

# DIOCESE OF PORTSMOUTH VALIDATION REPORT



## English Martyrs' Catholic Primary School

Dee Road, Reading, Berkshire RG30 4BE

URN: 110004  
Date of previous validation: 9<sup>th</sup> March 2012  
**Date of this validation: 30<sup>th</sup> March 2017**

### Overall effectiveness

Previous validation: Good  
**This 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 many outstanding features

- English Martyrs' is an example of a Catholic community, where the mission is truly lived out as the aim of 'nurturing a relationship with Jesus Christ' permeates all aspects of school life and is evidenced daily.
- The headteacher provides a very strong model of Christian witness, vision, leadership and dedication, and has enabled the school to grow and flourish, and for evangelisation to occur.
- The school embraces the self-review process to drive continuing improvement. Governors support the school to live out its mission.
- Pupils are good ambassadors for the school and speak about their school with pride. Their very good behaviour and attitudes are underpinned by their knowledge and living out of the school's mission statement. Children said, "We get support, know how to improve and learn to follow Jesus".
- The links between the school, parents and Church are strong and mutually supportive. The priest offers excellent support.
- A very large majority of parents are positive about all aspects of school life and are fully supportive of the school.
- Standards in Religious Education (RE) are good. The acting RE leader works to ensure that standards in progress and attainment are good and continually improving. Having worked hard on developing standards in RE the school is in a position to ensure that the children can respond to challenging questions relating to living in 21<sup>st</sup> century Britain. The Social Justice and Evangelisation Co-ordinator could be key in facilitating this.
- Spiritual and moral development is outstanding.

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

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

- Teachers are becoming more confident in assessment of RE and now need to choose key tasks that are suitable for accurate assessment.
- While teachers scaffold learning well children now need to be given opportunities to apply their RE knowledge and skills in an open ended way so they can truly show what their capabilities are.
- Embed and review the impact of and further develop the role of the Social Justice and Evangelisation Co-ordinator's work.

## Full Report

### The school as a Catholic community

The school community:	<b>Outstanding</b>
The wider community:	<b>Outstanding</b>

- The school's mission and Christian ethos permeates all aspects of school life. Children and staff are inducted through liturgy and staff receive information to support their understanding of working in a Catholic school.
- The school is committed to working creatively with local Catholic schools as seen in the lead they took in the recent appointment of a Social Justice and Evangelisation Co-ordinator. She is beginning to support the school in working towards the *Romero Award*. Joint inset days, including a residential for teachers and governors are also arranged with the cluster, along with RE moderation.
- There is a positive and trusting relationship between home and the school. The vast majority of parents consider school communication is good. This relationship is enhanced by the work of the school's own Family Support Worker, who works alongside the parish's St Vincent de Paul Society, in their work with vulnerable families. The school's diverse ethnic make-up is celebrated through the annual International Day.
- Parents hold the school in high regard. They recognise it as a caring Catholic community, where they are made to feel welcome and their children are happy. "The school is a real community and it feels like being part of a family."
- The school has a very visible presence within the local parish, witnessed through regular school involvement in Sunday Mass.
- English Martyrs' is a pro-active member of the diocesan family of schools, with the headteacher supporting schools as a validator and the school being present at diocesan events.
- All members of the school community demonstrate their commitment to the principles and philosophy of stewardship, through support of many local, national and international initiatives including supporting CAFOD, Save the Children, Samaritan's Purse, NSPCC and Mission Together.

### Curriculum religious education

Attainment and progress:	<b>Good</b>
Quality of teaching:	<b>Good</b>
Leadership and management of RE:	<b>Good</b>

- Curriculum RE is valued highly within the school, with a lot of effort going into the planning.
- A large majority of pupils make at least good progress, with some for whom it is outstanding.
- The quality of teaching and learning of RE as evidenced through pupils' RE books and the teaching observed on the day is of a good quality, with some elements of outstanding practice being seen.
- The acting RE leader has worked hard and is providing support for teachers, through the delivery of RE focused staff meetings. She is developing a clear understanding of key strengths in teaching and learning and areas for development and is working to see these areas improved and addressed. The work of a Sister based in the local parish with the children is held in high regard.
- Teachers work hard to ensure there is a great variety of work for every RE unit.
- Teachers are becoming more confident in assessment of RE and now need to choose key tasks that are suitable for accurate assessment.

