

THE VALIDATION REPORT



This report to the Bishop of the Diocese under Canon 806 of the Code of Canon Law is also the report to the governors of the school on religious education. For Christian maintained schools, the report also fulfils the requirements of Section 48 of the Education Act 2005.

| | |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| NAME OF SCHOOL | St Francis Catholic and Church of England Primary School |
| ADDRESS | Leeson Road Ventnor Isle of Wight PO38 1PR |
| URN | 136011 |
| CHAIR OF GOVERNORS | Michele Kaiser |
| HEADTEACHER | Angela Hewkin |
| NAMES OF VALIDATORS | Helena Pickering Chris Pritchard |
| DATES OF THE VALIDATION VISITS | 18 th and 25 th June 2012 |

Information about the school

Number of pupils on roll

302

Number of boys

172

Number of girls

130

Number of statemented pupils

6

Percentage of Christian pupils

60%

Number of teaching staff

21

Number of support staff

43

St Francis Catholic and Church of England school opened in September 2010. It is an amalgamation of three schools in Ventnor – formerly St Wilfrid’s Catholic Primary, St Boniface Church of England Primary and St Margaret’s Church of England Primary. The reorganisation of the education system on the Isle of Wight, from a three-tier to a two-tier system resulted in staff from the three existing schools being joined by staff from two other island schools. Foundation and key stage one pupils are currently based on the St Wilfrid’s site and key stage two pupils are based on the St Boniface site. A new school building is under construction and the entire community will move there in January 2013. The school serves the Catholic and Church of England parishes of Ventnor and Bonchurch, as well as the local community of Ventnor.

The governing body has been constituted to represent both communities and the Foundation Principles are jointly signed by the Anglican Bishop of Portsmouth and the Catholic Bishop of Portsmouth.

The school's effectiveness in providing Christian education

St Francis school is a very good example of a Christian community, which is committed to Gospel values and places these at the centre of school life. The school is extremely well supported by the clergy and governors. The children are proud of their school. The quality of relationships between all members of the community is very good, with everyone supporting one another and the school welcomes all who pass through its doors.

Religious education (RE) is a core subject and the school is committed to raising standards for all pupils. In providing a good standard of religious education, the pupils are given a firm faith foundation. The leadership and co-ordination of the subject are good, with a real commitment to its development. The pupils' work is of a good standard and they make good progress.

All aspects of school life contribute to the spiritual and moral development of pupils and offer good opportunities for their development in these key areas. Good quality worship is integrated into the life of the school and its positive impact can be seen in the words, attitudes and actions of its members.

a) Key strengths of the school

- The energy and drive demonstrated by the headteacher, clergy, governors, parents, staff and pupils, in ensuring that the new school is a place where Gospel values are lived out and all members of the newly-formed community are supported and valued.
- The strength and warmth of the relationships between all members of the community and the welcome offered to visitors.
- The quality and care of the physical environment that contribute to creating an attractive and purposeful school.
- How the children clearly love their school and value the support given and friendship shown to them by the staff and fellow pupils.
- The confidence and trust of the community in the school, that has been developed by the leadership team during a period of great change and uncertainty.
- The headteacher, who is an outstanding role model, supporting the vision and Gospel values of the school.
- The strong support of the governing body, working with the school leadership team, to steer the school's vision and mission.
- The outstanding displays, which ably support the RE curriculum.
- The attitudes and behaviour of the pupils during RE lessons.
- The professionalism and commitment of the teaching staff to provide an RE curriculum that is of a good quality.
- The work of the teaching assistants, which is well focussed and makes a significant contribution to the quality of learning.
- The interweaving of the message from the whole school worship to the worship that is class-based.
- The provision of excellent quality worship spaces, which emphasise the centrality of worship throughout the school
- The very good behaviour of the pupils.

b) Key areas for development

Once the whole school community is on one site:

- Build on the good work already carried out on the school's mission statement, in order to ensure that the school and wider community are fully aware of and live out the mission of the school.
- Develop and enhance the roles and responsibilities of all pupils, particularly the school's councils.
- Provide opportunities for pupils to plan, deliver and evaluate worship.

c) Not applicable

d) Summary of parents' views of the school

Eighty questionnaires were completed by parents as part of the validation process.

