

A report on

St Joseph's R.C. Primary School

**204 North Road
Gabalfa
Cardiff
CF14 3BL**

Date of inspection: February 2025

by

Estyn, His Majesty's Inspectorate for Education

and Training in Wales

About St Joseph's R.C. Primary School

Name of provider	St Joseph's R.C. Primary School
Local authority	Cardiff Council
Language of the provider	English
School category according to Welsh-medium provision	n/a
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	Roman Catholic
Number of pupils on roll	229
Pupils of statutory school age	179
Number in nursery classes	28
Percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals over a three-year average (The national percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals over a three-year average in Primary is 22.9%)	23.5%
Percentage of pupils identified as having additional learning needs (a) (The national percentage of pupils identified as having an additional learning need in Primary is 11.1%)	2%
Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home	0.0%
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	25.7%
Date of headteacher appointment	01/01/2017

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Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	01/05/2017
Start date of inspection	17/02/2025

Data reported is sourced from the latest available Pupil Level Annual School Census. These figures may be slightly different to those observed during the inspection.

Further information is available from the Welsh Government My Local School website:
mylocalschool.gov.wales

- a. The term 'additional learning needs' is being used to describe those pupils on the SEN/ALN register of the school.

Summary

St Joseph's R.C. Primary School is a vibrant, inclusive and nurturing environment. Staff and pupils have warm and positive working relationships and, as a result, nearly all pupils feel safe in school. Teachers support the pupils' wide-ranging needs in a stimulating and attractive environment. Nearly all pupils engage well in lessons and develop confident and mature attitudes to their learning as they progress through the school. Pupils' conduct and behaviour towards each other and adults is exemplary.

Leaders evaluate the impact of the school's work well and have a good awareness of its strengths and areas for development. Pupils take on active leadership roles that impact positively on the life of the school. The Learning Squad's recent work on the effectiveness of teachers' feedback has resulted in a new whole-school approach to the way pupils assess their own learning and progress. They have evaluated the impact of this, and demonstrate the difference it has made to how pupils improve their work.

Staff have a very good knowledge of pupils and their abilities. They make good use of assessment to plan for pupils' next steps in learning and this supports good rates of progress overall. On starting school, around half of pupils are acquiring and developing English as an additional language. These pupils quickly progress and develop strong oracy skills by the time they leave the school.

Staff provide a rich and stimulating curriculum for pupils. They plan engaging and creative tasks related to their topics that develop pupils' literacy and digital skills very well. However, there are not enough opportunities for pupils to apply their numeracy skills in their work across the curriculum. In the younger classes, the provision that the pupils access independently lacks focus and, as a result, pupils are unclear about the purpose of their task or what they are learning.

Pupils contribute confidently to what they would like to learn in their topics. However, they do not have enough opportunity to make choices about how they learn and there is a tendency for teachers to over-direct the learning in the older classes. As a result, there are limited opportunities for pupils to develop their independent learning skills.

Recommendations

We have made three recommendations to help the school continue to improve:

- R1. Improve opportunities for older pupils to develop their independent learning skills
- R2. Ensure that independent learning experiences for younger pupils support their developmental needs and enable them to use their skills at an appropriate level
- R3. Improve opportunities for pupils to apply their numeracy skills in their work across the curriculum

What happens next

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

Main evaluation

St Joseph's Roman Catholic Primary School is a welcoming and vibrant learning community that nurtures pupils so that they feel safe and cared for. The headteacher places strong emphasis on building positive relationships in an environment where staff and pupils feel heard, supported and respected. The school prioritises well-being and meets a wide range of needs for the diverse community it serves. Nearly all pupils respond positively to staff and behave very well in lessons and around the school. Their manners and conduct towards each other and adults are exemplary. Pupils are very proud of their school and many take opportunities to develop their leadership skills through a variety of pupil voice groups.

On entry, around half of pupils are acquiring English as an additional language or have developing communication skills. As a result of the school's early identification processes and its support for these pupils, nearly all quickly develop their oracy skills and progress to become confident and very articulate speakers. This is a strength of the school. Overall, nearly all pupils make strong progress in reading and writing, and apply these skills confidently across a range of contexts. Most pupils have strong digital skills that they enjoy applying to different aspects of their learning. Whilst most pupils make strong progress in acquiring mathematical skills, opportunities to apply these skills across all areas of the curriculum is limited.