- While teachers scaffold learning well children now need to be given opportunities to apply their RE knowledge and skills in an open ended way so they can truly show what their capabilities are.
- The school has carefully considered its multi-faith teaching, with visits from members of other faiths and to places of worship, such as the local Gurdwara.

## **Spiritual and moral development**

Spiritual development:

**Outstanding**

Moral development:

**Outstanding**

- Prayer and worship are integral to the daily life of English Martyrs'. The range of worship offered is wide and of high quality, and includes: sacramental celebrations including Masses and Reconciliation, class liturgies attended by parents, Stations of the Cross, using the Rosary Garden, mission weeks and weeks dedicated to prayer, which included Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. Worship is also planned and led by children, such as house leaders.
- All members of the school community pray together and opportunities for days of reflection enable them to deepen their relationship with God. Particularly notable is the biannual staff and governor residential held at Cold Ash Retreat Centre.
- The parish priest recognises, "It is a great community of faith, the mission statement is tangibly happening and it is a place of prayer."
- During worship observed on the day, the children led a whole school Stations of the Cross, creating a spiritual atmosphere where worshippers were encouraged to learn from the liturgy, reflecting on their own lives. Meanwhile younger children fully participated in a well-planned class worship.
- The children in the school demonstrate very good behaviour and Christian attitudes in their relationships, with a clear sense of right and wrong. Key factors promoting this include:
  - The very good role model provided by staff and older children in the school.
  - A wide variety of awards to reinforce high expectations of pupils and motivate children to aim to achieve more in developing their talents such as the weekly Laudate assembly, house-points and weekly awards from various members of the community such as teaching assistants, headteacher and breakfast club. The children are also very proud of their badges.
  - Curriculum enhancement, such as CAFOD workshops and Sion mission weeks.
- The school has developed a comprehensive sex and relationship education scheme of work which links to the Church's teaching, being based on the theology of the body.
- Groups of pupils take on key responsibilities throughout the school including, school councillors, Year 6 buddies and house captains.

## **Leadership and management:**

**Outstanding**

- The personal witness of the faith of the headteacher, provides a strong vision and direction for the work of the school.
- The culture of reflection and self-review by the senior leaders, governors through their Catholic Strategy and Ethos Committee and staff leads to challenge and aiming for high standards in all aspects of school life.
- Governors take a keen interest in the mission, development and progress of the school. They challenge the school in order to ensure success and provide opportunities. Governors have been actively involved in the diocesan self-review and regularly spend time in school.
- Good progress has been made on issues identified for improvement in the last validation. The school has worked hard in ensuring the mission statement is fully embedded in all aspects of the school, and understood and embraced by all.

## School details

<b>Name of school:</b>	English Martyrs' Catholic Primary School
<b>Age range of pupils:</b>	4-11
<b>Gender of pupils:</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on roll:</b>	413
<b>Chair of Governors:</b>	Ita McGullion
<b>Headteacher:</b>	Jamie Carroll

English Martyrs' Catholic Primary School is located in Reading, serving the parish of English Martyrs. There are 413 pupils on roll, of whom 65% are Catholic and 24% from other Christian traditions. Forty per cent of the staff are Catholic. The proportion of pupils eligible for pupil premium funding is 17%, below national average. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs is 14%, which is slightly above average. Pupils with English as another language (EAL) are 39%, which is well above national 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: Louise Buxton  
Assistant Validator: Tricia Opalko

### 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 headteacher.
- Pupil work scrutiny.
- Feedback of key findings to the senior leadership team.

## Conclusion

The validators would like to thank the headteacher, deputy headteacher, acting RE leader, staff, governors, parents and pupils of English Martyrs' 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