

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

**S48
INSPECTION REPORT**



St. Joseph's Roman Catholic Primary School
Sancreed Road
Poole
Dorset
BH12 4DZ

URN 140767

Head Teacher: Neil McDermott
Chair of Governors: Hugh Fogarty

Introduction

The inspection of St. Joseph's Roman Catholic Primary School was carried out under the requirements of the Education Act 2005, and in accordance with Plymouth Diocesan Framework and as a multi-academy Trust school (CAST) with the Schedule for Diocesan Canonical inspectors (S48), approved by the Bishop of Plymouth.

Context for the Inspection

St Joseph's is larger than average-sized primary school with 381 pupils on roll. Of these 17.32% of children are eligible for pupil premium, 12.60% of children receive free school meals and 19.6% of children have Special Educational Needs (SEN) of these 3 children have a statement of special educational needs. Significantly 27.3% of children have English as An additional Language (EAL).

Since the last inspection the school has undergone significant changes:

1. The sudden death the Head Teacher in 2013 led to a period of interim leadership until the current Head took up post in September 2014.
2. Following a re-organisation within the Poole area the school has become a primary school, having previously taken children through to the end of year 7.
3. The school has become an academy as part of CAST – a multi-academy trust incorporating all Catholic primary schools within Diocese of Plymouth.

Key Finding Grade 1

John 13:14-15

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 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.

Over the past three years St. Joseph's has gone through a difficult period and not insignificant distress following the sudden death of their Head Teacher. The impact of this experience affected the whole school and parish communities. It is therefore to the credit of the interim leadership team that the school continued to move forward and pastoral care of adults and children strengthened. Despite many staff changes, a commitment to serving one another has grown and deepened. This has been further enhanced by the appointment of a new Head Teacher who has brought his own integrity and vision to the school. As a

consequence it is a school dedicated to meeting the needs of all within the community, academically, spiritually and pastorally. All aspects of school life speak of the genuine care and love that members of the community have for one another. Parents, staff and children, all commented on this many times without hesitation. St. Joseph's is a school where living the Gospel really matters. The Head Teacher's own personal faith flows out into every action. The dignity of every person in the school is valued and as a consequence the desire of all to serve one another is inspirational. This is a community thriving because it is rooted in God and faith.

Summary of Key Findings

- The spirit of the Gospel permeates all aspects of the school's life. This is tangible in all areas of school life. In particular, positive and warm relationships ensure that the school's vision and mission – rooted in the core values of 'commitment, courtesy and collaboration' leads everyone to 'do their best for Jesus'.
- Since the last inspection the profile of the school has changed considerably. A higher proportion of children with EAL and special educational needs means that the school really has to embrace diversity. It does this with enthusiasm and genuine commitment to welcome all children and families regardless of ethnicity or background.
- Leaders within the school model Gospel values and the teachings of the Catholic Church particularly by their genuine commitment to serving the Common Good and rooting decisions within an understanding of social justice. In particular, leaders are committed to working within a framework of high expectations, concern for the marginalised and restorative justice.
- RE teaching has a central role in the life of the school. There is a heartfelt commitment to developing staff so that they can deliver engaging, challenging and rewarding lessons. This commitment is demonstrated in a number of the leadership team taking the opportunity to study for the Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies (CCRS).
- The faith life of the school permeates all areas of the school. In particular the prayer life of the school was experienced in many different ways throughout the inspection. These experiences contribute to a deep sense of God's presence and a belief that this is a school firmly rooted in the Catholic Tradition.
- St. Joseph's is more than just a happy school. Children are consistently welcoming and generally calm as they go about the school. In lessons their behaviour is excellent. They are engaging to talk to and reflect the genuine care which adults consistently model for them.
- Children who have difficulties are supported by well-trained and informed adults. The school inclusion team is a particular example of professional excellence.

Area of Focus for Development

- To continue the work begun on defining Gospel Values and how to deepen their application to the life of the school.

