

A report on

St Joseph's R.C. Primary School

**Fairoak Avenue
Newport
Gwent
NP19 8FW**

Date of inspection: June 2026

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	Newport City Council
Language of the provider	English
School category according to Welsh-medium provision	English Medium
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	Roman Catholic 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.
Number of pupils on roll	206
Pupils of statutory school age	176
Number in nursery classes	N/A
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 21.7%)	8.1%
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 9.2%)	*

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Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home	0.0%
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	16.5%
Lead partner in Initial teacher education	No
Date of headteacher appointment	01/09/2023
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	11/02/2019
Start date of inspection	29/06/2026

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

Leaders at St Joseph's Roman Catholic Primary School are committed to creating a happy school that celebrates its place in the local community and in Wales. This contributes to an important sense of belonging where many pupils feel safe and respected at school. They are developing a sound understanding of their sense of place through learning about their locality as well as being a citizen of Wales. Many pupils enjoy coming to school and generally engage appropriately with the learning experiences provided. However, approaches to behaviour management are too variable across the school. This means that there is frequent low-level disruption in lessons that hinders learning. In addition, too many pupils eligible for Free School Meals do not attend school regularly enough.

By the time they leave school, a majority of pupils make suitable progress from their starting points. However, due to inconsistencies in the quality of teaching a minority of pupils do not make enough progress during their time at school. The progress of pupils with additional learning needs is too variable. Leaders and teachers do not have a strong understanding of how well intervention strategies support these pupils to progress.

Although they plan for a range of interesting learning activities, leaders and teachers do not focus sufficiently on the progressive development of pupils' literacy, numeracy and digital skills. As a result, too many pupils do not make the progress of which they are capable.

Leaders do not evaluate the impact that the school's provision has on pupils' progress well enough. Monitoring processes do not provide leaders with a clear enough understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development, particularly in teaching and learning. Overall, leaders and governors do not hold each other accountable enough for the quality of provision or pupils' progress in their learning.

The school has established positive relationships with parents and carers, creating a welcoming community where families feel valued. Staff celebrate the rich diversity of cultures represented within the school community effectively, providing meaningful opportunities for pupils to develop respect, understanding and pride in their own and others' backgrounds. Arrangements to support pupils' transition to high school are well planned. In addition, the school's highly effective buddy system provides very strong support for pupils joining the school. This helps new pupils to settle quickly, develop positive friendships and build confidence.

Recommendations

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

- R1 Strengthen the strategic leadership of teaching and learning through effective self-evaluation and improvement processes
- R2 Improve the quality and consistency of teaching and assessment to ensure that all pupils are supported and challenged effectively
- R3 Ensure that teachers plan systematically for the progressive development of pupils' skills in particular writing, mathematics and digital
- R4 Improve attendance for pupils eligible for free school meals.

What happens next

In accordance with the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion, that special measures are required in relation to this school. The school will draw up an action plan which shows how it is going to address the recommendations. Estyn will monitor the school's progress usually every four to six months.

Main evaluation

Leaders have established a caring and inclusive school community where pupils are encouraged to value themselves, others and their local community. The school's strong commitment to promoting Welsh identity and celebrating its place within the local area helps pupils develop an increasing understanding of belonging and their role as citizens of Wales. Many enjoy attending school and participate positively in school life. However, attendance for pupils eligible for free school meals remains too low.

A majority of pupils make suitable progress from their individual starting points. However, a minority of pupils do not make sufficient progress during their time at school. This is because of inconsistencies in the quality of teaching, assessment and classroom practice. Pupils are not involved consistently enough in evaluating their learning or understanding the next steps needed to improve their work. The progress of pupils with additional learning needs is too variable. Leaders and teachers do not have a strong understanding of how well intervention strategies support these pupils to progress.

Leaders do not evaluate teaching and learning well enough. They have not identified weaknesses in teaching, assessment and curriculum progression with sufficient precision. This means that they do not have an accurate understanding of the school's most important priorities for improvement. Improvement planning is not focused sharply enough on securing better outcomes for pupils.

Governors are supportive of the school's work and understand its values well. They manage the school's finances, including grant expenditure, effectively. However, they do not hold leaders to account rigorously enough for the quality of teaching, or the progress pupils make.

