contexts.

## **Care, support and guidance: Good**

The school is a caring, inclusive community that supports pupils' moral, social and emotional development effectively. This has a very positive impact on the standards of pupils' work. The school has effective systems to track and monitor pupils' progress. Teachers and school leaders use this information skilfully to plan the next steps in pupils' learning. There are comprehensive arrangements for supporting pupils with additional needs and this enables many pupils to make good progress. Staff monitor and review pupils' individual learning plans thoroughly alongside parents. Teaching assistants provide pupils with valuable support through focused and targeted intervention activities.

There are close links with other schools both locally and within the Catholic community. The school shares information well with its partner schools and has strong transition arrangements with them. In addition, a very few pupils with specific additional learning needs benefit from bespoke transition programmes, which enable them to settle quickly into the next stage of their schooling.

The school has strong links with and works alongside other agencies, such as educational psychologists, social services and police liaison officers. For example, it organises valuable support for pupils with speech and language difficulties, hearing impairments and behaviour challenges.

In general, staff foster valuable relationships with parents, provide them with suitable information on a range of school matters, and consult them on appropriate issues. For example, following consultation the school adopted a new physical education kit to strengthen inclusion.

The school makes appropriate arrangements for promoting healthy eating and drinking and provides suitable opportunities for pupils to take regular exercise. It works well to develop pupils' appreciation of their own culture and that of others. For example, pupils in Year 6 have chosen to learn about food from across the world and parents have been involved in multi-cultural food tasting sessions.

Teachers provide pupils with effective experiences to help prepare them for adult life, including the world of work. For example, the school has developed their own currency called 'Joebucks' as a reward system. The pupils save in order to purchase items from the Joebucks shop. The initiative has been successful in improving behaviour, developing pupils' responsibility and supporting them to appreciate the value in working hard and saving money. When 'Seasons Greetings', the work of artist Banksy, appeared in the town, the pupils worked with a construction company to create safety posters. The pupils held valuable discussions and considered the implications for the town in keeping the work, for tourism and possible boosts to the local economy. The pupils wrote letters to persuade the Deputy Minister for Art and Culture to provide funding for the local gallery so that the painting remains in the town.

The school places significant value on developing pupils' creativity. For example, the whole school is involved annually in a major production in which nearly all pupils have beneficial opportunities for singing, dancing and acting. In addition, the school provides pupils with valuable opportunities to learn musical instruments from peripatetic music teachers.



Leaders monitor pupils' attendance closely and have robust processes to support pupils whose attendance is a cause for concern. The school has appropriate systems to promote the importance of good attendance, but these have not been successful in maintaining improvements in pupils' attendance over the past two years. The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements and are not a cause for concern.

### **Leadership and management: Good**

The headteacher provides purposeful leadership for the school. She has high expectations and promotes positive professional values and behaviours well. The deputy headteacher assists the headteacher ably and members of staff work together effectively. They fulfil their roles well and support the headteacher conscientiously. This helps to create a purposeful learning organisation. The headteacher distributes leadership well and teaching staff have specific areas of responsibility for aspects of the school's development, based on their skills and interests. For example, the work of the ICT co-ordinator has led to improvements in the skills of staff and pupils.

The school is an effective learning community. Staff share good practice regularly, and this improves their skills successfully. An example of this is the consistent way in which all members of staff develop pupils' writing and Welsh language skills.

Systems for self-evaluation and planning for improvement focus extremely well on the progress pupils make and the standards that they achieve. Staff use a good range of first-hand evidence including lesson observations, scrutiny of pupils' work and learning walks effectively to monitor and evaluate pupils' standards. These processes identify the school's strengths and areas for development accurately and ensure that staff have a sound understanding of the areas for improvement. An example of this is the way in which the school has improved pupils' numeracy skills by ensuring regular opportunities for them to apply these skills appropriately across the curriculum. However, systems to evaluate the school's provision for pupils' wellbeing are less effective.

Leaders and staff have responded well to the challenges of developing a new curriculum for schools in Wales. They have developed an interesting, creative and stimulating curriculum, based on themes of the pupils' own choice, which inspires and engages pupils very successfully and is leading to strong progress in the development of their skills. This aligns with the four core purposes of the new curriculum for Wales well and reflects the school's commitment to meeting the needs of its pupils in relation to national priorities. The school has robust performance management systems to develop the skills of teachers and teaching assistants and relevant training supports this process well.

The governing body supports the school's work very well. The headteacher keeps governors well informed about developments and pupils' progress. Governors have a very good knowledge of the school's performance data and its strengths and areas for development. They challenge the leadership team robustly as critical friends and hold the school to account for its performance effectively.

The school is well resourced and has sufficient, suitably qualified teachers to deliver all aspects of the curriculum. The teaching assistants provide valuable support for individuals and groups of pupils, both within classes and in withdrawal groups. School leaders and governors manage resources effectively to provide varied and rich learning experiences for pupils. They allocate funding appropriately to support the school's priorities and monitor expenditure carefully to ensure that it has a positive impact on provision and pupils' standards. The school makes very good use of the pupil development grant to support pupils who are eligible for free school meals. It allows financial support for educational visits and the employment of teaching assistants to provide effective intervention programmes for these pupils. This has a positive effect on pupils' wellbeing and outcomes and widens their experiences and skills. As a result, nearly all identified pupils make strong progress from their individual starting points.

## Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from the school and from the Estyn website ([www.estyn.gov.wales](http://www.estyn.gov.wales))

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

<b>Excellent</b>	Very strong, sustained performance and practice
<b>Good</b>	Strong features, although minor aspects may require improvement
<b>Adequate and needs improvement</b>	Strengths outweigh weaknesses, but important aspects require improvement
<b>Unsatisfactory and needs urgent improvement</b>	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](mailto:publications@estyn.gov.wales)

This and other Estyn publications are available on our website: [www.estyn.gov.wales](http://www.estyn.gov.wales)

© Crown Copyright 2019: This report may be re used free of charge in any format or medium provided that it is re used accurately and not used in a misleading context. The material must be acknowledged as Crown copyright and the title of the report specified.

Publication date: 19/08/2019