

DIOCESE OF PORTSMOUTH VALIDATION REPORT



St Paul's Catholic Primary School, Portsmouth

Bourne Road, Paulsgrove, Portsmouth, Hampshire. PO1 1PX

URN: 116487
Validation dates: 26th June and 2nd July 2014

Overall effectiveness: **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:	Outstanding	Leadership and management:	Good

This is a good school.

- St Paul's is a good example of a Catholic school, where the mission statement is lived out in the life of the community and is evident in the strong relationships, good standards of behaviour and the actions and deeds of the children.
- Secure relationships between adults and children, based on mutual respect, have led to a positive climate for learning.
- The leadership of the headteacher helps to exemplify the school's Christian vision and the pursuit of high standards.
- Senior leaders, along with governors and the parish priest, have a clear strategic vision for the school and are determined to improve outcomes for children.
- The mutually supportive relationship between the school and the parish ensures that Christ is at the centre of the school community.
- Parents' views of the school are generally positive, as was recognised by the responses of parents to the questionnaire.
- Teaching overall is good. Evidence from books and the lessons observed indicated that children were making secure progress and reaching good standards in religious education (RE), which compared favourably with standards in English.
- The RE manager provides good support for staff and has been instrumental in improving the teaching and learning in RE.
- Pupils are respectful during times of prayer and recognise that this is a special time to build our relationship with Christ.
- The school effectively supports pupils' moral development. Strategies and approaches, which give pupils opportunities to take on responsibilities along with celebrations of achievements, positively promote pupils' self-esteem and good attitudes.
- The pupils respond positively in their support for charities and support for others.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

Validators recognise the progress that the school has made since the last RE validation and to continue this improvement suggest that the school:

- Shares the good practice seen in the best examples of the teaching of RE, so that high quality teaching is embedded to ensure consistency and sustained improvement across the school.
- Continues to monitor and evaluate achievement and standards to ensure the highest outcomes for all pupils.
- Continues to improve worship following the advice of the diocese.

Full Report

The school as a Catholic community

The school community: Good

The wider community: Good

- The school's mission statement and Christian ethos are evident in the daily actions, behaviours and relationships of the school community. The school is welcoming and determined to meet the needs of all pupils.
- Pupils value their school and take an active part in it, through their involvement as play leaders, prefects and in the school council.
- The school receives high levels of support from the parish priest, who recognises the strong and mutually supportive links that exist between the parish and school. The parish priest reported that the school hosts events for parishioners, which are very much appreciated.
- The school has worked hard to encourage parents to participate in the life of the school; for example, the governors have employed a family support worker, who works closely with a number of parents, supporting them in many ways. As a result attendance has improved.
- The school supports a number of charities, recognising its responsibility to reach out to others, e.g. CAFOD, Books for Bamenda.
- Opportunities to celebrate the diversity of the school community are well established, with pupils developing respect for other cultures and faiths. Visitors and a Community Week have helped pupils to understand what different faiths believe and how they pray.
- The school has received good support from a local Catholic school and the local cluster, where they have moderated work and shared good practice.
- The school's leadership recognise that they should be more active in the life of the diocese.
- The well-maintained and attractive environment and displays in the public area, make explicit the Catholic nature of the school.

Curriculum religious education

Attainment and progress: Good

Quality of teaching: Good

Leadership and management of RE: Good

- Pupils' work indicates that attainment in RE is broadly average, with progress from starting points good. This is largely in line with standards in English.
- Most pupils are able to demonstrate their learning through a range of strategies and appreciate the opportunities for creativity in religious education.
- The school now needs to embed effective, consistent and sustained differentiation for all pupils, especially those working at the higher level, to ensure that they make more rapid progress and enjoy greater achievement.
- Procedures linking outcomes of assessments with planning and teaching are beginning to have a positive impact on attainment. The validators recommend that this continues so that tasks are more carefully matched to pupils' ability.
- Pupils are keen to do well and apply themselves diligently in lessons.
- Teaching is judged to be good by the school. Teaching observed on the day of the validation was mainly good. In the best lessons pupils were interested and enthusiastic about their learning. Teachers' subject knowledge and questioning enabled pupils to demonstrate their understanding of Scripture and themes studied.
- The work scrutiny highlights the value placed on RE and the improvements that have been made since September.

