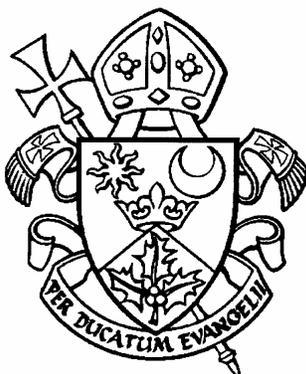


THE VALIDATION REPORT



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 under Section 23 of the 1996 School Inspections Act.

| | |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| NAME OF SCHOOL | St Thomas of Canterbury Catholic Primary School |
| ADDRESS | High Street Carisbrooke Newport Isle of Wight PO30 1NR |
| CHAIRMAN OF GOVERNORS | M. Kevin Doran |
| HEADTEACHER | Mr Neal Bosworth (Acting) |
| NAMES OF VALIDATORS | Mr Robert Dare Mrs Fran Valentine |
| DATE OF THE VALIDATION VISIT | 16 November 2006 |

Information about the school

| | |
|-------------------------------|-----|
| Number of pupils on roll | 80 |
| Number of boys | 41 |
| Number of girls | 39 |
| Number of statemented pupils | 0 |
| Percentage of Catholic pupils | 41% |
| Number of teaching staff | 6 |
| Percentage of Catholic staff | 36% |

St Thomas of Canterbury Catholic Primary School is a small school serving the parish of St Thomas of Canterbury, Newport, which is one mile from the school. There are 80 children on roll of whom 41% are Catholic; 25% from other Christian traditions; 1% from other faiths and 33% with no stated faith commitment. The school was recently federated with St Mary's Catholic Primary School, Ryde. The school serves families from a range of socio-economic backgrounds. Almost all of the pupils are of white British heritage, there are a small number of pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds. The majority of pupils at the end of year four transfer to Archbishop King Middle School. The majority of teaching staff are Catholic.

The school's effectiveness in providing Catholic education

St Thomas of Canterbury School reflects much of what is good about a Catholic community. There is a strong sense of commitment to the mission of the school: the quality of relationships between all members of the school community is very good, with everyone supporting each other and the school welcomes all who pass through its doors.

Religious education (RE) is given high status in the school. The provision for RE in the school is broadly satisfactory, with the leadership in the school committed to raising standards quickly.

In promoting the spiritual and moral development of the pupils, St. Thomas' ethos permeates all aspects of the school and offers good opportunities for the pupils' development in these key areas. Young people are valued, respected, spoken to and dealt with in ways that draw the best out of them.

a) Strengths of the school

- All in the school community do their best to live out the mission statement. There is a strong sense of welcome in the school and an atmosphere of care and nurturing of the pupils.
- The way in which all in the community have worked together and supported each other during a difficult period in the life of the school.
- The Christian leadership of the acting headteacher and his hard work and commitment to moving the school forward during a difficult period. His leadership is strengthened and supported by the work of the school's governing body.
- The dedication and enthusiasm of the school staff to providing good quality pastoral support for all pupils.
- The school gains great benefit from the work of the two priests most closely linked with the school. There is a good range of links between the school and main feeder parish and both groups are committed to building on these to strengthen the partnership further.
- The school council is an effective pupil voice for consultation and change.
- The good standard of spiritual and moral development.
- The school's active participation in the local Catholic cluster of schools, which is an effective and mutually supportive group for maintaining and developing Catholic education on the Island.
- The commitment and enthusiasm shown by the school in the introduction of the revised diocesan RE scheme.
- The pride taken by the pupils in their RE work, which is enhanced by the way it is presented in their 'Special RE Book'.

b) Areas for development

- Ensure that targets in the school's diocesan self-review are specific and attainable.
- Ensure that the Catholic life of the school always forms a key strand of the school development plan.
- Further develop planning to ensure that all pupils make progress in religious education through the use of appropriate support and challenge.

WHAT THE SCHOOL SAYS:

SECTION A.1: The school community

WHERE ARE WE NOW? (Strengths)

