

**DIOCESE OF PLYMOUTH  
VICARIATE FOR EVANGELISATION CATECHESIS AND  
SCHOOLS**

**CANON 806  
INSPECTION REPORT**



St. Paul's Catholic Primary School  
Pemros Road  
St. Budeaux,  
Plymouth  
PL51NE

URN 140676

Interim Head Teacher: Maria Anderson  
Chair of Governors: Barbara Kirk

## Introduction

The inspection of St. Paul's Catholic Primary School was carried out under the requirements of the Education Act 2005, and in accordance with Plymouth Diocesan Framework and Schedule for Diocesan Canonical Inspections (806), approved by the Bishop of Plymouth.

## Context for the Inspection

St Paul's is an average-sized primary school with 190 pupils on role. Of these 17% of children are in receipt of pupil premium with 17% of children receiving free school meals. Significantly 22% of children are on the SEN register and 2% of children have a statement of special educational needs. 4% of children have English as an additional language and 7% of children are from British service families.

Since the last inspection the school has become an academy as part of CAST – a multi-academy trust incorporating all Catholic primary schools within the Diocese.

In 2012 the school was judged to be inadequate by OFSTED and placed in special measures. An interim Head Teacher (executive Head of two other local Catholic primary schools) took over the school until the current consultant Head Teacher took over the role in September 2014.

### Key Finding Grade 2:

**John 13:34-35**

**'I give you a new commandment that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples if you love one another'. John 13:34-35**

*The greatest of all commandments is that we love one another. Living the Christian life is to live a life of love which ultimately leads to washing one another's feet. This is a journey. There are times when we succeed and there are times when we become distracted. Other priorities take over or we fall susceptible to the secular world which may be offering a different set of priorities or values. Fear, anxiety or a lack of confidence can impact on the capacity of those in leadership to fully respond to the Christian call above all other demands. As a result, although most of the time the community is responding to the call to love, there are times when this gets forgotten and anomalies creep in.*

With the demands facing a school that has been deemed inadequate by Ofsted, it is easy to become distracted by those demands. The emphasis on standards according to Ofsted criteria, become the priority. This has been no different for St. Paul's. Since going into special measures in 2013, St. Paul's has experienced a significant amount of turmoil and uncertainty. The past three years have been a painful journey for the school with a number of staff leaving and the leadership changing. Fear, anxiety and a lack of confidence, stemming from being in special measures, has had a marked impact on staff morale and as a consequence its' Catholic life. The securing of a consultant Head Teacher has brought new hope, a clear vision and appreciation of the needs of the school. The leadership team has recognised the absolute need to protect its Catholic nature. Evidence throughout the school points to a genuine desire to build a school rooted in the mission of the Church, a place founded on love and determined to ensure that all members of the community are nurtured and nourished to grow into the people that God is calling them to be. In relation to the children,

this ultimately means that there is an expectation that the adults will be supported so that all children receive every opportunity to become the very best that they can be, spiritually, academically, socially and morally.

From this belief confidence is growing and morale is far stronger than it has been for some time. The school now has firmer foundations on which to grow.

### **Summary of Key Findings**

- St. Paul's is a school where Christ is at the centre and from whom all receive their direction.
- The development of the mission statement which has involved all members of the community and which all can articulate has given a new focus and direction to the school.
- The school's induction programme has been developed to ensure that all new staff are supported and enabled to fully participate in the life of the school. The RE leader ensures that new staff understand and appreciate the centrality of the Gospel to the life of the school.
- Curriculum RE has a high status and is being delivered effectively and with dedication.
- The leadership team, with the governors and the school Ethos committee, is working with increasing confidence and effectiveness.
- The quality of displays and classroom focal points reflect the commitment the school has to providing children with an engaging and creative environment. Throughout the school these give testimony to the nature of the school as a place of faith and worship.
- The quality of care for vulnerable members of the community ensures that all children genuinely feel welcome, safe and at ease. Clear systems and compassionate appraisal makes for positive decisions and appropriate courses of action for even the most challenging of children.