A very large majority of parents feel that St Francis Catholic and Church of England Primary School is a supportive, caring, Christian community, which communicates well with parents. Practically all parents, who responded, agreed that they are made to feel welcome and that their children are happy in the school. One parent wrote that the school is 'a lovely, supportive and caring school, with a very positive and inclusive Christian ethos'. Parents feel that the school provides good opportunities for pupils to develop spiritually and morally. The majority of parents feel that the school welcomes them to take part in the religious and worshipping life of the school. The majority of parents felt that the links between home, school and parish are well developed.

THE SCHOOL AS A CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

WHAT THE SCHOOL SAYS

| SECTION A1: The school community | Outstanding | Good | Satisfactory | Inadequate |
|----------------------------------|-------------|------|--------------|------------|
| | | ✓ | | |

Key strengths identified by the school

St Francis is a good example of a Christian community that has worked hard over the last 18 months to establish and evolve the Mission and Vision for the community that it serves.

- People who visit our school have frequently commented on the warm, welcoming, happy atmosphere.
- The newly developed Mission Statement has begun to have a positive impact on the life of the members of the school community, who recognise its importance and do their best to live it out.
- The very well maintained and attractive environment and display make explicit the Christian nature of the school.
- Most members of the school community, through their actions and words, demonstrate their commitment to the principles and philosophy of stewardship.
- Clear accessible channels of communication exist for parents and carers to communicate with the school, which the school actively encourages parents to use.
- As a new school a great focus has been made to foster positive relationships with most groups of parents and carers, who are kept well-informed, which leads to good relationships between home and school.
- The school environment is tidy and pleasant and reflects the Christian nature of the school, in each classroom and main entrances to both sites.

Areas identified for development by the school *(include timescale for action)*

- As a split site school we need to look to ensuring that pupils and staff across the 2 sites have the opportunity to work and mix together to become one community.
- Build on good work already carried out on our mission statement in order to ensure all the school and wider community are fully aware of and live out the mission of the school.

VALIDATORS' JUDGEMENT

| SECTION A1: The school community | Outstanding | Good | Satisfactory | Inadequate |
|----------------------------------|-------------|------|--------------|------------|
| | | ✓ | | |

Key strengths

St Francis is a school that works hard to witness that Christ is at the centre of its school community.

Validators agree with the school's self-evaluation and commend the school for the following:

- The energy and drive demonstrated by the headteacher, clergy, governors, parents, staff and pupils in ensuring that the new school is a place where Gospel values are lived out and all members of the newly formed community are supported and valued.
- The strength and warmth of the relationships between all members of the community and the welcome offered to visitors.
- The quality and care of the physical environment that contribute to creating an attractive and purposeful school.
- How the children clearly love their school and value the support given and friendship shown to them by the staff and fellow pupils.
- How the children feel valued and know that they have a role and responsibility in developing their school.

Areas identified for development

The validators agree with those areas identified by the school.

WHAT THE SCHOOL SAYS

| SECTION A2: Leadership and management | Outstanding | Good | Satisfactory | Inadequate |
|---------------------------------------|-------------|------|--------------|------------|
| | | ✓ | | |

Key strengths identified by the school

- The leadership team of St Francis is effective and sets an example of service and humility, which others follow.
- All members of St Francis are valued for their varying gifts and talents.
- The role model of Christian leadership provided by the leadership team and many middle leaders helps to exemplify and share the St Francis' Christian vision and purpose.
- Leaders and managers routinely make good use of rigorous monitoring activities, relating to teaching, learning, spiritual and moral development and other provision outcomes. This has supported the development of teaching and learning and the embedding of our new RE curriculum.
- Development planning is founded on robust evidence and good quality data and links are made to furthering the mission of the school.
- The governing body has the capacity to meet the school's needs and is influential in determining the strategic direction of the school. It has supported the development of the new school.
- The leadership team and governing body are committed to improving outcomes still further and have identified the next key steps to take. This has been identified in SDP and Post Ofsted Action Plan.

