



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
Fairoak Avenue
Newport
Gwent
NP19 8FW**

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 voluntary aided Roman Catholic Primary school is in the Archdiocese of Cardiff, and is situated on the eastern outskirts of Newport. There are 215 pupils on roll, aged between 4 and 11 years.

The average proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals over the last three years is about 11%. This is below the average for Wales, which is 18%. The school identifies around 18% of its pupils as having additional learning needs, which is below the national average of 21%. Around 31% of the pupils are from varied ethnic backgrounds with 19% of them learning English as an additional language.

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 school's previous inspection was in June 2011 and the current head teacher took up her post in September 2015.

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 voluntary aided Roman Catholic Primary school is a highly inclusive and nurturing learning community for its pupils. It has an outstanding caring ethos, and celebrates the cultural diversity of the local area very successfully. Under the inspirational leadership of the headteacher, the governing body and staff share a clear vision for the development of the school based on developing pupils that have clear aspirations to become successful individuals that are able to play an important role in society.

Almost all pupils make progress in their literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills that is at least good over time. They apply these skills effectively in a wide range of rich contexts across the curriculum. Teachers and support staff work together creatively to develop innovative planning methods that challenge pupils consistently to make strong progress and become confident and able learners.

The school parliament is an outstanding feature through which the pupils learn to work collaboratively and make decisions about many aspects of their school. Pupils learn to work together, make decisions and evaluate progress against agreed actions. This work has an excellent effect on their independence and attitude to learning.

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

Recommendations

R1 Develop further, pupils' Welsh oracy skills

What happens next

Estyn will invite the school to prepare a case study on its work in relation to the effect that the school parliament has on pupils' independence, collaboration and attitude to learning, for dissemination on Estyn's website.

Main findings

Standards: Good

The majority of pupils start school with language, numeracy and social skills that are at the expected level for their age. Nearly all make progress that is at least good during their time at the school.

Most pupils across the foundation phase listen attentively to each other and to adults, and express opinions confidently. They collaborate purposefully when discussing a particular task, such as when looking for clues to find the wicked witch in the reception class. Across key stage 2, most pupils have well developed oracy skills. They share their views maturely and appreciate other people's points of view when working on paired and group tasks.

Across the school, although most pupils' Welsh speaking, reading and writing skills are developing appropriately, they do not make progress in this area as quickly as they do in other areas of the curriculum. In the foundation phase, most pupils enjoy learning songs and rhymes and in key stage 2 most express themselves in familiar contexts with increasing confidence. The work of the 'Cryw Cymraeg' encourages great enthusiasm towards the language and culture of Wales.

Most pupils across the foundation phase make good progress with their reading. Most reception pupils recognise letters, blends and build simple words with confidence. Most year 2 pupils read confidently and enjoy discussing their books, their likes and dislikes, and anticipating the next steps in a story. Across key stage 2, most pupils' reading continues to develop well and by Year 6, most read with good fluency and expression. Many pupils become absorbed in their books and nearly all persevere well when tackling unfamiliar words. Most Year 6 pupils discuss their love of books maturely and express their favourite authors and genres confidently.

In the foundation phase and key stage 2, most pupils are confident writers. Most pupils in the reception class make quick progress from early emergent writing to forming sentences which reflect their thoughts and opinions well. Most Year 2 pupils use elementary punctuation accurately. Many write confidently and to a high standard in a wide variety of genres. For example, they retell the story of Rumpelstiltskin and write an original poem about themselves.

In key stage 2, most pupils' writing skills continue to develop well. Many write confidently in different genres, such as an original imaginative story following their forest school discovery in Year 4. Most pupils write confidently and to a high standard across the curriculum, for example when writing a conclusion about an investigation into the effect of microbes on food in their science topic, in Year 6. Many use emotive language effectively when writing a formal letter to express concern about plastic pollution, for example.

