

# DIOCESE OF PORTSMOUTH VALIDATION REPORT



## St. Thomas of Canterbury Catholic Primary School

High Street, Carisbrooke, Isle of Wight, PO30 1NR

URN: 118119  
 Date of previous validation: July 2012  
**Date of this validation: 15 and 26 June 2017**

### Overall effectiveness

Previous validation: Good  
**This validation: Good**

The school community:	<b>Good</b>	Attainment and progress in RE:	<b>Good</b>
The wider community:	<b>Good</b>	Quality of teaching in RE:	<b>Good</b>
Spiritual development:	<b>Good</b>	Leadership and management of RE:	<b>Good</b>
Moral development:	<b>Good</b>	Leadership and management:	<b>Good</b>

### This is a good school

- St. Thomas of Canterbury School is a community of faith, firmly embedded in Gospel values, recognising *'God is at the heart of our school and in the heart of each of us'*.
- The personal faith, leadership and dedication of the headteacher provides the vision that continues to take the school forward.
- St. Thomas of Canterbury is a school that knows itself well. The leadership team and governing body have put in place a comprehensive system of self-evaluation.
- Pupils are understandably proud of their school. Their behaviour and attitudes are underpinned by their living out of the school's mission statement, which the children all know well.
- The majority of parents, who responded to the survey, were positive about all aspects of school life, one parent writing, *"The staff do a fantastic job ..... Please support the school to continue the exceptional work they do with the children, the support they give and the opportunities they offer"*.
- The RE leader works tirelessly to support staff in ensuring that RE teaching and learning continues to improve and that RE in the school is given a high status.
- A focus on the more rigorous planning of work is beginning to secure more consistent progress and attainment. This will be aided by the school's intention to focus on high quality feedback across the curriculum.
- Moral development is good, with children's attitude and behaviour being exemplary.
- Thoughtful design of the outside environment enables it to be used for liturgy and worship, along with providing opportunities for awe and wonder in the school curriculum. The school recognises the need to enhance the experience of worship.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

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

- Through continued development of subject knowledge enable teachers to become less dependent on worksheets and more confident in delivering tasks that allow challenge and opportunities for higher order thinking.
- Ensure feedback is effective in supporting and challenging the pupils' learning.
- Increase teacher confidence in delivering worship in the school in order to enhance the quality being offered and so better enable the children to lead by following such role modelling.

## Full Report

### The school as a Catholic community

The school community:	Good
The wider community:	Good

- The school's mission and Christian ethos permeates all aspects of school life, where every member is nurtured, valued and encouraged to recognise that 'God is at the heart of our school and in the heart of each of us'.
- The school has a positive relationship with the different groups that make up its community, and whom are involved in the life of the school in a variety of ways. The school is working hard to celebrate diversity, for example, through its Cultural Calendar.
- The priests of the parish are very supportive of the school. Links with the parish community are strong, through masses at school, as well as participation in parish masses. The school is viewed by the parish priest as benefitting from "a mature co-operation between the Church and the school".
- Links are strong with local Catholic schools, for example, establishing and leading a joint Vocations Day with Year 6 pupils at Quarr Abbey, along with maintaining very good working relationships with pre-schools, Christ the King College and other local high schools through visits, sports days and theatre events. Following the success of its work with local schools the school is currently seeking ways in which to further develop its links to the local community.
- The school effectively communicates with parents, ensuring they are kept up to date with what is happening and are given opportunities, such as monthly coffee, cake and chat parents' meetings. The Friends of St. Thomas Association is enthusiastic and supportive in providing community events along with fundraising. There is a positive and trusting relationship between home and the school.
- Parents are very supportive of the school. They recognise it as a caring Catholic community, where they are made to feel welcome and their children are happy. One parent stated, "I am very happy with all the educational and leadership aspects of St. Thomas of Canterbury".
- Pupils do contribute to school life through prefects, school council and house captains, although there is scope to increase the amount of input that they have into the improvement of their community.
- All members of the school community demonstrate their commitment to the principles of stewardship through support of many local, national and international initiatives, including Foodbank, Disability Dogs, singing at a local care home, and national and international groups including CAFOD and The Red Cross, as well as such events as Comic and Sporting Relief.