Areas identified for development by the school *(include timescale for action)*

- Continue to build on the good start made to staff development as we settle to stable staffing after 2 years of development in this area
- Ensure that annually staff have the opportunity to come together for a day of reflection to deepen everyone's understanding and ownership our school context and ethos.

VALIDATORS' JUDGEMENT

| SECTION A2: Leadership and management | Outstanding | Good | Satisfactory | Inadequate |
|---------------------------------------|-------------|------|--------------|------------|
| | ✓ | | | |

Key strengths

The Christian leadership at St Francis Catholic and Church of England Primary School provides an excellent vision and direction for the work of the school.

The validators believe that the leadership and management in the school are outstanding. This is evidenced by:

- The confidence and trust of the community in the school, that has been developed by the leadership team during a period of great change and uncertainty.
- The headteacher, who is an outstanding role model, supporting the vision and Gospel values of the school.
- The RE governor, who works enthusiastically with staff to develop, challenge and support the work of the school.
- The leadership team, which works together to ensure that the values of the school are met.
- The strong support of the governing body, working with the school leadership team, to steer the school's vision and mission.
- The regular report from the senior leadership team to the governors, which has been widely recognised as a strength of the school.

Areas identified for development

The validators agree with those areas identified by the school.

WHAT THE SCHOOL SAYS

| | | | | |
|--|--------------------|-------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| SECTION A3: The wider community | Outstanding | Good | Satisfactory | Inadequate |
| | | ✓ | | |

Key strengths identified by the school

- St Francis is an active member of the local and diocesan family of schools and has two-way partnership with the local Catholic and Church of England communities.
- The school community actively supports the work of other schools through engagement with diocesan initiatives and the activities of local Catholic and Church of England partnerships.
- There are active partnerships with other local schools through links with the schools within the Ventnor area.
- St Francis is effective in preparing pupils for their roles and responsibilities towards all members of today's society and is developing strong links with all the feeder secondary schools.
- Social, ethnic and cultural diversity is celebrated, encouraging pupils to develop their social conscience through living out Gospel values and the mission of the school.

Areas identified for development by the school *(include timescale for action)*

- We need to extend previous links with national and international communities:
- Further Develop links with Christ the King College.
 - Develop links with other joint Catholic & Church of England Schools – this has already begun with The Emmaus School in Liverpool.
 - Review existing international links and extend across the school.

VALIDATORS' JUDGEMENT

| | | | | |
|--|--------------------|-------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| SECTION A3: The wider community | Outstanding | Good | Satisfactory | Inadequate |
| | | ✓ | | |

Key strengths

- The validators agree with the school that links with the wider community are good. This is evidenced by:
- The commitment of the clergy to visiting the school as often as they can, to offer support to staff and pupils.
 - The overwhelming support of the parents for the school as a place of learning and spiritual growth for them and their children.
 - The support for diocesan events, for example the Good Shepherd celebration and the Cathedral Leavers' Service.
 - The attendance at diocesan meetings and training courses.
 - The awareness of the role of the school in supporting the local and wider island community.
 - The very good links with local Catholic and Anglican schools.

Areas identified for development

Refresh and enhance the school's involvement with the local community once the school is established on the new site.

