

DIOCESE OF PORTSMOUTH VALIDATION REPORT



St John's Cathedral Catholic Primary School

Cottage View, Portsmouth, Hampshire PO1 1PX

URN: 116385

Date of previous validation 3rd and 28th February 2014

Date of this validation 13th and 29th March 2019

Overall effectiveness	Previous validation:	Good
	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

- St John's Cathedral Catholic Primary School is an outstanding example of a Catholic school community, where the spirit of the Gospel and the mission statement "*Loving to learn: Learning to love*" is fully embedded in all aspects of the school's life.
- Validators commend the school on its success in genuinely providing a first class Catholic education that is supporting pupils to truly live their lives as Christ's disciples.
- Relationships are excellent and all members of the community are highly committed to the vision of the school. Pupils particularly recognise and value the care, guidance and support they receive from their teachers.
- The head teacher, along with senior staff, are exemplary in living out their Christian witness.
- Almost without exception, parents are overwhelmingly positive about the Catholic life of the school, particularly the school's role in the local Catholic community, the sense of welcome and inclusive atmosphere and positive relationships based on Gospel values.
- As a result of excellent teaching, pupils have very positive attitudes to RE (religious education) and are highly articulate in demonstrating their understanding of their faith. Standards are high.
- The RE leader plays a pivotal role in ensuring high standards in RE are maintained and built upon. Along with the headteacher, she is ambitious in her vision for RE and determined to continue to strive for excellence.
- The outstanding spiritual life of the school is very much at its heart. Pupils are provided with a wide range of spiritual opportunities which they value and embrace with enthusiasm.
- Pupils' engagement during collective worship is outstanding; they demonstrate a mature and reflective attitude enabling them to reflect on and deepen their relationship with God.
- Personal development and pupils' moral understanding is exemplary. They treat each other with high degrees of respect and value the dignity of each other.
- Leaders, including governors, provide a very strong and highly effective model of Christian leadership, where all are valued and supported.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

As already identified by the school, the following should be addressed:-

- Further review and embed the provision to support the excellent attainment of more able pupils in RE.
- Continue to embed assessment processes in order to support pupils' achievement in RE.

Full Report

The school as a Catholic community

The school community:

Outstanding

The wider community:

Outstanding

- The school's mission statement and Christian ethos permeate all aspects of school life. This is reflected in the outstanding relationships that have led to a loving and trusting environment where all thrive and achieve their full potential.
- The Catholic ethos is strongly evident within the school environment. High quality displays, contribute to an attractive and purposeful community of learning.
- All parents hold the school in high regard. They appreciate and recognise the school's very strong Catholic ethos; 100% stated that they felt that the school had a caring atmosphere with relationships based on Gospel values.
- There are very good systems of communication, ensuring everyone is well-informed and regularly updated. The school's newsletter and website reflect the importance placed on the Catholic life of the school.
- The school benefits from outstanding support from the local priests, they are frequent visitors to the school and offer much valued support for both RE and worship. The contribution of the school to the life of the parish is very much appreciated and welcomed.
- The school has good and growing partnerships with Catholic and local primary and secondary schools which is proving mutually beneficial and enhancing teaching and learning at St John's.
- The school is to be commended on its determination to support every family, including current and former parents, children and staff, often playing a key role during times of difficulty.
- Positive attitudes are underpinned by the pupils' growing understanding of Catholic Social Teaching. The school's progress in achieving the Oscar Romero Award is enabling children to put their faith into action.

Curriculum religious education

Attainment and progress:

Outstanding

Quality of teaching:

Outstanding

Leadership and management of RE:

Outstanding

- RE in the school has a high status. The evidence in pupils' books, the class enrichment books, the consistently good and outstanding teaching and high standards has led to outstanding attainment and progress.
- Outstanding relationships have created a very positive learning environment where pupils are confident to contribute and through discussion show their secure depth of understanding in RE.
- In lessons observed, pupils demonstrated a positive attitude to learning and behaviour was outstanding. Work in the pupils' books shows the high standards that are achieved with pupils' confidently expressing their understanding of scripture.
- Creative and differentiated tasks enable pupils to effectively achieve the learning objectives and continue to make secure progress in their knowledge and understanding of RE themes.
- The RE leader provides outstanding support for all staff through regular meetings, bespoke support and by keeping up to date with diocesan expectations. Her enthusiasm and expertise is a key factor in promoting high standards and outstanding teaching and learning across the school.
- When the school's work on challenge for more able pupils in RE is fully embedded, the very strong attainment and progress in religious education should increase even further.

Spiritual and moral development

Spiritual development:

Outstanding

Moral development:

Outstanding

- The school provides a wide range of high quality worship, which allows all members of the school community to express their relationship with one another and with God, in a reflective and prayerful manner. Strong examples include:
 - Class Masses in which pupils are highly engaged in organising.
 - The creative approaches to explore scripture with the pupils, for example, the wonderful exploration of the Parable of the Fig Tree with early years children.
 - The pupils' high levels of response and engagement as seen in the whole school worship led by the deputy headteacher.
- Local clergy work very effectively with the school to provide a wide range of excellent liturgical celebrations and opportunities for reconciliation for the whole community.
- 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 through RE and worship and their application in helping children make the right choice.
- Pupils are justifiably proud of their school, commenting on how well they are loved, nurtured and cared for by staff. One Year 6 boy said, he would very much miss St John's as he moved to secondary education and nothing could be improved.
- Pupils are fully aware of their responsibilities to one another through the work of the school council and their support of charities. They are keen to put their faith into action.

Leadership and management:

Outstanding

- The headteacher provides an outstanding model of Christian leadership, demonstrating humility and service and ensures all members of the school community are highly valued.
- Senior leaders and governors share a common Christian vision and through example inspire the community to share in a strong sense of purpose and mission resulting in a highly collaborative and successful school.
- The school constantly challenges itself through rigorous self-review and aims for high standards in all aspects of school life. Validators would agree with the identified actions from the improvement plans, which will embed the exemplary provision at the school.
- Governors are supportive, critical friends of the school and know the school's strengths and areas for development in religious education. A more comprehensive understanding of standards and teaching in RE will only serve to further improve their ability to support and challenge the school.
- Staff are well supported in their development needs and benefit greatly from collaborative work, including joint moderation and the individual support and coaching they receive. Senior leaders are committed to working with the wider community in order to share and benefit from professional expertise.
- Good progress has been made on the areas for development identified in the previous validation particularly in teaching, learning and achievement in RE.

School details

Name of school:	St John's Cathedral Catholic Primary School
Age range of pupils:	3-11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number of pupils on roll:	210 + 26 (Nursery)
Chair of Governors:	Nicolas Speller
Headteacher:	Laura Park

St John's Cathedral Catholic Primary School was built in 1980 and is situated near the centre of Portsmouth. It is of average size and the number of boys and girls is approximately the same. The school serves the parish of St John's Cathedral and the vast majority of its pupils are Catholic. The percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals is average. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language, or who are from a minority ethnic group, is higher than average, as is the percentage of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

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 validator	-	Ursula Clark
Assistant Validator	-	Jamie Carroll

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 leader, staff, governors, parish priest, parents and pupils of St John's Cathedral 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.