



Rhagoriaeth i bawb – Excellence for all

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: October 2012

by

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



During each inspection, inspectors aim to answer three key questions:

Key Question 1: How good are the outcomes?

Key Question 2: How good is provision?

Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?

Inspectors also provide an overall judgement on the school's current performance and on its prospects for improvement.

In these evaluations, inspectors use a four-point scale:

Judgement	What the judgement means
Excellent	Many strengths, including significant examples of sector-leading practice
Good	Many strengths and no important areas requiring significant improvement
Adequate	Strengths outweigh areas for improvement
Unsatisfactory	Important areas for improvement outweigh strengths

The report was produced in accordance with Section 28 of the Education Act 2005.

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Publication date: 11/12/2012

Context

St Joseph's Roman Catholic Junior School serves the Catholic community of Port Talbot, including the parishes of St Joseph's, Port Talbot, Our Lady of Margam and Our Lady of the Assumption, Briton Ferry. As a Community First Area, the school's catchment contains pockets of significant social deprivation and is considered economically disadvantaged.

The school caters for pupils aged from seven to 11 and there are currently 118 on roll. Numbers have declined over the last few years. Most pupils are of white British ethnic origin and all speak English at home. Welsh is taught as a second language.

Currently 12% of the pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is much lower than the average for the local authority and Wales. The school has identified about 36% of pupils as having additional learning needs. This is above the national and local average.

The headteacher has been in post since September 2008.

The individual school budget per pupil for St Joseph's Catholic Junior School in 2012-2013 means that the budget is £3,322 per pupil. The maximum per pupil in the primary schools in Neath Port Talbot is £7,410 and the minimum is £2,806. St Joseph's Catholic Junior School is 44th out of the 68 primary schools in Neath Port Talbot in terms of its school budget per pupil.'

Summary

The school's current performance	Good
The school's prospects for improvement	Good

Current performance

The current performance of the school is good because:

- pupils' attainment at the end of key stage 2 at the expected level is consistently high;
- Most pupils make good progress;
- the school ensures a caring, inclusive community in which pupils feel happy and safe;
- the behaviour of nearly all pupils is excellent; and
- there is a family ethos that is based on respecting the rights of all individuals.

Prospects for improvement

The school's prospects for improvement are good because:

- the headteacher and governors have a clear vision for the school, which is effectively communicated to all stakeholders;
- self-evaluation is based firmly on a good range of first hand evidence, including a thorough analysis of a wide range of data;
- planning for developing the use of new technologies throughout the curriculum is good; and
- partnerships with parents, the community and other schools are strong and contribute effectively to fulfilling the school's aims.

Recommendations

R1 Ensure that all more able pupils make appropriate progress.

R2 Improve the provision for pupils to develop their literacy, numeracy and thinking skills across all areas of the curriculum.

R3 Improve the quality of teaching, particularly by planning challenging activities and allowing pupils to develop as independent learners.

R4 Provide pupils with more opportunities to develop Welsh skills.

What happens next?

The school will draw up an action plan that shows how it is going to address the recommendations. The local authority will monitor the school's progress.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Good

Standards: Good

Most pupils enter the school with good literacy skills and most make good progress during their time at St Joseph's Catholic Junior School. Pupils with special educational needs perform well against their individual targets. More able pupils, however, do not make the progress they are capable of.

Throughout the school, pupils' oral skills are good. They communicate their ideas and responses well in individual presentations. Many pupils are confident when speaking to a large audience, such as during whole school assemblies or Mass. Most pupils listen well in structured activities. Nearly all pupils make good progress in developing their reading skills. Most are able to read aloud clearly and meaningfully. They discuss the events in the stories they have read enthusiastically. The reading age of many pupils is either equivalent to or greater than their chronological age. Pupils who receive additional support with their reading make excellent progress.

The majority of pupils make good progress in their writing skills relative to their aptitude and ability. The standard of the majority of pupils' writing is good and most pupils write for different purposes to good effect in literacy lessons. However, a minority of pupils do not develop their writing skills well enough, and as a result too few achieve the higher levels.

Most pupils develop good skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology. However, these skills are not always applied consistently across all subjects.

Performance of 11-year-olds in end of key stage assessments over the last four years in English, mathematics and science has been good. The school has moved from the bottom half to the top half of schools when compared to schools with a similar percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals.

Over the last three years, the proportion of pupils attaining the expected level (level 4) at the end of key stage 2 pupils has been consistently higher than that of similar schools and the Wales average.