### **Areas of Focus for Development**

The school's mission as a Catholic School would be further enhanced by focusing planned development in the following areas.

1. Continue to develop and fully embed the 'School as a Catholic Community' framework so that it becomes the heart of all decision making.

Despite, and maybe because of the struggle that St. Paul's has gone through, there is a genuine desire by all to re-discover the heart of the school and grow into a community where everyone is truly at the service of one another. This is not easy and there remains some need of healing and reconciliation. However, whilst the school may have been going through Good Friday there is every indication that new life is emerging and the school can become once again a beacon of hope and light in the community.

During the course of this inspection it was clear that Gospel values are lived out in the school. This has been enhanced by the creation of a new mission statement which has involved the whole community and as a consequence all can see how they contribute positively to it.

The quality of welcome in the school is strong. The presence of senior leaders at the school gate in the morning and at the end of the day has strengthened relationships with parents and carers. Concerns are picked up quickly and action is taken to respond to any needs or issues. Parents have commented favourably on this new development. Staff ensure that they are available for parents and when needed offer appointments speedily so that parents and carers feel that they are valued and welcome. The school is fully inclusive and increasingly able to respond to the challenges that some children are facing.

The school induction programme is well-planned and identified as an important means to ensuring that all new members of staff can fully immerse themselves in the life of the school with confidence and a positive sense of well-being.

Children are happy at St. Paul's and enjoy their lessons. They speak confidently about their learning and are keen to take on responsibility and participate constructively in the life of the school. This is seen in their engagement with Junior SVP and the many and varied ways by which the children raise money for charity and take part in different events which raise awareness and appreciation of the needs of others.

Many activities reflect the commitment of the staff to reflect the face of Christ in all their interactions with the children who learn from this modelling. Prayer, special liturgical events and a genuine appreciation of other faiths and beliefs adds to the growing rich and diverse nature of this school.

### **Focus for Development**

1. Continue to embed the SCC framework so that all new staff are clear about expectations and supported to fully engage with the ethos and mission of the school.
2. To develop further opportunities for engaging with the wider community with a particular focus on celebrating social, ethnic and cultural diversity, both nationally and internationally.

## **The School as a Catholic Community – Leadership and Management**

**Grade 1**

**John 13:14-14**

At the core of the new leadership team at St. Paul's is a deep desire to serve the community and to bring about change with compassion. Change is often difficult and more so for some than others. However, this leadership team has embraced that challenge and recognises the need to be open, honest and clear about expectations and demands. At the same time they do this with kindness and with a desire to nurture people through the necessary changes. Every member of the community is valued by the team and every effort is made to provide the appropriate forums for individuals to obtain any help they need.

Gradually, this is a team which is inspiring the school community to have a sense of a shared purpose, vision and mission. Rigorous and extensive monitoring, searching self-analysis and self-challenge are leading the school to devise very well focused plans which are firmly rooted in the mission of the school and under-pinned by Catholic Social Teaching.

Governors are also well-informed and regularly visit the school. They are confident and insightful, able to challenge appropriately, yet supportive. They play an active part in the faith life of the school and are increasingly well informed about the direction the school is taking. Their engagement with the school is highly effective and valued.

Inevitably the school has had to determine key areas for development. The leadership team recognise the needs of the staff and is constantly seeking ways to ensure that all staff are heard and responded to with the support and training that they need.

There is no sense of complacency with the leadership team. They know they have a difficult job to do but are embracing it with faith, hope and love.

### **Focus for Development**

1. To build upon the strong foundations now in place and fully embrace what it means to lead a Catholic school and in particular to ensure that the mission of the Catholic school lies at the heart and underpins all activity.
2. To support all staff to fully understand and appreciate the richness of Catholic Social Teaching.

