



Summary of School Development Plan 2025 - 2026

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1. Summary of Self Evaluation Strengths and Areas for Improvement

Estyn Outcomes (June 2023)

Overview

St Joseph's Roman Catholic Primary School is an inclusive and caring school that supports success for all pupils, and service to others, exceptionally well. All pupils love belonging to the school. They speak warmly about their friends and teachers and look forward to coming every day. Pupils are kind and respectful towards each other and the relationship between the oldest and youngest pupils is very strong. The positive and nurturing relationships that exist between pupils, and between staff and pupils, contribute well to the inclusive and welcoming nature of the school and community.

Pupils' positive attitudes to learning and willingness to support one another in their work and play are notable. They are confident and inquisitive learners and enjoy finding out about things that interest them. Nearly all pupils develop good speaking and listening skills and use these well to build on, or challenge, each other's ideas. Across the school, most pupils develop good mathematical and digital skills. Pupils build their musical and artistic skills well and enjoy performing to a range of audiences. However, pupils do not make enough progress in their writing during their time in the school.

Many teachers plan and deliver a knowledge rich curriculum effectively, through a comprehensive range of engaging learning experiences. Outside learning areas are stimulating and enable pupils to develop knowledge and skills effectively. Teachers offer many opportunities to learn about the history and culture of Wales and the local area. Provision for physical development is strong, as is the teaching of mathematics where learning happens at a suitably brisk pace. Overall, the quality of teaching across the school is variable, particularly in younger year groups where many activities are over-directed by adults and opportunities to develop independence are limited.

The headteacher has created a clear vision for the education and well-being of learners and shared it effectively with all stakeholders. The headteacher takes the lead in ensuring that the school provides an inclusive and caring environment for all. There is a strong team ethos across the school, where pupils and staff feel supported and valued. Members of the governing body are supportive and well-informed. Leaders have identified many of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. However, self-evaluation and improvement processes are overly complex and leaders identify too many priorities. This makes it difficult for the school to focus well enough on the most important aspects of its work.

Recommendations	
R1	Sharpen self-evaluation and improvement processes to ensure that they focus on the most important areas of school improvement
R2	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
R3	Improve pupils' writing skills

The report summary for parents and carers can be found here:

<https://estyn.gov.wales/system/files/2023-08/Parents%20and%20carers%20-%20Inspection%20Report%20-%20St%20Joseph%27s%20R.C.%20Primary%20School%202023.pdf>

Estyn Interim Visit (March 2025)

Overview

Purpose of the Visit

Inspectors visited the school to evaluate progress made since the core inspection in June 2023, focusing on two key recommendations:

1. Sharpen Self-Evaluation and Improvement Processes

Clearer Focus: School leaders have refined self-evaluation and improvement processes to concentrate on high-impact priorities.

Distributed Leadership: The senior leadership team leads on teaching and learning quality, while other staff take on activities such as book scrutiny and progress evaluation, creating manageable and effective monitoring.

Professional Learning: Staff development aligns with school priorities, incorporating peer collaboration, research, and external visits.

Governor Involvement: Governors now actively participate in self-evaluation through learning walks, learner interviews, and staff discussions—providing informed support and challenge.

2. Improve Consistency of Teaching and Provision to Support Pupils' Development and Independence

Consistent Teaching: A school-wide approach has improved consistency, especially in assessment for learning strategies.

Questioning and Vocabulary: Most teachers use effective questioning to check understanding and develop vocabulary.

Independent Learning:

Staff are fostering independence, particularly in younger learners, through purposeful play and choice-led learning, though consistency still needs development. Older pupils show strong independence and motivation, often solving problems without adult help. Pupil-led inquiry is promoted across the curriculum.

Effective Use of Environment: Classrooms and outdoor spaces are used well to support learning.

Assessment and Planning: Teachers use assessments effectively to inform planning and provide appropriate challenge for individuals and groups.

Overall

The school has made strong progress in addressing key recommendations from the 2023 inspection. Leaders and staff demonstrate a clear commitment to continual improvement and recognise areas still requiring development.

