

This letter is also available in Welsh

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Dear Laura

Interim visit: March 2025

A team of inspectors recently visited St Joseph's R.C. Primary School to consider how the school has progressed in addressing the recommendations from its core inspection in June 2023.

Below is a summary of progress against two of the recommendations from the school's core inspection.

During the visit, the team had the opportunity to:

- observe learning in classes
- talk to pupils about their learning
- meet with teachers and leaders
- scrutinise documentation

Focus of visit

Sharpen self-evaluation and improvement processes to ensure that they focus on the most important areas of school improvement

- Since the core inspection, school leaders have narrowed the focus of self-evaluation and improvement processes. They focus clearly on the most important priorities and those that will have the greatest impact on pupil outcomes.

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Estyn welcomes correspondence in both English and Welsh. Correspondence received in either language will be given equal priority.

- Members of the senior leadership team have overall responsibility for the school's priorities. They take the lead on observing the quality of teaching and learning, while other staff focus on helpful, whole school monitoring activities, including book scrutiny and evaluation of pupils' progress. This keeps monitoring processes manageable and leads to sharp evaluations that drive continuous school improvement well.
- Professional learning for staff, including visits to other schools, personal research and peer-to-peer collaboration, aligns closely with the school's priorities. This means that that, over time, all leaders and staff develop the knowledge, skills and understanding they need to contribute effectively to self-evaluation and school improvement.
- Governors now contribute regularly to self-evaluation activities. They gain first-hand evidence by being involved in a range of activities such as learning walks, listening to learners and professional discussions with staff. This enables them to offer useful support and appropriate challenge to school leaders.

Improve the consistency of teaching and provision to ensure that it is appropriate to pupils' stage and age of development and successfully develops pupils' independence

- Leaders and staff have worked well to develop a consistent approach to teaching across the school. This has generally been effective, for example when developing the school's approach in the use of assessment for learning strategies. Most teachers use questioning well to check pupils' understanding and develop their vocabulary effectively.
- Leaders prioritise the development of pupils' independent skills. Staff engage in worthwhile professional learning, and benefit from visits to other schools to observe high quality practice. The use of teaching triads enables staff to observe effective practice within school and develops a positive and supportive culture to improve their teaching.
- Overall, staff make good use of the indoor and outdoor learning environment. In the youngest classes, staff provide worthwhile opportunities for pupils to make choices about their learning. In the most effective instances, this promotes independent learning through play and develops pupils' sense of curiosity. Leaders recognise the need to develop a consistency in this approach across the youngest pupils' classes.
- Most older pupils make sensible choices when they work independently and look for alternatives to asking an adult when they need support in their learning. They are motivated, have good attitudes to learning and develop their independent learning skills well. The school's focus on pupil-led inquiry enables most pupils to

lead and take responsibility for their learning when appropriate, and apply their skills in a variety of purposeful contexts.

- Teachers use a range of observations and assessments to inform their planning. They make beneficial use of clear success criteria that build effectively on pupils' current knowledge and skills. In most classes, staff provide a good level of challenge that meets the needs of individual pupils' and groups of learners well.

Leaders and staff have worked well to address these recommendations and acknowledge the aspects that need to develop further.

The school's/PRU's latest core inspection report and further information on the process and purpose of interim visits can be found on our website:

<http://www.estyn.gov.wales/provider/6733368>

Yours sincerely



Liz Miles

Assistant Director