## **The School as a Teaching and learning Community**

**Word**

**Grade 2**

**John 13:34-35**

Across the age range, children are provided with rich and engaging RE lessons. Although there remain a number of issues which need to be addressed in teaching, the work in RE is progressing well. In the majority of lessons observed children were engaged, keen to do well and applied themselves well to their work. As a consequence of solid planning children are able to make progress and want to succeed. They are proud of their work and keen to talk about their learning. A variety of teaching strategies enable the children to show their learning in different ways.

Relationships between children and teachers is very positive, not least because the teachers model Christ in all of their interactions. Their patience, compassion and appreciation of different needs allows every children to feel valued and cared for.

The RE leader has been very effective in supporting her colleagues and is herself an inspirational teacher. Her own lessons inspire children, fully engage them and they express a real enthusiasm for RE. Vibrant displays and a variety of approaches ensure that the children in her care make excellent progress. Her work as a leader in this is to be commended, not least because throughout the struggle of going into special measures she has ensured that the Catholic life and RE teaching stays on the radar and is not undermined.

### **Focus for Development**

1. To ensure that all staff know how to assess and measure attainment in RE.
2. To ensure that all staff understand AT2 in its fullness and have the opportunity to develop their skills to engage children in critical analysis of AT1.

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| <b>The School as a Celebrating Community Development</b> |
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| <b>Worship, Spiritual and Moral</b> |
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| <b>Grade 2</b> |
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| <b>John 13:34-35</b> |
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The spiritual life of St. Paul's is a developing area. There are many strong elements to it and a genuine commitment to making prayer central to the life of the school.

Liturgies are joyful, reflective and inclusive, enabling pupils, staff, parents and carers to reflect on and be grateful for the gifts that God has given them. Children are keen to take on roles and responsibilities and do so with reverence and confidence. The Feast of Ss. Peter and Paul was celebrated with a whole school Mass. This was a beautiful celebration with the parish. Children were fully involved in this, responding to the prayers and singing well. Ministries of reading, serving and presentation of the gifts were led by the children. The experience of the Mass showed the capacity of the children to be silent, respectful and yet enthusiastically involved.

In addition to regular prayer times which are well established there are a growing number of opportunities for prayer developing in the school. Children are enabled to pray outside of normal prayer times and their desire to do this is emerging. With changes in staff there is a need for some formation to develop the knowledge and understanding of how to prepare and deliver appropriate acts of worship. This would help to ensure that children also develop the skills needed to prepare liturgies.

Through the traditions and practices of the Catholic Church, children have a context for learning what is right and just. They are able to develop a critical conscience which ultimately gives them freedom because they know how to live and what gives them life. Their commitment to serving others and caring for their world is very strong and is supported by the many and varied activities on offer to them including those of prayer and worship.