The full version of the Interim Visit letter can be read here: <https://estyn.gov.wales/app/uploads/2025/04/Interim-visit-letter-St-Josephs-R.C.-Primary-School-2025.pdf>

2. A report of progress against the previous year's priorities

Evaluation of SDP Priorities - 2024 - 2025 (Year 2)

Priority	Progress (RAG)		
	Autumn	Spring	Summer
Enhance the self-evaluation process by involving all stakeholders, focusing on learner outcomes, and embedding strategic leadership and accountability at all levels.	Green	Yellow	Yellow
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.	Orange	Orange	Yellow
To continue to improve pupils' writing skills.	Green	Green	Green
To further develop a St Joseph's Catholic Curriculum which promotes the Catholic Social Teaching principles, diversity, independent learning and creativity and is supported by assessment processes focusing on pupil progress.	Green	Orange	Yellow

3. Self-Evaluation: Strengths and Areas for Improvement based on School Development Plan 2024 - 2025

Priority - LEADERSHIP	Enhance the self-evaluation process by involving all stakeholders, focusing on learner outcomes, and embedding strategic leadership and accountability at all levels.
End of cycle summary	<i>This cycle has successfully sharpened self-evaluation processes, clarified leadership roles, and embedded strategic oversight through structured MER. A culture of excellence is emerging, underpinned by stakeholder engagement and enhanced SLT capacity. The school has moved from complex improvement planning to a streamlined, impact-focused approach. However, further work is needed to embed definitions of excellence across all areas, refine the feedback cycle from stakeholder input, and ensure SLT accountability systems consistently lead to measurable improvements in learner outcomes.</i>
Next Steps/ Considerations for SIP 2025 - 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional Reading and Research: Conduct a literature review including SE for school improvement: An evidence review; WG School Improvement guidance; WG self-evaluation and improvement; What we inspect (Estyn) (SDP 2025 – 2026) • MER: Create a timetable for stakeholder feedback including surveys and focus groups for staff, parents, pupils, and governors. Include questions focused on the School Development Priorities for teaching, learning and curriculum. (SDP 2025 – 2026) • MER: Work with SLT and staff to define what excellence looks like for key priorities (e.g., teaching, learning environments, pupil progress, well-being) and develop clear success criteria that can be used in self-evaluation and guide school improvement efforts. (SDP 2025 – 2026)

Priority – TEACHING AND LEARNING	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.
End of cycle summary	<i>There has been a cultural shift towards independent, pupil-led learning. Teachers and LSAs are more confident in using observations to guide planning, and the integration of pupil voice is influencing provision more consistently. Enquiry approaches and high-order questioning are fostering reflective, curious learners. Continued professional learning on AfL and Expressive Arts, alongside extending phonics and independent learning provision, will further consolidate gains. Going forward, the focus should be on sustaining this culture of independence beyond Early Years and refining assessment strategies linked to independent learning.</i>
Next Steps/ Considerations for SIP 2025 - 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional Learning: Professional Learning for all Early Years LSAs focusing on child development, play based learning, observing, reporting and recording, planning for experiential learning and effective outdoor provision. (SDP 2025 - 2026) • Collaborative working: Fully embed the ‘Express and Create’ stage across all Domains, ensuring progression in Expressive Arts knowledge, skills, and experiences, while evaluating impact through pupil outcomes and staff collaboration. (SDP 2025 – 2026) • Embed Assessment for Learning strategies linked to the medium term planning across the Early years. (SDP 2025 – 2026) • Continue to roll-out phonics scheme into Year 2 (up to Level 6). (SDP 2025 – 2026) – consider setting

Priority – TEACHING AND LEARNING	To continue to improve pupils’ writing skills.
End of cycle summary	<i>Writing instruction is now more consistent and developmentally progressive. Most pupils demonstrate improved sentence structure, grammar accuracy, and confidence in extended writing. Targeted support has ensured that ALN, eFSM, and MAT pupils are making progress towards their goals. The phonics and spelling strategies are more embedded, though work remains to ensure fluency and independence in applying these skills across writing contexts. Next steps include deeper evaluation of the impact of grammar and punctuation teaching and refining assessment tools to monitor long-term writing development.</i>
Next Steps/ Considerations for SIP 2025 - 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MER: Lesson observations and learning walks focusing on how grammar and punctuation are taught within the English Writing Journey. (SDP 2025 – 2026) • Professional Learning: Refresher sessions on the phonics scheme focusing on consistency and progression in teaching phonics across phases. (SDP 2025 – 2026) • Collaborative Working: Year group collaboration between Reception, Year 1, and Year 2 teachers to ensure a smooth transition in phonics delivery and coverage and the sharing of good practice through regular professional discussions, encouraging dialogue on successful phonics teaching strategies. (SDP 2025 – 2026) • MER: Tracking progress through phonics assessments at key intervals, ensuring consistent and effective use of the scheme. (SDP 2025 – 2026) • MER: Peer observations to ensure consistent phonics delivery between classes in Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and 2. (SDP 2025 – 2026)