In the foundation phase, most pupils make good progress with their mathematical development. Most demonstrate that they have a sound understanding of number. They use tally charts correctly, estimate different lengths confidently in the continuous and enhanced provision, and apply their numeracy skills successfully in a

variety of contexts across the curriculum. Across key stage 2, most pupils' numeracy skills are strong. Most have a sound understanding of number, shape and data, and apply these skills confidently in a suitable variety of contexts. For example, most Year 4 pupils interpret data successfully from a line graph and compare temperature in cities across the world using positive and negative numbers. Most pupils in Year 5 and 6 pupils continue to make effective progress in mathematics. For example, they set co-ordinates in the four quadrants and interpret pie charts about how they travel to school every day.

Across the school, most pupils make very good progress with their scientific knowledge and understanding. For example Year 2 pupils investigate the effect of friction when using a spinner on different surfaces. This is a particular strength of the school.

Most pupils have very strong information and communication technology skills. In the foundation phase, nearly all use a variety of software and applications confidently to support their learning. Most can input instructions into a programmable robot and plan its journey confidently. They use equipment naturally to assess their work and record activities. In key stage 2 nearly all pupils use an effective variety of hardware, software and applications independently to enhance and share their learning. There is clear progression in their use of skills. Digital leaders support their peers and staff very effectively and as a result, most pupils make very good progress over time.

Wellbeing and attitudes to learning: Excellent

Nearly all pupils behave exceptionally well in lessons, around the school and when moving between classes and activities, such as whole-school assemblies. They are very considerate towards each other and develop positive relationships with their peers, staff and visitors. This is exemplified very effectively in the way that Year 6 buddies nurture younger pupils from the time they start at the school. Pupils feel very well supported by their older peers. This helps them build positive relationships throughout their time at the school. Many parents consider this to be a significant strength and helps pupils transfer confidently from class to class.

Nearly all pupils feel safe at school and are fully aware of the importance of keeping themselves safe when using the internet. They have good knowledge of road safety. For example, when walking to the nearby forest they walk sensibly and are mindful of traffic risks. Nearly all pupils are aware of the need to make healthy choices when eating and drinking and keeping active. The Healthy Schools Group plays an integral and active role in monitoring snacks and encourages pupils to include healthy options in their lunch box. Nearly all pupils enjoy taking part in physical activities both within their daily lessons and in after school activities. For example, nearly all the pupils in Year 2 performed the Viennese Waltz with panache as part of Cinderella's Ball in their thematic work. Nearly all pupils participate fully and enthusiastically in high quality sporting activities using excellent local facilities. They benefit from expert coaching which enhances their skills well. Most pupils attend a wide range of extra-curricular sporting clubs such as, football, Zumba, yoga and circuit training, and understand the effect that these activities have on their wellbeing and fitness.

All pupils from Year 2 to Year 6 are members of the school parliament. Nearly all of them develop increasing independence and responsibility by participating in the valuable and purposeful activities of the nine ministries within their parliament. They play an important and highly effective role in whole school development, for example by producing meaningful action plans which link closely to the whole school development plan. As a result, they are involved fully in making important decisions that have a positive effect on their learning and wellbeing. Many pupils undertake significant leadership roles and carry them out very effectively. The work of the school parliament also makes a very valuable contribution to the local community. For example, the guardian angels' ministry has established a strong relationship with a local nursing home, and have been trained in dementia friendly approaches. Throughout the school, pupils make decisions about what they would like to learn within a topic. For example, pupils in the reception class plan an activity to measure Prince Charming's shoes using non-standard units.