### **Focus for Development**

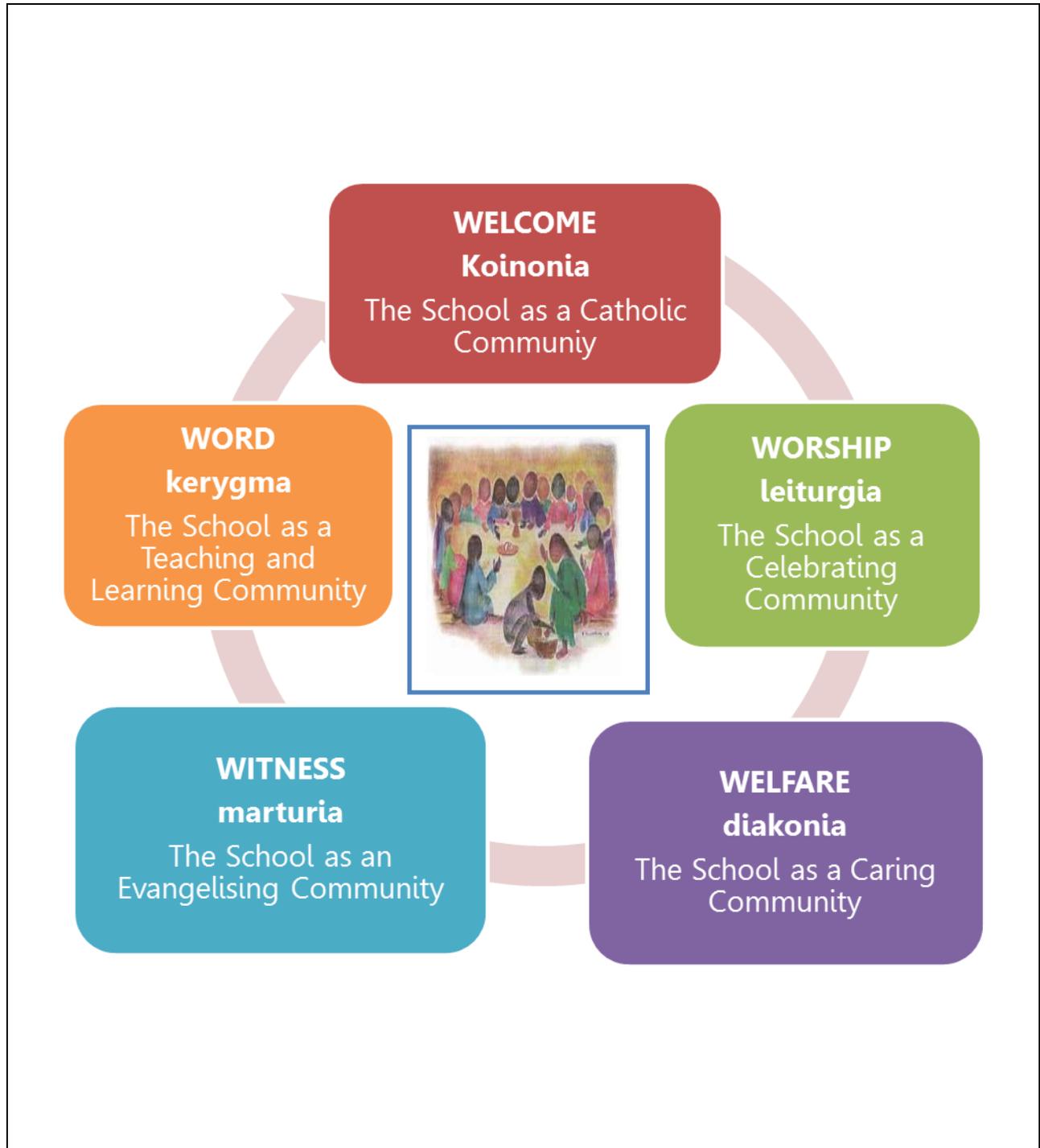
1. To work towards children being able to plan and lead meaningful and quality acts of worship.
2. To consider implementing some form of mediation, focused on Jesus, across the school.
3. To work towards have a planned journey of spiritual opportunities for children to experience during their time at the school.

### **Conclusion**

This inspection has allowed St. Paul's to show just how strong the faith life of the school is becoming and the obvious commitment that everyone has to restoring the community to a confident sense of well-being. There is still some way to go but parents, carers and all those concerned with the school can feel optimistic about the future. The school is to be commended for its courage and conviction and be assured that by continuing on this path St. Paul's will once more flourish in every respect.

**Sarah Adams**  
**June 2015**

## THE SCHOOL AS A CATHOLIC COMMUNITY



## **Introduction**

The Catholic community is one that is rooted in Baptism, Eucharist and an on-going call to Conversion. The areas of Welcome, Worship, Word, Welfare and Witness can be described as the key components of what it means to live the Christian life. As such, the school as a Catholic community, is called to embrace these as a way of being community and living the mission of the Church. The manner in which these are expressed reveal for us the heart of where the community lies.

