

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

**S48  
INSPECTION REPORT**



Holy Cross Catholic Primary School  
Beaumont Road  
Plymouth  
PL4 9BE

URN 140

Head Teacher: Paul Cotter  
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Chair of Governors: Marcia Wolstencroft

## Introduction

The inspection of Holy Cross was carried out under the requirements of the Education Act 2005, and in accordance with Plymouth Diocesan Framework and Schedule for Diocesan Canonical Inspections (S48), approved by the Bishop of Plymouth.

## Context for the Inspection

Holy Cross is an oversubscribed average sized primary school with 256 children currently on roll serving the Cathedral Parish. It draws its children from a wide catchment area across Plymouth. The school community is made up of children from a diverse range of backgrounds with 29.69% being EAL. Twelve languages are spoken across the school. 9.77% of children are on the SEN register, with four children having a statements. 9.76% of children receive free school meals and 15.23% of children are in receipt of pupil premium funding.

Since the last inspection the school has become federated with Cathedral School and is now 'Mary of the Cross Federation'. In addition the school has become of a part of Plymouth CAST (a multi academy trust incorporating all the Catholic schools in Plymouth Diocese).

<b>Key Finding Grade 1:</b>	<b>John 13:14-15</b>
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**"If I the 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.*

The above commentary on John 13:14-15 truly reflects the life and witness of Holy Cross School. It is a privilege to spend time in this vibrant and richly faith-filled community. It is a true reflection of a community which thrives, despite the fact that there have been not inconsiderable challenges to overcome. These have included a significant building project resulting in classes being displaced, lack of playground and many other obstacles to overcome. In addition the school has been without its RE leader due to illness for several months. These challenges alone may have daunted many schools but the courageous determination on the part of all staff to work together, serve the community and essentially keep the children at the fore-front shows how strong this school is as a Catholic community. As a consequence of serving one another Holy Cross has become a true witness of what it means to 'take up your cross and follow me'. The school's motto "Act Justly, Love Tenderly, Walk Humbly with your God." (Micah 6:8) permeates all dimensions of school life and is a pertinent reminder for all when life does throw up unexpected challenge. Holy Cross is a

school which is firmly rooted in the mission of the Church and demonstrates what it means to walk in the footsteps of Jesus. The commitment the school has to improving standards and ensuring that children experience high quality teaching and opportunities to learn is firmly rooted in a belief that this is what the gospel teaches. Learning across the school is supported by a rich liturgical and prayer life which all value and appreciate.

### **Summary of Key Findings**

- The spirit of the gospel permeates every aspect of the school life. This is tangibly evident in the 'theme of the week' which flows from the Sunday Gospel. It is a thread which runs through the school week and is taken up in a variety of ways.
- The school's mission statement 'We are a celebrating, caring, learning and living community' roots itself in the Diocesan mission statement. It is an area the school wishes to revisit but as it currently stands it is a true reflection of that happens at Holy Cross and is firmly rooted in the teaching of Christ and the work of the Church.
- Relationships within the school community are highly positive. It has been a difficult year but the adult community has worked hard to maintain an optimistic outlook. The impact of huge pressure on staff during the building work was recognised by the leadership team who responded by providing release days for staff to spend extra time with their families. Lessons on these days were planned and taught by the Head Teacher and Head of Learning.
- The school recognises and responds well to the high needs of some very vulnerable children in the school. The Parent Support Adviser and the SENDco are significant people within the community. Their work is a rich expression of the care and concern that all staff show to the children. As a result children feel safe and confident that the adults will respond appropriately and be attentive to their needs. As a school the adults recognise that the children's needs must come first.
- The faith life of Holy Cross is evident in every aspect of school life. In particular focal points, displays, artefacts, little prayer corners and the presence of a Prayer Space shout of the Catholic nature of the school. The school makes use of every available space and to great effect. Added to this is the development of the liturgical life of the school which offers children many opportunities formal and informal to pray and reflect. Children respond well and value this dimension of their life in school. They have a great capacity for reflection and stillness. When they sing they do so with joy and beauty.
- The quality of teaching and learning is promising. Teachers have embraced the RE curriculum and have a genuine desire to provide children with creative and stimulating lessons. Children are offered opportunities to offer their views and opinions and helped to respect the views of others that may be different from their own. There is still some work to do on differentiation but this is recognised and steps are being put in place to support teachers to address this.
- Although children have a voice, ways to develop this would help them to feel that they have a greater contribution to make.
- Across the school children's behaviour was very positive, polite and welcoming.