- Mission Statement developed shared and reviewed by all staff, pupils and governors annually and in focus for more in depth review every four years. Mission statement sent to all parents in prospectus when they start school and every year at the first parent meeting of the year. It is owned by all within community and has its basis in strong Christian values. (Due for review Autumn 2006)
- We have a clear Induction Policy and check list for staff .
- We have a clear process for introducing and welcoming our annual intake into the Reception Class. We have informal but very secure structures to welcome children into classes across the school.
- We review our Continuous Professional Development Policy regularly and this links with our Performance Management Cycle
- Performance Management recognises and rewards hard work.
- Clear policy for Rewards linked to our Behaviour Policy
- Staff work as a mutually supportive team. Recent reports show that they are a happy and committed community with a strong sense of team work.
- Communication is good between staff, pupils, parents and parish although the school is working hard to further improve communications with parents and priest
- As reflected in our Mission Statement and School Aims everyone's views and strengths are valued.
- The school supports the preparation for the children's First Holy Communion through the curriculum which reinforces the learning. Members of the school are involved in after school catechism. We also invite the children to talk about and celebrate their learning and achievements. Staff members represent the school at the Holy Communion Celebrations.
- The majority of teachers are practicing Christians who have a very sound knowledge and understanding of the Gospel Values.
- Good quality displays and Focal Points throughout the school give messages of continuity and sense of whole school community as well as being informative and setting standards.
- Governing Body places a high priority upon RE and its place across the curriculum through ensuring:
 - a. One Development Day a year is for Staff Development in this area.
 - b. RE co-ordinator or school representative attends all appropriate training.
 - c. Areas in each class base are dedicated for RE and sharing prayer.
 - d. Each teacher ensures that their class has at least two hours of RE per week.
- At Isle of Wight level partnership between the Catholic Schools is very strong and supportive.
- Governors take an active part in the life of the school through acquiring a deeper knowledge of the school and its needs by:
 1. Regularly attending governor and committee meetings in order to fulfil their strategic role
 2. Formal visits to monitor classes, subjects, staffing, admissions finance and buildings
 3. Informal visits to carry out tasks to support the school and the development of their role and knowledge of the school.
 4. Attending meetings and training set up by the Dioceses and the LEA to enable them to carry out their role more fully.
- Each term parents are sent letters and leaflets providing an overview of all subject areas and another that offers guidance on the topics to be covered in RE (Here I Am) and how they relate to the Gospel values and the Liturgical Year. These linked to Parent's Meetings and Reports aim to enable parents to support their child.
- Communication between home, school and parish is maintained through weekly Newsletters.
- As reflected in our Mission Statement and through clear carefully followed through policies and procedures we aim to value all who work and learn within our school:
 - a. Non-Catholics and Catholics receive the same consideration
 - b. Non-teaching staff are highly valued and their needs and development are considered as part of the Performance Management process
- Our school is repeatedly recognised as a very welcoming and caring community.
- Equal opportunities policy which is reviewed annually and ensures everyone is valued and given appropriate opportunities to develop.
- Our School Self Evaluation Process links all aspects of monitoring. We have policies for Racial Equality, SEN, Gifted and Talented, Monitoring and Assessment that all aim to help us meet the needs of all our pupils through being aware of their many and varied needs. We also have action plans for Disabled Access and Racial Equality that ensure that this area is given appropriate consideration across the year.

WHAT THE SCHOOL SAYS:

- Through many areas of the school we try to celebrate the many rich cultures that help our pupils to have an understanding of the diverse cultures across the world. We appreciate that we are lucky to have experience of some of these at first hand through some of our parents, pupils and staff. We use visits and visitors to help develop the children's understanding of the world in which they live.
- There is a clear building programme for development and maintenance. Much effort is made by all staff to provide a bright, stimulating and attractive environment.
- Much work has been done and is planned to improve the school grounds and an Environment Club is run by Teaching Assistants.
- The staff room will be re built in 2007 and will help to provide a better environment for staff.
- Every available space is utilised in order to ensure that there is a place for everything as far as possible.

HOW DO WE KNOW? (Evidence)

- Mission Statement and photographs reflecting the ways in which it is shared.
- Prospectus
- Ref to Mission Statement in Policies
- School Assemblies that link to Mission Statement and School rules.
- Induction Policy and Check List.
- Admission documentation
- Continuous Professional Development Policy
- Performance Management Documentation
- Examples of staff congrats in newsletter.
- Behaviour Policy and Awards.
- Newsletters and other communication with parents
- Notice boards. Display boards
- School Curriculum Aims,
- Governor Minutes, Staff Meeting Minutes, Governor Visit Records
- Staff and Governor audits.
- School Council minutes.
- Home School Agreement.
- Parents / visitors comments, cards, letters.
- RE and collective Worship observation egs,
- Focal Points of prayer and RE Displays
- School Development Plan
- School Self Evaluation Policy,
- Training and development records
- All Governors receive copy of School Governors News letter, Portsmouth Diocese.
- Pupil Reports
- FOSMA information and photos.
- Family Learning and Support / Share information
- Equal Opportunities, Racial Equality, SEN, Gifted and Talented, Monitoring and Assessment Policies. Action plans for Disabled Access and Racial Equality
- Other visitors eg: Barnardos

WHAT WILL WE DO NOW? (Areas to be developed and targets for action)

- Develop further communication with parents to improve understanding and involvement in their children's learning.
- Continue to strengthen links with the local community.
- Include target for leadership in a Catholic Community for new Acting Head and Acting Deputy's Performance Management.
- Continue work on outside environment and school building.

TARGET CHOSEN

- Develop parental engagement in their children's learning – improve communications.

REFERENCE TO SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Development Area 2

VALIDATORS' JUDGEMENTS

SECTION A.1: The school community

STRENGTHS

Validators judge that St Thomas of Canterbury is a good example of a Catholic community.

Validators commend the following strengths:

- All in the school community do their best to live out the mission statement.
- Pupils are nurtured within a Christian atmosphere.
- The Christian leadership of the acting headteacher and his hard work and commitment to moving the school forward during a difficult period.
- The strong links established by the governing body. Many governors are regular visitors to the school. The governing body is very supportive of the school and is developing its rôle of critical friend by being ready to challenge the school leadership where appropriate.
- The dedication and enthusiasm of the school staff to providing good quality pastoral support for all pupils.
- The welcome extended by all in the school to parents, visitors and parishioners.
- Parents regard the school as a welcoming, supportive and caring Catholic community in which their children are happy.
- The school recognises and celebrates pupils' achievements in a variety of ways.
- The view of the pupils, as expressed by the school council, is that teachers care for the children, that the school is a fair place, where they can meet their friends and where they are taught to love God and to learn what they thought they could not do.