<p>Priority – CURRICULUM</p>	<p>To further develop a St Joseph’s Catholic Curriculum which promotes the Catholic Social Teaching principles, diversity, independent learning and creativity and is supported by assessment processes focusing on pupil progress.</p>
<p>End of cycle summary</p>	<p><i>The school has taken strong, values-driven steps to develop a distinctive and inclusive Catholic curriculum. The integration of CST and anti-racist principles has deepened pupils’ understanding of justice, dignity, and diversity. Expressive Arts integration has supported holistic development and well-being. The creation of e-portfolios remain a challenge and further work is needed to embed assessment processes that fully reflect progress across the curriculum continuum. The next cycle should consolidate assessment strategies, refine curriculum mapping, and enhance teacher confidence in measuring progress through enquiry-based and creative learning.</i></p>
<p>Next Steps/ Considerations for SIP 2025 - 2026</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MER: Gather quantitative and qualitative data related to pupils’ outcomes and teacher effectiveness, focusing on progress made against the knowledge and skills identified in the cluster curriculum progression maps. Analyse this data to identify strengths and areas that need improvement. (SDP 2025 – 2026) • MER: Review of CRAFT to assess consistency and effectiveness in promoting pupil progress. (SDP 2025 – 2026) – Edit time • Professional Learning: The use of an online resource to begin to create Learner E -Portfolios to exemplify a learners’ progress along the curriculum continuum. (SDP 2025 – 2026) • Collaborative Working: Teacher collaboration to share best practices for managing and developing learner e-portfolios, ensuring they provide a comprehensive picture of pupil progress. . (SDP 2025 – 2026) • MER: E-Portfolio progress checks to ensure pupils and staff are using the portfolios effectively to document learning milestones, with sample reviews conducted during staff meetings. . (SDP 2025 – 2026)

4. School Development Plan Priorities Overview and Planned Actions

Year 3 - School Three Year Strategic Plan 2023 – 2026

Year 3 2025 – 2026	Details
Priority 1: Embedding strategic self-evaluation to drive continuous improvement (Year 3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustain a whole-school culture of meaningful self-evaluation, ensuring all stakeholders (staff, pupils, parents, and governors) contribute regularly to dynamic and responsive improvement planning. • Refine and embed a long-term Monitoring, Evaluation, and Review (MER) timetable that provides strategic oversight of all Areas of Learning and Experience and inspection areas, ensuring MER consistently leads to high-impact actions and a focus on learner outcomes. • Strengthen leadership capacity by empowering middle leaders to lead self-evaluation, supported by a clearly defined culture of high expectations and success criteria for excellence across teaching, learning, and governance. • Introduce peer review and seek external validation to ensure self-evaluation is robust, accurate, and externally moderated, supporting continuous improvement. • Ensure that professional learning remains strategically aligned with self-evaluation findings, with clear evidence of improved pupil outcomes in key priority areas such as writing, pupil independence, and curriculum development.
Priority 2: Embedding consistent, age-appropriate practice to deepen pupil independence (Year 3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embed high-quality observation and planning practices in Nursery and Reception, using Seesaw and the observation proforma to document progress and inform provision. These practices are extended into Years 1 and 2 to support developmental continuity and promote growing independence across the Foundation Phase. • Strengthen pupil independence through structured enquiry-based learning, self-directed tasks, shared enquiry and discussion and increased opportunities for pupils to reflect on their learning, set goals, and take ownership of their next steps. • Develop and implement a Teaching and Learning Charter to define shared expectations, promote consistency, and reduce variability in teaching practice across the school. • Consolidate and embed the Writing Journey and Skills Progression Ladders to improve literacy outcomes and ensure teaching aligns with identified learner needs and curriculum expectations. • Continue embedding effective Assessment for Learning strategies, including high-order questioning, feedback, self-assessment, and peer review, to deepen understanding and guide learner progress.
Priority 3: To enhance teaching consistency and pupil outcomes in mathematics through the implementation of a new scheme of work: <i>White Rose Maths</i> (Year 1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build staff confidence and consistency in planning and delivering White Rose Maths. • Establish strong foundations for mastery, CPA, and curriculum alignment. • Launch professional learning on White Rose Maths pedagogy and planning. • Use structured MER activities (lesson observations, book looks, pupil voice) to monitor early implementation. • Establish consistent planning expectations using small steps and formative assessment, improving teaching consistency across classes. • Review and align curriculum coverage and assessment points. • Begin addressing key gaps (e.g., times tables fluency) and gather teacher reflections to guide improvements.
Priority 4: To promote fluency and confidence in Welsh across the school community. (Year 1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upskill staff through targeted Welsh language development courses through the Penarth Cluster Project improving staff confidence and frequency of Welsh language use. • Embed daily routines and cultural activities to increase Welsh visibility and exposure. • Teachers and LSAs complete 60hr, 120hr and short courses and bespoke CPD is delivered for LSAs and headteacher completes Everyday Welsh course. • Use Cymraeg Bob Dydd to enhance Cymraeg Cyflym, daily Welsh commands and songs using Caru Can and CanSing, allowing pupils to participate in daily Welsh routines and songs. • Deliver mini-unit Cymru a Fi - Welsh and Me. • Staff begin using the Welsh Language Continuum for planning and assessment, developing a consistent approach to planning for progression using the Continuum.

