

DIOCESE OF PORTSMOUTH VALIDATION REPORT



St Francis Catholic Primary School

Coronation Road, Ascot, Berkshire. SL5 9HG

URN: 141818

Date of previous validation

June 2013

Date of this validation

25th April and 4th May 2018

Overall effectiveness

Previous validation: Outstanding

This validation: Good

The school community:

Outstanding

The wider community:

Outstanding

Spiritual development:

Good

Moral development:

Outstanding

Attainment and progress in RE:

Good

Quality of teaching in RE:

Requires improvement

Leadership and management of RE:

Requires improvement

Leadership and management:

Good

This is a good school

- St Francis is an outstanding example of a Catholic school community where the spirit of the Gospel is lived out in all aspects of the school's life. The mission statement and Christian ethos have a very positive impact. Excellent relationships between adults and pupils lead to a loving and trusting environment where the uniqueness of every child is valued.
- The strong leadership and vision shown by those in positions of leadership, including governors, is a key strength of the school.
- The links with the parish is outstanding and local clergy provide exemplary support.
- Parents are supportive of the school. In the questionnaire sent out ahead of this validation an overwhelming majority were positive about all aspects of school life.
- Attainment and progress in religious education is good because by the time pupils leave the school the standard of their work meets national expectations in RE.
- The school has worked hard to support teachers in the teaching of RE through shared training with other local Catholic schools. This is beginning to have impact with teachers acknowledging their improved subject knowledge.
- Spiritual development is good. There is a range of worship, including Masses and class worship which provide pupils with good opportunities to deepen their relationship with God.
- Moral development is outstanding. Throughout the visit the children were courteous, welcoming and supportive of each other. Pupils have a clear sense of right and wrong.
- Staff are committed to supporting the school and working together to further its success.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

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

- Raise standards in RE by consistently ensuring challenge in lessons, particularly for the most able pupils.
- Develop a rigorous and robust system of monitoring the standards of teaching and learning in RE and ensure the outcomes and progress of this is regularly shared with governors.
- Continue to support staff development in order to secure the best possible teaching and improved subject knowledge.
- Develop opportunities in all worship for pupils to fully reflect on the theme of the scripture and further deepen their relationship with God.

Full Report

The school as a Catholic community

The school community: Outstanding

The wider community: Outstanding

- The school's mission statement, "Recognising Christ in everyone" and Christian ethos have a positive impact on school life. The school's values are reinforced each half term enabling pupils to apply these in their daily life which is evidenced in their very respectful and positive relationships.
- Pupils are proud of their school and take an active part in it through their involvement as house captains and RE leaders. Discussion with pupils during the validation showed they enjoyed coming to school and valued the support from the staff.
- The links between the parish and school are strong and mutually supportive. School and parish are working closely together to promote the faith amongst the community.
- Communication with parents is effective and along with well thought out induction the partnership with parents is good.
- The school environment, especially the shared displays, makes explicit the Catholic nature of the school.
- Members of the school community demonstrate their commitment to live out their mission values through their charitable giving.
- Following the appointment of the executive headteacher the school works closely with another local Catholic school which is mutually beneficial.
- The school aims to support other local and Catholic schools in its role as a Teaching School.

Curriculum religious education

Attainment and progress: Good

Quality of teaching: Requires Improvement

Leadership and management of RE: Requires Improvement

- Attainment and progress of pupils from the time they start in the Early Years until they leave is broadly as expected and therefore good.
- In the lessons observed as part of the validation, pupils achieved outcomes that were broadly in line with age expectations. Considering the pupils' strong overall attainment, validators believe that they can now be challenged to achieve higher standards in Religious Education.
- Evidence seen by the validators, suggests that due to changes in teaching staff, the quality of teaching and learning in RE is not yet consistent. The recent developments to use more creative approaches is beginning to ensure pupils are engaged in their learning and needs to be further embedded.
- The school is committed to improving pupil outcomes in RE. The school has accessed training and support for staff which has led to improved subject knowledge which once embedded will lead to more confident teaching.
- Validators would recommend continuing to develop activities which challenge and deepen children's thinking so that rapid progress will be more evident and in turn lead to higher standards in RE.
- Where feedback is most effective pupils are given clear guidance on how to improve their work. This approach needs to be consistently embedded across the school.
- Work has begun to further develop the use of key questions to aid assessment against national levels for RE. The plans in place to help staff become more confident in this area should have a positive impact on teaching and learning.