The school identifies pupils with additional learning needs (ALN) and those in need of extra support to learn swiftly, and provides appropriate and timely intervention and support. Families recognise this support and are grateful for the communication they receive to help support their children. The school tracks and monitors the progress of all pupils regularly and robustly.

Leaders provide strong strategic direction and evaluate the impact of the school's work well. They have a good awareness of the school's strengths and areas for development, and have a good track record of improvement. Recently for example, the school has made improvements to older pupils' reading and writing skills, and the mathematical experiences they provide for younger pupils. Through their clear roles and responsibilities, teachers have led improvements in these areas that have had a direct impact on outcomes for pupils. However, despite the school's improvements in the environment and its provision to develop the independence of younger pupils, the learning experiences do not match pupils' developmental needs well enough and do not provide opportunities for pupils to further develop or refine their skills.

Pupils take on active leadership roles that impact positively on the life of the school. The Criw Cymraeg actively promote the use of the Welsh language through their assemblies, their roles as monitors and in the playground. As a result, many pupils are confident in their use of incidental Welsh around the school, for example when greeting visitors. They also enjoy singing Welsh songs and taking part in the St David's Day celebrations. The innovative work of the Learning Squad has resulted in a new, whole-school approach to aspects of assessment.

Spotlight: effective pupil leadership

The Learning Squad have implemented an effective system for marking and feedback across the school. They used classroom research to inform their work on how to self and peer assess effectively and to consider how best to engage with their teachers to move their learning forwards. They monitor the impact of this work and present their findings to staff and governors. This has had a positive impact on the assessment procedures across the school, and has resulted in improved outcomes for pupils and enabled them to develop a better understanding of how they can improve their work themselves.

Staff have developed and adapted the school's curriculum into one that is diverse, creative and stimulating. It meets the needs of its pupils and its community well. It offers pupils rich opportunities to discuss historical and moral issues within their community, the local area and the wider world. Pupils contribute confidently to what they would like to learn. However, they do not make choices about how they would like to learn and there is a tendency for teachers to over direct the learning. As a result, there are limited opportunities for pupils to develop their independent learning skills.

Staff provide a range of opportunities to develop the pupils' artistic and creative skills. Pupils across the school access music lessons, opportunities to learn an instrument and enjoy opportunities to perform. They experiment with different techniques and styles of art. The curriculum offers opportunities for pupils to develop their spirituality and social skills well. There is a well-embedded ethos of care and respect for others and their beliefs.

The school has effective processes to support pupils with social and emotional well-being. Highly trained support staff make very effective use of a range of intervention strategies which impact positively on pupils' well-being. Nearly all pupils have a good understanding of the benefits of healthy food and drink choices and how exercise plays an important role in keeping healthy. The Healthy Squad group promote physical well-being by encouraging physical activities and awarding their peers for choosing healthy snacks, and a few pupils attend sports clubs and activities after school.

The governing body are passionate and supportive advocates of the school. More established governors have a strong understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development and provide a high level of challenge to leaders. They have a sound overview of the management of the finances of the school, and oversee appropriate use of the pupil development grant. They meet regularly to discuss important aspects of the school's work, such as the curriculum and the impact of provision on pupils. They support evaluation through their link roles, and show a strong awareness of the school's priorities and the progress the school is making against them.

Estyn does not inspect denominational 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 denominational religious education and collective worship to be inspected separately.

Additional information

The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils do not give any cause for concern

The school's arrangements for site management do not give any cause for concern

The school has appropriate arrangements for promoting healthy eating and drinking

Leaders and governors manage the school's finances appropriately, including the use of the pupil development grant.

Evidence base of the report

Before an inspection, inspectors:

- analyse the outcomes from the parent/carers 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/carers 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' well-being, 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

Appendix 1: Numbers – quantities and proportions

The report makes references to different quantities and proportions e.g. '*most pupils...*' or '*very few pupils...*'. We use these terms to describe quantities and proportions as outlined in the table below:

nearly all =	with very few exceptions
most =	90% or more
many =	70% or more
a majority =	over 60%
half =	50%
around half =	close to 50%
a minority =	below 40%
few =	below 20%
very few =	less than 10%

Copies of the report

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

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 publication. Any enquiries or comments regarding this document/publication should be addressed to:

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