

DIOCESE OF PORTSMOUTH S48 VALIDATION REPORT



St Patrick's Catholic Primary School, Farnborough

Whitefriars, Avenue Road, Farnborough, Hampshire GU14 7BW

URN: 116390
 Date of previous s48 validation 10 June 2015
Date of this s48 validation 15 January 2020

Overall effectiveness	Previous s48 validation: Good
	This s48 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.

- St Patrick's Catholic Primary School continues to be an outstanding example of a Catholic school community where the school's mission statement is firmly embedded in the life of the school.
- The school has fully embraced the opportunity to widen its scope and work more closely with its sister school in Farnborough and this has resulted in benefits for both communities.
- The executive headteacher has a clear vision for the school which is known and actively supported by all with leadership roles in the school. She is very ably supported by the head of school who brings her own strengths to this dynamic partnership. Together they provide a strong model of Catholic leadership.
- All spoken to during the validation spoke passionately about the school and how it strives to live out its mission to be a Christian witness to others, particularly those who are vulnerable or in need. One parent commented, *'Whatever is required, whether it is practical assistance or just a chat and a box of tissues, there will be somebody at school with time for you.'*
- Parish links are very strong. Very good support is offered by the local parish priest. There exists a mutually respectful appreciation of the gifts and strengths that school and parish can offer each other.
- St Patrick's is a key partner in the local Catholic family of schools. Strong and supportive links exist, not only with the school it is directly linked with but with all in the Farnborough and Farnham area.
- Outcomes from the parental survey show parents are very supportive of the school and are positive about all aspects of the life of this Catholic school.
- The quality of teaching and learning in RE is good. There is a strong commitment to improving this further. The subject has a high status in the school. Good leadership and support are being provided by the RE leader, executive headteacher and head of school in developing this core subject.
- Spiritual and moral development are outstanding. Pupils are provided with a range of high quality opportunities to develop their spirituality. The quality of the worship is also a key factor in helping the children develop a strong moral foundation based on Gospel values. Pupils recognise they have a key role in bringing Christ to others; to putting their faith into action through their words and deeds.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

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

- Ensure teaching throughout the school reflects the high expectations and challenge seen in the best classes.
- Embed in upper key stage 2 and then extend to all year groups the recent move to pupils planning and leading aspects of their own worship, ensuring expectations are appropriate for the age of the children involved.
- Ensure governors have a clearer understanding of the religious education taught in the school and have regular opportunities to engage in discussions on the standards of teaching and learning in this core subject.

Full Report

The school as a Catholic community

The school community:	Outstanding
The wider community:	Outstanding

- All in the school are firmly committed to living out their mission statement, ‘*With Christ as our guide and example, we celebrate the uniqueness of the individual. Together we will try to: learn from Jesus, love like Jesus and live like Jesus*’. Leaders, staff, governors and pupils, all spoke with enthusiasm and passion on how the Catholic ethos drives and impacts on the daily life of the school. This impact was seen in the strong and supportive relationships that exist between all groups in the school, and the many physical signs of faith both in the school buildings and within the school grounds and how these are valued and used to enhance the spiritual development of all in the community.
- When new members join the community of St Patrick’s, they are given a comprehensive induction into its ethos and expectations so all can quickly find their place and feel part of the school. Both adults and pupils are well supported by their peers when they initially join the school.
- There is a strong sense of welcome in the school and this was confirmed by the very positive response to the parental survey, one parent commented, ‘*Wonderful school, our girls love going here. We have been made to feel very welcome and all staff are happy and friendly, I would highly recommend this school and its teachers and staff to everybody.*’ Parents are very much a valued partner in the life of the school.
- Strong and mutually supportive links exist between the school and local parish. The parish priest is a regular and valued visitor to the school and is strong in his support of the school and its contribution to the Catholic life of the area. Pupils have opportunities to visit the parish church, join in with a weekday mass, see the sacrament of healing being administered and mix with parishioners, helping them to feel part of their local faith community.
- The school is to be commended and thanked for how it reached out to St Bernadette’s at a time of need and how it has turned this partnership into one that is bearing rich fruits in both schools. This strong, supportive bond is also reflected in the wider Catholic family of schools in the Farnborough area.
- A great strength of the school is how it reaches out to the vulnerable and those in need, both formally through fund-raising and more informally through its quiet support of its own families in need. This is very much faith in action and placing of the school community at the service of others.
- The systems of communication ensure stakeholders are well-informed and regularly updated. Currently, the school’s website is not used as well as it could be to reflect and celebrate the school’s Catholic ethos.