The proportion of pupils attaining the higher level (level 5) at the end of key stage 2 has been consistently below that of similar schools and the Wales average. The school has been in the bottom half of schools with similar percentages of pupils entitled to free school meals.

At the higher level, boys consistently outperform girls in mathematics and science.

Data for standards in Welsh as a second language indicates that the school is performing better than the Wales average; however, this was not reflected in

observed sessions during the inspection. Pupils do not sustain conversations confidently and they speak very little Welsh around the school.

Wellbeing: Good

The school is a caring community where adults and pupils are kind and courteous towards one another. The behaviour of nearly all pupils around the school and on the yard is excellent. Nearly all pupils feel happy, safe and secure in school. Pupils have a good understanding of the importance of healthy living and fitness and are able to explain how and why they should keep healthy and how the school encourages them to do this. Most pupils speak with enthusiasm about school life.

Pupils develop a good range of social and life skills through appropriate opportunities to take part in extra-curricular experiences and activities.

The school council and eco-council are well established and pupils benefit from the responsibilities offered to them. For example, they have been successful in improving the school grounds and introducing sustainable practices across the school. However, pupils have limited opportunities to make decisions about their life at school and about how and what they learn.

Attendance has steadily improved over the past three years and the most recent data shows that the school has achieved its target of 95%. Punctuality for nearly all pupils is good.

Key Question 2: How good is provision?	Adequate
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Learning experiences: Adequate

The school offers an appropriate range of learning experiences for the pupils, which meet National Curriculum requirements; however they do not always stimulate or challenge the needs of all pupils, in particularly more able pupils. Through early identification, the school provides sound provision for pupils with special educational needs. These pupils make good progress as a result.

Teachers' short-term plans identify opportunities to develop their literacy, numeracy, information and communication technology and thinking skills. However, in practice, the school does not have a clear strategy on how to develop these skills progressively across the curriculum. There are suitable opportunities for pupils to develop their information and communication technology skills, for example the use of i-pads to present information in literacy. The school promotes pupils' oracy skills sufficiently. During acts of collective worship, individual pupils read prayers and passages. Across the school, pupils complete too many worksheets. This limits their independence and gives them too few opportunities to write at length and for a range of purposes.

Pupils have appropriate opportunities to learn about Welsh culture and traditions. However, activities in many classes are not challenging enough. The use of Welsh by pupils and staff on a daily basis is limited.

Pupils enjoy the opportunities offered to them to be sustainable and take part in the eco-council. There are appropriate opportunities for them to learn and understand how to care for the environment through recycling, saving energy and developing the school garden.

Pupils are developing an understanding of the wider world but have limited opportunities to learn about global citizenship. Suitable use is made of school grounds to provide an extensive range of extra-curricular clubs. The school makes a good effort to ensure that all children have access to these clubs.

Teaching: Adequate

Most teachers have up-to-date subject knowledge and their planning identifies clear learning objectives. Where teaching is judged only as adequate, lessons are over directed and do not challenge pupils to achieve highly. Most teachers plan for skills development across the curriculum but this is inconsistent in its implementation throughout the key stage. Where teaching is best, pupils' independent thinking skills are developed during the lesson, for example by allowing pupils to make choices using various innovative information technology devices at their disposal to create 'character mood diaries'. However, this occurs in only a very few lessons.

The management of behaviour is generally good, but, where expectations of progress are not high enough, a few pupils become distracted and unfocused in their learning.

Pupils are beginning to set their own targets for improvement and where teaching is good or better, the teacher uses effective peer assessment to allow pupils to reflect on their work. Assessment for learning strategies are not fully developed across the school. Written comments do not always inform pupils of what they need to do next in order to improve their work.

Arrangements for statutory assessment are systematic. The school has good moderation processes with other schools and this results in accurate end of key stage assessments. Electronic tracking systems are effective in identifying pupils who are underachieving and enabling teachers to plan for intervention and support. End of year reports to parents meet statutory requirements and parents are well informed of the progress being made.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The school has good procedures in place to promote pupils' wellbeing. Pupils are made well aware of school rules and expectations of behaviour. Many pupils enjoy partaking in the wide range of sporting and extra-curricular activities that encourage them to be active. Provision for encouraging pupils to eat healthily is less well established in the school.

The school provides a caring community with a strong moral and spiritual ethos that fosters respect for all. Parents appreciate the excellent communication that they receive from the school and are very supportive of the school's activities. This is strength of the school. There are also strong links with the local community and specialist services.

