

DIOCESE OF PORTSMOUTH VALIDATION REPORT



St. Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Bridge Road, Aldershot, Hampshire GU11 3DD

URN: 137422
Date of previous validation: 8 December 2011
Date of this validation: 17 November 2016

Overall effectiveness

Previous validation: Good with outstanding features
This validation: Outstanding

The school community:	Outstanding	Attainment and progress in RE:	Outstanding
The wider community:	Outstanding	Quality of teaching in RE:	Outstanding
Spiritual development:	Outstanding	Leadership and management of RE:	Outstanding
Moral development:	Outstanding	Leadership and management:	Outstanding

This is an outstanding school

- The school's vision to '*Welcome all and value Christ in everyone, whilst seeking the highest possible achievements*' permeates the life of the school, with all members of the community taking an active part in living out this mission.
- Leaders provide a very strong and highly effective model of Christian leadership, where all are valued. They inspire the community to share in a strong sense of vision and mission, resulting in a highly collaborative and successful school with a positive ethos.
- The school is proud of its Catholic heritage and regularly gives a visible Christian witness, through its charitable works and its religious processions through the local area.
- Spiritual development is outstanding. Pupils are provided with a wide range of spiritual opportunities. The provision of The Well and the Spiritual Garden enhance this provision still further. Their availability to the wider community is a positive sign of Christian outreach.
- The overwhelming majority of parents are supportive of the school and its mission.
- Pupils make outstanding progress and achieve highly in religious education (RE). When the pupils leave St Joseph's standards in RE are above national expectations.
- Teaching of RE is of a consistently good standard, with many elements of outstanding practice.
- Pupils demonstrated a very positive attitude to learning in the lessons observed. Regular pupil surveys show that they have a high regard for their school. The children spoken with on the day commented on how what they learn in RE and the Gospels helps them in their day to day lives.
- Leadership of RE is outstanding. The commitment of the RE team, particularly the RE co-ordinator and deputy, to continually review practice and develop it further is a key strength.
- Moral development is outstanding. The children in the school demonstrate outstanding behaviour and Christian attitudes.
- St Joseph's is pro-active in recruiting and training teachers for our Catholic schools and in nurturing and developing them as potential future leaders within our diocesan family.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

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

- Ensure the activities designed to support learning in RE challenge the pupils of all abilities.
- Provide greater opportunities for pupils to take ownership of their prayer and worship, particularly in upper key stage two.
- To maintain the current very good practice in RE and worship and provide a comprehensive induction and mentoring programme for the new RE co-ordinator.

Full Report

The school as a Catholic community

The school community:

Outstanding

The wider community:

Outstanding

- St Joseph's is a school that knows its community well and successfully nurtures and supports its members. Throughout the school there is firm evidence that you are within a community of faith. Particularly strong examples include:
 - The centrality and living out of its school vision to *'Welcome all and value Christ in everyone, whilst seeking the highest possible achievements'*.
 - The determination of all in the school to continually strive for improvement and to enrich the lives of the pupils in their care.
 - The very good relationships between all members of the school community.
 - A commitment to the principles of stewardship in using their God-given talents to support others, both within the school and beyond.
- The school works in close partnership with its feeder parishes, particularly St Joseph's, Aldershot. Good support is offered by their parish priest, who commented on how privileged he feels to be welcomed into such a strong Catholic community.
- 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.
- There are very good systems of communication, ensuring all stakeholders are very well-informed and regularly updated. More use could be made of the school's website to inform parents about, and celebrate, the school's Catholic ethos.
- The school has outstanding induction procedures, particularly for new teaching staff. This includes supporting them in teaching RE, leading worship and entering fully into the Catholic life of the school.

