

DIOCESE OF PORTSMOUTH VALIDATION REPORT



St Anne's Catholic Primary School

Pinkerton Road. Basingstoke. RG22 6RE

URN: 116379
 Date of previous validation June 2014
Date of this validation 5th and 13th June 2019

Overall effectiveness	Previous validation:	Outstanding
	This validation:	Requires Improvement
The school community:	Requires Improvement	Attainment and progress in RE: Good
The wider community:	Requires Improvement	Quality of teaching in RE: Good
Spiritual development:	Good	Leadership and management of RE: Good
Moral development:	Good	Leadership and management: Requires Improvement

This is school which requires improvement.

- Although all groups in the school, including leaders, talk about valuing the school's Catholic ethos and Mission Statement, in reality not enough is done to actively promote and safeguard it, hence they have limited impact on the daily life of the school. The headteacher, who would normally take the lead, is currently not adequately fulfilling her role as the leader of the school's faith community. A first step would be for the headteacher and other senior leaders to be more visible during times when the community come together to worship.
- The school's improvement planning, particularly in relation to the Catholic life of the school, is not robust enough which makes it difficult for governors to monitor and evaluate the impact of actions taken.
- Since the 2014 validation there has been a decline in the standards pupils achieve in religious education (RE) and in some activities that celebrate and promote the Catholic life of the school. School leaders, including governors, have not paid sufficient attention in monitoring and evaluating these fundamental elements of a Catholic school. Standards and quality of teaching in RE, although now improving, are still not providing sufficient challenge for all pupils.
- From the evidence gathered through surveys and discussions held on the day, just over a quarter of responses indicated the school does not listen to or act on concerns expressed.
- Although some parents and carers comment on the generally positive relationships they have with the school, others indicate communication is poor and leads to misunderstanding and frustrations.
- Partnership with the local parish community is limited to occasions when the parish priest leads Masses and liturgies in the school and when a class is present at Sunday Mass. The links with other local and Catholic schools is also limited and needs further development in order for it to be mutually beneficial.

Validators recognised the following strengths:

- Teachers and support staff effectively model Gospel values and positive relationships are evident in the classroom.
- In the last two years, there has been significant staff turbulence. The RE leader has provided timely support to new members of staff and has been key in helping teachers consolidate good teaching so that evidence in the pupils' RE books show standards are improving.
- The pupils' behaviour is exemplary and they demonstrate positive attitudes towards RE and their learning. All work hard and take pride in their work.
- In all areas covered by the parental survey, with the exception of those referred to above, a large majority (at least 65%) of those responding either strongly or moderately agreed with the given statement.
- The recent commitment of the governors in supporting staff and parents to ensure the school provides a secure learning environment.
- The support of the parish priest in leading liturgies.
- Pupils' understanding of their role as disciples of Christ is being effectively nurtured.
- The opportunity for pupils to lead prayer in their classroom and as prayer partners is being developed.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Adopt robust and rigorous procedures which would enable governors to monitor and evaluate standards in RE and the Catholic life of the school and hold school leaders to account in these core areas of a Catholic school.
- Ensure leaders, particularly the headteacher, actively promotes the school's Catholic vision through;
 - Greater involvement in the prayer life of the school, particularly whole school worship;
 - Regularly leading the weekly Gospel assembly;
 - Ensuring interactions actively promote and reflect the core values and ethos of the school.
 - Ensuring improvement planning includes measurable targets to promote and develop the Catholic life of the school, including RE (religious education), and identifies the key elements that each will be responsible for.
- Review and refine improvement planning, particularly linked to the Catholic life of the school, so that success criteria are clearly identified enabling more rigorous and robust monitoring and evaluation.
- Improve standards in RE by ensuring teaching challenges all pupils to improve their skills and knowledge in RE.
- Continue to develop the use of assessment in RE to ensure teaching builds on the pupils' knowledge and skills.
- Review communication with parents and how the school responds to any complaints or issues raised by parents or others, in order to improve relationships and rebuild trust.
- Consider how the school can improve and extend its links with the local parish and with the local Catholic cluster of schools so all benefit from a closer and mutually supportive partnership.

Full Report

The school as a Catholic community

The school community:

Requires Improvement

The wider community:

Requires Improvement

- The school's mission statement encourages pupils and staff to live out the Gospel Values on a daily basis and is displayed around the school.
- The Catholic ethos is evident in the positive and trusting relationships between teachers and pupils.
- Although some parents and carers recognise the positive relationship they have with the school and feel they are adequately informed, others feel communication is poor and leads to misunderstandings and frustrations.
- The school's newsletter and website mention the Catholic life of the school but could also be a tool to keep parents better informed of the RE curriculum and how the school's mission is lived out.
- Induction procedures enable staff to gain some understanding of the distinctive nature of a Catholic school.
- The school engages with diocesan initiatives, for example the "Building the Kingdom" programme; which once embedded, will deepen pupils' understanding of what it means to be a disciple of Christ.
- The school benefits from good support from the local parish priest, who supports the liturgical life of the school. The contribution of the school to the life of the parish is an area which should be further explored and developed. More explicit and cohesive links between parish and school would be enhanced through a greater visible presence at St Joseph's Church and cementing of the mutually supportive relationship.
- Where staff do interact with other local Catholic schools it is proving mutually beneficial, for example, in developing the RE curriculum and assessments.