Pupils with additional learning needs make good progress in relation to their age and ability. Early identification processes enable the school to target intervention and support and this is particularly effective in developing reading skills. Individual education plans are monitored regularly and pupils make good progress against their targets.

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

Learning environment: Good

The school is a welcoming and supportive environment, which values diversity and equal opportunities for all. The care and respect pupils show for one another and for adults is a very positive feature of the school. Class philosophy sessions, circle time and the messages given in assemblies help to reinforce this inclusive ethos.

Classrooms are well resourced and the school has recently invested in new information and communication technology resources, which have already impacted positively on the opportunities offered to pupils for developing their independent thinking skills. There have been improvements to the school grounds, which have been influenced and contributed to by pupils and the school council.

The school is well maintained, clean and tidy in all areas.

Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?	Good
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Leadership: Good

Leadership and management have many notable features, which underpin the school's success and sustain overall good standards. The headteacher provides a strong direction to the work of the school. The management team has positive relationships with all stakeholders. The headteacher and deputy headteacher work very well together, meet every week and have a clear and purposeful vision. They are both efficient and effective in their management of the school; both display a deep concern for all pupils and staff in their care.

Staff are clear about the school's priorities and have a genuine desire to be involved. Roles and responsibilities are reviewed regularly according to the needs of the school.

Performance management arrangements fully meet statutory requirements. Teachers' targets are linked to the school development plan and staff responsibilities. Support and administrative staff are also part of the system and agree targets and professional development needs. Appropriate support and training is provided as a result of this process, for example with a reading support scheme that has resulted in improved reading results for pupils.

The governing body is well established, and meets regularly; relevant committees are in place and statutory requirements are fulfilled. All essential policies are in place and are signed and dated. Governors are supportive, proactive, challenging and well

informed. They have specific responsibilities and most visit the school regularly and focus on specific priorities of the school's development plan.

The school shows a strong commitment to the implementation of national and local priorities.

Improving quality: Good

The school's self-evaluation report is robust and every member of staff contributes. It is a useful and comprehensive document that focuses clearly on improving pupils' standards. It includes a thorough analysis of performance data, the monitoring of provision and a review of all aspects of the school's life and work. The headteacher and deputy headteacher have a very clear picture of the school's performance, its strengths and areas for development.

Effective use is made of assessment information to set targets for improvement and identify groups of pupils that are underperforming. The school has been effective in ensuring continued improvement at level 4+ over a number of years. There is a wide range of rigorous monitoring activities, including purposeful lesson observations. The school has succeeded in implementing nearly all of the recommendations of the previous inspection.

The school has established effective networks of professional practice in the school and with other schools and partners. Members of staff take advantage of opportunities to develop their expertise and are keen to take part in activities to improve their effectiveness, such as involvement in action research to improve guided group reading techniques.

Partnership working: Good

Partnership with parents, governors and the community is a strong feature of the school. These links contribute positively towards standards and the welfare of pupils. The collaboration with neighbouring schools is a very positive element and transfer arrangements of pupils to secondary schools are good. Pupils take part in local visits regularly, and often welcome individuals from the community to talk to them in school. The school has well established links with the Diocese and St Joseph's Church.

The school communicates effectively with parents on pupils' progress, which contributes to achieving the objectives of the school. Daily contact arrangements through newsletters, website and text messaging ensure that parents receive appropriate and timely information.

The partnership with the secondary school and the cluster is good and ensures accuracy and a shared understanding of standards at the end of key stage 2.

International partnerships with other countries are underdeveloped.

Resource management: Good

The school's staffing resources are managed and used efficiently to improve learning. The teachers and support staff work effectively in order to ensure appropriate support for the pupils.

The school building is maintained to a high standard. Resources are managed well and financial reports are used effectively to support priorities for improvement. The headteacher has secured additional funding for resources such as mobile technology, to ensure that the school stays at the forefront when investing in new educational technologies.

Considering pupils' outcomes and the use made of finances, the school provides good value for money.

Appendix 1

Commentary on performance data

Over the last four years the percentage of pupils attaining the core subject indicator, (the expected level at 11 years of age in all three of the individual subjects of English, mathematics and science in combination) has increased year-on-year. The school has moved from the lower 50% to the upper 50% of schools when compared to national benchmarks for schools with similar levels of free school meals.

Over the last three years, the performance of key stage 2 pupils has been consistently higher than that of similar schools and the Wales average.

