



## Standards and Quality Report

2024 - 2025

# St. Joseph's Academy, Kilmarnock



## Establishment Context

### School Profile

***NB – Figures used are those as of September 2025 during session 2025/26.***

St. Joseph's Academy is East Ayrshire's only Roman Catholic secondary school. Situated in Kilmarnock, we serve the entire local authority area. Our associated primary schools are:

Mount Carmel – Kilmarnock

St. Andrew's – Kilmarnock (with whom we share a campus)

St. Sophia's – Galston

St. Patrick's – Auchinleck

St. Xavier's – Patna

A long-standing inter-authority arrangement sees the small number of primary seven pupils attending St. Xavier's primary school transition to Queen Margaret Academy in Ayr, South Ayrshire.

Our school roll is currently 659, with an FTE allocation of 46 FTE teaching staff. We are supported by four priests from local parish communities and employ nine classroom assistants. The SLT is comprised of Mr Kane (HT), Mrs Shearer (DHT), Mr Boyle (DHT) and Miss Quigley (DHT). Our campus officer is PC O'Donnell. Our school chaplains are Fr. Kevin Rennie and Fr. Stephen McGrattan.

Our SIMD profile is as follows:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
21%	19%	10%	9%	11%	6%	5%	8%	10%	1%

Uptake of FME sits at 18.5%.

At the time of writing, fourteen pupils are Care Experienced, twenty-one pupils are young carers, and two hundred and fifty-six pupils (39%) are recorded as having additional support needs.

## **Establishment Vision, Values and Aims**

### **Our School Motto: Fidelis – Justus – Prudens**

#### **Our Vision**

We see every young person, teacher, staff member, parent/carer and partner as a unique and important person made in the image and likeness of God. Our vision is to foster a culture of academic and spiritual aspiration which is tangible in the work ethic and dedication of our staff, and in the application and commitment of our pupils. We look to our patron, St. Joseph the Worker, as an example of the care, compassion and trust we strive to witness to for the greater good of our school community.

#### **Our Values and Aims**

##### **Respect**

We appreciate the diversity of our community regardless of faith or culture. We treat ourselves and each other with dignity, tolerance and compassion. We, as a Catholic school, are ambassadors for the rights of others.

##### **Equality**

We recognise everyone as unique and made in the image of God. We create an inclusive ethos where everyone has a voice. We ensure our diverse values and views are heard and respected by all.

##### **Ambition**

We strive to reach our full potential while developing our God given talents. We aim to develop our holistic wellbeing Spiritually, Mentally, Physically and Socially through LearnWell.

##### **Courage**

We have faith in God to help us persevere throughout our learning journey. We embrace challenge and show resilience in making and learning from mistakes.

##### **Truth**

We uphold an ethos of openness, honesty and integrity as reflected through Gospel values. We cultivate a faith community in which we all live and work together in understanding and love.

##### **Service**

We respond to the needs of our school and wider community by promoting the principles of Catholic Social Teaching. We are generous with our time and take pride in putting others first. We help improve our community by being patient and kind in our interactions with others.