Most pupils work confidently and effectively in a variety of ways. They show maturity when making decisions about the best way to address a particular task, for example by deciding to work independently, in pairs or small groups. Most demonstrate a positive and highly enthusiastic attitude towards their work. They work collaboratively and confidently in groups and demonstrate an excellent attitude towards learning. From an early age, pupils are engaged fully in their learning. For example, in their forest school, pupils in Year 1 show great perseverance when building a bridge strong enough to hold the Gingerbread Man. Most pupils develop a strong 'growth mind set' approach. Nearly all pupils participate in daily meditation sessions which contribute positively to their wellbeing. They show resilience when faced with challenges and understand that making mistakes helps them to improve. For example, pupils in Year 6 attempt to solve a mathematical investigation about the terracotta army exhibition at the Newport museum.

Most pupils develop well as ethical citizens and raise significant amounts of money for good causes locally, such as supporting the homeless in Newport. They show very good appreciation of the cultural diversity within the school and local area and actively celebrate different pupils' traditions and languages. As a result, the school is an extremely inclusive, diverse and happy community.

Teaching and learning experiences: Excellent

Across the school, teachers and support staff have very close and supportive professional relationships with their pupils. They provide pupils with a wide and effective range of stimulating and thought provoking activities. Teachers use open-ended questioning techniques, which challenge and encourage pupils to think for themselves, and collaborate with their peers very effectively. As a result, nearly all pupils become fully engaged in their learning.

Teachers often act as facilitators of learning, working in partnership with pupils, and developing their ideas into challenging and stimulating activities. Staff develop this further through the work of the ministries of the school parliament. Staff plan regular curriculum time for all pupils from Year 2 to 6 to work in one of nine established 'ministries' across the year groups on specific areas such as the digital leaders group and the curriculum development group. The prime minister and her deputy co-ordinate many of the groups' activities and are elected annually by the pupils and staff.

Leaders and staff empower pupils to take ownership of their learning and work together to develop the provision at the school. For example, the digital leaders ministry prepared an engaging presentation about internet safety to share with their peers in a whole-school assembly. There is a strong emphasis on developing pupils' understanding of the four core purposes of the new curriculum for Wales. Staff allow pupils to lead the activities. This has a very significant effect upon their wellbeing, and attitudes to learning. This focus on developing pupils' independence enables almost all of them to develop as confident independent learners regardless of their ability in a particular area. This is an excellent feature of the school's work.

Across the school, highly effective teaching strategies are embedded well. Staff provide pupils with consistent and effective well planned opportunities for them to discuss their work in pairs and small groups, and express their opinions. They provide pupils with a very well developed and supportive learning environment and foster a highly effective collaborative atmosphere across the school. This, again is a particularly strong feature. From the outset, staff encourage pupils to think for themselves and make decisions. For example, the pupils in the reception class decide if marshmallows have the correct properties to build Hansel and Gretel's house.

Teachers provide pupils with effective graded challenging activities. This is a very strong and consistent feature across the school. They provide pupils with a choice of 'good', 'amazing' and 'awesome' challenges within their daily activities. Using these consistently has a very positive effect on pupil progress and growing independence. Most pupils have a firm grasp of the importance of using success criteria to evaluate their own progress, and understand what they need to do to develop their work further. Staff use verbal feedback very effectively with pupils across the age and ability range. Written feedback is concise and useful for the learner, and pupils are given appropriate time to reflect on this and consider their next steps in learning.

Teachers plan well-timed activities for pupils. For example, in the foundation phase staff provide pupils with regular opportunities to discuss their work in pairs, and share their views and feelings during their activities. The principles of the foundation phase are embedded well. Pupils influence their learning successfully by sharing their ideas and interests with the staff at the planning stage. As a result, staff provide young learners with meaningful, real life focus tasks and well planned continuous and enhanced provision that encourages pupils to persist with their tasks and become independent and interested learners. Across the school, staff have established a 'can-do' mind set successfully. For example, they display positive messages on wall displays such as 'future world changers', alongside pictures of the pupils in the class, and others entitled, 'I can't do it yet'. As a result, most pupils display very good levels of perseverance and resilience.