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

- Continue to explore all avenues of collaboration with the St. Mary of the Cross Federation so that mutual and generous sharing continues to build an outward looking community rooted in service to one another.

The gospel passage selected for this grade is Jesus washing the feet of his disciples and telling them that they must do the same if they are to be his friends. Holy Cross is a school committed to the act of serving all those who visit the school. The quality of welcome, welfare and witness is tangible. Although a very busy place there is a sense that people have an open disposition ready and willing to respond to the needs of others.

The quality of welcome is reflected in the manner in which Holy Cross embraces children from a wide range of back grounds and different ethnicities including refugees and asylum seekers. Every child is considered to be unique and special and the presence of so many different groups of children is considered to be a 'rich blessing'. The school has a strong reputation in the local community. When the school experienced a fire local people were keen to help in a variety of ways including making sure that there was somewhere for the children to have their lunch. Over the past year the school has been blessed by the local Anglican community who opened their doors to the school so that they would have somewhere to worship and meet as a whole community once a week. This has helped to develop a strong ecumenical link which the school hope to foster.

Like many schools, Holy Cross has embraced IT and social media as a way of engendering a sense of belonging and shared ownership of the life of the school. The school newsletter which goes out every week is also translated via the school website for those who do not have English as a first language. The result of this is that 100% of parents responding to a survey find the school to be friendly and welcoming. Another example of the quality of welcome is the feedback which comes from secondary school students who are offered opportunities to observe and volunteer within the school. These students comment on how inspirational they find the school and for some, how the experience has made them consider teaching as a profession.

Induction within the school is focused on ensuring that every new person, including children, feels at home in the school as quickly as possible. For children coming into EYFS, the school, in response to parent feedback, has developed a comprehensive transition and induction programme so that children and families are given at least three opportunities when children can play and parents can meet one another in a relaxed and un-threatening manner. During this time staff from the school are able to identify those families who may need extra support. In addition the families of all children joining FS are visited at home. Communication links are forged so that families can also meet the staff, senior pupils and receive practical information, have a chance to sample school meals and receive details about uniform. All of these small steps amount to a bigger picture showing the commitment the school has to ensuring the best of starts for every family.

New teachers including NQTs speak very positively about the induction they have had and the support which they receive on an on-going basis. This enables new staff to feel at one with the team and settle quickly into their role and fully appreciate the expectations they can have of the school and the school of them.

The school has strong links with the wider community and reaches out in a variety of ways. Through the concept of 'Witnesses of the Week' children are encouraged to nominate individuals who have demonstrated their living out of the week's Gospel message. In concept this is a creative and thoughtful idea. However, not all children fully understand what it is about and as a consequence their perception of it is confused. This is something

which can easily be rectified. Despite this, children are inspired by the culture of the school and respond collectively and individually. An example of this would be a young girl, after learning about the work of CAFOD in RE was inspired to ask her friends not to bring gifts to her birthday party but to donate to CAFOD instead. There are many such examples of the generosity and kindness of the children to support a wide range of charities, not only the national ones such as CAFOD but also local causes including the local soup kitchen. The many examples given reflect a school which actively promotes social awareness and living out the Gospel within the community. It is clear that through this the children themselves are evangelising through their actions. The school takes evangelisation seriously by helping children to understand what it means to evangelise and encouraging them to do this, through the way they express their faith and how they live it out.

Other examples of the school's links with the wider community include the many relationships that the school has with other external bodies including the Diocesan network, the Plymouth Excellence Cluster, the MAST team and a wide range of other professional groups who support the school in the welfare of children and families. The school now has a dedicated room for running professional training for both CAST and Plymouth City schools.

### **Focus for Development**

1. Explore additional ways by which children can develop their roles and responsibilities to contribute to the running of the school.
2. Re-examine how the 'Witness of the Week' is perceived by children and develop it so that it becomes a genuine expression of the mission of the school.