In a minority of classes, where teachers apply behaviour management strategies consistently, pupils engage well with learning and benefit from calm, purposeful classrooms. This practice is not embedded consistently across the school and there is generally too much low-level disruption in classrooms. This has a negative impact on pupils' progress.

Leaders and staff have designed a curriculum that reflects the school's values and promotes pupils' understanding of their local community, Wales and the wider world. Pupils benefit from a broad range of engaging learning experiences, particularly those that promote creativity, culture and personal development. However, curriculum planning does not ensure the progressive development of pupils' literacy, numeracy and digital skills. Opportunities for pupils to develop and apply these skills in meaningful contexts are too limited and too many pupils do not achieve as well as they could.

Many pupils communicate confidently using appropriate vocabulary when discussing their learning with adults and their peers. They listen respectfully in most situations and contribute positively to collaborative activities. However, a minority make limited progress in developing effective listening skills because classroom routines do not consistently support purposeful discussion or minimise low-level disruption.

Many pupils develop secure reading skills as they move through the school. They read with appropriate fluency, expression and accuracy and generally apply these skills effectively to support learning across the curriculum.

A majority of pupils develop appropriate writing skills and demonstrate a suitable understanding of writing for different purposes and audiences. They apply these skills appropriately across a range of curriculum areas. However, a minority do not develop sufficient accuracy in punctuation and grammar. Feedback from teachers is too inconsistent to help pupils recognise errors, improve the quality of their work or understand clearly how to make further progress.

Most pupils develop appropriate Welsh oracy skills during their time at the school. Younger pupils respond confidently and enthusiastically during daily routines. As they progress through the school, older pupils develop increasing confidence in speaking Welsh. Staff implement the Welsh Language Continuum effectively and provide regular opportunities for pupils to communicate in Welsh during lessons and daily routines.

Many pupils develop appropriate mathematical knowledge and understanding. They acquire secure number skills and apply these confidently in familiar contexts. However, teaching does not consistently provide sufficient challenge to extend pupils' mathematical reasoning or deepen their conceptual understanding. Opportunities for pupils to apply their numeracy skills progressively across the curriculum are underdeveloped.

Provision to develop pupils' digital competence is inconsistent. Teachers do not plan systematically for the progressive development of digital skills and pupils have too few opportunities to apply these skills meaningfully across the curriculum. As a result, many pupils leave the school with digital skills that are not sufficiently well developed to support their learning effectively.

In a minority of lessons, teachers establish clear expectations for behaviour and respectful relationships. As a result, in these sessions pupils work cooperatively and treat one another with consideration. In around half of lessons, teachers use questioning effectively to deepen pupils' understanding and extend their learning. Overall, however, the quality of teaching is too variable. Teaching does not consistently build on pupils' prior learning or provide sufficient challenge for all pupils, including the more able. Consequently, pupils' progress varies too much between classes.

A minority of teachers deploy support staff effectively so that they make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning. They understand pupils' needs well, provide purposeful support and help pupils remain engaged in learning. This has a positive impact on the progress of pupils requiring additional support.

The curriculum provides particularly effective opportunities for pupils to develop their creative skills. Pupils produce artwork of a good standard using a wide range of media and techniques. Their creative skills develop well over time and contribute positively to their confidence and enjoyment of learning.

Provision for pupils' spiritual development is a notable strength. Staff provide regular opportunities for reflection and encourage pupils to appreciate the natural world while considering wider aspects of their own lives and those of others. These experiences make a valuable contribution to pupils' emotional development and well-being. The school's provision for moral development is generally effective. This supports many pupils to

develop an appropriate understanding of right and wrong, although this is not yet consistent across the school.

The school has established strong relationships with parents and carers and has created a welcoming environment where families feel valued and included in school life. Staff celebrate the diverse cultures represented within the school community successfully, helping pupils develop respect for different backgrounds and contributing to the school's inclusive ethos. Arrangements to support transition to secondary education are well planned and prepare pupils confidently for the next stage of their learning. In addition, the highly effective buddy system supports new pupils exceptionally well. Pupils settle quickly, establish positive friendships and develop confidence, contributing positively to their well-being and sense of belonging.

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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Publication date: 01/09/2026