Curriculum religious education

Attainment and progress:

Outstanding

Quality of teaching:

Outstanding

Leadership and management of RE:

Outstanding

- The evidence in pupils' books, the consistently good or better quality of teaching, the high end of year outcomes and discussions with pupils all combine to show that attainment and progress in RE are outstanding.
- Pupils value RE and recognise that it can help them in their daily lives. In the lessons observed as part of the validation, pupils were able to share their strong knowledge of Scripture and religious vocabulary. Very good learning behaviours were evident. Lessons were engaging and clearly focussed on key skills in religious education. Learning is supported by well-organised environments, well-chosen resources and targeted support from teaching assistants.
- A scrutiny of pupils' work shows evidence of outstanding progression through the school. Teachers are rigorous in marking work against the learning objective and a number are encouraging further learning by also posing challenging questions as a follow-up.
- Those with responsibility for leading and developing RE in the school, particularly the current RE co-ordinator and the deputy headteacher, provide excellent support and challenge. Good support is provided by the RE director/governor, who takes a passionate interest in all aspects of the Catholic life of the school. Standards of teaching and learning in RE are rigorously monitored, outcomes analysed and actions agreed and followed through.
- The staff work hard to assess and track pupils' progress against the national levels for RE. Further work is needed to ensure consistency across the school. This is an aspect that is being looked at across the diocese.

- The school has a clear understanding of the key strengths and areas for development and as a result, standards in the subject are very high and continuing to improve. Areas already identified to work on include the attainment and progress of the most able, continuing to develop teacher subject knowledge and training and support for the new RE co-ordinator. The successful addressing of these should ensure that the very high standards in RE continue.

Spiritual and moral development

Spiritual development:

Moral development:

Outstanding

Outstanding

- The school provides a wide range of very high quality worship, which allows individual and collective members of the school community to express their relationship with one another and with God, in a reflective and prayerful manner. The school embraces every opportunity to nurture spirituality and give Christian witness; these include:
 - The Well and the Spiritual Garden, both of which are made available to the wider community, as well as providing spiritual opportunities for pupils.
 - Opportunities for Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament.
 - Increasing use of silence and time for reflection.
 - Involvement of pupils in the liturgical life of the school, although this could be extended, particularly in upper key stage two.
 - Regular religious processions through the local area, for example, on the feasts of Corpus Christi and St Joseph.
 - Extending the work on spirituality to the children's homes, for example, prayer and rosary books going home, discussions on the 'big questions'.
- 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 consistent reinforcement of Gospel values and their application in helping children make the right choice.
- The school is moving to formalise the promotion of moral and ethical behaviour to the school's vision, through the use of a 'mission tree'; this is to be commended.

Leadership and management:

Outstanding

- Leadership at all levels is very strong and clearly centred on the mission of the school. The culture of reflection and rigorous self-review by the senior leaders, staff and directors/governors leads to constant challenge and the aiming for very high standards in all aspects of school life.
- The headteacher's outstanding leadership, with his clear focus on striving to '*welcome all in Christ's name and to see Christ in everyone*' impacts positively on all aspects of the life of this highly successful school and faith community.
- The board of directors/governing body are very strong supporters of the school and also act as a critical friend. They make an outstanding contribution to the work and direction of the school.
- The school is committed to identifying, valuing and nurturing the gifts of all in their community.
- The school has a well-structured approach to the diocesan self-review process. Good progress has been made on the issues identified for improvement in the last validation, especially in developing standards in RE and in engaging the wider community in the worship in the school.
- Although there is evidence that issues relating to RE and the Catholic life of the school are discussed at board level this is not always minuted in sufficient detail to reflect its core status.

School details

Name of school:	St Joseph's Catholic Primary School
Age range of pupils:	4 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number of pupils on roll:	484
Chair of Governors:	Dr Campbell McCafferty CBE
Headteacher:	Mr Bill James

St Joseph's is a Catholic Academy within the parish of St Joseph's. The school also serves the parish of Our Lady and Holy Trinity, Fleet. The school is a larger than average school, with the large majority of pupils coming from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities is slightly above average, while the number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is low. The school cares for children aged 0-4 in a pre-school and day nursery. The school is situated on an attractive site, with the various buildings named after the parishes that historically have connections with the school. The school will shortly be celebrating its 150th anniversary.

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 directors/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: Robert Dare
Assistant Validator: Sarah Matthews

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 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, deputy headteacher, RE co-ordinator, staff, directors/governors, parish priest, school chaplain, parents and pupils of St Joseph'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.