

Report following monitoring

Level of follow-up: Special measures

St Josephs R.C. Primary School Neath

**Cook Rees Avenue
Neath
SA11 1UR**

Date of visit: September 2025

by

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

Outcome of visit

St Joseph's RC Primary School, Neath is judged to have made insufficient progress in relation to the recommendations following the most recent core inspection. As a result, His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales is maintaining the level of follow-up activity. Estyn will re-visit the school in around four - six months' time to monitor progress against a sample of the recommendations.

Under the provisions of Section 39 (9) of the Education Act 2005, every annual report to parents prepared by the governing body under Section 30 of the Education Act 2002 must include a statement on the progress made in implementing the action plan.

The Education (Induction Arrangements for School Teachers) (Wales) Regulations 2015 state that an induction period may **not** be served in a school requiring special measures i.e. as described in grounds 6 or 8 in section 2 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 (1). The presumption is that schools requiring special measures are not suitable for providing induction for newly qualified teachers, other than in exceptional circumstances. Therefore, schools requiring special measures should not normally appoint a newly qualified teacher (NQT) to their staff.

Progress since the last inspection

R1. Address the safeguarding and health and safety issues identified during the inspection

Inspectors did not evaluate this recommendation during this visit.

R2. Improve strategic leadership at all levels and implement effective evaluation and improvement processes that focus on improving outcomes for pupils

Senior leaders continue to evaluate important aspects of the school's work with support. Recently, the school reviewed pupils' reading skills from Year 3 to Year 6. Together with the local authority (LA), they identified clear areas for development. However, senior leaders are not yet identifying key aspects of pupils' progress that require significant improvement, independently.

The headteacher has mapped out monitoring and evaluation work across the academic year. This makes it clear to staff when they are taking part in activities such as learning walks or looking at pupils' work. However, evaluations of the quality of teaching and learning for key priority areas such as reading have not been included. This means that

there is no effective strategy in place to evaluate the impact of the school's improvement work in this important area.

The headteacher continues to provide useful professional learning opportunities for staff, focused on areas requiring improvement. She has fostered a positive climate where staff readily reflect upon and discuss aspects of pedagogy to support improvements in their own teaching. This is having a positive impact in several areas including the sustained improvement in the provision for younger pupils.

Middle leaders continue to steadily strengthen their subject knowledge and leadership skills. They have recently set a few suitable objectives for improvement in the areas they lead. The leadership of early reading continues to raise expectations and supports effective approaches such as engaging pupils more actively in their learning. This is beginning to have a positive impact on pupil progress.

Senior leaders have completed performance reviews for all teaching staff. They enable staff to reflect on their performance and agree goals for improvement that focus on whole school priorities. However, important priorities, such as improving the quality of teaching, are not clearly identified.

A few governors continue to gain first-hand evidence of the school's work through regular visits. Governors work closely with the headteacher to monitor the school's budget. Together they identify any areas where savings can be made. Despite this, the school's deficit is growing and remains a concern.

R3. Improve teaching and assessment

In many lessons, teachers plan learning experiences with a clear purpose that is well understood by pupils. Teachers often model relevant strategies and employ resources that support many pupils to engage in their learning with appropriate independence. However, teachers do not always ensure that tasks are well enough matched to pupils' needs to enable them to make as much progress as they could.

In the foundation classes, teachers generally use the environment to promote pupils' learning through play effectively. Staff observe and interact with pupils helpfully, for instance to model suitable language and actions during role play and to develop pupils' knowledge of different habitats. In a few instances, teachers have not considered carefully enough how pupils might use the environment more purposefully to develop their skills to an appropriate level.

Across the school, staff use a consistent approach to develop pupils' knowledge of letter sounds effectively. Teachers have recently begun to make beneficial use of ongoing professional learning to improve older pupils' reading skills. This is beginning to deepen pupils' understanding of what they read and to enhance their writing, for instance by

strengthening their vocabulary. While teaching in these lessons generally proceeds at a suitable pace, teachers' talk occasionally reduces pupils' opportunity to engage more actively in discussion and to write more frequently.

Most teachers use questioning to check pupils' understanding and to monitor their progress during lessons appropriately. They identify what pupils do well and provide helpful prompts, for instance to support the youngest pupils to refine their movements or to encourage pupils to self-correct their reading and spelling. In a few instances, teachers challenge pupils to reflect on and extend their thinking. This is beginning to help older pupils to express their learning more clearly.

Older pupils have begun to use feedback from teachers and their peers to make focused improvements to their written work. However, this practice is not consistent, and teachers do not focus systematically enough on the most important aspects of pupils' work to be improved.

R4. Improve the curriculum and provision for pupils' skills including their independent learning skills

Inspectors did not evaluate this recommendation during this visit.