<b>Holy Cross as a Catholic Community</b>	<b>Leadership and Management</b>
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<b>Grade 1</b>	<b>John 13:14-15</b>
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Leadership in a Catholic School is a huge opportunity for ensuring that what lies at the heart of the school is a strong ethos rooted in Christ's commandment to 'do this in memory of me'. Thus sharing in communion with one another and having the humility to serve one another is crucial if witness is to be authentic and meaningful. Holy Cross is blessed to have a well-established, dedicated Head Teacher and a dynamic and committed Head of Learning who both have the same goals and a deep desire to provide the best for every member of the school's community. This is not achieved by simply being cosy and supportive of one another. It requires the capacity to use one another's gifts and effectively challenge where necessary. This is a strength of Holy Cross. It is a safe place where people are respected for who they are and what they have to offer. As a result, it is possible to express concerns, sometimes disagree and work out solutions professionally, with integrity and the willingness to engage in reconciliation when needed. Staff consistently commented on the way they feel valued and appreciated by senior leaders.

A strong set of Governors, which is well led, is key to ensuring that the vision and goals of the school are on track. This is another strength of Holy Cross. The school is blessed to have a long-standing, active Chair of Governors who is fully committed to growth and success of Holy Cross. Her contribution has been immense and continues to be so. Her capacity to challenge, have high expectations and also be pastorally supportive has ensured that when the school has faced difficulties, it has had a group of governors who can and do engage effectively with the school. Having the Catholic Life of the school as a standing item on the agenda of governor's meetings keeps the governors focused on the core purpose of the

school and enables them to be confident in how the school is living its mission. The governors are continually growing in their ability to evaluate the effectiveness of this work and support the leadership within the school to identify staff needs and respond appropriately.

The dedication and commitment of the adults at the school, which is commendable, is enriched and flows from feeling valued and appreciated. The leadership models for all staff what it is to witness to Christ and as a consequence everyone works to the best of their capacity, seeking support where necessary and being supportive to others. This leads people to be self-evaluating, open to monitoring and willing to engage in searching analysis. Thus the school has sound systems in place to ensure well-focused plans are guided by gospel values.

The RE leader is a key member of the school but has had a long-term absence through illness for much of the academic year. However, it is a credit to her and the whole staff team that everyone pulled together and carried on implementing a regular meeting to reflect on each new RE unit and worked hard to ensure that children could celebrate acts of worship in Class when there was no school hall for this.

### **Focus for Development**

1. Develop a school chaplaincy team to support the work of the RE leader. The aim of this would be to continue enabling others to develop their skills and talents to provide an even richer experience for children and staff both in the teaching of RE and the worship life of the school and the Spiritual journey of the staff.

Holy Cross as a Teaching and Learning Community	Word
Grade 2	John 13:34-35

Jesus is the model for anyone who wishes to teach in a way that reflects the gospel. His actions often spoke louder than his words as he reached out to everyone, finding different ways to enable people to hear his message and to learn effectively. Thus, in a school that is committed to modelling Christ, it is not surprising to find teachers and teaching assistants who reflect Jesus in their approach to teaching and learning.

Curriculum RE has a high status and is seen to be important to teachers and leaders. The enthusiasm and commitment of the RE leader has helped to create an enthusiasm for teaching RE. Her encouragement is enabling teachers to grow in their confidence and desire to offer well prepared and thoughtful lessons. Her attendance at Diocesan meetings and the school's commitment to INSET ensure that the teachers are given the information they need to develop their teaching in RE. This has included visiting other schools to observe practice and gain other ideas about different approaches to teaching RE. In addition, teachers and TAs are helped to grow in their roles by having clear individual priorities and targets which are supportive and fair. Monitoring and self-challenge ensures that all teachers are constantly trying to improve on what they offer. The fruit of this is evident in the obvious learning that is taking place, the enjoyment of the children and the displays around the school which reflect the learning taking place

Regular meetings prior to the start of a new unit of teaching is a supportive and essential dimension of enabling teachers to prepare meaningful and engaging lessons from a position of self-confidence. In addition, the school not only contributes to, but also uses, the materials provided by CAST's RE writing group. As a consequence of this work, Holy Cross is offering children lessons which help them to reflect upon and express their understanding and views on their learning from the teaching of the units.

