

DIOCESE OF PORTSMOUTH VALIDATION REPORT



St. Paul's Catholic Primary School

Bourne Rd, Paulsgrove, Portsmouth PO6 4JD

URN: 116487
 Date of previous validation: 2nd July 2014
 Date of this validation: 2nd July 2019

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:	Good	Leadership and management:	Good

This is a good school

- St Paul's is a good example of a Catholic school community, where the mission statement and Christian ethos, have a very positive impact. This is evident in the good relationships between adults and pupils leading to a loving and trusting environment, where all are encouraged to live out their mission statement of *"Do everything with love."*
- The school community values and celebrates all as God's children.
- The strong leadership of the executive headteacher and her senior leadership team enhances the school's Christian vision and strong ethos of the school.
- The regular support of the new parish priest is becoming of great benefit to the school.
- St Paul's is a school where strengths are recognised and celebrated and any areas for development that are identified are quickly addressed.
- Governors play a key role in acting as critical friends.
- The school's Catholic ethos is enhanced by the high quality of the physical environment and the many outstanding displays, celebrating its Catholic identity.
- The quality of teaching is good as are the standards in RE.
- Good relationships within and beyond the classroom enhance learning.
- Staff and children act as witnesses to their faith through their support of one another and their support for local, national and international charities.
- Parents are supportive of the school. A large majority of parents were very positive about all aspects of school life especially the school's sense of welcome and relationships.
- Spiritual development is outstanding. Pupils are very good ambassadors for the school and speak about their school with pride. Their good behaviour and attitudes are underpinned by their knowledge and living out of the school's mission statement: children said, *'We are not just different classes we are one big person making a whole school 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 there is consistent challenge for all pupils both in thinking and written work, which may be through differentiated or open ended tasks.
- Ensure planning provides regular and frequent opportunities for children to demonstrate the depth of their knowledge and understanding of scripture.
- Ensure more time for personal reflection is built into worship to enable all those participating to reflect on the message of the scripture and to deepen their relationship with God.

Full Report

The school as a Catholic community

The school community:	Outstanding
The wider community:	Outstanding

- The mission statement is firmly embedded into all aspects of school life, enabling children and staff to, ‘*Do everything with love.*’ Pupils spoken to talked confidently and gave examples of how they do their best to put the words into action.
- The school has a calm and welcoming atmosphere. Relationships within the school community are very strong and children respond openly and with confidence.
- The induction of new members of staff to the school reflects the community’s commitment to be inclusive, caring and supportive.
- The Catholic ethos is strongly evident within the school environment. High quality displays contribute to an attractive and purposeful community of learning.
- Parents hold the school in good regard. They recognise it as a caring Catholic community, where they are made to feel welcome and their children are happy.
- The school council and the eco council bring the children together so that they have a highly vocal pupil voice in the school.
- Children are given many opportunities to be role models including, school councillors, prefects, play leaders, librarians, prayer leaders, and JRSO (Junior Road Safety Officer).
- The school has a visible presence within the parish church. Classes regularly attend mass in the parish. The parish priest is a regular visitor to the school, offering support when required.
- All members of the school community demonstrate their full commitment to the principles of discipleship, for example, through their support for CAFOD, Bamenda and Kerala disasters.

