

DIOCESE OF PORTSMOUTH VALIDATION REPORT



St Edward's Catholic First School

Parsonage Lane, Windsor, Berkshire, SL4 5EN

URN 110031
Date of previous validation 7 July 2014
Date of this validation 9 July 2019

Overall effectiveness	Previous validation:	Good
	This validation:	Good

The school community:	Outstanding	Attainment and progress in RE:	Good
The wider community:	Outstanding	Quality of teaching in RE:	Good
Spiritual development:	Outstanding	Leadership and management of RE:	Good
Moral development:	Outstanding	Leadership and management:	Outstanding

This is a good school with outstanding features.

- The school mission statement, '*We see Jesus in everything we do*', permeates every aspect of the school community, with all members taking an active part in living it out on a daily basis.
- Leaders provide a strong and effective model of Christian leadership, where all members of the school community are valued. They inspire the community to share in a strong sense of vision and mission, resulting in a highly collaborative and successful school with a positive ethos.
- The links with the local parish are very good and mutually beneficial. The parish priest provides very strong support and is well known to the school community.
- The overwhelming majority of parents are supportive of the school and its Catholic ethos. They acknowledge the strength of the welcome, the caring atmosphere based on Gospel values, and the quality of the prayer and worship provided in the school.
- Attainment and progress in RE are good. Pupils make a very good start in the foundation stage and as they move through the school build a strong scriptural knowledge.
- The overall quality of teaching of RE is good. Pupils demonstrated a very positive attitude to learning in the lessons observed.
- Strong support for RE is provided by the headteacher and RE governor and particularly by the RE leader.
- Spiritual development is outstanding. The school provides a rich variety of opportunities for pupils' spiritual development, including innovative ways to celebrate the liturgical year and key events, such as '*Mary, untier of knots*', *Remembrance*, and dressing in purple to mark Advent.
- Moral development is outstanding. The children in the school demonstrate very good behaviour and Christian attitudes and are keen to reach out to help others both within the school and more widely.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

In order to continue to move forward, the school should consider the following:

- Take the opportunity provided by the introduction of the new standards in RE to review how the subject is planned in order to ensure regular opportunities are provided for all children to be challenged within the lesson and for the most able to demonstrate they are capable at working at a greater depth in the subject.
- Build on the start already made on involving the children in the planning and delivery of class worship. The level of involvement to be staggered across the school culminating with the older children being trained and supported to plan and lead whole worships for their peers and others.

Full Report

The school as a Catholic community

The school community: Outstanding

The wider community: Outstanding

- St Edward's is a school that knows its community and successfully nurtures and supports its members. All those joining or visiting the school are made to feel very welcome.
- Throughout the school there is firm evidence that you are within a community of faith. Particularly strong examples include:
 - The centrality and living out of the mission statement, '*We see Jesus in everything we do*'. The '*Mission Model*' award and the time spent each September focussing on the mission statement help to acknowledge and reinforce its importance and value to the community.
 - The very good relationships between all members of the school community and the strong Christian role model they give to each other and visitors.
 - The attractiveness of the school environment, which is enhanced by the many displays and artefacts celebrating its Catholic nature and the pupils' rich cultural heritage. Key features include the prominence of the school's patron saint on the building exterior and the display of the mission statement in the many languages spoken in the school.
- There are very good systems of communication, including the use of tweets, ensuring all stakeholders are well-informed and regularly updated, including information relating to the Catholic life of the school and RE.
- The school has established very good links with the local parish, including joint fund-raising for the Parish Centre. The parish priest's contribution to the life of the school is outstanding.
- St Edward's is an active member of the local and wider Catholic community. The headteacher in particular, contributes in many ways to the life and work of the diocese.
- Children from the school regularly visit Queen's Court, a local old people's care home to share books, stories and songs with the residents, this started from a Lenten Promise made by one of the classes – a lovely example of the mission statement in action!
- The school supports a wide number of charities, including Save the Children, the Catholic Worker Farm, the Alexander Devine charity and Samaritan's Purse.

Curriculum religious education

Attainment and progress: Good

Quality of teaching: Good

Leadership and management of RE: Good

- The evidence in the pupils' books, the good quality teaching seen on the day and discussions with pupils all combine to show that attainment and progress in RE are good.
- In the lessons observed as part of the validation, pupils were able to discuss questions linked to the scripture being studied, demonstrate good RE subject knowledge and correctly use RE specific vocabulary. Pupils demonstrated a very positive attitude to learning and behaviour was very good. Learning is supported by well organised environments.
- Children receive a very good start to their religious education in the foundation stage where they are given appropriate and varied activities to help them investigate key Bible stories and events. By the time the children leave the school they are capable of producing work in RE that is of a good standard, and are beginning to apply the message within a piece of scripture to their own lives and that of others in the school and wider community.
- To improve standards further, teachers need to take the opportunity provided by the introduction of the new standards in RE in order to:
 - Develop a more consistent and accurate approach to assessment in the subject.
 - Ensure activities planned are consistently matched to the lesson objective.

