

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

**SECTION 48
INSPECTION REPORT**



St. Joseph's Catholic Primary School
Regent's Gate, Long Causeway
Exmouth
Devon
EX8 1TA

URN 140766

Interim Head Teacher: Rachel Pattison
Head of Teaching and Learning : Nicola Taylor-Bashford
Chair of Governors: Sandi Forte

Introduction

The inspection of St. Joseph's Primary School was carried out under the requirements of the Education Act 2005, and in accordance with Plymouth Diocesan Framework and Schedule for S48 inspections as approved by the Bishop of Plymouth.

Context for the Inspection

St. Joseph's is average-sized primary school with 216 pupils on role. Of these 14% of the children are EAL. 5% of children receive free school meals and 15% of children were in receipt of pupil premium at the start of the academic year. 7% of children are on the SEND register with one child having a statement. The school serves the parish of Holy Ghost Exmouth.

Since the last inspection in 2011 the school has experienced a number of significant changes:

1. Retirement of the Head Teacher in April 2016 and the appointment of an interim executive Head Teacher.
2. Appointment of a Head of Teaching and Learning January 2016
3. Becoming an academy as part of the CAST – a multi-academy trust incorporating all Catholic primary schools in the Diocese.

Key Finding Grade 3

John 5:6-8

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 Bethesda 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', particularly if they feel that all is going well. A failure to monitor and challenge rigorously can lead people to believe that they are doing better than they are. There can grow a reluctance for 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.

St. Joseph's is a warm and welcoming school. Its environment is vibrant and engaging. The adults work well together and support one another generously. Adults speak positively about their experience and parents, who responded to the parent survey for the most part also speak positively. However, this inspection has revealed significant gaps in the over-all provision offered to the children, particularly in relation to its Catholic life. These gaps appear to have come about because the vision of the school has remained static for some time. There appears to have been insufficient strategic leadership to move the school forward and support for those who have roles of responsibility has been limited.

Although the school finds itself in a vulnerable place, the interim arrangements, prior to appointing a new Head Teacher, appear robust and a greater clarity of how the school needs to move forward is emerging. There is, therefore, no reason why the situation the school finds itself in cannot be reversed and fairly quickly. Although the staff will be disappointed by the outcome of this inspection they are a strong team, with the capacity to bring about the necessary changes needed to ensure that the children are given the very best experience of Catholic education that is possible.

Summary of Key Findings

- A specific focus has recently been given to Gospel values so that ultimately they will lie at the heart of the school.
- The school's mission statement 'Walking with Jesus to be the best that we can be' reflects the ethos of the school.
- Relationships within the school are positive.
- Pupils are provided with a number of opportunities to grow spiritually but are limited in their capacity to fully participate by the way acts of worship are currently being delivered.
- A significant number of teachers are new to teaching RE and although they plan their lessons carefully, they have yet to gain sufficient understanding of the curriculum to offer lessons where pupils can gain skills in analysis, enquiry, interpretation or evaluation.
- Standards of attainment in RE fall below what could be expected of the children at St. Joseph's because the activities offered to them do not challenge or enable children to achieve at the highest level.
- Children tend to be passive in lessons and low level disruption is often not challenged.
- Children have little opportunity to take on different roles of leadership and insufficient opportunities to voice their views – though this has been recognised and is recognised as an area for development.

Areas of Focus for Development

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

- For the whole community of St. Joseph's; Leadership, Governors and Staff to engage fully with the 'School as a Catholic Community' framework and put in place an on-going programme of reflection and challenge to ensure that everyone can fully understand engage with what it means to be a Catholic School in all its fullness.

Although St. Joseph's has a number of strengths as a Catholic Community, in the areas of 'Welcome, Witness and Welfare' there remain some significant gaps which prevent it from living its mission as a Catholic school in its fullness. These gaps are not insurmountable and with care and attention to detail these can be moved forward quickly.

The significance of gospel values and how they are lived out has recently been identified by the school as an area for development. As a result, the school has identified ten gospel values which it is gradually introducing to the children. These are being linked to assemblies and explored across the week. They appear in every classroom. During the inspection the theme was 'Respect'. The identification of these values has been led by the leadership team. As well as on-going consulting with the other adults in the school, it will be important to enable the children to express their views in relation to these values and talk with them about what they consider to be important. As yet this is an area which has to be embedded in the life of the school. It will be important that living the gospel values becomes more than a code of conduct with rewards attached.