5. Relevant Milestones

Priority	Autumn 2025	Spring 2026	Summer 2026
Priority 1: Embedding strategic self-evaluation to drive continuous improvement (Year 3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finalised 3-Year MER/Spotlighting timetable is launched. Definitions of excellence for key priorities are co-constructed with SLT and staff. Stakeholder feedback calendar and tools are finalised. Peer review approach and timeline agreed. Literature review on self-evaluation completed and shared with SLT. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Middle leaders lead MER activities in at least one AoLE or priority area. Stakeholder feedback collected and analysed; key insights shared. At least one peer review or external validation activity completed. Evidence of success criteria influencing evaluations and next steps. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All self-evaluation documentation shows alignment with success criteria and evidence of impact on learner outcomes. Peer reviews have been embedded as part of MER. Middle leaders confidently lead feedback conversations. SLT reflects on 3-year cycle and plans refinements for the next strategic phase.
Priority 2: Embedding consistent, age-appropriate practice to deepen pupil independence (Year 3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seesaw and observation proforma are being used consistently in Nursery and Reception; initial examples show purposeful documentation and planning adaptation. Planning in Years 1 and 2 begins to reflect Early Years-informed practices (e.g., observational notes, play-based provision). Learning environments are reviewed across Foundation Phase for progression in independence and engagement. Teaching and Learning Charter has been co-constructed, consulted on, and finalised with staff. Charter is shared and displayed school wide. EDIT time is relaunched, and early implementation is evident across the school. Early pupil voice and book scrutiny reflect increased ownership in learning and growing confidence in using success criteria, particularly in the Writing Journey. <p>Learning Toolbox strategies (e.g., graphic organisers,</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Observation-led planning is embedded in Nursery–Year 2, with clear evidence of developmental progression and use of pupil voice to shape provision. Independent learning routines are securely established in Year 1–2, showing continuity from Reception. Teaching and Learning Charter is actively used to support lesson observations, coaching conversations, and instructional triads. EDIT time is used purposefully in most classes; pupil work shows evidence of improvement and revision in response to feedback. AfL strategies (questioning, peer/self-assessment, use of success criteria) are consistently observed during MER activities. Interim writing moderation confirms upward progression aligned with the Writing Journey and Skills Progression Ladders. Pupils across the school are independently using Learning Toolbox tools and reflecting on their learning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High-quality observation and developmental planning are embedded across Nursery–Year 2, contributing to strong progress in independence and personalised learning. Teaching and Learning Charter is embedded in professional dialogue, performance management, and MER feedback. Staff voice confirms increased clarity and consistency in expectations. EDIT time, AfL, and the Learning Toolbox are fully integrated into learning routines, supporting pupil reflection, independence, and improved outcomes. Most pupils make sustained progress in writing, with improved independence, vocabulary, and structure evident in final writing samples. Classroom environments reflect autonomy, inclusion, and progression in learning across all phases. Pupils across most classes demonstrate improved confidence in reasoning, discussing and exploring ideas, supported by consistent use of