St. Joseph's is a genuinely humble community. It takes great humility to wash the feet of another person and to allow ourselves to be washed by another. This is the level of service prevalent within this school. The children of St. Joseph's are blessed to have adults who come to work with one agenda and that is to do their very best for the children and families who walk through their doors. These are adults who consistently go the extra mile to meet the needs of every child. Aspirations for the children are high. As a result children are offered a rich and wide curriculum in a joyful and life-giving environment. This comes about by virtue of the quality of teaching, numerous extra-curricular activities on offer and the high levels of pastoral care provided for all. The quality of welcome, welfare and witness is tangible.

Welcome is not simply a gesture. It is a consistently open disposition to seeing the needs of others and having the capacity to respond to those needs regardless of personal pressures and constraints. As a result the adult community also feels supported because what the children experience the adults also experience from one another. In addition the quality of welcome is reflected in the openness of the community to receiving children from a wide range of diverse cultural and economic backgrounds. These children add to the beauty of the community because they feel safe and accepted. As a result they integrate well and others benefit from their presence. The school has a designated inclusion leader. Her expertise and committed approach to working with a team to meet all children's needs has an enormous impact on the quality of relationships with parents and carers.

A solid and up-to-date website and a bi-weekly newsletter ensures that parents are kept well-informed not only of events taking place but of many other important dimensions of school life including the mission and purpose of the school. Communications with parents are generally strong with parents expressing their confidence in the relationship they have with the school to keep them informed (Parents' survey and conversations with parents). This is another dimension of the school's capacity to make St. Joseph's a truly welcoming place.

Induction of new staff is carefully thought about and effective in helping people to quickly feel a part of the community. Shared planning of lessons enables less experienced staff to learn from more experienced staff and as a result to grow in confidence, particularly in the teaching of RE.

The employment of a specialist language support TA, who speaks Polish, has been a successful move in supporting the school's children with EAL and more specifically the parents of these children. Opportunities for these parents to attend school meetings and a monthly coffee morning reflect the desire of the school to ensure that everyone feels included. The school has evidence that many parents choose St. Joseph's because they know that they will be supported to understand and engage in English school life. Many parents of different nationalities including English parents comment on the warmth of the welcome that they receive. At the same time the school continues to find ways to reach those parents who are less engaged with the school. They are open to exploring ways to achieve this.

Children at the school have a strong voice and are keen to take on roles of responsibility. In addition to school councillors the school holds elections for house captains and vice captains. Through this process candidates children must 'make a pitch' as to their suitability

and all children are enabled to grow in their understanding of the democratic process and commit to it. Children spoke with enthusiasm and confidence about this. Children have a high level of respect for one another and recognise that each one is special. This is not surprising because the adults see each child as unique and special and consequently their attitudes to the children are reflected in the way they treat each other.

As can be seen the school witnessing to the Gospel lies at the heart of the school. Governors are fully engaged with the school and are committed to supporting its work while acting as the necessary critical friend which all leadership teams need. Governors meet regularly and visit the school on an increasing basis. In addition to working with governors the school has excellent relationships with other local schools and is highly supportive of the CAST cluster group of schools. In particular the Inclusion lead within St. Joseph's has worked with all the other cluster schools to identify and evaluate provision for SEN and has through this work also provided the school leaders with actions to develop practice across the eleven schools. Another example is the way that the school has shared with other schools their effective teaching strategies.

Through the work of the school council, children are proactive in identifying needs in their community and the wider community. They regularly hold charitable events to raise much needed funds but also awareness of charities such as the Poole Food Bank, CAFOD, the Shoe Box appeal and Children in Need to name but a few. This enthusiasm reflects the outward looking nature of the school and in particular the growing awareness of the children that because of their own blessings, they have a responsibility to respond to the needs of others. The School Self Evaluation Form (SEF) identifies many ways in which the children respond with generosity and out of a growing Faith.

Focus for Development

1. To consider how to develop links with the wider community specifically with an international community.
2. Work with staff to develop a common understanding of Catholic Social Teaching and how it underpins the work of St. Joseph's within CAST.