<b>Improvement Priority</b> <i>(Expressed as outcomes for learners)</i>	<b>Improvement Priority (Expressed as outcomes for learners)</b> <i>Develop a systematic methodology for internally capturing self-evaluation evidence accumulated since our Inspection in 2018, with a particular focus on Pupil Voice at all stages.</i>  <i>Outcomes will be linked to the findings of enhanced Pupil Voice activities, in that the next iteration of improvement will take account of views gathered in a coherent and strategic manner (Quality Assurance).</i>	<b>Education Service Improvement Plan 1: Our Leadership</b>  We actively support, promote and enact leadership at all levels. Our young people are supported to be leaders of their learning in our centres, schools and wider life experiences. All staff have ready access to appropriate CLPL and experiences to promote leadership in every classroom, playroom and centre.
<b>Our Leadership</b>		
<b>Progress and Impact</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Extensive evidence gathering and retention of recent work against both QI 2.3 and QI 3.1. Evidence held centrally within an accessible drive for promoted staff and all evidence shared with EAC colleagues during local authority visit to the school.</li> <li>Extent of evidence retained demonstrates significant engagement with specific themes across both QIs</li> <li>All PTs can evidence progress in respect of Pupil Voice activity and in session 25/26 we intend to take forward branding used in PE – ‘OurVOICE’ across all departments</li> <li>Pupil voice now taking place and responses being recorded centrally. Pupil feedback provided, aids teachers to evaluate the effectiveness of teaching strategies, curriculum design as well as pace and challenge (Science example).</li> <li>You Said, We did example from English which evidences where young people influenced department DIP.</li> <li>There are examples across all areas which demonstrate engagement with VOICE.</li> </ul>	
<b>Next Steps</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Embed OurVOICE across all departments in order that all staff and young people can recognise and reference the ways in which Pupil Voice activity impacts changes to learning and teaching and the celebration of success, as well as providing a basis from which considered Pupil Leadership activities can follow.</li> <li>In session 25/26, our focus will be gathering evidence against QI 1.3, particularly demonstration of alignment between internal Quality Assurance procedures and progress against SIP and DIP targets. The undernoted areas of Leadership of Change will form the basis of evidence retention.</li> </ul> <p><b>Increase collegiality of quality assurance of learning &amp; teaching</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff views indicate that sharing practice in learning &amp; teaching at school level is highly beneficial, a priority is to increase opportunities to share practice</li> <li>Involve Principal Teachers &amp; class teachers in learning visits to departments in 2025/26 to enhance sharing practice, build staff capacity and enhance staff leadership opportunities</li> <li>Roll out i-learn as a Universal approach to empowering young people to take responsibility for support accessed during learning.</li> </ul>	

<b>Improvement Priority</b> <i>(Expressed as outcomes for learners)</i>	<b>Improvement Priority (Expressed as outcomes for learners)</b> <p>Progress next phase of internal pedagogical focus on differentiation, with a particular focus on providing challenge within the BGE.</p> <p>Engage in cross-centre collaborative activities across each curricular area that result in longer term joint working for the benefit of learners in all centres.</p>	<b>Education Service Improvement Plan Priority 2: Teaching and Learning Together</b> <p>Our young people should experience a teaching, learning and curriculum offer that meets their needs, and those of our local and national context. All staff should be supported to deliver in new and innovative ways by accessing CLPL relevant to their needs and those of our young people.</p>
<b>Teaching and Learning Together</b>		
<b>Progress and Impact</b>	<p>The LEARN policy is well embedded at St. Joseph's Academy, and pupil voice activities such as focus groups indicate that young people can talk confidently about the policy in practice. Young people at all stages are able to talk about their learning in classes, and identify the LEARN components within their lessons. Young people have participated in various whole school pupil voice surveys to provide feedback on their learning, and participate regularly in departmental surveys, focus groups and questionnaires.</p> <p>2024/25 was the third year of a three year self-evaluation cycle focused on Meeting Learners' Needs. During the three year period, an extensive quality assurance programme has allowed us to gain high quality evidence of learning &amp; teaching in the school, including on the impact of our focus. Evidence at all levels suggests that young people feel supported to learn in classes and are appropriately challenged. This focus on Learners' Needs sits alongside an extensive staff CLPL programme including sessions on differentiation, EAL learners, supporting pupils with dyslexia, use of digital assessment tools and sharing in-house good practice during whole school meeting time. Staff surveys indicate that the vast majority of staff responding feel that this focus has positively impacted their practice and skills &amp; knowledge in terms of supporting learners.</p> <p>The points below show the wealth of evidence we have been able to gather as part of this three year cycle:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 55 Departmental QA Calendars</li> <li>• 178 departmental observations</li> <li>• 167 Pupil Voice Activities in departments (surveys, questionnaire or focus groups)</li> <li>• 4390 pupil responses captured at dept. level</li> <li>• 11 SLT Department QA Visits comprising 127 classroom observations</li> <li>• 3 whole staff surveys (103 responses)</li> <li>• 3 S1-6 Pupil surveys (469 responses)</li> <li>• 5 LEARN pupil focus groups (37 learners involved)</li> </ul> <p>During our Learning Visit in February 2025, we were able to use this evidence to highlight areas of significant progress since our 2019 inspection. Pupil voice data, staff views, direct observations and feedback from our Learning Visit highlight the following as areas of significant strength in our school</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The ethos and culture of our school reflects a commitment to children's rights and positive relationships</li> </ul>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Our children and young people are eager and active participants who are fully engaged, resilient, highly-motivated and interact well during activities.</li> <li>• Our learners are successful, confident and responsible.</li> <li>• They contribute effectively to the life of the school and wider community in a range of well-planned activities.</li> <li>• Our teaching is underpinned by our shared school vision and values.</li> <li>• We use a wide range of learning environments and creative teaching approaches</li> <li>• Learning is enriched and supported by our effective use of digital technologies</li> <li>• Our explanations and instructions are clear</li> </ul> <p>In terms of assessment, tracking &amp; monitoring, we are able to evidence that learners' progress is monitored closely and appropriate interventions are in place at whole school and departmental level. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regular Tracking of all stages at departmental level with a focus on evidencing interventions</li> <li>• Creation of a BGE Assessment Framework</li> <li>• Regular whole school tracking in line with reporting calendar – tracking data shared with departments to allow for comparison across curricular areas</li> <li>• Additional school level Senior Phase tracking – as well as interventions for off-track learners at departmental level, DHT intervention meetings take place and are evidenced at whole school level</li> <li>• Enhanced tracking of at-risk risk groups – ARONA tracking 3 times per year with interventions, Challenge 100 group (most at-risk) benefit from additional interventions e.g. outreach visits, provision of National 2 assessment materials etc. Positive attainment trend for lowest 20% year on year and reducing number of learners achieving zero tariff points</li> <li>• Whole school targeted interventions – e.g. Key Marginal group led by Associate DHT, How to support your Teenager with exams, Ambition working group</li> <li>• Continued consistency around SQA Presentation with coherent policy – has positively impacted attainment</li> <li>• Transitions – Pathways File introduced in 2024/25 based on departmental level assessment data has positively impacted options process for learners</li> <li>• Moderation activity – this is now evidenced on department QA Calendars and numerous moderation activities have taken place with primary colleagues and other Easy Ayrshire schools this session</li> <li>• External verification – continued positive feedback from partners such as SQA in many areas following verification activity i.e. PE, French, Maths</li> </ul>
<b>Next Steps</b>	<p><b>Focus on areas identified for improvement through quality assurance activities – areas from level 5 illustrations below</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We use skilled questioning and engagement to promote curiosity, independence and confidence and to regularly enable higher order thinking skills in all learners</li> <li>• Learners' experiences are appropriately challenging and enjoyable and well matched to their needs and interests</li> </ul>