### **Koinonia - (κοινωνία) Welcome**

Koinonia is the Greek work for communion, for participation, for the sharing with one another. It is to be welcome an 'other' in fellowship and love. It is to be of an open disposition to receive from another and to respond in love. Within the community it can be minimalized to the gesture of greeting at the front entrance. In school it might simply be seen as the role of the receptionist. Koinonia however, requires a much greater vision of what it means to welcome. Ultimately it speaks of the disposition of every member of the community to be open to the needs of another, be that to listen, to hear, to respond, to act. The idea of welcome will be embedded in all aspects of the school's way of doing things.

### **Leiturgia – (Λειτουργία) Worship**

The Greek word 'leiturgia' means public activity or in a religious sense it means 'respect' or 'service'. When it was adopted by the Church it meant to carry out a religious service. It is a public service as opposed to private prayer and concerns the Christian community gathering first and foremost to celebrate the paschal mystery of Jesus Christ. It is also a time when the community gathers to be reconciled, to celebrate, to be fed, and to be sent out in mission. Central to the Catholic School is its call to be a Eucharistic community in the widest sense – that is to be the body of Christ ready to serve the world in its fullness. All prayer, all liturgy ultimately is intended to lead to this. It is not something that happens once a week and has no further meaning. It is an invitation to live each day what has been received through Word and Eucharist.

### **Marturia – (μαρτυρία) Witness**

The core meaning of the Greek word marturia means to testify, to give witness, from which we get the word martyr. Simply it means to share our values and faith with the world and our local community so that others may come to know the love of Christ. Within the Catholic School community this will mean promoting a shared vision and shared values which stem from a shared sense of the teaching of the Gospel. The Christian is called to witness to Christ's teaching in the way they live their life. Like John the Baptist these values are those which direct others to Christ.

### **Diakonia - (διακονία) Welfare**

The word 'diakonia' comes from the Greek word to mean to serve the poor and the oppressed. The emphasis within the word is on service and care for others. Within the Christian community diakonia is a way of being with others. It encourages care and concern for every person regardless of who they are or where they come from. Within the Catholic school, service lies at the heart of the community. It is about how children are supported in their learning, shown compassion when their behaviour is challenging and cared for when they are unhappy or in need. Equally it is about how adults are cared for and care for one another. At the same time the community is one that reaches out to the local community and the wider world, recognising the needs of others and responding to these generously.

## **Kerygma – (κήρυγμα) Word**

Kerygma is the New Testament Greek word for preaching or proclaiming the message of Christ. Within the context of the school this is expressed both in how we expose young people to the person of Christ as revealed in scripture, and the manner in which we teach. Access to the WORD of God through scripture and Christian tradition is considered to be a significant part of what the Christian community is about. By the way they are taught children come to know that God speaks to us in the way that we experience and engage with kindness, beauty, justice, the wonders of the natural world, relationships and the needs of others. It is therefore seen as important that in every subject, every lesson, positive values and attitudes are communicated. A confident and open attitude to teaching of lessons well thought about and prepared is central to achieving this.

## **Self-Review**

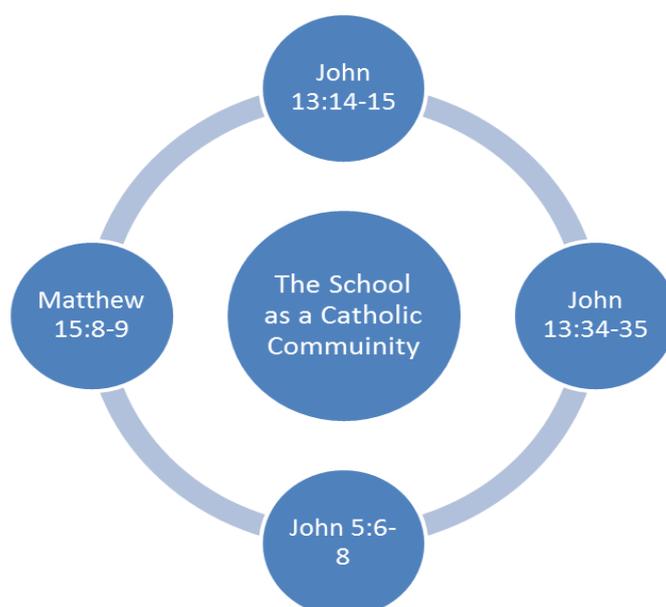
There will be three key areas within which these five elements will be reviewed:

- The School as a Catholic Community (Welcome, Witness and Welfare)
- The School as a Teaching and Learning Community (Word)
- The School as a Celebrating Community (Worship)

For each of these sections focus areas for evaluation are offered and means of gathering evidence to support this work. See appendix for further guidance.