A number of lessons were observed across the age-range. Lessons are well planned and thoughtfully delivered. In most lessons children made progress and were able to articulate what they had been learning about. Occasionally this was of a very high standard and when children were challenged to think deeply, they did so with energy and also respect. When they didn't agree with someone they would temper their response so that they could express their different view without diminishing another person in the process. Although lessons observed often engaged the children in AT2 activities, appropriately at this point in the unit, few teachers demonstrated their confidence in differentiating activities so that all children could make progress according to their ability. This has been identified by the school as a next step for the development of teachers. Some lessons but not all gave consideration to the different learning styles of children, thus creative activities, drama, use of film and music added to the dynamics of the lesson and the engagement of children. Where this was not present some children struggled with accessing the activities and found it hard to achieve.

An excellent dimension of the teaching at Holy Cross is the very effective use of working walls which all teachers make use of for RE. These have a prominent place in the classroom and are used to support the teaching and learning within the classroom. Knowing how to approach having an RE working wall is something which Holy Cross could share with other teachers.

The commitment of the SENDco to working with vulnerable children and identifying their needs ensures that teachers and TAs are aware of what these needs are when working with children in the classroom. It is a credit to her work that children do feel fully supported and as a consequence enjoy their learning. The quiet presence of many of the TAs within the classroom, gently supporting and working with the children reflects the respect and care taken to ensure that all children can participate and learn.

At present the school is exploring the best way to approach marking and providing feedback to children. Although the policy for marking and feedback has been embedded in the past and a strong feature of teaching and learning, the school is exploring effective ways of feeding back to children. Because of this there is, currently, no consistent system for marking and feedback across school. The school understands that offering children the opportunity to dialogue about their learning and to know how they are doing this is important because it ensures that children feel that their efforts are validated and that they understand what they need to do to improve. It is reviewing their marking and feedback policy as a school early in the Autumn term.

### **Focus for Development**

1. Once a marking policy has been clearly established, ensure that it is consistently applied, allows children to respond and informs next steps for planning.
2. Ensure that lessons take into account the differing learning styles of children and provide opportunities for every child to achieve their learning objectives.
3. Ensure that children have opportunities to experience and explore other Faiths in a meaningful way.

The Spiritual life of Holy Cross is deeply embedded. There is no doubt upon entering the school that this is a community firmly rooted in faith, hope and love. Throughout the school expressions of a living prayer life can be found. The new school hall and classrooms have been created within the confines of a Catholic Church attached to the school but no longer in use. The design of the new building has ensured that nothing has been lost of the old architecture. As a result, new classrooms contain the windows which were formerly part of the church building. Children can see into the main church worship space, now the school's worship space, which retains many of the old fixtures and fittings. It is a credit to all concerned with how the two buildings have come together. Once more the school has a place for Worship only now it can take the whole school, family and friends when liturgy takes place.

Throughout the week there are various forms of worship. A weekly liturgy based on the Gospel of the Sunday is a rich liturgical experience. Adults and children share the different roles and the whole community is encouraged to join in with the responses and singing. In particular, the quality of the children's engagement, particularly with the singing, is moving and precious. Children clearly embrace this opportunity and participate with enthusiasm. The school invites parents and are trying to encourage them to attend. At present parents seem more comfortable with the celebration assembly on a Friday. However, as the hall has only just opened it will take some time for parents to embrace this opportunity.

Because the school was without the hall for most of the academic year it was felt important that everyone could still have a shared liturgy within their own class. This means that the children are now very familiar with what happens when the whole school gathers. Liturgies experienced in a number of classes revealed that some are more confident with leading this than others. Although the structure was similar, what was experienced became more of an RE lesson rather than a liturgy. For some children this was too difficult and as a consequence the prayer dimension could be lost. However, in other classes the experience was very prayerful with children showing a very real ability to be still, reflective and thoughtful.

Around the school and in classrooms, focal points speak loudly of the Catholicity of the school. During the inspection the school were holding a planned Prayer Space. This gave all children and adults the opportunity to engage in prayer activities in a quiet and reflective room. It was set up in such a way as to create a 'wow' factor. Children spoke gratefully and enthusiastically about the opportunity this gave them for simply stopping and thinking about bigger things. The absence of a hall allowed the school to explore other ways of praying. For example, all children made a rosary decade bracelet and the praying of the rosary became embedded across the school. In doing so it exposed the youngest children to the rich tradition of our Catholic heritage. Meditation has also been introduced; another way of helping children to learn new ways of praying. In EYFS staff are very creative with RE and worship and their Harvest liturgy was attended by almost all parents.