As a school there is a commitment to 'Walking with Jesus to be the best we can be'. This mission statement is known to everyone in the school and it is apparent that different elements of the community strive to live this. However, although visibly evident, how the mission statement could impact on all areas of school life, particularly learning, is not understood by all. Low level disruption in lessons which is not challenged, prevents children from being the very best that they can be. Looking at what lies at the heart of the mission statement in more depth may help everyone to live it more fully.

Welcome is one of the strengths of the school. The school is a warm and inviting environment with a clear focus on its Catholic nature. Adults have an open disposition and are supportive of one another. This is particularly evident in the way that new staff are inducted and how staff generally look after each other. Induction of children within the Foundation Stage is positive. Parents are encouraged to drop in and experience the children's learning and teachers in this area meet parents at the door when they arrive. Further developments to embrace parents and carers more fully throughout the school have just been introduced with the interim Head holding open assemblies for parents. The new school website is another attempt by the school to try and reach out to parents. This is to be commended. Though the quality of welcome is strong within the school the need to extend this beyond the school and into the wider community would be advantageous.

Because of the quality of welcome to new staff, induction is seen as an important element. A combination of providing a handbook, ensuring that new staff know about vulnerable children and a buddy system all serve to ensure that new staff are not left isolated or uncertain. At present a systematic means to ensuring on-going formation of new staff, particularly into the Catholic Life, has yet to be fully explored and developed but is something that would add to the sense of new staff feeling valued and enabled.

The number of children with particular needs who attend St. Joseph's is lower than the national average of 13%. Children are for the most part well behaved and generally do not present the school with serious issues. Despite this it is important that the school is fully equipped to cater for children of all abilities and potential challenges. The school has recently lost its Thrive Lead Practitioner and SENDCo. As a consequence the two Heads of school are leading on this. In addition a part-time member of staff supports children on a one-to-one basis when needed

and provides staff with information and strategies. At present the Interim Head Teacher can access 'Thrive' support from her school which is being used in St. Joseph's but a plan needs to be in place to ensure that all staff have training in how to deal with challenging children or those with specific issues. This would enhance the school's capacity to engage with diversity and ensure equality of provision for all children who wish to attend the school. Pastoral care goes beyond being kind. It needs careful assessment and clear implementation, so that all adults are competent and alert to the needs of children. The school does have access to a local donkey therapy centre and children who need this experience are enabled by staff to access this. Recently the school has experienced a number of issues regarding bereavement. Having trained Rainbows practitioners within the school has enabled them to support the children to deal with this loss. It is a strength of the school. In addition parishioners within the parish rallied to support the school during these sad times. This link with the parish in such a tangible way is an indication of how the parish desire to be fully engaged with the school.

Whilst the school has been an active member of the local Catholic cluster group and works in partnership with the Exmouth local learning community, the staff would benefit from opportunities to visit and learn from other Catholic schools. Although distances between schools can be challenging shared planning and observation times would be mutually supportive.

Although there is an active school council at St. Joseph's there is little evidence to suggest that there are additional activities for children to take on roles of responsibility outside of the school council. The school may consider becoming involved in schemes such as 'Eco-schools' or 'International Schools' which offer more responsibilities for children to express their views and opinions. Recently a notice-board has been created on which children can express their views but this is in its early days. It is important to develop opportunities for children to take on leadership roles and find ways to grow in their sense of responsibility for the wider community and the world in which they live. The children respond well to opportunities to raise money for a variety of charities such as CAFOD, Red Nose day, BBC children in Need and responding to more immediate needs such as the Nepal earthquake appeal. At present the children do not appear to have the opportunity to engage in any voluntary programmes such as Mini-Vinnies (Junior SVP) or have opportunities to be of service to others, particularly the wider community. Other schools in the Catholic cluster would willing share what they do to develop this aspect of school life for children.

In terms of preparing pupils for life in modern Britain and for global citizenship there is more work that could be done. St. Joseph's needs to develop its links with the wider community and provide children with opportunities for helping them to develop a clear understanding and appreciation of ethnic and cultural diversity. In line with this, the leadership team needs to ensure that pupils are provided with opportunities for reciprocal learning to develop mutual respect and awareness of other groups and communities, particularly in those areas where there is a cross section of cultures and nationalities.

The school is set in beautiful grounds and, as has been noted, the environment is warm and inviting. Focal points are up to date and some are clearly a reflection of the children's participation in them. Others tend to be more adult, less engaging and not always child focused. The more the children are engaged with them the more they will grow to appreciate their purpose.