- Response marking is beginning to have a positive impact on pupils' learning. Validators noted that as a matter of routine children read and responded to teachers' comments.
- The school has begun to record pupil achievement more rigorously. This should now be extended in order to have a positive impact on teaching and learning.
- RE displays are relevant to the current topic.
- The RE manager has worked hard to support staff in their teaching of RE. He has actively promoted high standards in RE and worked hard to support colleagues, including leading professional development.
- The partnership between the headteacher and the RE leader is strong and mutually supportive. They have implemented a range of increasingly effective monitoring activities that are beginning to have a positive impact.

Spiritual and moral development

Spiritual development: Good

Moral development: Outstanding

- There is a good range of opportunities to develop pupils' spirituality.
- Parents and the parish are encouraged to worship with the school community.
- The school uses the local church to develop children's understanding and appreciation of liturgies. The parish priest commented very positively on the pupils' attitudes and reverence during worship.
- The opportunities for meditation and reflection during worship need to be further embedded and the staff would benefit from the sharing of good practice from within and beyond the school.
- Modelling of good collective worship will enhance the quality of child-led worship. However, the validators would like to congratulate the children on their planning, preparation and leadership of the class worship.
- The school environment provides opportunities for personal prayer and reflection.
- The mission statement has a very positive impact in the everyday life of the school. Pupils explained how it is lived out.
- Staff are positive role models in developing the pupils' understanding of ethical and moral choices. Pupils recognise that they are well supported by the staff.
- Strong pastoral support from within the community, including learning mentors, ELSAs, Nurture Group leader and the Family Support worker ensure that this is a fully inclusive school.
- Older children provide a strong example for others to follow and support the rest of the school to resolve conflicts e.g. acting as play leaders. They respond positively to their responsibilities e.g. as prefects.
- The opportunities for celebrations and rewards are strong. This is recognised as a positive feature of the school by the pupils and parent community, who value the chance to come to celebrate achievements.

Leadership and management: Good

- The headteacher is determined to improve outcomes for all children.
- The senior leaders, well supported by governors, have a clear vision to improve St Paul's.
- The RE action plan identifies areas for development. The actions identified to improve teaching and learning would be strengthened by providing further opportunities to moderate and assess work in RE.
- The enthusiastic support and commitment of the parish priest contribute to the successful leadership and management of the school.
- The school has addressed the issues from the last validation effectively, especially by improving the monitoring of religious education and communication with parents, through the attractive and well-organised website. Self-review procedures are secure.

School details

Name of school	St Paul's Catholic Primary School
Age range of pupils:	4 – 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number of pupils on roll:	384
Chair of Governors:	Shelagh Moore
Headteacher:	Brenda Schouller

St Paul's is a Voluntary Aided Catholic Primary school, serving the parish of St Colman and St Paul. It is situated in Paulsgrove, an area to the North of the City of Portsmouth. With 384 children on roll, St Paul's is an above average-sized primary school. Of its teaching staff 46% are Catholic. The percentage of children eligible for free school meals and the pupil premium is approximately 32%. Pupils identified by the school as having special educational needs (23%) are above the national average. There are 5 pupils with a statement of special educational needs. Approximately 71% of pupils on roll are from a White British background. The remainder are from a wide mix of ethnic backgrounds. Approximately 22% are learning English as an additional language.

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

Ursula Clark	Lead Validator
Tony Murray	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 key stage and class worship.
- Observations of teaching and learning in RE, including joint observations with senior staff.
- Pupil work scrutiny.
- Feedback of key findings to the leadership team and representatives of the governing body.

Conclusion

The validators would like to thank the headteacher, RE manager, staff, governors, the parish priest, parents and pupils of St Paul'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.