St. Joseph's as a Catholic Community	Leadership and Management
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Grade 1	John 13:14-15
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The desire to support one and serve one another in the best possible way flows from a leadership team that believes that service is best modelled by those at the top. The leadership team with governors, is committed to promoting a school community rooted in social justice and the common good. They promote an ethos which reveals Jesus Christ, the teacher, in the daily life of the school. It is clear that there is nothing the leadership team would ask anything of others that it wouldn't do itself. The Head Teacher's personal humility and faith ensures that staff are well cared for and supported to do what they need to do. They fully appreciate the efforts made by the adult members of the community and in the conversations with staff, it became clear that they know this and feel valued and dignified.

The open disposition of the leadership team ensures that the needs of children and adults are constantly being addressed in an appropriate and purposeful manner. Through

monitoring, appraisal and regular meetings, adults within the community are helped to identify what will help them to develop professionally. Leaders see themselves as stewards of the vocation that lies within each individual and through agreed performance management targets, adults are encouraged and supported to grow and develop. An example of this would be a teacher wanting to progress to Upper Pay Scale and being challenged to work with another member of staff to improved outcomes in the colleague's class.

As well as rigorous monitoring and a desire to see adults to grow professionally, the leadership team is supported by a challenging and effective governing body. They have high expectations of the school and are frequent visitors to the school. They are welcome visitors and respected by the adults within the school. Fully engaging with the 'School as a Catholic Community' they are aware of the areas of strength and those areas where the school might develop. For example both Governors and Leaders identified that they needed to explore in more depth what the school means by Gospel Values. As a result an INSET day was given to looking at this and the work is on-going.

The school has been blessed to have an RE leader who has always worked hard to support teachers in their delivery of RE and all that goes with the role. She has also been supported, in very recent years, by the current Head Teacher who recognises the significance of the role and how it requires time and on-going reflection to ensure that there are solid opportunities for cascading information and also engaging with it.

Focus for Development

1. To ensure that a programme of rigorous and extensive monitoring is put in place which involves searching analysis and self-challenge so that RE teaching results in clearly defined progress.

St. Joseph's as a Teaching and learning Community	Word
Grade 2	John 13:34-35

Although given an over-all grade of a 2 for this section it is important to note that the quality of teaching experienced at St. Joseph's is considered to be a 1. There are other areas which still need developing but the actual lessons observed were of an exceptionally high quality. Teachers are clearly committed to providing lessons which challenge and engage children. They plan thorough and for the most part succeed in offering lessons where children can and do make progress. Their attitude to teaching reflects the compassion, generosity and challenge of Jesus. Teachers and TAs are open and thoughtful. Children are treated with respect and teachers have high expectations. At the same time they are gentle in their interactions, calm and know how to guide children towards success. TAs work well with children who need their support.

Much of the success of the quality of teaching has been helped by working with other CAST schools to develop a common understanding of what constitutes strong and effective teaching. Through joint observations and monitoring, evaluation has resulted in a well-focused action plan which is clearly enabling improvement and high outcomes. In particular the introduction of large class books has been very successful in recording children's work and providing rich evidence of the kind of experiences the children are having. People are rightly proud of these books, which will provide a useful tool for teachers as children move through the school.

Children enjoy their lessons and can talk very positively about their learning experience. They are able to talk with eloquence. Their knowledge and understanding is excellent. They understand the expectations that teachers have of them and consider lessons to be interesting and fun.

There are some areas for development particularly in the area of differentiation of task. Although children were consistently offered challenging tasks, they were not always separated out from one another and given different tasks. This is an area which the school has identified as one that they have yet to completely master.

Marking is an improving area and is an opportunity for children to engage in a dialogue with their teacher about their work. It will be even better once children are helped to see what their next steps are and how they are progressing.

Focus for Development

1. Continue to support teachers to fully understand the importance of differentiation of task (as opposed to differentiation by outcome) and rooted in a knowledge of RE.
2. To be clear about how children make progress in RE and ensure that children also understand this.