Areas of Focus for Development

- To continue to develop the school's relationship with parents and carers.
- Ensure that pupils can take responsibility and participate constructively and independently in the school life beyond routine lessons and activities.

- To continue to work on the Gospel values and ensure that whatever the framework is that they are fully embedded in all aspects of school life.

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| The School as a Catholic Community | Leadership and Management |
| Grade 2 | John 13:34-35 |

Although it has been identified that St. Joseph’s is a school which has, to some degree, become ‘stuck’ there is a belief that it can and must move forward. The very newly established senior leadership team (albeit an interim arrangement) coupled with a fairly new governing body and have the capacity and desire to ensure that St. Joseph’s can become a school rooted in love but unafraid of being appropriately challenging where it needs to be.

Governors are in a process of identifying key areas for development and recognise that the Catholic life of the school is one such area. They have expressed their commitment to working to bring about change.

One of the reasons why the school has become stuck maybe due to a lack of formation and development of key people to be able to monitor effectively and bring about results. As a result, the quality of teaching and learning in RE is poorly developed. A more systematic and analytical programme of monitoring would help teachers to gain the necessary skills to enable them to plan and deliver effective RE. Ultimately, monitoring needs to ensure that the children receive the best from their teachers. They can only deliver this if they fully appreciate what this entails. For this to happen those with subject leadership responsibility need to be supported to develop their own understanding of what this looks like. This is true for any subject across the curriculum and not just RE.

In other areas the senior leadership team will need to develop their skills to deliver meaningful acts of worship if they are to model for teachers and children what this looks like. When they can do this it will be possible for teachers and children to take on the role of leading in these areas.

Opportunities for teachers to attend Diocesan training are occasionally provided. These could be built upon by developing a planned programme of CPD which includes developing an understanding of Catholic Social Teaching.

Areas of Focus for Development

1. As a leadership team, to fully appreciate the need for improvement in all areas of the Catholic life and develop a systematic implementation programme based on clear analysis and data.
2. To support staff in the development of their understanding of Catholic Teaching and Catholic Social Teaching – particularly in the way that this underpins being part of CAST.
3. For Governors to fully embrace the SCC framework and ensure that it is a working document for governors and the school.

Throughout St. Joseph's the relationship between children and adults is positive. Generally, the atmosphere is calm and conducive to learning and for the most part children behave well, although occasionally there is low level disruption which often goes un-noticed or challenged. Teachers and support staff are kind and gentle in their interactions with the children.

This is a school where 50% of the children come from Catholic families and in many ways have a greater degree of religious literacy, having a breadth and depth of religious knowledge and understanding. Unfortunately very little of the teaching really took this into account and the possibility for children to show their knowledge and move forward was rarely enabled.

Lessons observed across the whole school varied in the quality of teaching and learning. Too frequently children were sitting on the carpet for long periods of time and teachers were doing much of the work. Recall was often a dominant feature and, although well-ordered, lessons were insufficiently challenging. Activities which followed often did not progress children's learning and differentiation of activities was minimal. AT2 activities were rarely evident.

It is clear from the in-depth planning provided that teachers work hard when it comes to planning their RE. Unfortunately, the nature of much of the planning does not consistently support progression in learning. Quality of Planning differs from teacher to teacher and too often lacks clear learning outcomes and then suitable activities to achieve these. Planning tends to be focused on AT1 activities and in the books much of the work is art based. There was little evidence of any use of the thinking skills pack which God Matters offers. There appears to be little record of the AT2 discussions that may be taking place. The use of large class books would help in the recording of such activities.

As many of the teachers are new to the subject their difficulties with delivery appear to be due to a lack of confidence and knowledge of the subject. To help give this confidence to teachers, the pre-topic discussion needs to focus on the theology of the topic and ensure that adults are given the information they will need to understand what they are being asked to teach. In addition lesson plans need to be monitored to ensure that teachers receive the guidance they need to ensure progression in learning for children. At present insufficient time is allocated to the teaching of RE. It is a national expectation that 10% of curriculum time is given over to the teaching of RE in Catholic schools. In most classes this is currently less than 7%.

Children found it difficult to speak about their learning in RE and they found it difficult to talk about their next steps. They did understand the concept of 'wishes' written by the teachers in their books – that is a question or comment for children to respond to – however too often time is not given for children to respond to these.

Areas of Focus for Development

1. Ensure that RE planning is clearly focused and leads to high outcomes as determined by the Bishops' expectations for attainment and progress. In order for pupils' attainment to be above average, teachers need to be supported to plan and deliver appropriate learning objectives and activities to achieve these.
2. Ensure that the pre-topic discussion informs teachers of the theology that they will be teaching and helps them to feel confident about their subject knowledge.