<b>Improvement Priority</b> <i>(Expressed as outcomes for learners)</i>	<b>Improvement Priority</b> <i>(Expressed as outcomes for learners)</i>	<b>Education Service Improvement Plan Priority 3: Our Wellbeing and Belonging</b>  We want all of our young people to feel supported by people who know them well, and feel included in all of our schools and centres. Our staff need to be supported in their working with our young people, especially in times of adversity. As a key universal service, it is our vision that all young people attend our establishments on a full-time and regular basis to support them in their development at all stages.
<b>Our Wellbeing and Belonging</b>		
<b>Progress and Impact</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A wide-ranging review of practice occurred and informed internal policy for next session. This included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ review of service bus routes to school to avoid bus station as this was a barrier to attending due to removal of school buses</li> <li>◦ referral to mental health supports within school</li> <li>◦ exploring options away from school for those in senior phase lacking motivation to remain in school</li> <li>◦ referral to educational psychologist for additional supports</li> <li>◦ referral to SCRA (lack of attendance)</li> <li>◦ revised approach on a universal level to raising awareness of low or dropping attendance rates i.e. individual SMS messages and specific engagement when attendance sits below certain thresholds detailed in internal policy</li> <li>◦ Overall aim of 92% was too ambitious against national drop-in attendance rates</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	
<b>Next Steps</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Full roll out of revised internal guidance in terms of monitoring and actioning attendance issues</li> <li>• Evidence of improved attendance as a result of revised approaches for targeted cohorts as the year progresses</li> <li>• Initial aim is to stay above EAC average while implementing new approach to increasing and maintaining attendance. New approach is as follows (taken from guidance developed in session 23/24 and references above): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pupils who are identified by Pastoral Care as being on the Child Protection register, CSO or vulnerable will be contacted directly by office staff at 10am each morning if they are not in school or there is no response to the first group call. Calls will continue after each group call if no response.</li> <li>• Pastoral Care staff identifying a targeted group of pupils whose attendance is a concern. The process for this will be the same as those pupils who are CP/CSO/vulnerable. Most pupils within this group are pupils who are late to school or truant throughout the day.</li> <li>• Any pupils left as 'tbc' at the end of the day, parents will be contacted to try and determine reason for absence.</li> <li>• Removal of attendance letters when attendance drops below 90%, this will be replaced with online forms for pupils and parents to gather feedback and potential reasons for non-attendance. The feedback, where appropriate will be shared with relevant staff.</li> <li>• Attendance provided to pupils monthly in PSE, pupils aware of procedure if below 90%, SMS shared with parents monthly</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	