CURRICULUM RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

WHAT THE SCHOOL SAYS

| | | | | |
|--|-------------|------|--------------|------------|
| SECTION B1: Leadership and co-ordination of religious education | Outstanding | Good | Satisfactory | Inadequate |
| | | ✓ | | |

Key strengths identified by the school

- Curriculum RE is given prominence at St Francis and is valued and seen as important by the large majority of stakeholders, within the context of the varied make-up of the school population.
- Senior leaders and governors take a keen interest in the subject and are aware of its strengths and areas for development and play a key role in the monitoring process.
- The RE Leadership Team, who have responsibility for leading and co-ordinating RE, are key figures within the school, who actively promote the high standards in RE, through their own good subject knowledge and ability to develop students and staff, leading by example.
- There is a range of rigorous monitoring activities, enabling St Francis to set clear direction and challenging targets.
- The agreed RE scheme of work is embedded across the school and used to enhance teaching and learning in RE, leading to attainment that is above average.
- Catholic & Church of England Cluster training days focus on areas for development. Staff have gained confidence and skills through training linked to Collective Worship and range of teaching styles.

Areas identified for development by the school *(include timescale for action)*

- The RE Policy continues to be under review due to the unique nature of our school foundation within the structures of the two Dioceses of Portsmouth.
- We are looking to review and develop our termly class letters to parents to provide more comprehensive information for parents.

VALIDATORS' JUDGEMENT

| | | | | |
|--|-------------|------|--------------|------------|
| SECTION B1: Leadership and co-ordination of religious education | Outstanding | Good | Satisfactory | Inadequate |
| | | ✓ | | |

Key strengths

The RE leadership team has worked hard to ensure that religious education is becoming increasingly a key element of the life and work of the school.

- Validators commend the school for the following:
- The successful implementation of the newly written RE Scheme and the positive impact this has had upon the RE curriculum.
 - A programme of monitoring is in place with feedback to staff and governors.
 - The RE policy is in place.
 - The detailed RE action plan that links to the school improvement plan and has a clear focus for continuing to enhance and develop teaching and learning in RE.
 - Staff attendance at diocesan training days.
 - The outstanding displays ably support the RE curriculum.

Areas identified for development

The validators agree with those areas identified by the school.

WHAT THE SCHOOL SAYS

| | | | | |
|---|-------------|------|--------------|------------|
| SECTION B2: Attainment and progress in religious education | Outstanding | Good | Satisfactory | Inadequate |
| | | ✓ | | |

Key strengths identified by the school

- The pupils acquire knowledge, develop understanding and learn and practise the skills well.
- In the majority of lessons pupils are keen to do well, apply themselves diligently in lessons and work at a good pace.
- The majority of pupils seek to produce their best work and are usually interested and enthusiastic about their learning, given the wide range of starting points that they have in their home environments.
- A very large majority of groups of pupils make at least good progress.
- Most pupils are able to demonstrate their learning through a variety of strategies.
- In the best lessons assessment for learning procedures informs teachers' planning, ensuring that most pupils are supported and challenged in matching attainment to ability. Peer to Peer coaching is being developed to ensure that best practice is shared across the school.
- Relationships are good and contribute to creating a quality learning environment.

Areas identified for development by the school *(include timescale for action)*

- Assessment is an area of development as our new RE scheme has been used and evaluated over the last 18 months; this has helped us to evolve a range of ways to assess the pupils' work.
- As we serve a wide and varied catchment and are the only local school we need to continue to develop our commitment to ensuring that all our families feel part of and connected to the religious nature of our school, irrespective of their own faith tradition or none.

VALIDATORS' JUDGEMENT

| | | | | |
|---|-------------|------|--------------|------------|
| SECTION B2: Attainment and progress in religious education | Outstanding | Good | Satisfactory | Inadequate |
| | | ✓ | | |

Key strengths

Standards in religious education at St Francis are good. Pupils enjoy their RE lessons and the range of activities offered to them to support their learning.

Validators agree with the school's self-evaluation and commend the school for the following:

- How the pupils acquire knowledge, develop understanding and practise their skills well.
- The range of learning opportunities to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding.
- The attitudes and behaviour of the pupils during RE lessons.
- How the good relationships in the classroom contribute to learning.
- How the school enables pupils to develop their knowledge of other faith traditions.
- In lessons observed during the validation the children were able to think, reflect, question and draw on prior knowledge.
- In the better lessons, teachers used a variety of methods, including questioning, paired or group discussion and practical tasks, to achieve outcomes that were consistent with the learning intention.