The percentage of pupils attaining the higher level 5 at the end of key stage 2 has been consistently below that of similar schools and the Wales average. The school has been in the lower 50% and lowest 25% of schools when compared to national benchmarks for schools with similar levels of free school meals.

There is no significant pattern of a difference in the performance of boys when compared to that of girls at the expected level. However, at the higher level, boys consistently outperform the girls in mathematics and science.

There is no significant pattern of a difference between pupils entitled to free school meals when compared to those not entitled.

Appendix 2

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Estyn received 108 responses from their learner questionnaire. A majority of responses were very positive and compared favourably to the national average. Four responses were within five percentage points of the national average. The response to the question about behaviour at playtime and lunch time was significantly lower than the national average.

All pupils feel they have enough books and equipment to do their work.

Nearly all pupils:

- feel safe in school;
- know who to turn to if they are worried;
- feel that the school teaches them how to keep healthy;
- feel that they are doing well at school;
- feel that teachers and other adults in the school help them learn and to make good progress;
- know what to do and whom to ask if they find their work hard; and
- feel that the homework helps them understand and improve their work in school.

Most pupils:

- feel that the school deals well with bullying; and
- feel that there are lots of chances for regular exercise in school.

Many pupils believe that:

- other children behave well in class; and
- nearly all children behave well on the yard.

The 55 responses from parents or carers were all positive, with all responses comparing favourably to the national average.

All parents and carers that expressed an opinion either agreed or agreed strongly that:

- overall, they were satisfied with the school;
- their child likes this school;
- their child was helped to settle in well when he or she started;
- their child is making good progress;
- pupils behave well in school;
- teaching is good;
- staff expect pupils to work hard and do their best;
- homework builds well on what the pupils learn in school;
- staff treat all children fairly and with respect;
- children are encouraged to be healthy and to take regular exercise;
- their child was safe in school;
- they were kept well informed about their child's progress;
- they felt comfortable about approaching the school with a question or problem;
- the school helps their child to become more mature and take on responsibility; and
- that the school is well run.

Nearly all parents agree or agree strongly that:

- their child receives appropriate additional support in relation to any particular individual needs;
- they understand the school's procedure for dealing with complaints;
- their child is well prepared for moving on to the next stage in their education; and
- there is a good range of activities including trips or visits.

Appendix 3

The inspection team

Mike Hayes	Reporting Inspector
Enir Rees Morgan	Team Inspector
Dyfrig Ellis	Team Inspector
Catherine Jenkins	Lay Inspector
Paula Vaughan	Peer Inspector
Michael Daley	School Nominee

Copies of the report

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

Under the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003, the school must provide copies of the report to all parents of the school. Where a pupil is subject to placement by a local authority, a copy of the report should be sent by the school to each relevant authority.

Year groups and key stages

Schools use a common system of numbering year groups from the start of compulsory schooling to 18 years of age. This system emphasises the importance of continuity and eases communication among schools, governing bodies, parents and LEAs.

The term 'Reception' (FPR) refers to the year group of pupils in a primary school who reach the age of five during the academic year. FYear 1 refers to the year group of pupils who reach the age of six during the academic year and so on. Year 13 is the year group of students who reach the age of 18 during the academic year.

Primary phase:

Year	FPR	FPY1	FPY2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6
Ages	4-5	5-6	6-7	7-8	8-9	9-10	10-11

Secondary phase:

Year	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Y12	Y13
Ages	11-12	12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16	16-17	17-18

The four key stages cover the following year groups:

Foundation Phase	Reception, Year 1 and Year 2
Key stage 2	Year 3 to Year 6
Key stage 3	Year 7 to Year 9
Key stage 4	Year 10 and Year 11

Glossary of terms – Primary

National Curriculum

Expected National Curriculum levels

- By the end of the key stage 1, at the age of seven, learners are expected to reach level 2 and the more able to reach level 3.
- By the end of the key stage 2, at the age of eleven, learners are expected to reach level 4 and the more able to reach level 5.

Core subject indicator in all key stages

The core subject indicator relates to the expected performance in English or Welsh first language, mathematics and science, the core subjects of the National Curriculum. Learners must gain at least the expected level in either English or Welsh first language together with mathematics and science to gain the core subject indicator.

All-Wales Core Data sets

Schools and local authorities may refer to performance relative to their family of schools. These families of schools have been created to enable schools to compare their performance to that of similar schools across Wales. Families include schools with similar proportions of pupils entitled to free school meals, living in 20% most deprived areas of Wales, having special education needs at school action plus or statemented and with English as an additional language acquisition less than competent.