

# DIOCESE OF PORTSMOUTH VALIDATION REPORT



## St Teresa's Catholic Primary School

Easthampstead Road, Wokingham, Berkshire RG40 2EB

**Date of this validation** 16 November 2015

Date of previous validation November 2010

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>This validation:</b>	<b>Good</b>
	Previous validation:	Outstanding

<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>Good</b>	<b>Leadership and management of RE:</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>Moral development:</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>	<b>Leadership and management:</b>	<b>Good</b>

### This is a good school

- St Teresa's Catholic Primary School is a good example of a school that works hard to live out its vision to be, 'Safe, happy and successful together with God'.
- Outstanding elements can be found within all sections of this report. The challenge for the school is to build upon and extend this very good practice in order, to embed it across all aspects of the life of the school.
- Religious education (RE) has a core place in the life of the school. The subject leader, who displays very good knowledge and skill in supporting staff, is well placed to further develop their expertise. The subject is valued by staff, governors, parents and children.
- The evidence in the pupils' books, the good quality teaching seen on the day and discussions with pupils all combine to show attainment and progress in RE are good.
- A varied range of worship is offered, which provides children with regular opportunities to develop their relationship with God.
- The children exhibit very good behaviour and Christian attitudes. They are thoughtful and reflective, demonstrating the school's very good provision for their spiritual, social and cultural development. Moral development is outstanding.
- The school leadership, including governors, is fully committed in its drive to further develop the Catholic life of the school.
- 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 links with the local parish are excellent and mutually beneficial.
- Pupils are justly proud of their school; they said the school 'helps them to learn who Jesus is, instead of just believing in him'.
- Parents' views of the school are very supportive. A very large majority of those responding to the pre-validation survey were positive about all aspects of school life.

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

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

- Reviewing the vision and mission statements, along with the other guidance currently offered, to provide a clearer and more cohesive framework to inspire and direct the school community.
- Ensuring that the tasks given to children in RE provide the opportunities for them to demonstrate their understanding of the learning, including that shown in discussions. Planning of activities should include opportunities for children to demonstrate their higher level understanding and give opportunity for reflection as to how it may impact on their daily lives.

## Full Report

### The school as a Catholic community

The school community:

**Outstanding**

The wider community:

**Outstanding**

- There is a strong sense of welcome in the school and very good relationships exist between all members of the community. New families and members of staff are warmly welcomed into the school and inducted into the school's ethos.
- Although the mission statement is displayed around the school, it is the simpler vision statement and the recently agreed set of core values structured around the SAINTS acronym that are more commonly used in the school. The latter is based on Scripture and successfully helps guide the children's day to day approach to relationships. With the forthcoming appointment of a new headteacher, it would be a good time to review all these key statements and how they support and relate to each other, at the same time, taking the opportunity to explore how the school's Catholic ethos can be made more explicit in all aspects of school life.
- The school communicates effectively with parents, ensuring that they are kept up to date and are given opportunities to visit and participate in the life of the school. However, thought should be given to how communication, including the school newsletter and website, can better reflect and celebrate the school's strong Catholic ethos.
- The local parish and the school share a lived experience of a Catholic community, which is mutually supportive. Strong examples include, the attendance at weekday Mass by each class on a rota basis and the encouraging of parishioners to come into school to support reading.
- The school is an active member of the diocesan family of schools. The school benefits from good links with the local clusters of Catholic schools and also enters fully into the life of the local community.
- Members of the school community demonstrate their commitment to the principles of stewardship, through their support of many local, national and international initiatives, including CAFOD, the local foodbank and the twinned diocese of Bamenda in Cameroon. These activities are often selected and led by the children.