The school has long, medium and short term planning that is detailed and highly effective. Planning for literacy, numeracy and ICT is thorough and successful. Support staff are involved fully in the planning process and understand their roles very well. They support and challenge pupils very effectively. Pupils make worthwhile contributions to the planning process through their roles with the different ministries. For example, the digital leaders make decisions about which apps particular year groups should use next, and provide explanatory notes for staff to ensure that they understand them. The school has embraced the principles of the

curriculum for Wales appropriately. Leaders and staff collaborate successfully to trial new and innovative planning processes based on the four core purposes. This has led to greatly enhanced learning opportunities for pupils.

Care, support and guidance: Excellent

Members of staff use a rigorous system to track the progress of all pupils. They assess pupils regularly using a range of assessment procedures and target specific groups of learners for intervention effectively. Skilled practitioners deliver intervention activities successfully to ensure that groups of vulnerable pupils make good progress.

Teachers and support staff make very effective use of assessment systems to monitor and co-ordinate support for pupils with identified additional needs. The co-ordinator collaborates very effectively with class teachers to track the progress of groups of pupils carefully, and ensures that the provision meets their needs well. With support from the co-ordinator, class teachers devise detailed individual development plans for targeted pupils. They write specific and achievable targets in conjunction with the pupils and parents and review them regularly. Teachers provide challenges for pupils they identify as being more able and talented through carefully differentiated activities. As a result, most pupils make strong progress over time. Staff and external agencies support pupils that have English as an additional language very well. As a result, these pupils make good progress in acquiring the skills that enable them to communicate effectively and access the school curriculum fully.

The school has fostered a very strong and successful partnership with parents and carers. Parents feel that the school informs them well about relevant matters through a range of methods such as newsletters, social media and text messaging. The school holds regular informative parents' evenings, and teachers write detailed and comprehensive annual reports of pupils' achievements and progress. This helps parents support their children effectively. For example, information evenings on growth mind set, and online resources greatly enhance parents' ability to support their child's learning. The school promotes the importance of good attendance effectively and ensures that parents and pupils understand that attending school every day is important.

The different 'ministries' within the School Parliament provide excellent opportunities for nearly all pupils from Year 2 to Year 6 to become active and ethical citizens. This is a significant strength of the school. Through a range of curricular activities and assemblies, nearly all pupils have a very strong understanding of the importance of respecting other cultures and faiths. They demonstrate an extremely mature and empathetic attitude towards diversity.

The school encourages pupils to be healthy individuals and has appropriate arrangements for healthy eating and drinking. The provision to develop pupils' spiritual and moral understanding is outstanding. The school is a very caring community which is highly effective in promoting respect and empathy towards others. Assemblies make an outstanding contribution to the strong whole school ethos and developing pupils' spiritual, moral and social skills. The whole school meditation sessions held at the start of each afternoon contribute significantly to the wellbeing of nearly all pupils. The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements and give no cause for concern.

The school provides a range of sensitively planned activities which embrace and celebrate pupils' cultures, languages and faiths successfully. Teachers provide pupils with frequent opportunities across the curriculum to enable them to broaden their attitudes towards human rights. As a result, most pupils strive to become ethical and knowledgeable individuals. Stimulating activities during Anti-bullying Week help to reinforce pupils' understanding of respect and tolerance. The school actively promotes and celebrates the cultural diversity within the community. The 'Big Me' event invites visitors from different career backgrounds into school and is successful in raising pupils' aspirations and preparing them well for the wider world of work. Visitors such as the male midwife help to challenge gender stereotypes and promote equality.

Education for sustainable development is embedded. The school promotes this successfully through the work of the eco committee and curricular themes, such as the Go Global topic in key stage 2. Nearly all pupils in key stage 2 develop a strong awareness of global citizenship through their studies of different countries. Teachers successfully promote the United Nations Human Rights of the child. As a result, most pupils develop an excellent understanding of their own rights and an awareness of the challenges faced by children in different communities.