- Make greater use of pupil assessment to ensure teaching and learning is correctly pitched at the right level for all groups within the class.
- Incorporate the challenge that is currently being offered through formative marking more within the lesson itself.
- Ensure the most able have the opportunity to demonstrate greater depth in RE.
- The school is planning on introducing the Caritas Faith in Action resource. This should prove useful in helping the children apply the message of the Gospel in today's world.
- The headteacher, RE leader and RE governor provide strong support for the subject helping to ensure that RE is given a high status. They monitor standards through a range of activities, including observing teaching, pupil conferencing, work sampling and analysing teacher assessments. There is strong capacity in the school to ensure RE keeps moving forward.

Spiritual and moral development

Spiritual development:

Outstanding

Moral development:

Outstanding

- The school provides a wide range of worship which allows individual and collective members of the school community to express their relationship with one another and with God in a reflective and prayerful manner. The school embraces opportunities to nurture spirituality and give Christian witness; these include:
 - Use of the central courtyard area as a prayer focus, e.g. marking *Remembrance*.
 - The introduction of Christian meditation to all classes by the parish priest.
 - Allocation of Lenten prayer partners by pupils and staff.
 - The recent focus on Our Lady as '*the untier of knots*', which encouraged the whole community to hand their worries over to Mary.
 - Year Two's visit to the War Memorial to lay the crosses they had made.
- In previous years the older children have taken a more prominent role in planning and leading their worship. The school is planning to reintroduce this in the new academic year. This is to be welcomed. Once embedded this can then be cascaded down to the younger age groups, with the level of involvement staggered across the school
- The children in the school demonstrate very good behaviour and Christian attitudes in their relationships, with a clear sense of right and wrong. Key factors promoting this include:
 - Consistent, high expectations.
 - Very good pastoral care, guidance and support to all pupils provided by the staff.
 - Links made between RE and moral development.
 - Effective reward systems, for example, the '*Mission Model*' award.
- Groups of pupils take on key responsibilities throughout the school including, school councillors, house captains, buddies and sports leaders.
- Pupils are very proud of their school. They describe the school as a place where all are welcome. They spoke enthusiastically about serving at Mass and helping others through their fund-raising for charities.

Leadership and management:

Outstanding

- The headteacher, senior leadership team, governors and other leaders share a common Christian vision and, through example, inspire a strong sense of purpose, vision and mission.
- The comprehensive approach to the monitoring of all aspects of the life of the school enables the school to constantly challenge itself and there is a strong drive for improvement.
- The governing body are strong supporters of the school and also act as a critical friend.
- Progress has been made on the issues identified for improvement in the last validation, particularly in developing more reflective acts of worship.
- The school provides effective induction and ongoing professional development for its staff.

School details

Name of school	St Edward's First Catholic Primary School
Age range of pupils:	4 - 9
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number of pupils on roll:	299
Chair of Governors:	Dawn Smith
Headteacher:	Sarah Matthews

St Edward's Catholic First School is a popular and over-subscribed school in Windsor. The school serves the parish of St Edward and St Mark. The vast majority of its pupils are Catholic. Since the last validation in 2014 the school has expanded and is now a two-form entry first school. The school is adjacent to St Edward's Ecumenical Middle School and the two schools share the school field. Approximately 44% of pupils are of White British heritage with the remainder coming from a wide range of other ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is broadly average at 23%. Approximately 11% of pupils have special educational needs, with seven having an Education and Health Care Plan. The percentage of pupils in receipt of pupil premium (4%) is well below average.

Information about this validation

This report to the Bishop of the Diocese under Canon 806 of the Code of Canon Law is also the report to the governors of the school on religious education. For Catholic maintained schools, the report also fulfils the requirements of Section 48 of the Education Act 2005.

Validation Team

Robert Dare	Lead Validator
Jeff Sendall	Assistant Validator

Activities Carried Out as Part of the Validation

- Ethos walk.
- Discussion on the school's self-evaluation sheets.
- Discussions with various members of the school community.
- Observations of collective worship.
- Observations of teaching and learning in RE, including joint observations with members of the school leadership team.
- Pupil work scrutiny.
- Feedback of key findings.

Conclusion

The validators would like to thank the headteacher, RE leader, staff, governors, parish priest, parents and pupils of St Edward's Catholic First School for their preparatory work for the validation, which forms part of the school's regular self-review cycle. They would also like to express their appreciation for the warmth of welcome they received and the support given during the validation process.