St. Joseph's as a Celebrating Community	Worship and Spiritual and Moral Development
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Grade 1	John 13:13-14
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There are many aspects of the spiritual life of St. Joseph's which are a cause for celebration and which contribute to children growing in their relationship with God and in relation with each other and with creation. Prayer lies at the heart of the school. Many examples of this were experienced over the two days. These comprised of small class acts of worship, meditation, reflection times, a Key Stage liturgy and a whole school Liturgy.

Striking within all of these is the quality of reflection and engagement. From the smallest child to those in Year 6, the capacity to be still or sing with enthusiasm is tangible. It is clear that the spiritual lives of all present is taken seriously. It is significant that everyone who participates does so because this is what the community does. There is no sense of any kind of coercion or insistence for anyone. Prayer is a genuinely valued part of daily life at the school.

Around the school wall displays, focal points and different artefacts point to the Catholic nature of the school. These are often a rich expression of what the school represents and believes in. Because of the nature of the school building such displays can get lost so it will be important to keep an eye on this. Equally class focal points do not have the same vitality as other aspects of the Faith life of the school and is an area which does require some development.

The school has been blessed to have an excellent music and performing arts teacher who works well with other members of staff to offer children rich opportunities to perform in school productions. However, this expertise is used to great advantage when it comes to

offering children and adults rich liturgical experiences at key moments in the school year, such as Advent, Lent, Holy Week and Easter. Rather than performance the children are enabled to re-enact with music and words the main message of these seasons. They are a source of inspiration to everyone and not least a genuine tool for evangelisation.

Links with the parish which have been exceptionally strong are in a new phase. A change in Parish Priest has meant that new relationships are still in the process of being forged. Thus far this has meant that school Masses have continued. The school and parish are working together to develop relationships further despite the change of circumstances and a diminishment of the parish team. As time goes on it is hoped that the school and parish will once again enjoy a close and productive relationship. On another note relationships with the feeder secondary school are very positive and growing. Leaders from that school are developing strong links with both Catholic primary schools shown in the past year by the engagement of children from most year groups attending a prayer project run by Year 12 pupils. This very successful project is leading to further discussions about other possibilities for linking children to the secondary school. It is a very positive sign of the witness that each school is giving to the other.

Everything about the life of St. Joseph's enables children to grow spiritually and morally. The traditions and practices of the Catholic Church which are embedded in the life of the school, give the children a context for learning what is right and just. Through this they are able to develop a critical conscience and are given the freedom to choose what ultimately gives them life.