Areas identified for development

The validators agree with those areas identified by the school.

WHAT THE SCHOOL SAYS

| SECTION B3: Quality of teaching | Outstanding | Good | Satisfactory | Inadequate |
|---------------------------------|-------------|------|--------------|------------|
| | | ✓ | | |

| Key strengths identified by the school |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teaching is consistently effective, ensuring that pupils are motivated and engaged. The great majority of teaching is securing good progress and learning, Teachers generally have strong, secure subject knowledge, which enthuses and challenges most pupils and contributes to their progress. Good and imaginative use is made of resources, including new technology and art to enhance learning. Other adults' support is well focused and makes a significant contribution to the quality of learning. Teachers listen to, observe and question groups of pupils during lessons in order to reshape tasks and explanations to improve learning. The majority of learning environments have a positive impact on children's learning as a result of being relevant, well maintained and presented. |

| Areas identified for development by the school <i>(include timescale for action)</i> |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessment is an area of development as our new RE scheme has been used and evaluated over the last 18 months; this has helped us to evolve a range of ways to assess the pupil's work. Further develop the range of approaches to differentiation. |

VALIDATORS' JUDGEMENT

| SECTION B3: Quality of teaching | Outstanding | Good | Satisfactory | Inadequate |
|---------------------------------|-------------|------|--------------|------------|
| | | ✓ | | |

| Key strengths |
|---|
| <p><i>The quality of teaching of religious education is of a good standard. On the day of the validation the teaching observed ranged from good to outstanding.</i></p> <p>Validators agree with the school's self-evaluation and commend the school for the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The professionalism and commitment of the teaching staff to providing an RE curriculum that is of a good quality. The work of the teaching assistants, which is well focussed and makes a significant contribution to the quality of learning. <p>During the validation, four whole lessons were observed; particular strengths included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The teachers' obvious enthusiasm for and commitment to the subject, which motivates the children to strive to do their best. The good subject knowledge of the teachers. The good use of a variety of resources and strategies to engage children successfully in learning. Good use of information technology resources. Excellent use of interactive classroom displays, as part of the teaching and learning. Stimulating learning environments. |

| Areas identified for development |
|--|
| <p>The validators agree with those areas identified by the school.</p> |

SPIRITUAL AND MORAL DEVELOPMENT

WHAT THE SCHOOL SAYS

| | | | | |
|--|-------------|------|--------------|------------|
| SECTION C1: Spiritual development | Outstanding | Good | Satisfactory | Inadequate |
| | | ✓ | | |

Key strengths identified by the school

- A wide range of experiences contribute to the spiritual development of pupils.
- Opportunities to encourage pupils' spiritual development are to be found in a number of curriculum areas.
- There is a variety of well planned and spontaneous religious experiences, for example, meditation, prayer, contemplation and ritual; these are well supported by priests and Lay Preachers
- Good quality worship follows the liturgical year has been developed over the last 21 months; it is topical and tailored to individual needs. This is achieved at class, year group, key stage and whole school level
- Good resources contribute to pupils' awareness by helping to create a spiritual atmosphere.
- The importance and relevance of Scripture is understood.
- Members of the school community pray together and, where appropriate, parents and carers are invited to be involved.
- Members of the school community recognise the gifts of the Spirit in themselves and others.

Areas identified for development by the school *(include timescale for action)*

- The Collective Worship Policy continues to be under review due to the unique nature of our school foundation within the structures of the two Dioceses of Portsmouth.
- We have carried out staff development linked to RE and collective Worship but prior to January 2013, when we move to our new site, we will look to strengthen this area through times of reflection for all staff during Staff training sessions.

VALIDATORS' JUDGEMENT

| | | | | |
|--|-------------|------|--------------|------------|
| SECTION C1: Spiritual development | Outstanding | Good | Satisfactory | Inadequate |
| | | ✓ | | |

Key strengths

St Francis offers pupils, staff and parents a range of opportunities to help them deepen their personal relationship with God.