3. For the RE leader to have the opportunities to visit other CAST schools to enable her to work with other RE leaders in shared monitoring activities.
4. To ensure that parents are kept informed about their children's learning in RE and individual pupil progress.
5. To ensure that all teachers are teaching the prescribed amount of time for RE. This is 2 hours in KS1 and 2.5 hours in KS2. (This is exclusive of all prayer times).

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| The School as a Celebrating Community | Worship |
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| Grade 3 | John 5:6-8 |
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Regular Masses, classroom prayers and assemblies all serve to reflect the opportunities children at St. Joseph's have to grow spiritually and morally. Recent opportunities to celebrate the Year of Mercy by creating a Holy Door within the school was spoken of as a beautiful experience, not least because parents, parishioners and the school joined together as the parish priest blessed the door. The art work created by the children ensured that this was very child focused and gave it meaning for them.

Class acts of worship give children an opportunity to pray together in a more intimate way and in the one observed it was clear that children are used to gathering in this way. Their responses during the time demonstrated that they are open to God's presence in their lives and the lives of others.

Class Masses and the participation of the school in parish Masses enable the whole school to remember what is at the heart of the Christian community. Parishioners enjoy joining the children on these occasions. By these experiences the children are enabled to grow in an appreciation of the traditions and practices of the Catholic Church.

Unfortunately, at the moment the experiences that the children are offered do not influence sufficiently the worship life of the school as a whole. This is an area in need for consideration and development. Currently most acts of worship are 'assembly' orientated with adults taking a leading role in what becomes, in essence, a lesson with some scripture, prayer and music attached. On these occasions children do not have a sense that they are coming into a 'special' time of worship. The kind of prayerful and appropriate atmosphere that would help them with this is currently lacking.

In addition to working on developing a pattern of worship through the week that is liturgically based, the school could consider other ways of praying for children such as meditation and contemplation. Currently Year 4 are given a residential retreat experience which is very positive. Retreat type activities alongside the physical activities would be a beneficial addition to the Year 6 residential and mark it out as something different.

The opportunity for prayer before briefing meetings for staff gives them a focus for the day and is much appreciated. Further opportunities for adults and children to gather on a voluntary basis would further develop the spiritual life of the school.

Children are currently not involved in planning and preparing acts of worship. At present this would be difficult for them because adults do not feel confident in this area. Once a pattern of worship is established with more adults being developed in their own skills to do this, children will be enabled to develop their skills.

The liturgical year provides a sound framework for the school's worship life. The school is fortunate to be close to its parish church and has a parish priest able and willing to engage with the school in on-going formation of the adult community. Parish links are positive and supportive, not least in the engagement between the school and the parish in the catechetical preparation of children for First Communion.