Links with the wider Parish community are strong. The school shares first Communion catechesis with the Parish and the clergy are very supportive of the school. Whole school

Masses take place at the Cathedral as do class Masses. The introduction of an Advent Service was well attended and well-received with positive feedback. This was a new venture for the school but was appreciated by the community.

In every aspect of the life of this school the spiritual and moral development of the children is clear to see. Children are nurtured in their spirituality and encouraged to express their sense of God's presence in the everyday moments of life.

The traditions and prayers of the Catholic Church lie at the heart which provide a context for all aspects of the school's life and serve to enrich the prayer life of the whole community and stimulate development of all the community.

### **Focus for Development**

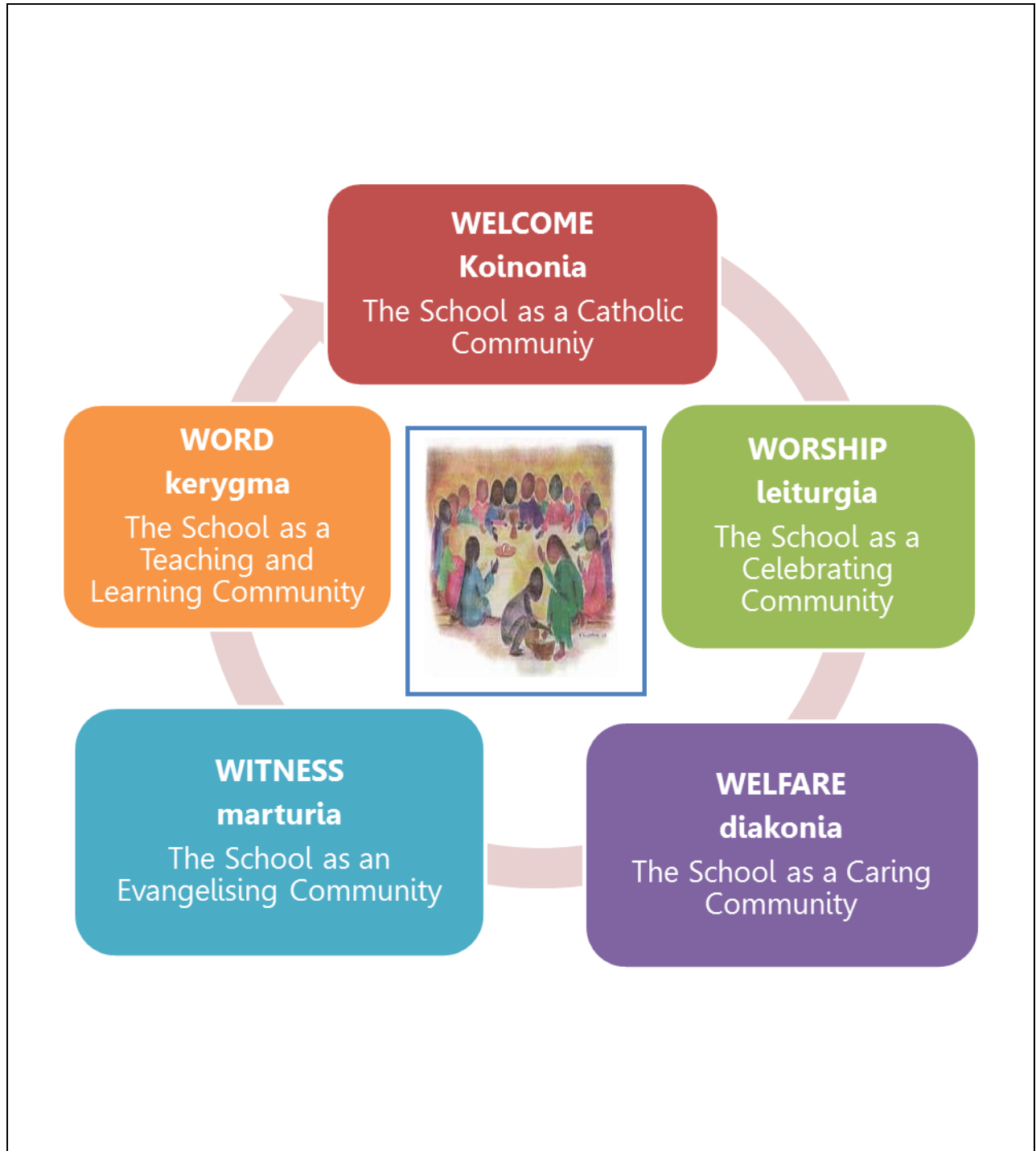
1. Continue to develop and offer a variety of forms of prayer experiences.
2. Ensure that class Acts of Worship are age appropriate and that they avoid falling into the realms of teaching.