AREAS TO BE DEVELOPED

In addition to the target chosen by the school

- Consult with all in the school community on revising the school's mission statement.
- Ensure the Catholic life of the school always forms a key strand of the school development plan.

WHAT THE SCHOOL SAYS:

SECTION A.2: Worship in the school

WHERE ARE WE NOW? (Strengths)

A.2.1 Assemblies and Worship

- The school has an annually reviewed Collective Worship Policy. This works alongside the carefully planned programme of assemblies to ensure that all staff work to common, clearly understood aims.
- Worship is linked to 'Here I Am' and events across the Liturgical Year'.
- Meaningful prayer is an integral part of all acts of worship.
- Across the week there are whole school and class acts of worship, this enables pupils to be involved in preparation and participate in a range of different ways
- Music, Art and Drama are used where they will enhance the theme and develop the children's understanding of the key elements.
- All staff have different styles and gifts. The teaching staff, supported by other staff, visitors and pupils lead whole school assemblies on a rota.
- As a staff we believe that through ensuring that we end the week by sharing an assembly with all staff and all pupils, we confirm our sense of community. We believe that through our collective worship programme we can follow through themes and prayers in a meaningful way and allow for further reflection at year group and individual pupil level across the week. We feel that our programmes of worship offer our pupils variety and potential for awe and wonder.

A.2.2 Liturgy

- School celebrations are planned for the term ahead with the Parish Priest.
- All pupils prepare for any school Mass or celebration by hearing simplified readings and reflecting on the themes. We practice the music for the Mass at school and class level. The children from Key Stage 2 take responsibility for the Readings and the Offertory.
- Special leaflets are produced for all Masses to help with singing and sometimes reading. Prayer cards are sometimes produced for children and parents.
- Where possible Holy Days are marked by a Mass or celebration in school but this varies due to the other commitments of the Parish Priest. Examples of special Liturgical celebrations for special times which we have had include the School Feast Day, Remembrance Day, Advent Service, Christingle Service, Reconciliation Service during Lent etc.
- Through the curriculum work and class liturgies, the school supports the Parish based programme for preparing the children for the Sacrament of Reconciliation. The children have opportunities to receive the Sacrament within the Parish and the school helps to keep the children and families aware of these opportunities.

A.2.3 Attitudes of pupils

- Our whole school approach to acts of worship ensures that year on year we work towards building on and extending children's experience.
- Children have appropriate experience of the Mass to support our Home School Parish approach to this area.
- Each class has a celebration Liturgy at the end of each topic that enables them to share work produced and the knowledge and understanding that has been developed.
- Children gain most from assemblies and liturgies when both they and their peers are actively involved. We try to ensure that whole school celebrations always have an element of active pupil involvement.

HOW DO WE KNOW? (Evidence)

- Collective Worship Policy
- Collective Worship timetable examples
- Sample planning for assemblies
- Observations of acts of worship
- Photographs
- Newsletters referring to celebrations.
- Interview with Parish Priest.
- Examples of curriculum work on Reconciliation.

WHAT THE SCHOOL SAYS:

- Examples of school Masses and special celebrations
- Observation of prayer times and times for reflection around the school
- Focal points for prayer in all classes
- School Prayer Leaflet
- Samples of children's prayers

WHAT WILL WE DO NOW? (Areas to be developed and targets for action)

- Further develop staff knowledge, experience and expertise with planning for worship and prayer so that we can maximise the opportunities and experiences for pupils.
- Continue to develop the Parish School links with the Parish Priest's support.
- Extend the range of resources for Collective Worship and Prayer.
- Complete an update of a School Prayer Leaflet

TARGET CHOSEN

- Further develop staff knowledge, experience and expertise with planning for worship and prayer in line with review of the Here I Am curriculum, so that we can maximise the opportunities and experiences for pupils.

REFERENCE TO SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Development Area 3

VALIDATORS' JUDGEMENTS

SECTION A.2: Worship in the school

STRENGTHS

Validators judgement is that the range and quality of worship are good.

Validators commend the following:

- Worship is linked to the liturgical year or the RE programme.
- Pupils are involved in liturgy through a variety of ways, for example, contributing their own prayers, drama and artwork.
- The parish priest and school staff work hard to ensure the pupils are offered a range of good quality liturgical services, for example, Masses and assemblies, services of reconciliation and a harvest celebration. Many of these are open to parents and parishioners.
- In each classroom there is a prayer area linked with the liturgical year or the current RE topic. There is also an attractive and informative display in the entrance area.
- From the records the school keeps of its monitoring of worship and the observation carried out during the validation, it can be seen that the quality of the worship in the school is good.
- In the worship observed on the day of the validation, pupils were respectful, and well focussed.
- The school has a comprehensive policy for collective worship, which emphasises the central place of Scripture.

AREAS TO BE DEVELOPED

In addition to the school target of supporting staff in planning and leading worship,

- To continue to develop children's individual prayer and reflection.
- To ensure the school hall reflects the Catholic ethos of the school, through an appropriate focus or display.