- The RE leader, who is shared across both schools in the partnership, is committed to bringing about improvements. Although she is recently in post she has already begun to develop a clear understanding of the strengths and areas for development in RE.
- Validators would recommend that all leaders, including governors, support and work alongside the RE leader, to develop and embed more systematic approaches to monitoring RE and ensure that identified areas for development support improvements in teaching and learning in RE..

Spiritual and moral development

Spiritual development:	Good
Moral development:	Outstanding

- There is a varied range of worship, including liturgies, Masses and class worship which provide children with opportunities to develop their relationship with God. Other activities, such as the Travelling Nativity involve the whole family.
- The parish priest commented that children participate and respond positively to the sacramental liturgies that are organised.
- During the collective worships the validators were invited to, there were opportunities for children to share Gospel messages to the parent community and their peers.
- At the last validation it was recommended that the school worked towards pupils becoming RE leaders. This work has begun but should be extended further so that they have an even greater impact on the spiritual life of the school.
- The school environment and the nearby church, supports worship, providing opportunities for children to experience the awe and wonder of God’s creation and joy of living.
- The children in the school demonstrate exemplary behaviour and Christian attitudes in their relationships, with a clear sense of right and wrong. Key factors promoting this include their:
 - Excellent conduct
 - Confident demeanour
 - Respect and consideration shown to one another
 - Enthusiastic welcome to visitors.
- Pupils are justly proud of their school, they described it as a “wonderful school” and “where we are treated equally.”

Leadership and management:

Good

- The executive headteacher and head of school provide a good model of Christian leadership where all members of the school community are valued. They, along with other school leaders including governors, inspire the community to share in a strong sense of vision and mission.
- The governing body are committed to maintaining the strong Catholic ethos of the school and through the appointment of the executive headteacher have secured a leadership team that will continue to move the school forward.
- Governors are keen that high standards in RE are achieved. Therefore, they should now ensure they receive comprehensive and regular reports and feedback on the quality of teaching and standards in RE.
- Progress has been made on some of the issues identified for improvement in the last validation, particularly in collaborating with other schools. Further work needs to be done on pupils’ involvement in planning and leading liturgies and RE assessments.
- Staff are committed to supporting the school and working together to further its success.

School details

Name of school	St. Francis Catholic Primary School
Age range of pupils:	4 – 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number of pupils on roll:	209
Chair of Governors:	John Ware
Executive Headteacher:	Juanita Dunlop
Head of School:	Caroline Johnson

St Francis is a Voluntary Aided Catholic Primary school serving the Parish of St Francis, Ascot which is part of the South Berkshire Pastoral Area. With 209 children on roll, St Francis is an average sized primary school. A high proportion of children are Catholic. Of its teaching staff 25% are Catholic, with 48% of support staff also being Catholic. The percentage of children eligible for free school meals is 2%, 4% are in receipt of pupil premium funding. Pupils identified by the school as having special educational needs (11.5%) is below the national average. There are 2 pupils with an Education Health Care Plan. The vast majority of children are from a White British background. Approximately 12% are learning English as an additional language which is significantly below the national 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

Ursula Clark	Lead Validator
Jamie Carroll	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 class worship.
- Observations of teaching and learning in RE, including joint observations with senior staff.
- Pupil work scrutiny.
- Feedback of key findings to the leadership team and representatives of the governing body.

Conclusion

The validators would like to thank the executive headteacher, head of school, RE leader, staff, governors, the parish priest and pupils of St Francis Catholic Primary 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.