### **Conclusion**

Holy Cross is a school firmly rooted in service to all and lives this from the heart. It is a school which can only continue to grow and flourish as a living, breathing Christian community. The absolute commitment to service will be what enables the children to become the best that they can be and for the adults to be nurtured and nourished to achieve even greater things. It is a school of which the Bishop, the Diocese, parents and parishioners can be very 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 word for communion, for participation, for the sharing with one another. It is to be welcome an 'other' in fellowship and love. It is to be of an open disposition to receive from another and to respond in love. Within the community it can be minimalized to the gesture of greeting at the front entrance. In school it might simply be seen as the role of the receptionist. Koinonia however, requires a much greater vision of what it means to welcome. Ultimately it speaks of the disposition of every member of the community to be open to the needs of another, be that to listen, to hear, to respond, to act. The idea of welcome will be embedded in all aspects of the school's way of doing things.

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

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

### **Marturia – (μαρτυρία) Witness**

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

### **Diakonia - (διακονία) Welfare**

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

## **Kerygma – (κήρυγμα) Word**

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

## **Self-Review**

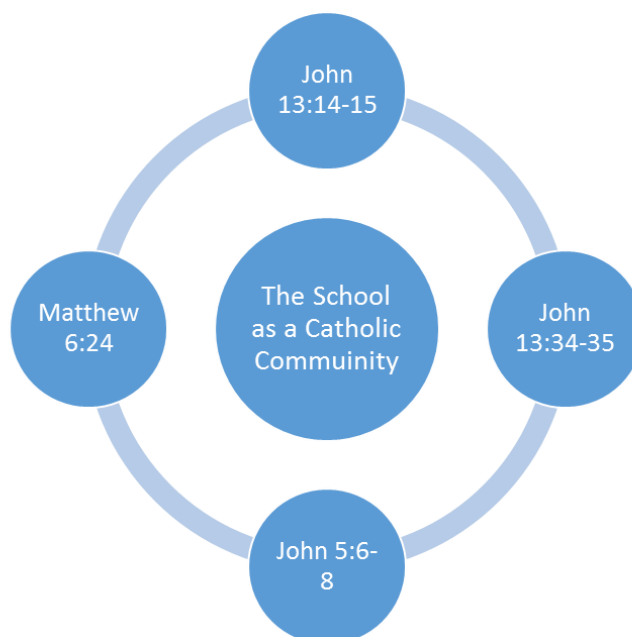
There will be three key areas within which these five elements will be reviewed:

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

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

## **Scripture Passages**

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



### CONTEXT FOR THE CHOICE OF SPECIFIC SCRIPTURE REFERENCES –

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

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

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

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

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

As a result, although most of the time the community is responding to the call to love, there are times when this gets forgotten and anomalies creep in.

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

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

**Grade 4 'No one can serve two masters; for a slave will either hate the one and love the other, or be devoted to the one and despise the other. Matthew 6:24**

Throughout Scripture we are taught that we must choose between God and false gods. Jesus wants us to be free, not just of concerns but of all worries, in order to serve God. It is easy when we are under extreme pressure to respond in ways which are detrimental to our core beliefs and vision. Sometimes this happens because we are facing understandable difficulties. At other times we are insufficiently discerning and go with what seems to be more attractive or safe. Schools can fall into this trap when results and progress become more important than the all-round development of the child. 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.