WHAT THE SCHOOL SAYS:

SECTION A.3: The rôle of priests and chaplaincy issues

WHERE ARE WE NOW? (Strengths)

A.3.1 Visits by priests and chaplaincy issues

- As part of a federated school we have visits from two priests. Father Bruce is our Parish Priest and visits the school informally and attends our special assemblies. Father John is on the Board of Governors and also visits the school informally – in this role he has a holistic and strategic view of the school and also of its partner school, St Mary's, and influences the decisions made for the school.
- We do not have a school chaplain

A.3.2 Links with Parishes

- There are satisfactory links with our feeder parish.
 - a) School has Governors who are also part of the PPC, thus ensuring that communication is maximised.
 - b) Newsletters are exchanged between school and parishes
 - c) Home, School and Parish work together in mutually supportive roles but this could be developed further.
 - d) Parishioners are invited to school celebrations and Masses.
 - e) We have a number of parishioners who support the school by being regular voluntary helpers.
 - f) The parish support the school with collections of tokens etc.
 - g) The school ensures that the children preparing for the first sacraments are supported in school through the work in class and opportunities to share and celebrate with the other children. We have also supported families with the preparation and celebration of baptism.
 - h) The school also works closely with the other Catholic schools on the island and the strong partnership that we have has been praised. We use this partnership approach to work together with all the parish priests to look at our future work for the children on the island.

HOW DO WE KNOW? (Evidence)

- Parish Priest interviews.
- Pupil interviews.
- Photographs
- Governor membership list
- Newsletter samples
- Poster examples inviting/informing parishioners about school events.
- Photographs
- Newspaper cuttings.
- Bishop's report.

WHAT WILL WE DO NOW? (Areas to be developed and targets for action)

- Continue to develop liaison with the parish and other members of the wider parish community.
- Work with the other island Catholic schools and the priests of the Deanery to define the reality of what we can expect from the parishes and what they can expect from us.

TARGET CHOSEN

- Work with the other island Catholic schools and the priests of the Denary to define the reality of what we can expect from the parishes and what they can expect from us.

REFERENCE TO SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT PLAN Development Area 2

VALIDATORS' JUDGEMENTS

SECTION A.3: The rôle of priests and chaplaincy issues

STRENGTHS

Validators' judgement is that the support offered by the priests associated with the school is good, as are the links with the main feeder parish.

Validators commend the following:

- The school gains great benefit from the work of the two priests most closely linked with the school. They help to provide strong Christian leadership to all in the school community.
- The parish priest of St Thomas of Canterbury Church is a regular visitor, well-known by all in the school and a visible sign of the partnership between the school and the parish.
- The good partnership between the school and parish is demonstrated through:
 - the school's support of the parish sacramental programmes.
 - use of school facilities by the parish
 - invitations to parishioners to attend celebrations at the school
 - availability of school and parish newsletters to both parents and parishioners.
 - parishioners supporting the learning, for example, hearing children read.
 - pupils' work displayed in church.
 - the school nativity formed part of the service for the feast of the Epiphany in the parish church.

AREAS TO BE DEVELOPED

- The school's own target.

WHAT THE SCHOOL SAYS:

SECTION A.4: The wider community

WHERE ARE WE NOW? (Strengths)

A.4.1 The Wider Catholic Community

- Our Mission Statement, prospectus and shared policies and procedures create and support a sense of common awareness and purpose. This ensures that the principles of Catholic education remain at the forefront of the school's endeavour.
- The school works closely with the Diocese and is satisfactorily supported by the various departments. We support the Service Level Agreement and buy into the training for governors, leadership and teaching ensuring that the school stays fully up to date with new initiatives.
- The partnership between the Catholic schools on the island is a great strength. We work closely together at all levels to maximise efficiency and share the workload of common tasks. We have regular Cluster Meetings and we are regularly supported at these meetings by the Diocese and the LEA.
- One development day a year is given over to shared island inset. In addition the Catholic Cluster has an annual plan of shared staff training and planning initiatives.
- The Federation between St Mary's and St Thomas of Canterbury has strengthened the two schools but the current leadership situation is temporary and the Governors are aware of the need to fill the important posts of Executive Head and School Leader as soon as possible.
- The school works hard to support all diocesan initiatives as they are usually to the mutual benefit of school and Diocese.

A.4.2 The Local Community

- School works closely with local cluster of schools on initiatives such as Family Support and Behaviour Support.
- The school participates in local events such as the Carnival etc.
- Members of the local community are welcomed as helpers into the school community. Once again this enables us to share our Mission Statement and school aims in promoting the principles of peace, justice, truth and love in the locality. It also enables the children to value the part played by the older members of our community.
- We make sure that our children recognise the role that members of our local community play and provide letters/cards and gifts as signs of our appreciation when appropriate.
- We look to supporting local charities as well as the Catholic Children's Society and CAFOD in our fund raising for Charity.
- We look closely at our local community and environment in various aspects of our Geography, History, Science, PSHE and RE curriculum. These ensure that we keep up to date with local issues.
- We have a School Police Liaison Officer who supports our children in and out of school and backs up our school values of peace, truth and justice.
- The school is available for lettings both from the local community and from parents.

A.4.3 The World Community

- Our curriculum involves informing and exploring our place within the wider world and introduces the children to our place within the World Church.
- We encourage visits from members of the wider community who can help children and staff explore the national and international mission of the Church and the richness of cultural diversity.
- Portsmouth People, Catholic Teachers Gazette, Times Educational Supplement, African Mission publication and the CAFOD magazines are all provided regularly for staff information in school. Staff are also invited to request other periodicals and magazines as needed.
- All staff have internet access in their rooms and are advised of useful sites for information regarding RE Curriculum, Collective Worship ideas, current local, national and world issues, etc.
- Children in KS2 are offered a residential visit to an Island Activity Centre and as part of this visit we look at the local Churches and the history. On previous visits the local Parish Priest has met us there and talked to the children about the links with their parish and the special things about his parish. On the last visit Father John conducted a mass for the two schools at the residential centre.
- The school annually contributes to CAFOD and the Catholic Children's Society. Other local, national and world wide charities are selected on a yearly/termly basis in an effort to recognise the interests and needs of our changing community.