The school provides excellent opportunities for pupils to perform in school and in the community. For example, many pupils in key stage 2 develop their oracy and performance skills successfully through participating in an innovative project with local schools. Nearly all pupils prepare and take part confidently in class assemblies. Most take part in the annual school Eisteddfod which greatly enhances their awareness of aspects of Welsh culture. There are effective opportunities for pupils to learn about the history and cultural heritage of their local area and of Wales.

Leadership and management: Excellent

The leadership of the head teacher is inspirational, innovative and highly effective. She gives strong strategic direction by communicating a clear vision understood by all members of the school community. The strong caring Christian ethos is central to the life of the school. It encompasses every aspect of school life and underpins the work of staff and governors effectively.

The senior leadership team supports the head teacher very effectively. Together, they succeed in fostering high expectations among the staff, pupils, governors and parents and are ambitious in seeking to establish a culture that creates independent, aspirational individuals.

The head teacher recognises and nurtures the strengths and leadership skills of staff and pupils. This has proved to be very empowering for staff and pupils. The quality of distributed leadership within the school is outstanding. Nearly every member of the school, adult and pupil, is a leader in their own right. For example, following a skills audit, the head teacher organised staff into learning teams relating to the six areas of learning in the new curriculum for Wales either as leaders or team members. The professional learning leader is developing a new curriculum planning structure which is already transforming teaching and learning and raising standards of attainment and wellbeing. Leadership is effective at all levels. This is particularly true for pupils in relation to the incredibly powerful effect that the school parliament

has had on them as leaders. For example, it has greatly increased most pupils' self-esteem, resilience, collaboration and leadership skills. This can clearly be seen in the exceptional way pupils take on responsibilities within the school such as planning and delivering training to their peers and staff, preparing and leading assemblies and organising events.

The school is an excellent learning community. Teachers use the 'excellent teaching and learning framework' to improve aspects of their own practice. They take part in individual action research projects that are already having a positive effect on standards of teaching and learning throughout the school. For example, the wellbeing and equity leader has undertaken work on understanding the effect of adverse childhood experiences on pupil progress and wellbeing. As a result, vulnerable pupils are supported well. A team of skilful teaching assistants provide very effective learning support. They contribute purposefully to the experiences of specific groups of pupils by supporting their particular needs in lessons and extra-curricular activities.

All staff and pupils within the school take part in school development and have a role to play in moving the school on. This links in very well with the new curriculum and supports pupils' knowledge and understanding of democratic rights as well as the responsibilities that accompany them. Members of the school parliament's curriculum ministry identify areas for improvement and these feed into the school development plan.

The school has a successful culture of continuous self-evaluation, which focuses clearly on pupils' outcomes. The process is very effective in enabling leaders to identify, monitor and evaluate the school's performance honestly and accurately. As a result, leaders and staff know the school very well and address improvements quickly and successfully. School development priorities are linked to clear measurable targets which support appropriate incremental changes well.

Leaders are very successful in meeting national and local priorities. For example, the way they have introduced and are beginning to embed the new curriculum for Wales, the digital framework and four core purposes is outstanding. Significant factors in the success of these initiatives to date include the manner in which they have been embraced by the staff and pupils and the substantial effect they have had on planning the curriculum.

The governing body is very effective and shares high aspirations for the school, its pupils and staff. Governors have a sound understanding of the school's performance and procedures through undertaking a programme of visits, observations and book scrutiny. Governors' relationship with the senior leadership team is very purposeful and productive. They monitor the school's self-evaluation processes robustly. For example, the 'standards committee' meet each half-term to analyse data and identify trends over time. They provide a robust level of challenge to the school which is successful in improving standards and ensuring high quality provision.

Leaders manage and monitor expenditure well and link it carefully to its priorities for improvement. The school makes effective use of the pupil development grant to enrich the curriculum and provide extra support for vulnerable pupils.

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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