

# DIOCESE OF PORTSMOUTH VALIDATION REPORT



## St Bede's Catholic Primary School, Portsmouth

Popley Way, Popley, Basingstoke RG24 9DX

Validation dates

01 April 2014

**Overall effectiveness:** **Good with outstanding features**

<b>The school community:</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>	<b>Attainment and progress in RE:</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>The wider community:</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>	<b>Quality of teaching in RE:</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>Spiritual development:</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>	<b>Leadership and management of RE:</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>Moral development:</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>	<b>Leadership and management:</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>

### This is a good school.

- St Bede's Catholic Primary School is an outstanding example of a school, where the mission to 'Love one another as I have loved you' underpins all aspects of the life of the school and is evident in the quality of the relationships throughout.
- The headteacher, senior leadership team, governors and other leaders are fully committed in their drive for continuing improvement. They undertake a rigorous cycle of monitoring, evaluation and support to ensure the celebration of strengths and the highlighting of areas for development.
- The school makes an outstanding contribution to the life of the diocese, especially through the Primary Catholic Partnership.
- The links between the school, the parish and the local Catholic cluster – in particular the Catholic secondary school – are very strong and mutually supportive.
- An overwhelming majority of parents are positive about all aspects of school life and are fully supportive of the school.
- The recently appointed RE leader is a key strength of the school.
- RE is clearly valued by all staff, governors, parents and children.
- The quality of teaching and standards in RE are good.
- Spiritual and moral development are outstanding.
- Staff and children act as witnesses to their faith, through their support of one another and their support for local, national and international charities.
- The school provides a wide range of high quality worship, which includes liturgies, Masses and class collective worship, enabling children to deepen their relationship with God.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

In order to continue to move forward, the school should consider the following:

- Provide professional development opportunities for staff to moderate and level work across and beyond the school.
- Ensure that all planning enables pupils to fulfil the requirements outlined in the national levels of attainment.
- Continue the work the school has already begun in improving the quality of the evidence, so that it reflects challenge and high expectations.

## Full Report

### The school as a Catholic community

The school community:	Outstanding
The wider community:	Outstanding

- The school's mission statement and Christian ethos permeate all aspects of school life. This is reflected in the secure and positive relationships that have led to a fully inclusive environment.
- The Catholic nature of the school is enhanced by the attractive, well-maintained displays throughout, especially those linked to the mission statement, which celebrate positive behavior, spirituality and achievement.
- The school effectively communicates with parents, ensuring that they are kept up to date with what is happening and are given every opportunity to visit and participate in the life of the school.
- The school has very good and mutually supportive links with the parish and with many members of the school community involved in parish life, including significant numbers of children serving at the early morning Lenten Masses.
- The school is an active and key member of the diocesan family of schools. The headteacher has done extensive work in supporting the Primary Catholic Partnership SCITT, where he chairs the Finance Committee. He is also a key validator in the diocese.
- Links with local Catholic schools, in particular the Catholic secondary school, are extremely strong and mutually supportive.
- The school supports a number of local, national and international charities. Children have organised fundraising events in support of the Basingstoke Food Bank, Naomi House, Southampton Hospital, Uganda, the flood disaster in the Philippines, CAFOD and Bamenda. They have developed strong links with a school for war orphans in Sierra Leone.

### Curriculum religious education

Attainment and progress:	Good
Quality of teaching:	Good
Leadership and management of RE:	Good

- The new RE Leader provides excellent support for all staff, through the delivery of RE-focussed inset and the opportunity to attend a weekly RE 'drop in' clinic. She has a very clear understanding of key strengths in teaching and learning and areas for development.
- The excellent relationships in the classrooms impact positively on children's learning.
- Formative marking ensures high quality feedback to pupils, who are able to improve their work.
- Curriculum RE is valued highly within the school.
- The detailed RE action plan identifies priorities, resulting from rigorous review and evaluation of key strengths and areas for development.
- Teaching observed on the day was good and evidence in the pupil's books supports this judgement. In the best lessons children were engaged. High level questioning challenged children's thinking and allowed them to demonstrate their knowledge of Scripture.