WHAT THE SCHOOL SAYS:

HOW DO WE KNOW? (Evidence)

- Mission Statement
- Prospectus
- Policy samples
- List of training and Development days linked to Diocese for Staff and Governors
- Governing Body Minutes re: Federation, SLA, Building Fund
- Governors Fundraising information.
- Cluster Group Minutes
- Minutes Spiritual Development Group
- Diocesan Cluster Group Minutes
- Photographs
- Behaviour and Family Support Leaflets/ Programmes
- Newsletters
- Thank you's
- Fundraising Information
- PC White's visits
- Planning
- OfSTED Report
- Examples of periodicals
- East Dene / Little Canada Information
- Fundraising information.

WHAT WILL WE DO NOW? (Areas to be developed and targets for action)

- Continue to develop our role within the local community – Parish and Island wide.
- Continue to support our role within the Diocesan community.
- Maintain good practice recognised in helping promote understanding of Cultural Diversity.
- Audit needs/wishes of staff regarding availability of publications and periodicals.
- Support developments to provide more support for Catholic families island wide.
- Develop the role of a School Press Officer

TARGET CHOSEN

- Continue to develop our role within the local community – parish and island wide.

REFERENCE TO SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Development Area 2

VALIDATORS' JUDGEMENTS

SECTION A.4: The wider community

STRENGTHS

The validators' judgement is that the school has good links with the wider community, which they are keen to strengthen and develop.

Validators commend the following:

- The children's involvement in local and wider community charitable works throughout the year, for example, Beans for Barnardo's, Catholic Children's Society, Mountbatten Hospice, and the recently initiated link with a school in Ghana.
- How the school helps children to become aware of local, national and worldwide issues and events.
- The school participates, wherever possible, in diocesan events, for example, at the Good Shepherd Mass in Portsmouth Cathedral, diocesan led in-service training.
- The good links with the local Catholic middle school, including good transfer links, Global Rock, attendance by older pupils from the school at Masses held at the middle school and joint RE planning and in-service training. Both schools also have the same chair of governors.
- The school played a key rôle in the early development and success of the Primary Catholic Partnership for School Centred Initial Teacher Training, which has benefited many schools in the Diocese through the training and provision of high quality primary school teachers. They are now looking forward to resuming their full participation.
- The very strong and supportive local Catholic cluster of schools, who meet and work together at a number of different levels, for example, headteacher, governor and shared in-service.
- Its participation in local events, for example, the Ryde and Newport Carnivals, and Walk the Wight.

AREAS TO BE DEVELOPED

- Further involvement of the school council across the federation.

WHAT THE SCHOOL SAYS:

SECTION B.1: Leadership and co-ordination of RE

WHERE ARE WE NOW? (Strengths)

- The previous headteacher provided high quality leadership and vision with clear expectations; these have had a positive impact on the school and the current staff are continuing the good work.
- Governors play a supportive role in the leadership of RE provision across the school and are aware of the performance management process. They have always ensured that the Headteacher has had professional targets clearly linked to her role as RE Subject Leader.
- Teaching and support staff work well as a team within the school.
- The new subject leaders work closely with the staff, governors and parish priest to ensure high quality RE provision across the school. They are supported by their Catholic Consultant Head.
- RE is at the heart of the school with the mission statement leading all documentation and influencing all areas of school life.
- There has been clear effective planning for the delivery of RE and unit assessment but this is now under review in the light of new diocesan advice regarding the teaching of Here I Am.
- Teaching and non-teaching staff positively contribute to living the Mission and the delivery of the RE curriculum.
- RE display and artefacts positively impact and support the delivery of the RE curriculum and school ethos. The resources, displays and prayer focus areas within the school are good. The subject leader and the Catholic Consultant Head provide good quality support and direction for staff on the use of displays and other resources.
- Partnership with most parents, other schools and the community are good, however there is more work to be done to continue to develop this.

HOW DO WE KNOW? (Evidence)

- The Mission Statement.
- The Ofsted report
- The School Development Plan
- The Prospectus.
- Newsletters and school information.
- Active involvement of parent association, and enthusiastic family learning group.
- Rewards systems
- Parent helpers enthusiastic and reliable.
- RE co-ordinators job description
- Self-evaluation policy and process.
- Long and medium term planning.

WHAT WILL WE DO NOW? (Areas to be developed and targets for action)

- The new leadership arrangements have led to changes in the way RE is led and managed – these arrangements need to be monitored and reviewed termly.
- Further the awareness of the self –review process with staff , the school council and governors.
- Maintain the sharing of good practise within and across the federation schools with new staffing arrangements.
- Develop high quality teaching of RE using new curriculum guidance.
- Review assessment of RE in line with new curriculum.
- Continue to look for ways to build home community partnerships further, especially with the more disengaged families.

TARGET CHOSEN

- Maintain the high quality of leadership of RE in the light of the new staffing arrangements.
- Develop high quality teaching of RE using new curriculum guidance.