## **Scripture Passages**

Scripture passages have been selected to highlight where the focus for the community may be at any one time. These will act as a guideline for the self-review process when schools consider the health of its community. The approach to these is best considered within the context of a cycle. Any anyone time the school may find different areas of its life at different points on the cycle:



## CONTEXT FOR THE CHOICE OF SPECIFIC SCRIPTURE REFERENCES –

Scripture has throughout history been interpreted in a variety of ways and is constantly being reinterpreted. The interpretations given here are one way of looking at how the passages may be understood within our own context. Equally there are many other passages which may have been selected but for now these reflect what is at the heart of our mission and seem appropriate.

**Grade 1: 'If I, your Lord and Teacher have washed your feet, you are also to wash one another's feet. For I have set you an example, that you should also do as I have done to you'. John 13 14-15**

The night before he died Jesus washed the feet of his disciples. Peter, one of the disciples was affronted. To wash another's feet was the lowest job of all, one done by the servants. Jesus, as the leader of the community he was about to establish, was very clear. The call to Christian ministry is a call to service, a humbling act of giving to one another. Unless we can serve our brothers and sisters we can have no part of in the life of Christ. A secular understanding of leadership often results in a top down mentality and little shared responsibility. The Christian community however, is one where those in authority act out of their desire to serve, not to be served. As a consequence the message of serving one another permeates the whole community.

**Grade 2: 'I give you a new commandment that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples if you love one another'. John 13:34-35**

The greatest of all commandments is that we love one another. Living the Christian life is to live a life of love which ultimately leads to washing one another's feet. This is a journey. There are times when we succeed and there are times when we become distracted. Other priorities take over or we fall susceptible to the secular world which may be offering a different set of priorities or values. Fear, anxiety or a lack of confidence can impact on the capacity of those in leadership to fully respond to the Christian call above all other demands. As a result, although most of the time the community is responding to the call to love, there are times when this gets forgotten and anomalies creep in.

**Grade 3 'Do you want to be made well? The sick man answered him, 'Sir, I have no one to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up; and while I am making my way someone else steps down ahead of me.' Jesus said to him, 'Stand up, take your mat and walk.' John 5:6-8'**

The sick man lying by the pool of Bethsaida has been there for a many years, stuck in the one place. Although he wants to be better he appears not to be able to move without some help. Jesus offers this to him and orders him to get up and walk. It could be said that the sick man has resided for too long in a 'blame someone else way of being'. Sometimes leaders and school communities do become 'stuck'. Leaders blame teachers, teachers blame students or leaders and the culture prevents an honest engagement in what needs to be done for any progress to be made. Schools stuck or struggling in this kind of cycle need help and support to break free. Healing and reconciliation may need to be a part of this journey. Honest clarification of priorities and challenging self-searching needs to take place for change to occur.

**Grade 4: 'This people honour me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me; in vain do they worship me, teaching human precepts as doctrines. Matthew 15:8-9**

The Pharisees and scribes accuse Jesus and his disciples of breaking the rules. The rules have become more important and the heart has been lost. The Pharisees and Scribes may appear to follow the law but they have forgotten what it all means. Where there is little service, no attention to love and no understanding of what it means to live a fully developed Christian life, there is little heart. When this is the case the school has lost sight of its meaning and purpose. As a consequence children are being failed and adults not supported to do what is right. Only a radical re-evaluation of what it means to be a Catholic community and a Catholic school will lead to a rediscovery of the commandment: 'Love one another' and ultimately to people washing one another's feet.