

Report summary for parents and carers on St Joseph's Catholic School and 6th form Centre

Date of inspection: 19/01/2026

Summary

St Joseph's Catholic School and Sixth Form Centre is a welcoming and inclusive community where the Catholic ethos strongly underpins school life. Over the past 12 months, the school has experienced a challenging period. However, throughout this time, staff have remained deeply committed, continuing to support the pupils and one another despite the challenges faced.

Leaders and staff at all levels work collaboratively to ensure that a strong culture of safeguarding is central to the school's work. As a result, most pupils feel safe. Care, support and guidance are a strength of the school.

The acting headteacher provides compassionate leadership and continues to steer the school through challenging times. He knows the school well and considers pupil and staff well-being carefully. However, the current leadership arrangements are not equitable or sustainable over the longer term. Although leaders know the school well, they are not precise enough in their evaluation of the impact of teaching on pupils' learning.

Despite recent improvements in planning, the school's provision for developing pupils' reading and writing skills is in the early days of development. Around a half of pupils struggle with grammatical accuracy and spelling, which is not addressed or corrected. In general, pupils do not receive enough opportunities to develop their numeracy and digital skills in relevant subjects across the curriculum.

In most lessons, there are positive relationships between teachers and pupils, contributing to a calm and productive atmosphere. The majority of teachers offer pupils suitable learning activities. In these lessons, many pupils demonstrate positive attitudes towards learning, follow instructions attentively, and collaborate effectively. A few lessons are particularly effective, where teachers use questioning skilfully to probe pupils' understanding, and plan activities that grow increasingly challenging. However, in a minority of cases, pupils make limited progress due to a lack of challenge and weak questioning.

Effective provision for pupils with additional learning needs (ALN) helps them to make suitable progress against their individual targets. Sixth form pupils are polite and welcoming to visitors, have positive attitudes to learning and contribute well during lessons. The school is beginning to develop opportunities for pupils to undertake leadership roles and whole school responsibilities. There is a wide variety of enrichment activities, including clubs and cultural visits, which complement the curriculum and the school's Catholic ethos and values. Pupils' attendance rates are improving well, and this remains a priority for the school.

Recommendations and next steps

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

- R1 Ensure senior leadership roles and responsibilities are defined clearly and balanced well and that leaders at all levels hold staff to account fully for their work.
- R2 Strengthen self-evaluation and improvement planning processes.
- R3 Improve provision for pupils' reading and writing skills so that they have meaningful and challenging opportunities to develop these skills across the curriculum.
- R4 Improve the effectiveness of teaching.
- R5 Improve the coordination of provision to develop pupils' numeracy and digital skills.

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

Full Report

If you would like to read more about Estyn's evaluation of the school, please follow this link to the [full report](#)

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