- The school has begun to develop further the use of assessment, based on the national levels of attainment, which will help to improve standards further.
- The quantity and range of evidence to support learning in RE is exemplary. The school needs to focus on the provision of more challenging tasks as they journey from 'good' to 'outstanding'.
- The children's application of RE knowledge is displayed very effectively, through the use of Big Questions books and Spirituality books.

## **Spiritual and moral development**

Spiritual development:

Outstanding

Moral development:

Outstanding

- Pupils are very proud of their school. They describe the school as 'a fair and loving school, where the community follows Jesus'.
- The school provides a wide range of high quality worship, which allows individual and collective members of the school community to express their relationship with one another and with God in a reflective and prayerful manner.
- The liturgical season and the prayers of staff and pupils are reflected beautifully in the dedicated indoor prayer area. The sensory garden outside the reception class commemorates the life of a pupil's sibling and provides many opportunities for prayer and reflection.
- The school embraces every opportunity to nurture spirituality, including Little Way Week, activities during the Year of Faith, a Rosary Group and the on-going contributions to a Spirituality book.
- The awarding of Mission Hearts, WOW! Certificates, year 6 ties and the support of a buddy system ensure that the mission statement 'Love one another as I have loved you' is central in promoting positive behaviour.
- Children are fully aware of their responsibilities to one another, through the work of the school council.
- The parish priest and priests from the pastoral area work with the school to provide liturgical celebrations and opportunities for reconciliation for the whole community.

## **Leadership and management:**

Outstanding

- The headteacher, senior leadership team, governors and other leaders and managers share a common Christian vision and through example, inspire a strong sense of purpose, vision and mission.
- The school constantly challenges itself through rigorous self-review and aims for high standards in all aspects of school life.
- Governors are supportive, critical friends of the school and have a strong knowledge of the school's strengths and areas for development. They recognise the need to have a greater input in the RE section of the School Improvement Plan and to become a more visible presence in the school.
- Staff are well supported in their development needs and benefit greatly from the use of peer mentoring and cross phase initiatives. The development of wider leadership is encouraged, through links with diocesan and national initiatives.
- Good progress has been made on the areas for development identified in the previous validation, particularly in reviewing and applying the marking policy and in continuing to develop the prayer life of the school.

## School details

<b>Name of school</b>	St Bede's Catholic Primary School
<b>URN:</b>	116380
<b>Age range of pupils:</b>	4 – 11
<b>Gender of pupils:</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on roll:</b>	404
<b>Chair of Governors:</b>	Simon West
<b>Headteacher:</b>	Tony Murray

St Bede's Catholic Primary School is larger than average and is situated in north-east Basingstoke. The school mainly serves the parish of Holy Ghost, Basingstoke but also has families from St Michael's, Tadley and The Sacred Heart, Hook. The vast majority of its pupils are Catholic. The percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals is well below average. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is well above average and the percentage of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly average.

## Information about this validation

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

### Validation Team

Helena Pickering	Lead Validator
Ursula Clark	Assistant Validator

### Activities Carried Out as Part of the Validation

- Ethos Walk.
- Discussion on the school's self-evaluation sheets.
- Discussions with various members of the school community.
- Observations of key stage 1 and class worship.
- Observations of teaching and learning in RE, including joint observations with the headteacher and RE leader.
- Pupil work scrutiny.
- Feedback of key findings to the senior leadership team.

## Conclusion

The validators would like to thank the headteacher, assistant headteacher, RE leader, staff, governors, the parish priest, parents and pupils of St Bede's School for their preparatory work for the validation, which forms part of the school's regular self-review cycle. They would also like to express their appreciation for the warmth of welcome they received and the support given during the validation process.