

Report summary for parents and carers on St Joseph's R.C.High School

Date of inspection: 02/03/2026

Summary

St Joseph's Roman Catholic High School provides a caring and supportive environment where many pupils, including those with Additional Learning Needs (ALN), develop their knowledge and confidence well. Positive working relationships between staff and pupils are a strong feature of the school. In most lessons, teachers know their pupils well and create calm and purposeful learning environments where pupils feel respected and willing to take part in learning. As a result, most pupils settle quickly to their work and many listen carefully and contribute thoughtfully to discussions. Many teachers explain ideas clearly and provide useful guidance and this means that many pupils make at least expected progress in their lessons. In a few lessons, highly engaging teaching leads to particularly strong progress because teachers use challenging questions and carefully planned activities that engage pupils effectively in their learning. In a few instances, activities do not challenge pupils well enough, or questioning does not extend their thinking sufficiently.

The school has a vibrant school library to help promote reading for pleasure. However, across the curriculum, pupils are mainly given opportunities to locate and retrieve information from texts. As a result, pupils do not use their advanced reading skills across the curriculum well enough to support their learning. The majority of pupils structure their extended writing logically and use a suitable range of vocabulary when expressing their ideas. However, a minority of pupils make careless errors in their written work. Leaders have started to map opportunities for pupils to develop their numeracy skills across relevant subjects. However, the extent to which planning secures progressively challenging opportunities for pupils to use and apply their numeracy skills is limited. Pupils develop creative and practical skills well, for example when composing music or creating artwork. Across the curriculum, worthwhile opportunities for pupils to strengthen their advanced reading, numeracy and digital skills are at an early stage.

The headteacher is a compassionate and ambitious leader who places pupils' well-being and progress at the heart of the school's work. Together with her senior leaders, they demonstrate a strong commitment to providing pupils with the best start in life. Leaders have made sustained progress in important areas such as attendance, well-being, and pupil outcomes. The school has a clear framework for self-evaluation, but evaluations tend to rely too heavily on summative data, leading to overly generous judgements, at times. As a result, improvement planning lacks precision as evaluation activities do not always focus closely enough on the impact of teaching on pupil progress. Professional learning is strategically planned but the impact of these opportunities is not evaluated robustly.

The school is a welcoming community with many strengths in teaching, pupil support, leadership and opportunities beyond the classroom. Pupils benefit from a broad curriculum that includes a range of subjects as well as valuable extra-curricular activities and educational visits. These features help many pupils feel safe, supported and motivated to succeed in their learning.

Recommendations and next steps

We have made two recommendation to help the school continue to improve:

- R1 Refine self-evaluation processes so that leaders focus robustly on the impact of teaching on pupils' progress and plan precisely for improvement.
- R2 Improve the planning of the provision for the progressive development of pupils' advanced reading, 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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