Areas of Focus for Development

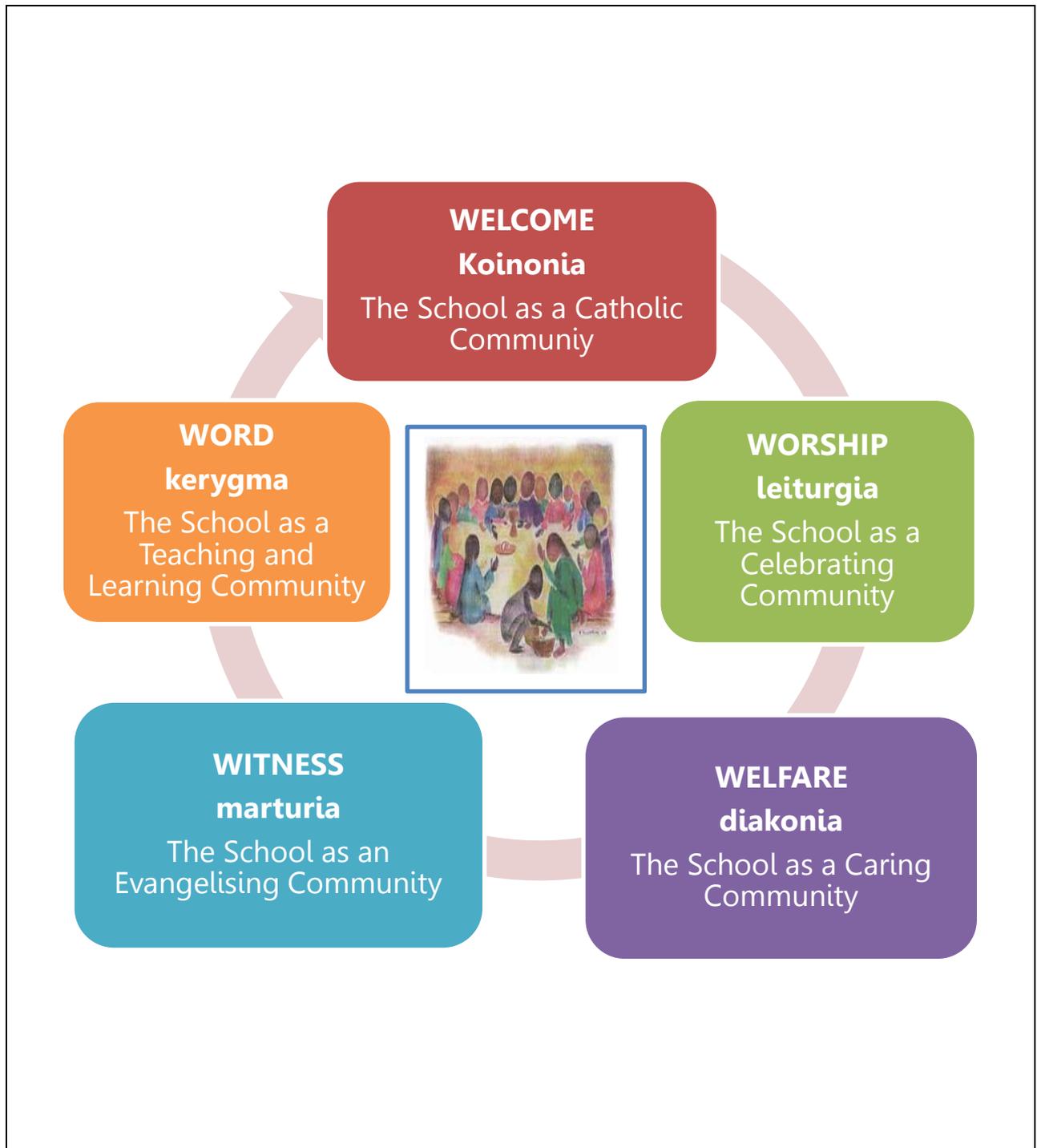
1. Develop the skills and ability of all staff to offer a variety of well-planned liturgical experiences.
2. To put in place monitoring of preparation and delivery of worship to ensure that it contains the components of good liturgical practice.
3. Begin to develop the skills of children to fully participate in the preparation and delivery of acts of worship.

Conclusion

St. Joseph's is a school which may have lost its focus but has the potential to regain a clearer sense of its vision and purpose. Currently it is in a time of transition with a leadership team willing to embrace the issues and committed to bringing about change. Staff, parents, governors and the wider CAST community working together have the capacity to bring about change quickly and with integrity. The school is made up of many good people who have the interests of the pupils at heart. This of itself, along with commitment, hard work and prayer, will be what transforms St. Joseph's to become the school that all believe it can be.

Sarah Adams
May 2016

THE SCHOOL AS A CATHOLIC COMMUNITY



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

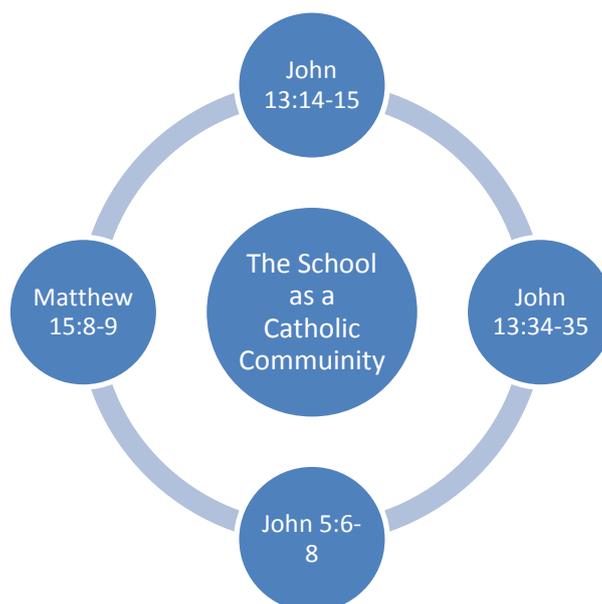
There will be three key areas within which these five elements will be reviewed:

- 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 any one 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.