

DIOCESE OF PORTSMOUTH VALIDATION REPORT



St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Dorset Road, Christchurch Road, Dorset, BH23 3DA

Dates of this validation **3 and 10 November 2015**

Date of previous validation November 2010

Overall effectiveness	This validation:	Good with outstanding features
	Previous 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

- St Joseph's is an example of an outstanding Catholic community, where the mission to live, love, work and serve as Jesus taught us, is truly lived out and celebrated in all aspects of school life.
- The Christian witness, vision, leadership, dedication and infectious enthusiasm of the headteacher are a key strength of the school.
- St Joseph's is a school that knows itself well. The leadership team and governing body have put in place a comprehensive and effective system of self-evaluation. Strengths are recognised and celebrated and any areas for development that are identified are quickly addressed.
- Pupils are outstanding ambassadors for the school and speak about their school with pride. Their outstanding behaviour and attitudes are underpinned by their knowledge and living out of the school's mission statement; children said "as 'Josepharians' we are kind because God teaches us to be kind".
- Religious education (RE) is central to the life of the school. The excellent support of the RE leader has ensured that progress and attainment are good and continually improving. Rigorous monitoring and evaluation ensure that the current high standards in teaching and learning will continue to improve even further.
- The relatively new parish priest offers excellent support and challenge to staff, pupils and governors.
- Parents are very supportive of the school. An overwhelming majority were positive about all aspects of school life.
- The very positive impact of prayer and reflection on Scripture can be seen in the daily life of the community.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

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

- Raise the number of pupils attaining the higher levels at the end of each key stage.
- Ensure the outstanding practice in RE is consistently applied throughout the school.
- To embed the work of the 'Mini Vinnies' in the life of the school.
- To celebrate all that St Joseph's offers in the wider community.

Full Report

The school as a Catholic community

The school community:

Outstanding

The wider community:

Outstanding

- Throughout the school there is firm evidence of a community of faith. Particularly strong examples include:
 - The centrality of the revised mission statement in the life of the school and the community.
 - The attractive central displays that are a constant reminder of the living out of the mission statement.
 - The warmth of the welcome received by visitors from all members of the community.
 - The care, kindness and support in evidence among all staff, pupils, governors and parents.
 - The outstanding attitudes and behaviour of the pupils.
- School leaders inspire and enthuse the community to share in a strong sense of vision and mission. The headteacher, senior leadership team and governors share a determination to continually strive for improvement.
- The Catholic ethos is evident within the setting up of a 'nurture and chill room' for those pupils in need of additional support.
- St Joseph's is very much a diocesan school. The headteacher is a key contributor to developing the work of the Primary Catholic Partnership (SCITT) in the diocese. The school works very closely with the local Catholic cluster and other local schools. Links with local Catholic schools are strong and mutually supportive.
- The induction of new families into the school and parish is highly effective, supportive and valued by those families.
- The school communicates effectively with parents, ensuring that they are kept up to date with what is happening and are given every opportunity to visit and participate in the life of the school.
- There is a strong partnership between the school and its main feeder parish. The involvement of the parish priest and the parish First Holy Communion catechist ensures that all pupils, regardless of their faith background, know they are valued members of the parish.
- The school provides rich and varied opportunities to encourage the children to strengthen their relationship with God. Mini Vinnies support the leading of high quality worship throughout the school

Curriculum religious education

Attainment and progress:

Good

Quality of teaching:

Good

Leadership and management of RE:

Good

- RE is central to the life of the school. Attainment and progress in RE are good, as evidenced by the quality of teaching, the evidence in pupils' books and class books and the 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 a wide range of Scripture.

- Marking is generally supportive and is used to further challenge the children's thinking along with the use of well-planned extension questions.
- Planning in the subject has a clear RE focus and is linked to the national levels of attainment, although the planned extension questions that challenge are not always completed.
- Teaching assistants play a key role in recording discussions and helping all pupils access the curriculum.
- Lessons have clear learning objectives and teachers use a variety of teaching strategies and activities, to stimulate and engage children.
- The RE subject leader, school leadership team and governors regularly monitor standards in RE, through work sampling and moderation at school, cluster and diocesan level.
- The RE leader's passion, knowledge and drive underpin her excellent support for all staff, enabling them to deliver RE lessons with confidence and enthusiasm and ensuring that standards in religious education are continually improving.

Spiritual and moral development

Spiritual development:

Moral development:

Outstanding

Outstanding

- Prayer and worship are integral to the daily life of the school and focus on the centrality of Scripture and reflection on its message and are highly valued by the children: "prayer is our gift from God".
- The school embraces every opportunity to nurture spirituality and give Christian witness. These include: the prayer garden, prayer tables in every classroom, class and key stage worship, staff prayers, the annual re-focused enrichment week and the celebration of the school's two feast days.
- Children's behaviour is outstanding. The school's rewards and sanctions reinforce a culture of high expectations and positive encouragement. The half-termly 'Buxton's Best Awards' are highly sought after.
- All staff provide excellent pastoral care, guidance and support to all pupils.
- The school works closely with parents to support pupils' moral development.
- Pupils willingly take on responsibilities and participate constructively in school life as prayer buddies and Mini Vinnies.
- Pupils are justifiably proud of their school: "We are just like a big extended family."

Leadership and management:

Outstanding

- The impact of the strong Christian leadership offered by the headteacher, deputy headteacher, leadership team and governing body is in evidence throughout the school.
- The rigorous and effective approach to the monitoring and evaluation of all aspects of school life enable the school to constantly challenge itself. There is a constant drive for improvement and insistence on high standards in all areas.
- The children take on a variety of leadership roles and are very good role models as Mini Vinnies, sports captains and house captains.
- Good progress has been made on the issues identified for improvement in the last validation, particularly in reviewing the school's mission statement and developing strategies to increase the level of challenge in RE.

School details

Name of school	St Joseph's Catholic Primary School
URN:	113848
Age range of pupils:	4 – 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number of pupils on roll:	223
Chair of Governors:	Brigid Hincks
Headteacher:	Louise Buxton

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School is a one form entry school situated in the parish of the Immaculate Conception and St Joseph, also serving the communities of Holy Redeemer and Our Lady of Lourdes within the Avon-Stour pastoral area. 63% of its pupils are Catholic; 6% of pupils have English as an additional language and come from a variety of ethnic minorities. The percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals is well below average as is the percentage who have special educational needs or disabilities.

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

Catherine Hobbs	Lead validator
Nuala Oster	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 a class and key stage worship.
- Observations of teaching and learning in RE, including joint observations with the headteacher and RE leader.
- Pupil work scrutiny.
- Feedback of key findings to the senior leadership team, RE leader and the chair of governors.

Conclusion

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