Curriculum religious education

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

- The evidence in the pupils’ books, the quality of teaching and discussions with pupils all combine to show that attainment and progress in RE are good, with some elements of very secure practice observed on the day of the validation.
- In the lessons observed as part of the validation, evidence was seen of pupils reflecting on the sacraments. In the best lessons, learning was enhanced by teachers’ subject knowledge, links to liturgy, good questioning, use of talk partners, personal experience and links to prior learning. Pupils reflected on how they could be Jesus’ modern day disciples and the youngest children, through high expectations, were able to talk confidently about the scripture shared and showed their knowledge of the signs and symbols discussed through role play.
- Pupils demonstrated a positive attitude to learning and behaviour was good.
- Planning and success criteria need to be driven by the new assessment framework and the school needs to embed effective, consistent and sustained differentiation for all pupils. Pupils need to be challenged in their thinking and allowed opportunities to voice their opinions more. There also needs to be greater reference to scripture, particularly in Key Stage 2, to underpin learning.
- RE displays are of a high standard but need to be used more as working walls that include key questions, vocabulary and pupil responses.
- The RE leader, who is also the deputy head of school, provides tireless and effective support for RE and as a result the subject has a high status within the school
- The leadership team including the RE leader monitor pupil progress through lesson observations, book scrutinies and assessment data and as a result standards are good.
- St Paul’s agreed to be a pilot school for proposed changes to assessment in RE and has adapted how it tracks pupils’ progress and has begun to moderate teacher judgements against the new assessment criteria.

Spiritual and moral development

Spiritual development:

Outstanding

Moral development:

Good

- St Paul's is a good example of a Catholic school community, where a wide range of experiences contribute to the spiritual development of pupils including meditation and individual prayer.
- Prayer and worship are integral to the daily life of St. Paul's. The range of worship offered is extensive through masses, assemblies, class liturgies, use of the Creation Garden and reconciliation services.
- Children's attitudes to worship and spirituality are outstanding, which is evident during acts of worship. Year 1 children were able to think about the importance of St Peter as the rock and were able to place their rock to help build the Church around Jesus and engage in stillness and reverence.
- Care must be taken to ensure that the children's experience of worship is different to that of an RE lesson. The number of questions asked should be kept to a minimum and more time built in to enable all those participating to reflect quietly on the key message of the scripture and to deepen their personal relationship with God.
- The use of prayer bags during Lent and Advent foster strong home school links.
- The growing support from the new parish priest and the tireless work from the lay chaplain greatly enhances the spiritual life of the school.
- All members of the community are invited to join the school for liturgies and masses.
- The mission statement underpins the moral development of all pupils, with staff providing excellent role models for the children. As a result, pupil behaviour at St Paul's is good.
- Children are justifiably proud of the various roles they hold in the school and carry them out enthusiastically and diligently.
- The celebration of achievement promotes pupil self-esteem and confidence. The children are rewarded for good behaviour and successes are celebrated in a variety of ways such as the celebration assembly and are not limited to academic achievement.
- Pupils are thoughtful and reflective, demonstrating the school's good provision for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. They describe their school as a place '*where we are welcomed, feel like a family and we can count on each other to follow in Jesus' footsteps*'.

Leadership and management: Good

- The personal witness to the faith provided by the executive headteacher, head of school, lay chaplain and deputy head of school provides a strong vision and direction for the work of the school.
- The effective approach to monitoring and evaluation of all aspects of the life of the school, enables the school to constantly challenge itself. There is an insistence on high standards in all aspects of learning.
- A small yet dedicated governing body take a keen interest in the mission, development and progress of the school.
- Morale is high and staff are committed to the mission, development and success of the school, which is made possible by the unfailing support of senior management and all leaders.
- Staff are committed to supporting the school and work purposefully to further its success.
- The robust self-review process is reflective and shared with a range of stakeholders including governors who both challenge and support.
- Good progress has been made on the issues identified for improvement in the last validation. Worship though strong could be improved further by allowing more time for reflection.

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:	387
Chair of Governors:	Alex Speight
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 387 children on roll, St Paul's is an above average-sized primary school. Of its teaching staff 38% are Catholic. The percentage of children eligible for free school meals and the pupil premium is approximately 40%. Ten per cent of pupils are identified by the school as having 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

Nuala Oster	Lead Validator
Sherlyn Lown	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 whole school and class worship.
- Observations of teaching and learning in RE, including joint observations with the executive headteacher, head of school and deputy head of school.
- Pupil work scrutiny.
- Feedback of key findings to the senior management team and RE governors.

Conclusion

The validators would like to thank the executive headteacher, head of school, RE leader, 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.