Curriculum religious education

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

- The evidence in pupils’ books, the good quality of teaching, the good end of year outcomes and discussions with pupils all combine to show that attainment and progress in RE is good overall. This is stronger in some year groups.
- On the day of the visit, all classes were being taught part of the *Christmas* unit. Aspects being studied included, the role of angels in the Christmas story and reflecting on why the Magi were chosen to visit Jesus. Throughout the school, children were engaged, interested and keen to demonstrate their good subject knowledge and ideas. Lessons were engaging and clearly focussed on developing key skills and increasing the pupils’ knowledge and understanding in religious education. However, some children spoken to felt the work they were given was not challenging them. Learning is supported by well-organised environments, well-chosen resources and targeted support from teaching assistants. A key feature is the use made of an RE working wall which helps to both support the children in their learning and to track the development of the topic across the length of the unit.
- Observations on the day clearly showed the positive impact of the school’s use of Growth Mindset and Philosophy for Children. Pupils were very willing to respond, articulate in their responses and showed resilience when encountering difficulties.
- Part of the day was spent reviewing the work in the pupils’ RE books, this included a small number of books from the previous year. Progression across the school is evident as is the variety of tasks the children are given and the pride the children take in their work. Learning is clearly based around scripture and Catholic beliefs, practices and traditions. Children are encouraged to reflect further or

deepen their response through the use of ‘orange questions’. This strategy to challenge pupils thinking is better developed in some classes than in others.

- In a small number of classes, where the quality of teaching and the level of attainment is not as strong, a greater element of challenge needs to be built into the teaching of RE; currently expectations are not high enough for pupils in these classes. Leaders in the school were already aware of the need to support and develop the staff concerned and had already begun to take appropriate action.
- The recently appointed RE leader has a good understanding of the subject and how to support staff moving forward. She is very ably supported by the executive headteacher and head of school.
- Governors are not sufficiently familiar with how RE is taught or the quality of teaching and learning in this core subject. The two recently appointed RE governors are keen to address this. Widening the reporting of the Catholic life of the school to governors to include RE will be a good first step.
- The school has taken on the new assessment framework for RE, along with new planning guidance provided by the diocese. As they work through the first year it would be beneficial for all teachers to reflect at the end of each unit as to what worked well and what will need amending the next time it is taught. Key aspects to include in this reflection are task design, the level of challenge, opportunities to demonstrate greater depth and to enable children to apply what they have learnt to their own lives.

Spiritual and moral development

Spiritual development:

Outstanding

Moral development:

