

DIOCESE OF PORTSMOUTH VALIDATION REPORT



St Mary's Catholic Primary School

Anns Hill Road, Gosport, Hampshire PO12 3NB

URN: 116394

Date of previous validation 24th May and 14th June 2019

Date of this validation 15th June 2022

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

This is a good school.

- St Mary's Catholic Primary School is a community of faith, firmly embedded in Gospel values, recognising, through their mission statement that, '*Dat deus Incrementum (With God we grow) for every child to flourish and achieve great things*'.
- The progress made since the last inspection is outstanding.
- The personal faith, leadership and dedication of the headteacher provides the vision that has taken the school forward and will continue to do so.
- St. Mary's is a school that knows itself well. The leadership team and governing body have an open and trusting relationship of support and challenge. Governors demonstrate an enthusiasm and dedication to the school.
- The regular support of the parish priest is of benefit to the school.
- Parents, who responded to the survey, were very positive about all aspects of school life.
- Leaders in the school have shown a strong commitment to improving standards in RE and their efforts have been successful. To build on this success, the school recognises it now needs to ensure there are opportunities for development of 'greater depth' within all lessons.
- Pupils are able to demonstrate learning through a variety of strategies e.g. written work, art, drama and discussion. Relationships within and beyond the classroom enhance learning.
- Moral development is good. Pupils are ambassadors for the school and speak about their school with pride. Their behaviour and attitudes are underpinned by their knowledge and living out of the school's mission statement. Children described their school as "*Joyful, caring and loving*".
- Through a variety of worship opportunities the children are opened to God's presence in their lives and in the lives of others. Through effective modelling by the staff, children now have a firm foundation on which to develop planning and leading prayer and worship in the school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

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

- Encouraging pupils to further develop their social conscience through living out Gospel values and the mission of the school by exploring opportunities to develop links with both the local and wider community.
- Mapping Catholic Social Teaching across the curriculum in a relevant and explicit manner.
- Developing the children's skills in planning and leading prayer and worship.

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 of the school is nurtured and valued. Along with the mission statement, the core values of *Community, Pride and Joy* are a constant. The sense of belonging was very evident in pupil responses during the validation.
- The parish priest supports the school through regular visits for Masses and class liturgies. He has been involved in the school's journey of improvement. He says: *'St Mary's is in a very good place, the foundations are being laid down and there is much hope for the future.'*
- Links are developing with local Catholic schools, for example, the RE leader meets regularly with others in the Edith Stein partnership. This allows for sharing of good practice. The school is currently seeking ways in which to further develop its links with both the local and wider community.
- The school effectively communicates with parents, ensuring they are kept up to date with what is happening and are given opportunities, such as the 'Achievement Passports', for collaborative working. 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, supportive Catholic community, where they are made to feel welcome and their children are happy. One parent stated, *'St Mary's is a school that listens and encourages children in their faith and their growth as a person.'*
- Pupils contribute to school life through school council, faith council and the Equality Ambassadors group. They feel able to contribute to the improvement of their community, an example being Year 6 being involved in the induction evening for new parents.
- All members of the school community demonstrate their commitment to the principles of stewardship through support of many initiatives, including Save the Children, Operation Christmas Child, CAFOD, Children in Need, Ukraine and Down Syndrome Day.

Curriculum religious education

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

- Pupils in the school 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 draw on knowledge of scripture and relate the messages to everyday life. Pupils acquire knowledge, develop understanding and learn and practise skills well.
- Progress is noticeable in all year groups. Teachers have been given clear direction and support to ensure good outcomes in RE and have worked hard to make the necessary changes. Teaching is effective and pupils enjoy their RE lessons. To improve outcomes still further, teachers need to ensure opportunities are provided in developing understanding allowing greater depth.
- The RE leader, who is also deputy headteacher, has enabled substantial improvement in a short space of time. Her skill and expertise is recognised.
- Teaching standards have benefited from moderation both internally and across the cluster, with good practice being shared and greater confidence in making judgements. The school values continuous professional development for staff.

- In all the lessons observed during the inspection, teachers showed good subject knowledge which contributed to the progress pupils made in the lessons.
- RE is at the core of St Mary's curriculum. Planning to further develop Catholic Social Teaching across the wider curriculum has already begun.
- Pupils are able to demonstrate learning through a variety of strategies e.g. written work, music, art, drama and discussion. Children show respect for the opinions and ideas of others and work well demonstrating cooperation.

Spiritual and moral development

Spiritual development:

Good

Moral development:

Good

- Prayer and worship are 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 Harvest Mass, Ash Wednesday and Stations of the Cross. The Marian procession, organised by the faith council, celebrates the centrality of Our Lady to the school. The school is aware of the need to continue to enhance and enrich the liturgical experience, by providing more opportunities for child-led worship.
- Children are respectful and engaged in collective worship and feel confident to contribute their responses.
- Many aspects of school life contribute to the spiritual development of children, including appreciation of the grounds and planning for 'awe and wonder' within the curriculum.
- Children's behaviour is good. The school's rewards and sanctions reinforce a culture of high expectations and positive encouragement. These rewards include house points and Stars of the Week, giving children a sense of positive pride. The 'Aspiration' work at the beginning of the year gives every child purpose and ambition.
- The children are given a wide range of opportunities to contribute to school life including school council, faith council, head students, Equality Ambassadors and other systems of responsibility.
- Pupils are proud of their school: *"It's a happy place". "I would say all my friends and teachers treat me kindly, with respect and I love this school"*.

Leadership and management:

- Since the last validation, the Catholic life of the school has been given its rightful prominence and the range and quality of the prayer life in the school has become enriched. Standards in RE have greatly improved.
- The personal faith and strong leadership of the headteacher is providing the vision that takes the school forward.
- The knowledge and dedication of the RE subject leader has ensured teaching and learning within RE has greatly improved. Staff feel confident to plan, deliver and assess this core subject.
- 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.

School details

Name of school:	St Mary's Catholic Primary School
Age range of pupils:	4-11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number of pupils on roll:	191
Chair of Governors:	Carmen Tweed
Headteacher:	Lauren O'Connor

St. Mary's is a Catholic primary school serving the parish of Gosport, Bridgemary and Lee on Solent. It is situated near the centre of Gosport in a residential area. There are 191 pupils on roll, of whom 27% are Catholic and 22% from other Christian traditions. The proportion of pupils eligible for pupil premium funding is 34%. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs is 18%. Pupils with English as another language (EAL) account for 17%.

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 Inspector: Louise Buxton
Assistant Inspector: Veronica Woodward

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.
- Pupil, staff and parent surveys.
- Feedback of key findings.

Conclusion

The validators would like to thank the headteacher, RE leader, staff, governors, parents and pupils of St Mary'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