<b>Improvement Priority</b> <i>(Expressed as outcomes for learners)</i>	<b>Improvement Priority</b> <i>(Expressed as outcomes for learners)</i> <p>Review tracking and monitoring approaches to facilitate better data sharing across departments for those learners not identified as ARONA and captured via well-established processes.</p> <p>Continue to gather a wide range of data pertaining to pupil achievement and participation.</p>	<b>Education Service Improvement Plan Priority 4: Our Attainment, Destinations and Achievements</b> <p>We want the very best for all of our young people in East Ayrshire. We aim to ensure that all young people secure a positive destination through excellent achievement and attainment at all levels.</p>
<b>Our Attainment, Destinations and Achievements</b>		
<b>Progress and Impact</b>	<p>Achievements within school and across each arena of Education Scotland's Learner Participation policy are retained for all pupils from S1-S6.</p> <p>Departments contribute to monthly returns which record the extent of pupil leadership and achievement across the entire pupil cohort. The SIP for session 25/26 will focus on utilising AI to better analyse and extract from this data trends and patterns, allowing staff to target individual participation across arenas.</p> <p>The process of revising tracking approaches, particularly within the BGE has informed SIP priorities again for next session. PTs are working to establish the reliability of S3 data against S4 attainment over the past three cohorts.</p>	
<b>Next Steps</b>	<p><b>Enhanced quality assurance of assessment, tracking &amp; monitoring at departmental level</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased moderation activity in departments around assessment levels, tracking across stages &amp; departmental interventions particularly in S3</li> <li>Opportunities for departments to share good practice around assessment, tracking &amp; monitoring and interventions</li> <li>HT/DHT/PT QA Meeting one in session 25/26 to determine subject specific actions and next steps as necessary</li> <li>Subsequent actions captured in DIP and department DM minutes, with WTA time for curriculum development utilised where necessary to revise S3 assessment standards, methods and marking schemes</li> <li>In the later part of 25/26, work to repeat the same process with S1 and S2 courses and assessment within those courses to better correlate with revision to S3 materials</li> </ul> <p><b>Wider Achievement</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>School to adopt SDS's profiling tool within glow across all current S1-S3 groups. Pupils supported to begin to engage with recording achievements over time</li> <li>Staff to proactively work with SDS colleagues to maximise reporting capability of new system (part of national group) in order that staff can easily extract patterns from what has been recorded on a pupil by pupil/cohort basis.</li> </ul>	

Pupil Equity Fund: Evaluation		
Approach/Intervention	Impact <b>Report on how you have improved outcomes for learners impacted by poverty</b>	What evidence do you have of positive impact? <b>Outline the data that supports your findings.</b>
Well established ARONA programme	<p>Continues to ensure YP are able to access the curriculum despite social and emotional challenges that prevent full time access to classes.</p> <p>Supported by quarterly ARONA tracking meetings whereby SLT, PT Pastoral, AP base staff and staff discuss those at risk of not attaining who may benefit from AP led input.</p>	<p>Almost all INSIGHT measures demonstrate strong attainment for L20% compared to attainment prior to ARONA Tracking, AP Base provision and Challenge 100 policy.</p> <p>This is a well-established programme covered across various SQR reports. The majority of our PEF spend is directed towards maintenance of the ARONA AP base.</p>

Establishment Self Evaluation: How Good is Our School? 4 Quality Indicators	
Quality Indicator 1.3 Leadership of Change	Good/Very Good
Quality Indicator 2.3 Learning, Teaching and Assessment	Good/Very Good
Quality Indicator 3.1 Ensuring Wellbeing, Equality and Inclusion	Good/Very Good
Quality Indicator 3.2 Raising Attainment and Achievement	Good/Very Good

Establishment Capacity for Improvement
Local authority visit was very positive, attainment profile over five years is extremely strong in almost all areas. Well established staff cohort and significant potential to progress to Very Good across all measure in the next three or four academic sessions.