Focus for Development

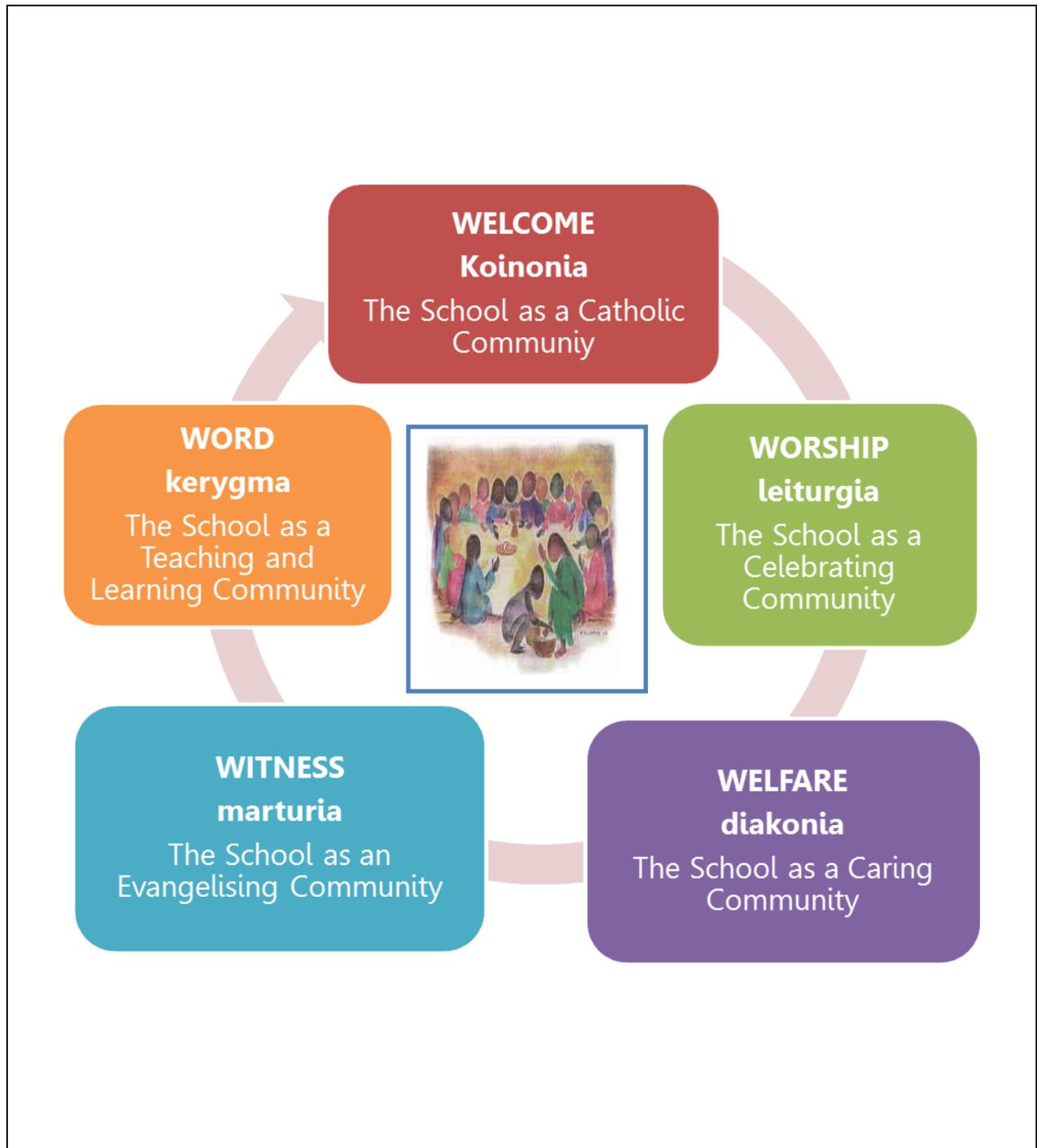
1. To develop liturgies so that children are enabled to grow in skills of presiding and preparing liturgy.
2. To re-consider how grow in the necessary skills to be creative with their focal points so that they are children friendly and engaging.

Conclusion

St. Joseph's is a joy to visit. It is a school which clearly knows where it is heading and has a strong sense of its mission and purpose. There is no doubting that everyone connected with the school contributes to its joy, hope and rich faith. It is a school of which the Bishop and the Diocese can be justly proud.

Sarah Adams
July 2016

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

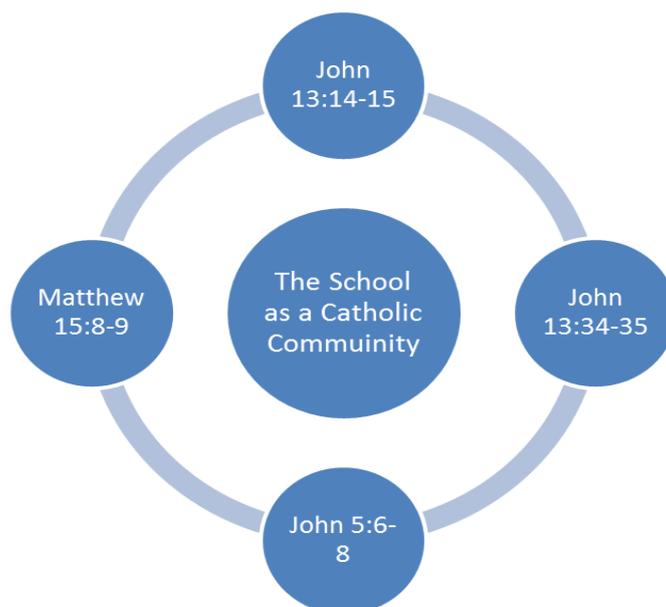
There will be three key areas within which these five elements will be reviewed:

- 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 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.