Outstanding

- Throughout the school there is clear evidence of the central role of prayer in the daily life of the school. Children and staff come together to pray regularly, this may be through class prayer or larger gatherings. They also have frequent opportunities to celebrate Mass and liturgies of the Word together. These are enhanced by a wide variety of liturgical celebrations which take place across the year, often linked to the liturgical year, for example, the Crowning of Our Lady during May, the Paschal Production to mark Holy Week and the Advent Carol Service. Opportunities are also provided for the older children to attend penitential services within school.
- During the visit two worships were observed, one a key stage two liturgy and the other a class worship with the Reception class. All the elements that lead to outstanding worship were present, including the creation of a reverent and prayerful atmosphere, opportunities for those participating to reflect on scripture, and a clear message for them to take away and put into action. Care was taken to ensure the content was relevant to the age of the children.
- The school has started a move to pupils taking more of a leading role in planning and delivering their own class worship, although this now needs to be embedded, firstly into the upper key stage 2 classes and then once this is complete to cascade it down through the school, ensuring the level of involvement is appropriate to the age of the children. The recently created pupil liturgy leaders will be able to take a key role in this initiative.
- Parents are a valued group within the school and are encouraged to take an active interest in their children’s spiritual life through invitations to school and class masses and worships. The school has further established prayerful links between home and school with each class having a prayer bag which all the children have the opportunity to take home. Prayers written at home can be added to the Prayer Tree situated just outside the main hall.
- The children in the school demonstrate outstanding behaviour and Christian attitudes in their relationships, with a clear sense of right and wrong. Key factors promoting this include:
 - The outstanding role models provided by the staff and older children in the school.
 - The high expectations of pupils.
 - The buddy system which encourages the older pupils to support the younger children.
 - The consistent reinforcement of Gospel values through RE and worship and their application in helping children make the right choice.
- The school encourages the children to reach out to those in need, to be a witness to Christ in the world. The staff provide an excellent role model in this regard. A number of charities are supported, including Cafod, ‘Share the Light’ and an orphanage in India. Individuals within the school and the local community are also given aid. When discussing reaching out to help others, one pupil commented, ‘*God made all of us, everyone should be treated fairly*’, clearly linking the moral purpose for helping others with their faith.
- The school is currently reviewing its approach to Relationships Education ahead of its statutory implementation from September 2020. The intention is to base their approach on the Ten Ten resource, ‘*Life to the Full*’ with additional material provided by the school to address any gaps.

Leadership and management:

Outstanding

- All those in leadership roles, led by the outstanding examples of the executive headteacher and head of school, have a shared vision and passion to ensure St Patrick's is a place where all feel welcome, valued, supported and encouraged to be the best that they can be. This within a strong faith community who strive to be witnesses to Christ in today's world.
- Governors are great supporters of the school and passionate about how it serves the school and local faith communities. They are knowledgeable about the Catholic life of the school, although this needs to be widened to improve their knowledge of the strengths and areas for development within RE.
- There is a strong commitment to developing staff, including identifying and supporting future Catholic leaders. Pupils are also encouraged to take on leadership roles within the school, for example, school councillors, liturgy leaders and taking responsibility for providing visitors with a tour of the school.
- Good progress has been made on the areas for development identified in the school's last s48 validation, particularly the one relating to having a beneficial impact on the work of other schools which is ably demonstrated through its embracing of the partnership with St Bernadette's.

School details

Name of school	St Patrick's Catholic Primary School
Age range of pupils:	4 – 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number of pupils on roll:	223 (266 including the nursery)
Chair of Governors:	Gerard Owens
Executive Headteacher:	Paula Dix
Head of School:	Anne Mulholland

St Patrick's Catholic Primary School is a one-form entry school situated in Farnborough. The school mainly serves the parish of Our Lady Help of Christian's. Just over two thirds of the pupils are Catholic. A quarter of the pupils have English as an additional language. The percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals is well below average. Pupils come from a wide range of cultural backgrounds. The school shares an executive headteacher with St Bernadette's Catholic Primary School.

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
Catherine Hobbs	Assistant Validator

Activities carried out as part of the validation

- Discussion on the school's self-evaluation sheets.
- Discussions with various members of the school community.
- Observations of key stage and class worship.
- Observations of teaching and learning in RE, including joint observations with the executive headteacher and head of school.
- Pupil work scrutiny.
- Feedback of key findings.

Conclusion

The validators would like to thank the executive headteacher, head of school, RE leader, staff, governors, parish priest, parents and pupils of St Patrick's Catholic Primary 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.