Validators agree with the school's self-evaluation and commend the school for the following:

- The time and resources given to supporting worship throughout the school.
- The interweaving of the message from the whole school worship to the worship that is class-based.

During the validation, three acts of worship were observed; particular strengths included:

- How the children gathered quietly and reverently and listened attentively.
- How the children in the upper school sang joyfully and reflected thoughtfully on the theme of Sacraments.
- How they considered the application of the message of the Scripture to their own lives.
- The provision of excellent quality worship spaces, which emphasise the centrality of worship throughout the school.
- The affirming, vibrant environment created by the efforts of the staff contributes to the children's spiritual development.

Areas identified for development

Provide opportunities for pupils to plan, deliver and evaluate worship.

WHAT THE SCHOOL SAYS

| | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|-------------|------|--------------|------------|
| SECTION C2: Moral development | Outstanding | Good | Satisfactory | Inadequate |
| | | ✓ | | |

Key strengths identified by the school

- Staff effectively use opportunities to enable pupils to relate ethical and moral choices in everyday life to religious beliefs and values.
- Pupils are developing a strong sense of common values.
- The majority of pupils behave considerately towards each other.
- They routinely show responsibility in responding to the expectations of staff, set consistent standards for themselves and respond quickly and well to any additional guidance from staff about how to conduct themselves.
- The majority of children know the difference between right and wrong and understand the consequences of their own and others' actions and welcome opportunities for reconciliation.
- Members of the school community have a good understanding that our gifts are used to demonstrate the school's commitment to gospel values and support for others.
- Staff make consistent use of the agreed system of rewards and sanctions to establish an effective framework for encouraging positive behaviour and celebrating achievement.
- The school provides a range of opportunities for parents to support the pupils' moral development.

Areas identified for development by the school *(include timescale for action)*

- We have to work hard to create a strong harmonious staff team, but as we have brought staff from 6 different schools together this is an area that we continue to work at as we move towards one community on one site.

VALIDATORS' JUDGEMENT

| | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|-------------|------|--------------|------------|
| SECTION C2: Moral development | Outstanding | Good | Satisfactory | Inadequate |
| | | ✓ | | |

Key strengths

The pupils interviewed stated that St Francis "is a school that cares for its community and the teachers are very good."

Validators agree with the school's self-evaluation and commend the school for the following:

- The environment of respect for each individual, shown through the relationships in the school.
- That children feel valued and safe and are appreciative of the support given by the staff and the positive role model they provide.
- The very good behaviour of the pupils.
- The effective systems and structures for rewards and sanctions.
- The pastoral care offered to pupils by all staff.
- The involvement of pupils in support and care for those less fortunate than themselves, through giving to charities e.g. Walk the Wight, British Heart Foundation.
- The support offered to new pupils in the school.
- The work of the School Council and the Eco Council.

Areas identified for development

Once the whole school community is on one site, develop and enhance the roles and responsibilities of all pupils, particularly the school's councils.

SOURCES OF EVIDENCE FOR THE VALIDATION

As part of the validation process:

- Two validators spent a morning in school, meeting with the headteacher and clergy, discussing the school's self-review report, touring the school and gathering evidence;
- Two validators carried out the validation in the course of a school day;
- During the validation day, interviews and discussions were held with:
 The headteacher,
 The school council,
 Two governors;
- Four religious education lessons were observed;
- Three acts of collective worship were observed;
- A sample of pupils' work was scrutinised;
- Prior to and during the validation, documentation was analysed and evidence files examined;
- An analysis was made of the responses to the parental questionnaire;
- Feedback was given to the headteacher, RE leader and two governors.

CONCLUSION

The validators would like to thank the headteacher, deputy headteacher, staff, governors, local clergy, parents and pupils of St Francis School for their excellent work in preparing for the validation. They would also like to express their appreciation for the warmth of welcome they received and the support given during the validation.