REFERENCE TO SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Development Area 4

VALIDATORS' JUDGEMENTS

SECTION B.1: Leadership and co-ordination of RE

STRENGTHS

The validators judge the leadership and co-ordination of RE to be good.

Validators commend the following:

- The school has shown commitment and enthusiasm in the introduction of the revised diocesan RE scheme.
- The school's commitment to providing regular staff training in religious education, including the use of one of its training days each year.
- Key staff in the school also make good use of in-service training offered by the Diocese.
- The school regularly monitors its RE provision through observations in school and pupil work scrutinies done through the cluster group.
- The commitment and support shown by the recently appointed RE leader.

AREAS TO BE DEVELOPED

- Ensure that all staff continue to be supported through the implementation of the new diocesan RE scheme.

WHAT THE SCHOOL SAYS:

SECTION B.2: Attainment and progress in religious education

WHERE ARE WE NOW? (Strengths)

- Implementation of new diocesan planning advice has begun.
- Curriculum planning is being reviewed as part of the school's creative partnership work and curriculum mapping will identify cross curricular links to RE.
- The subject leaders have a clear understanding of their monitoring and review responsibilities to inform assessment of the school's attainment and progress in RE.
- Achievement and the quality of religious education provided is at least satisfactory for all abilities and ages and is often good.
- The Federation is almost always represented at Diocesan, Deanery and Catholic Head teachers meetings.
- Support staff are well trained and are used effectively within classes to support the pupils' learning and development.
- The Gifted and Talented co-ordinator regularly reviews the register and most able pupils are well served by the school.
- Pupils are aware of their curricular targets and know that their literacy and pastoral targets apply to their work in RE.
- Creative Partnerships work has enhanced the delivery of the RE curriculum and improved pupil progress and attainment.
- Attainment and Progress in RE is in line with that of other core subjects. The level of pupil attainment and progress ranges from good to satisfactory across the school. Standards in religious education, (RE), are comparable with the standards achieved in other subjects and are in line with national expectations. In all lessons observed by the previous Headteacher and Acting Headteacher, pupils were interested and participated well in the discussions and activities.
- SEN pupils are well-supported.
- ICT is used well to support the delivery of the RE curriculum and this has a positive impact on attainment and progress.
- The school makes good use of cultural links which enhances the curriculum.

HOW DO WE KNOW? (Evidence)

- Tracking documentation
- Ofsted report
- School Development Plan
- Curriculum plans.
- Training and development records.
- Lesson Observations
- Home School Agreement / Family Learning.
- Photos.
- Pupils' work / interviews

WHAT WILL WE DO NOW? (Areas to be developed and targets for action)

- Complete the curriculum review in light of the Creative Partnerships work. Develop moderation / joint planning activities across the Federation to identify areas of strength which can be used to improve consistency of good practice across the two schools.
- Continue to track children's achievements against other areas of the curriculum.
- Plan for more pupil involvement in self-assessment of RE.

TARGET CHOSEN

- Complete the curriculum review. Develop moderation / joint planning activities across the Federation to identify areas of strength which can be used to improve consistency of good practice across the two schools.

REFERENCE TO SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Development Area 3

VALIDATORS' JUDGEMENTS

SECTION B.2: Attainment and progress in religious education

STRENGTHS

The validators judge that pupils make satisfactory attainment and progress.

Validators commend the following:

- The school's Catholic ethos contributes to the learning environment.
- There are good attitudes to learning and pupils are well motivated to achieve.
- The attainment of some pupils is good, particularly through their use of Scripture.
- Learning support assistants were deployed effectively to support learning in the lessons observed.
- Pupils take a pride in their work in their RE books.
- The children respond using appropriate religious language.
- In one class RE levels for pupils help them assess their own progress.
- All work is thoroughly assessed and attainment measured.

AREAS TO BE DEVELOPED

- To develop further differentiation by task rather than by outcome.

WHAT THE SCHOOL SAYS:

SECTION B.3: Quality of teaching

WHERE ARE WE NOW? (Strengths)

- The quality of teaching is satisfactory with many good elements. In the Foundation Stage teaching is mainly good. In Key Stage and in Key Stage 2 teaching is at least satisfactory and often good.
- A clear planning format with explicit objectives is being developed to maximise creativity and cross-curricular links.
- Monitoring has been carried out regularly by Governors, subject leader and the SMT. This needs to be reviewed in the light of staffing changes.
- Planning has been overseen by subject manager at medium term level, again this needs to be reviewed in the light of staffing changes.
- Teachers and support staff are highly skilled and work as effective teams.
- Pupils respond positively in the majority of lessons. They are well behaved and in the best lessons they display good independent learning skills. They generally show confidence, enthusiasm and willingness to approach new areas in RE.
- Successful cross-curricular links with RE are planned for by staff.
- There is effective application of ICT in context in RE lessons which enhances learning.
- There are effective links to the schools behaviour policy and PSHE curriculum.
- Community support is good.
- Planning partnerships are positive within the federation and across the local Catholic cluster.
- The performance management structure informs training needs.
- Staff enthusiasm and willingness to trial and explore new resources and approaches in RE has a positive impact on the quality of teaching and learning.
- An appropriate percentage of time is spent on religious education.
- The subject leaders provide support for staff that are not Catholic and all staff have had access to a range of training and development opportunities.