Curriculum religious education

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

- Good relationships in the classroom, create a productive learning environment where pupils are confident to contribute and achievement in RE is improving.
- Pupils work hard and seek to produce their best work. An over reliance on worksheets, written outcomes and comprehension type responses and limited opportunities to learn independently, hinders pupils' deepening understanding of RE themes. The school should consider varying the ways pupils can express their understanding of RE.
- Although now showing signs of improvement, standards and quality of teaching in RE are still not providing sufficient challenge for all pupils.
- Pupils make at least good progress given their starting points. Once the school's work on raising the challenge for all groups of pupils and deepening their thinking and understanding of scripture, is fully embedded attainment and progress in religious education should lead to high achievement.
- The school does not provide sufficient information for parents about curriculum RE and therefore parents feel unable to support their child's progress.
- Feedback in RE helps pupils to understand what they have done well, although there is some inconsistency in whether pupils respond to the teacher's comments.
- The majority of teaching is securing good progress and learning as is evident in the books and the teaching seen during the validation. Particular strengths include:
 - Effective links made between RE themes and how these relate to pupils' life and experience.
 - Questioning that encouraged pupils to reflect and explain their thinking.
 - Imaginative "hooks" that engaged pupils' interests.
- The RE leader is a key figure in the school, who has worked hard to support staff to improve teaching and learning in RE. Her support and guidance is very much valued and appreciated by staff.
- A range of monitoring activities occur each year which are used to identify strengths and areas for development within RE. In order to secure higher achievement and consistently high quality teaching, development plans need to be more effective, along with greater involvement in evaluating RE by senior leaders.

Spiritual and moral development

Spiritual development:	Good
Moral development:	Good

- The school community recognises all as God's children and most children are open to God's presence in their lives through worship and religious education.
- The school provides a range of worship, which allows pupils to express their relationship with one another and with God, in a generally prayerful manner. Strong examples include:
 - The range of celebrations linked to the liturgical year.
 - Pupils' attitudes to prayer supported through Prayer Partners
 - Pupil led prayer times.
- Opportunities for pupils to plan and lead worship are being developed in Year 5 where the pupils were enthusiastic in discussing their involvement. This approach now needs to be shared across the school appropriate to the age of the child.
- The use and organisation of prayer tables and reflective spaces should be reviewed. Validators recommend they should be simplified and be less cluttered with one bible open at a piece of scripture relevant to the class. The opportunity for pupils to add prayers is a positive feature of the prayer spaces.
- The parish priest works effectively with the school to provide liturgical celebrations and opportunities for reconciliation for the pupils.

- Pupils 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 role models provided by the staff and older children in the school.
 - Secure and positive relationships of teachers and pupils.
 - Excellent behaviour and positive attitudes to learning.
- Pupils should be given a greater range of opportunities to play a constructive role in the life of the school by taking on further responsibilities and strengthening pupil voice. For example, by initiating charitable activities based on an understanding of the aims and work of the charity enabling pupils to better understand their responsibility as a Christian in reaching out to others.
- Pupils are proud of their school, commenting, “*St Anne’s helps us be closer to God.*”

Leadership and management:

Requires Improvement

- Although all groups in the school, including leaders, talk about valuing the school’s Catholic ethos and Mission Statement, in reality not enough is done to actively promote and safeguard it, hence they have limited impact on the daily life of the school. The headteacher, who would normally take the lead, is currently not adequately fulfilling her role as the leader of the school’s faith community. A first step would be for the headteacher and other senior leaders to be more visible during times when the community come together to worship.
- School leaders, including governors, will benefit from seeking and acting on diocesan advice and support in order to improve the Catholic life of the school and reverse the current decline.
- Development planning includes approaches to further the Catholic vision of the school, however greater clarity of the actions to be taken and more rigorous monitoring and evaluation activities need to be built into the plan to ensure the areas identified for development have the required impact on the school’s success. Clearer success criteria are needed in order to evaluate impact of actions taken.
- Governors are supportive of the school and have a developing understanding of the school’s strengths and weaknesses. In the past, they have not held senior staff sufficiently to account. This has led to a lack of challenge in addressing the decline in evidence of the core elements of a Catholic school and standards in RE. Recently, they have developed a more strategic view of the work of the school.
- Training and development opportunities have been identified and staff have benefitted from joint working with other schools.
- Too little progress has been made on the areas for development identified in the previous validation (June 2014).

School details

Name of school:	St Anne’s Catholic Primary School
Age range of pupils:	4-11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number of pupils on roll:	254
Chair of Governors:	Mr W. Perotto
Headteacher:	Mrs. J. Alexander

St Anne’s Catholic Primary School is situated in Basingstoke and serves the parish of St Joseph’s. It is of average size and the number of boys and girls is approximately the same. The percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals is below average, as is the percentage of children in receipt of the pupil premium funding. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language, or who are from a minority ethnic group, is higher than average, although the percentage of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is slightly lower than 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

Lead Validator	Miss U. Clark
Assistant Validator	Mrs J. Dunlop

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, including parents, governors, pupils and staff.
- Scrutiny of evidence provided, including surveys and Governors' minutes.
- An observation 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, assistant headteacher, RE leader, staff, governors, parish priest, parents and pupils of St Anne'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 welcome they received and the support given during the validation process.