	<p>sentence stems, retrieval prompts) are introduced in classrooms.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Structured dialogue and metacognitive routines are introduced in at least half of classes, with early signs of impact on pupil reasoning, reflection and discussion. 	<p>metacognitive strategies and structured dialogue.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> End-of-year MER shows that independence, enquiry, and inclusive learning practices are consistently embedded and impacting positively on learner outcomes..
<p>Priority 3: To enhance teaching consistency and pupil outcomes in mathematics through the implementation of a new scheme of work: <i>White Rose Maths</i> (Year 1)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All teachers have received initial professional learning on White Rose Maths. Curriculum mapping for all year groups completed. Autumn units delivered with fidelity. Book scrutiny and lesson observations show consistent use of CPA and small steps approach. Teachers reflect growing confidence in the use of White Rose Maths. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Spring term units taught using the scheme. Opportunities for in-school and cross-school collaborative planning and moderation undertaken. Assessment points used to evaluate progress. Initial pupil voice and teacher reflection gathered. - Adaptations or support needs identified and acted on. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> End-of-year review of implementation. Books and data show improved consistency and progress. Teachers contribute to evaluation of impact and refinement of planning. Professional Learning needs for Year 2 identified. Next steps (e.g., deepening reasoning, embedding assessment for learning) planned for 2026–27.
<p>Priority 4: To promote fluency and confidence in Welsh across the school community. (Year 1)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Selected staff enrolled and actively engaged in Welsh courses. First online sessions of short course completed. LSAs begin bespoke Welsh language support sessions. Daily Welsh routines (commands, greetings, songs) introduced using <i>Caru Can</i> and <i>CânSing</i>. Teachers begin using <i>Cymraeg Bob Dydd</i> to enhance Cymraeg Cyflym. Launch of <i>Cymru a Fi</i> unit planned. School begins using the Welsh Language Continuum in classrooms. <p>-</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mid-point review of course engagement and impact on classroom practice. Cluster INSET for LSAs delivered (13.2.26). Everyday Welsh course for Headteacher underway or completed. Most classes use daily Welsh instructions confidently. Pupils sing a growing repertoire of Welsh songs. Initial teaching of <i>Cymru a Fi</i> unit completed. Pupil voice and MER show increased Welsh use in classrooms. Teachers using Continuum for planning and feedback. <p>-</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most staff complete Welsh development courses. Teachers embed Welsh Continuum into planning. Book looks, observations and pupil work reflect use of Welsh. MER shows effective use of <i>Cymraeg Bob Dydd</i>, songs, commands, and cultural learning. Teachers consistently apply the Welsh Language Continuum. Evidence of improved confidence, cultural pride, and learner progress in Cymraeg. Planning for Year 2 of the project, including support for new staff, begins. <p>-</p>

6. External support

Area of Evaluation and Improvement	Priority	External Support
Leadership	Priority 1: Embedding strategic self-evaluation to drive continuous improvement (Year 3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - School Improvement Partner support to improve processes in place for Middle Leaders to contribute directly to the school self-evaluation and longer-term direction of the School Development Plan. - CSC Self Evaluation website and resources for ‘High Standards and Excellence – Equity and Excellence for all.’ - LA Peer Partnerships Plan/ Education Endowment Foundation
Teaching and Learning	Priority 2: Embedding consistent, age-appropriate practice to deepen pupil independence (Year 3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Continued CSC support to provide professional learning focusing on Foundation learning philosophy and practice. - All Early Years teachers to attend the Penarth Cluster Early Years Forum.
Teaching and Learning	Priority 3: To enhance teaching consistency and pupil outcomes in mathematics through the implementation of a new scheme of work: <i>White Rose Maths</i> (Year 1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Visit cluster schools to observe good practice in the delivery of White Rose Maths lessons. - CSC resources – White Rose Maths Mapping against Curriculum for Wales.
Curriculum	Priority 4: To promote fluency and confidence in Welsh across the school community. (Year 1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Penarth Cluster Pilot Welsh Language Development Project - CSC – Effective use of the Welsh Continuum to plan and deliver Welsh lessons.