### Curriculum religious education

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

- Pupils' books, data, lesson observations and discussions with children indicate that standards in RE across the school are generally good.
- The children in the school value RE and are able to recognise how it helps them in their daily lives. They demonstrate a positive attitude to learning and behave very well.
- The school RE leader has been working hard to improve the provision of RE by linking the national levels of attainment in RE to the pertinent parts of the 'God Matters' scheme.

A focus on the more rigorous planning of units is beginning to secure more consistent progress and attainment.

- Teachers are gaining confidence in making use of key questions. This in turn will enable children to further develop their religious knowledge and demonstrate understanding. The Class Books provide good evidence of this and of curriculum coverage and good practice, as well as celebrating RE discussion and practical work.
- The quality of teaching overall is good. Exceptional practice was observed in the EYFS setting.
- The school recognises the need to develop and refine its practice of feedback in RE; this will help to improve standards further.
- The leadership and support provided by the RE subject leader ensures that the place of RE in the school is given a high status. Her moderation and work scrutinies reflect her dedication.
- The headteacher and governors are very supportive of the school and efforts are made to ensure that RE maintains a high profile in all aspects of school life.

### **Spiritual and moral development**

Spiritual development:	Good
Moral development:	Good

- Prayer and worship is a part of the daily life of the school and members of the school community actively participate in the traditions and practices of the Catholic Church.
- There is a variety of worship evidenced throughout the liturgical year, developed through a planned programme, ranging from drawing upon the religious aspect of Shrove Tuesday through the symbolic ‘burying’ of the *Alleluia*, Ash Wednesday, and Mary, Mother of God, May Day celebrations, along with using the ‘outdoor classroom’ for a variety of worship, such as an alleluia march, jubilee celebration and music recitals. The school is aware of the need to continue to enhance and enrich the liturgical experience, which will enable the children to take a leading role in prayer.
- Many aspects of school life contribute to the spiritual development of pupils. The school utilises its beautiful setting, with children being encouraged to take opportunities to appreciate the awe and wonder of God’s creation. There is potential to exploit these areas further with more varied opportunities for worship and prayer.
- Children’s behaviour is good. The school’s rewards and sanctions reinforce a culture of high expectations and positive encouragement. These rewards include Star of the Week certificates, the Golden Ticket, postcards home and newsletters, giving children a sense of positive pride and purpose. The children could be given more opportunities to contribute to the rewards system by asking for their ideas on how to ensure that they always strive to live up to the expectations of them.
- Pupils are proud of their school: *“We are encouraged to work independently and also to pull together as a team. We are one big family and we can rely on each other.”*

### **Leadership and management:** Good

- The personal faith of the headteacher is providing the vision that takes the school forward.
- The governing body takes a keen interest in the mission, development and success of the school and has the capacity to meet the school’s needs and be influential in determining the strategic direction of the school. They are fully involved in evaluating the school, including Diocesan Self-Review, and in supporting and challenging the headteacher.
- Staff are committed to supporting the school and work purposefully in their drive for improvement.
- Particular progress has been made on embedding the ‘Jigsaw’ approach, which links mission, vision, action and stewardship since the last validation.

## School details

<b>Name of school</b>	St. Thomas of Canterbury Catholic Primary School
<b>Age range of pupils:</b>	4 – 11
<b>Gender of pupils:</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on roll:</b>	187
<b>Chair of Governors:</b>	Katrina Rigby
<b>Headteacher:</b>	Maggie Sanderson

St. Thomas of Canterbury is a small primary school serving the parish of St. Thomas of Canterbury, Newport, which forms part of the Isle of Wight Pastoral Area. It is situated directly off the High Street in the village of Carisbrooke and the parish church is around fifteen minutes' walk away. The site is attractive and well maintained. There are 187 pupils on roll, of whom 47% are Catholic and 30% from other Christian traditions. The proportion of pupils eligible for pupil premium funding is 20%, just below national average. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs is 17%, which is above average. Pupils with English as another language (EAL) account for 3%, which is well below the national average.

The school is federated with St. Mary's Catholic Primary School in Ryde, under one governing body, with a headteacher in each 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

Louise Buxton	Lead Validator
Sarah Matthews	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 whole school and a class worship
- Observations of teaching and learning in RE, including joint observations with the head teacher and RE leader
- Pupil work scrutiny
- Feedback of key findings to the senior leadership team.

## Conclusion

The validators would like to thank the headteacher, RE leader, staff, priests, governors, parents and pupils of St. Thomas of Canterbury 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 of the warmth of welcome they received and the support they were given during the validation process.