HOW DO WE KNOW? (Evidence)

- Planning documentation
- School Development Plan
- Training and development records.
- Performance management paperwork.
- Monitoring documentation.
- Ofsted / HMI reports
- Pupil work sampling / targets / assessment info
- Lesson observations
- Pupil Annual Reports
- Parental feedback ...letters, questionnaires, PTA minutes
- Minutes of staff meetings
- Governor visit records

WHAT WILL WE DO NOW? (Areas to be developed and targets for action)

- Develop, monitor and evaluate: (a) progression (b) differentiation (c) challenge for most able children in planning and delivery of RE in light of curriculum and staff changes. Ensure high quality of teaching and learning is sustained and built upon.
- Develop area of assessment.
- Develop tracking of RE against achievements in other areas.

TARGET CHOSEN

- Develop, Monitor and Evaluate: (a) progression (b) differentiation (c) challenge for most able children in planning and delivery of RE in light of curriculum and staff changes.

REFERENCE TO SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Development Area 3

VALIDATORS' JUDGEMENTS

SECTION B.3: Quality of teaching

STRENGTHS

The validators confirm the school's judgement that the quality of teaching is satisfactory with many good elements.

Validators commend the following:

- As part of the validation two RE lessons were observed. The quality of teaching was judged to be generally satisfactory with some good features, this is in line with the school's own findings. Good elements included:
 - Well planned lesson, with clear learning intentions, which built upon previous learning.
 - Good subject knowledge of the teacher.
 - Appropriate pace maintained throughout the lesson.
 - Where pupils made good progress they were given the opportunity to demonstrate and share what they had learnt.
 - Good use of the plenary in enabling pupils to reflect on their learning.
- Pupils are generally managed well and a good standard of discipline is maintained.
- The quality and involvement of the learning support assistants are good.
- Relationships within the classroom are good.
- All pupils' contributions are valued and good use is made of praise and affirmation.
- Marking is specific to subject content.
- Distinct presentation of work makes the RE books unique.
- Evidence from the book scrutiny shows a good range of activities to enhance learning.

AREAS TO BE DEVELOPED

- To develop planning further to ensure all pupils make progress through the use of appropriate support and challenge.

WHAT THE SCHOOL SAYS:

SECTION C.1: Spiritual development

WHERE ARE WE NOW? (Strengths)

- The school is successful in making prayer a natural part of the life of the school community.
- The Catholic ethos and religious life of the school is seen in many displays and class focus areas for prayer are well-used.
- In lessons throughout the school pupils are encouraged to explore values and beliefs and the way they impact upon their lives and the lives of others.
- Role play and other creative approaches are used successfully and imaginatively to explore spirituality, emotions and beliefs.
- In all classes children listen well to each other and show respect for each other's ideas.
- Staff speak to children with affirmation and respect encouraging their questions. They enable pupils to make connections between points of learning to develop insight.
- Children throughout the school are encouraged to see the beauty of their own environment and that of other places in the world.
- Children explore a wide range of other cultures and acknowledge and celebrate differences between themselves and others
- The standard of collective worship is satisfactory. Children are encouraged to develop their ability to be thoughtful and contemplative as well as to pray together.

HOW DO WE KNOW? (Evidence)

- Lesson and Collective Worship Observations
- Displays
- Planning
- Work sampling
- Photographs
- School Council Meetings /Pupil Interviews

WHAT WILL WE DO NOW? (Areas to be developed and targets for action)

- Some children are still inclined to be passive learners. In order to increase their self confidence and readiness to take responsibility for their own learning there is a need to develop their self awareness and spiritual strength through the exercise of choice and the demonstration of courage in their beliefs. The school will develop ways of encouraging this more and give children further opportunities to express their ideas and try out their decisions. The school will also work to improve the engagement of parents in their children's learning.

TARGET CHOSEN

- Ensure all children are active learners by improving their engagement in their own learning.
- Ensure best use is made of the community to enhance children's spiritual development.

REFERENCE TO SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

1. Development Area 1
2. Development Area 2

VALIDATORS' JUDGEMENTS

SECTION C.1: Spiritual development

STRENGTHS

Validators judge that spiritual development in the school is good.

Validators commend the following:

- Pupils are supported in their spiritual development through planned opportunities for prayer during daily acts of worship.
- The staff and parish priest work closely together, providing support for pupils' spiritual development through liturgical celebrations.
- The school's work in religious education is used to support children's spiritual development.
- Through the RE programme, pupils develop an understanding of the spiritual development of people from other faiths.
- Parents believe the school provides good opportunities for the children's spiritual development.
- During the worship observed as part of the validation, pupils were made aware that prayer is the sharing of our everyday life with God.
- Enhancing pupils' spiritual development through a variety of activities, for example, the nativity celebration at Branstone Farm, and the establishment and upkeep of a wildlife area.
- Giving all parents opportunities to share in the prayer and spiritual life of the school through invitations to celebrations of worship.
- The school council stated that the school was a special place as it taught them 'to love God and to praise him.'

AREAS TO BE DEVELOPED

- Provide more opportunities for reflective prayer to develop the children's spirituality further.

