

DIOCESE OF PORTSMOUTH VALIDATION REPORT



St Bede's Catholic Primary School

Popley Way Basingstoke Hampshire RG24 9DX

URN: 116380

Date of previous validation

April 2014

Date of this validation

19th and 27th March 2019

Overall effectiveness

Previous validation: Good

This validation: Outstanding

The school community:

Outstanding

The wider community:

Outstanding

Spiritual development:

Outstanding

Moral development:

Outstanding

Attainment and progress in RE:

Outstanding

Quality of teaching in RE:

Outstanding

Leadership and management of RE:

Outstanding

Leadership and management:

Outstanding

This is an outstanding school

- St Bede's mission to "Love one another as I have loved you" is embraced by all members of the school community and perceptively permeates everyday life. Thoughtful displays, the indoor and outdoor prayer areas, the reverence of religious artefacts and the warm and positive welcome given to visitors by staff and children bear witness to this.
- Children speak with knowledge and understanding about the school mission statement and demonstrate a desire to live it out. Children said; "This is a caring, friendly, faith school where everyone is kind and fair."
- The school is proud of its Catholic heritage. The welcoming cross at the school entrance demonstrates the school's determination to nurture spirituality and there are many spaces around the school that offer opportunities for quiet and meaningful reflection. The developing prayer garden, which includes contributions from the entire school community, is a particular asset.
- Religious education (RE) is central to the life of the school. The commitment and drive demonstrated by the RE leader means that the subject has an extremely high status and is very well promoted. These, together with high quality teaching, result in outstanding attainment and progress in RE.
- Moral development is outstanding. The children in the school demonstrate very good behaviour and Christian witness is evidenced by their fundraising for many local and international charities and their good works in the wider community.
- Working closely with the Catholic teaching school St Bede's is pro-active in recruiting and training teachers for our Catholic schools and takes pride in nurturing and developing future teachers and leaders for our diocesan schools.
- Parents are welcomed in by the school to celebrate and participate in regular liturgies and the vast majority are highly complimentary about the school. One commented that; "There is a very clear Christian ethos at the school which students as well as parents are aware of. The school provides an excellent environment for young Catholics."

What does the school need to do to improve further?

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

- Ensure that the RE lesson focus is on the learning and challenge offered to all pupils and that they are encouraged to independently use their previous knowledge, particularly of scripture, to support their current learning.
- Provide more frequent opportunities for pupils to plan and deliver worship to others.

Full Report

The school as a Catholic community

The school community:	Outstanding
The wider community:	Outstanding

- The mission statement is central to the school's ethos and is known and understood by the children, who are keen to demonstrate ways in which they live it out, by caring for each other and the wider community. St Bede's is a Catholic community that is immensely proud of their ethos and vision. All are welcomed and invited to join in with the prayer and spiritual life of the school.
- School leaders inspire and enthuse the community to share in the strong sense of vision and mission. The headteacher, senior leadership team and governors share a determination to continually strive for improvement.
- There is evidence of effective links with other local Catholic schools. This continued sharing of good practice, learning and moderation will help to contribute to the improvement of the quality of lessons offered to pupils across the partnership and a shared, better understanding of the new RE assessment requirements.
- The school makes excellent use of the beautiful parish church situated next door. Pupils are regular visitors, either as a school, year group, class or small prayer group. There are opportunities for all to experience exposition, the rosary, reconciliation, Stations of the Cross as well as for mass, carol services and school celebrations.
- Pupils speak very positively about their school and are keen to reach out to help others as evidenced by their community visits and fundraising; this year for both a dementia and a stroke charity, voted for by the pupils, and CAFOD.
- Year 6 pupils embrace the leadership opportunities given to them and are particularly proud of their responsibility to ensure all children behave well in the playground.
- The school environment is vibrant and welcoming and reflects the high value placed on the Catholic faith. The children are proud of their school and eager to share their experiences with visitors.
- The school has many effective methods of communicating with parents including a comprehensive website and weekly newsletters that detail school life.