WHAT THE SCHOOL SAYS:

SECTION C.2: Moral development

WHERE ARE WE NOW? (Strengths)

- The school has good policies for behaviour management and bullying, based on reconciliation and forgiveness and for personal, social and health education (PSHE) and drugs education, based on the recognition of their own worth and that of others in the decisions they make.
- Rewards and sanctions reinforce the culture of high expectation and positive encouragement within the school.
- Policies for racial equality, equal opportunities, disability access and for the inclusion of pupils with learning difficulties and those who are deemed 'gifted and talented' all refer to the school's mission statement and our moral responsibility to respect all people equally.
- Pastoral care in the school is good and there is much evidence of time and trouble taken to support children with problems in Individual Education Plans, individual behaviour plans and small group support for those with special needs. There is a dedicated emotional and behavioural support teacher as well as a Family Support Worker.
- Children in the school are consistently reminded that their behaviour and relationships should reflect gospel values and this is clearly seen in their conduct.
- Children discuss/write their own classroom rules at the start of the year and are able to refer to the school rules. They understand well exactly what is expected of them. Circle time is a regular part of school life for all children.
- The school strives to improve its own understanding of how it appears to its own members and to the community in the awards it has worked towards, like Investors in People, which require introspection and evidence of compliance.
- Public responses show that the school is perceived to provide clear guidance on moral development to the children and that the school is a loving caring community where children are happy.

HOW DO WE KNOW? (Evidence)

- Behaviour and Bullying Policies
- Observations within and outside of the classrooms
- PSHE curriculum planning
- Celebration Assemblies
- Racial Equality, Equal Opportunities, Disability Access, SEN and Gifted and Talented policies.
- Example IEPs
- School Rules
- Pupil Interviews

WHAT WILL WE DO NOW? (Areas to be developed and targets for action)

- Maintain the good quality care and provision.

TARGET CHOSEN

- Maintain the good quality care and provision and provide appropriate cover for the Behaviour Support Teacher's Maternity Leave.

REFERENCE TO SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

N/A

VALIDATORS' JUDGEMENTS

SECTION C.2: Moral development

STRENGTHS

Validators judge that moral development is a good feature of the school.

Validators commend as strengths of the school:

- Relationships between all members of the school community are good.
- The school's behaviour policy.
- The strong sense of community ensures all feel secure and listened to.
- A good rewards and sanction system for work and behaviour supports and encourages pupils. Good behaviour, deeds and work are fully rewarded in a variety of ways, for example, Gold Band Award, Celebration Assembly, VIP Award, merit stickers.
- The RE programme, the school's personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme, Circle Time, assemblies, all give pupils opportunities to understand and discuss concepts such as right and wrong, freedom and responsibility, forgiveness and reconciliation, friendship, justice, and coping with peer pressure.
- The school council, which meets regularly, is an effective pupil voice for consultation and change, for example, the Buddy Stop, mirrors in the toilets, provision of a water cooler, and consultation on the mission statement.
- Charity appeals enable the pupils to develop a sense of empathy and concern for others, for example, the link with a Ghanaian school.
- Parents believe the school provides good opportunities for the children's moral development.
- School rules, which reflect the ethos of the school and the sanctions, when they are broken, are known by all.

AREAS TO BE DEVELOPED

- Continue to develop the rôle of the school council as a pupil voice.

SOURCES OF EVIDENCE FOR THE VALIDATION

As part of the validation process:

- Two validators spent a morning in school, meeting with the acting headteacher and RE co-ordinator, discussing the school's self-review report, touring the school and gathering evidence;
- Two validators carried out the validation in the course of a school day;
- During the actual validation day, interviews and discussions were held with:
 - The headteacher,
 - Two members of the governing body,
 - The RE leader,
 - The parish priest,
 - The school council;
- Two religious education lessons were observed;
- One whole school assembly was observed.
- A sample of pupils' work was scrutinised;
- Prior to and during the validation documentation was analysed and evidence files examined;
- An analysis was made of the responses to the parental questionnaire;
- Feedback was given to the headteacher at the end of the validation visit.

Conclusion.

The validators would like to thank the acting headteacher, staff, governors, parish priest, parents and pupils of St Thomas of Canterbury Catholic Primary School for their preparatory work for the validation. They would also like to express their appreciation for the warmth of welcome they received and the support given during the validation process.

PARENTS' QUESTIONNAIRE (RELIGIOUS EDUCATION)

| | | I AGREE | | NEUTRAL | I DISAGREE | |
|----|---|----------|------------|---------|------------|----------|
| | | Strongly | Moderately | | Moderately | Strongly |
| 1 | I am made to feel welcome by the school. | 88% | 12% | 0% | 0% | 0% |
| 2 | My son/daughter is happy at the school. | 88% | 6% | 6% | 0% | 0% |
| 3 | I feel the school communicates well with parents. | 65% | 24% | 6% | 0% | 6% |
| 4 | I am satisfied with the RE work pupils are expected to do at home. | 46% | 18% | 24% | 0% | 12% |
| 5 | The school keeps me informed about my son/daughter's progress in religious education. | 35% | 35% | 24% | 0% | 6% |
| 6 | I am satisfied with my son/daughter's standard of work in religious education. | 47% | 24% | 29% | 0% | 0% |
| 7 | The school welcomes parents to share in the religious and worshipping life of the school. | 70% | 6% | 18% | 6% | 0% |
| 8 | Links with home, school and parish are well developed. | 52% | 12% | 24% | 12% | 0% |
| 9 | The school keeps parents well informed regarding sex and relationships education. | 18% | 12% | 52% | 12% | 6% |
| 10 | The school provides good opportunities for pupils' spiritual and moral development. | 53% | 29% | 18% | 0% | 0% |
| 11 | I regard the school as a supportive, caring Catholic community. | 64% | 24% | 12% | 0% | 0% |

A total of 17 questionnaires were received from parents.