Curriculum religious education

Attainment and progress:	Outstanding
Quality of teaching:	Outstanding
Leadership and management of RE:	Outstanding

- RE is central to the life of the school. Attainment in RE and progress over the year is very good and is evidenced by the quality of teaching, the variety and quality of work in pupils' books, the whole class books and discussions with pupils.
- Pupils are able to work collaboratively to reflect on issues raised in RE and apply this to their own lives. As they progress through the school, they are able increasingly to justify their conclusions, using appropriate religious language and an increasing range of Scriptural references.
- Consideration of the books, the assessment data and observations on the day of the validation indicate that teaching is of a consistently high standard which then enables the pupils to develop a very good understanding of their faith. They are keen to work hard and please their teachers.
- Children's work is marked against the success criteria and when this includes a written comment can further challenge the children's thinking.
- Those with responsibility for leading and developing RE in the school provide excellent support for staff and are focussing on work to encourage them to challenge both themselves and the children more.

- Good support is provided by the RE governor, who takes a passionate interest in all aspects of the Catholic life of the school.
- The RE leader and school leadership team regularly monitor standards in RE, through observations, discussions at staff meetings, work sampling and book moderation at school, cluster and diocesan level. The impact of this rigorous approach can be seen in the high standards of RE.

Spiritual and moral development

Spiritual development: Outstanding

Moral development: Outstanding

- The school enthusiastically embraces every opportunity to nurture spirituality and give Christian witness. This was particularly evidenced by observing year 5 children who led a worship for the rest of the school, some of which they had planned themselves.
- The school provides a wide range of varied and high quality worship opportunities for both children and staff. This allows individual and collective members of the school community to consider and express their relationship with one another and with God, in a reflective and prayerful manner. These include;
 - the use of the prayer garden for quiet prayer, rosary and Station of the Cross liturgies
 - opportunities for Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament
 - Friday lunchtime Prayer Club
 - extending the spiritual witness into the children's homes through class prayer bags and rosary books going home with the children to share with their families.
 - high quality and attractive prayer tables in every classroom which reflect the liturgical season
- Both the class and whole school worship observed on the day were of a good quality. Children were familiar with the practice, well behaved and showed reverence.
- Children's behaviour is very good. The school's rewards and sanctions reinforce a culture of high expectations and positive encouragement. These rewards include leadership roles for year 6, the whole school Mission Hearts incentive, and house points which give the children a sense of positive pride and purpose.
- The staff are excellent role models for the children and promote high moral and behavioural standards.

Leadership and management: Outstanding

- The impact of the faith, dedication and commitment to Catholic education of the school leadership team, including the RE leader, is evident throughout the school.
- Leadership is outstanding. The commitment of the leadership team to continually review practice and develop all aspects of the Catholic life of the school is a key strength. The parish priest was particularly complimentary about the quality of liturgy prepared by the RE leader and the head teacher was described by a governor and the parish priest as; "a breath of fresh air who is providing an outstanding RE education for the children of St Bede's".
- The governing body are supporters of the school and also act as a critical friend. They make a valuable contribution to the work and direction of the school. There is an awareness that the governors could be more fully involved with the self-evaluation process moving forward and they are ready to embrace this responsibility.
- The school has made good progress towards meeting the targets set in the previous validation and moderation visits. This is noticeable in the prevalent wider use of scripture and scriptural references by the children and also in the provision of staff training and opportunities to moderate children's work across the school and within the cluster group.
- Staff and governors are proud of the school and aim to provide an education based on Jesus' core messages of love, co-operation and respect.

School details

Name of school	St. Bede's Catholic Primary School
Age range of pupils:	4 – 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number of pupils on roll:	419
Chair of Governors:	Mrs Katie Strickland
Headteacher:	Mr Jamie Carroll

St Bede's is a large, two form entry primary school situated in the St Bede's and Holy Ghost parish of Basingstoke. The majority of the pupils are Catholic with just a very small percentage of children of other faiths. The proportion of children who speak English as an additional language is above average at 38%. Less than 2% of the school population is in receipt of pupil premium funding, well below the national average, and just under 5% of them are on the special educational needs register. There are four pupils with an Educational Health Care Plan.

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

Sarah Matthews	Lead Validator
Patricia Opalko	Assistant Validator

Activities Carried Out as Part of the Validation

- Ethos Walk with two Year 6 pupils, the headteacher and the RE leader
- Discussion of the school's self-evaluation sheets
- Discussions with members of the school community, including school council members
- Joint observation of a whole school worship and a class worship
- Joint observations of teaching and learning in RE, with the headteacher and deputy head teacher
- Joint pupil work scrutiny
- Feedback of key findings to the headteacher, deputy head teacher, RE leader and RE governor

Conclusion

The validators would like to thank the headteacher, deputy headteacher, RE leader, staff, governors, the parish priest, parents and pupils of St Bede's 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 their hospitality, the warmth of welcome they received and the support given during the validation process.