### Curriculum religious education

Attainment and progress:

**Good**

Quality of teaching:

**Good**

Leadership and management of RE:

**Good**

- The evidence in the pupils' books, the good quality teaching seen on the day and discussions with pupils all combine to show that attainment and progress in RE are good. By the time pupils leave the school they are able to articulate and demonstrate a secure level of RE knowledge. Care must be taken to ensure that the more able in RE are consistently challenged.
- Pupils in the school value RE and recognise it can help them in their daily lives. In the lessons observed pupils demonstrated a positive attitude to learning and behaviour was very good. Learning is supported by well-presented and organised environments.
- Planning for the subject is clearly linked to the national levels of attainment in RE and makes good use of key questions to ensure learning is focussed appropriately.
- The quality of teaching overall is of a good standard. Elements of outstanding practice were seen in the teaching observed on the day of the validation.
- The school continues to develop and refine its assessment in RE; this will help to improve standards further. Teachers work hard to ensure that there are examples of children's work for every RE topic, however, building on recent improvements, they need to ensure that the work evidences the learning intentions and that marking both affirms and moves learning forward.

- The outstanding leadership and support provided by the RE subject leader ensures that the place of RE in the school is given a high status. She works hard to ensure staff are supported in this core subject, through regular planning surgeries and in-service training.
- Good support is provided by the recently appointed RE governor. However, to reflect the subject's importance, the governing body needs to ensure that the school regularly provides up to date information on standards in RE and to challenge the school, where these can be improved.

## Spiritual and moral development

Spiritual development:

**Good**

Moral development:

**Outstanding**

- The school provides a wide range of good 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 school embraces opportunities to nurture spirituality and give Christian witness; these include:
  - Special services to mark the liturgical year, for example, Mass for St Teresa's feast day, Lenten liturgies and a Marian liturgy.
  - The attendance of classes at the parish weekday Mass.
  - The establishment and use made of the central prayer area.
  - Opportunities for staff and governors to join together in prayer.
  - Events linked to the recent canonisations of Luis and Zelig Martin.
- Prayer and worship are regularly celebrated in the classroom. Coming together for prayer punctuates the school day; on these occasions the children tend to use the same prayers. Thought should be given to regularly changing these to reflect the liturgical season. Children in key stage 2 often plan and lead the class worships. This is to be commended as very good practice. However, it is important to monitor this provision to ensure that it is of a consistently high quality and to provide training and support where this is needed.
- The children in the school demonstrate very good behaviour and Christian attitudes in their relationships, with a very clear sense of right and wrong. Key factors promoting this include:
  - The use of the SAINTS acronym to encourage children to reflect on their actions.
  - The very good Christian role models provided by the staff and older children in the school.
  - The consistent reinforcement of Gospel values.
- The celebration of achievement positively promotes pupil self-esteem and confidence. The children are rewarded for good behaviour and successes are celebrated in a variety of ways.
- Pupils value their school and take an active part taking on key responsibilities throughout the school, including sitting on the school council and acting as peer mediators or play buddies.

**Leadership and management:**

**Good**

- School leaders provide a very good model of Christian leadership, where all members of the school are valued. They inspire the community to share in a strong sense of mission.
- The governing body is a strong supporter of the school and also holds the senior leadership team to account. Governors regularly make use of the school vision statement to help them in their decision making.
- Although the school has a structure for the ongoing process of self-review, at the moment this is not sufficiently owned by the leadership team or governing body. This should be reviewed to ensure that the Catholic life of the school, including RE, is a regular agenda item and evidence is analysed and interrogated and where appropriate, areas for improvement are identified and addressed.
- Good progress has been made on the issues identified for improvement in the last validation, particularly in developing the staff's knowledge and understanding of assessment of RE and in providing a central prayer area.

## School details

<b>Name of school:</b>	St Teresa's Catholic Primary School
<b>URN:</b>	110032
<b>Age range of pupils:</b>	4 - 11
<b>Gender of pupils:</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on roll:</b>	337
<b>Chair of Governors:</b>	Niamh Feeley
<b>Headteacher:</b>	Clare Wagstaff
<b>Deputy Headteacher:</b>	Nikki Peters

St Teresa's is a larger than average primary school with 337 pupils currently on roll, serving the parishes of Corpus Christi, Holy Ghost and Arborfield (Army base). The school is oversubscribed and the overwhelming majority of pupils are from Catholic families. The proportion of pupils with a special educational need and/or disability is below average. The number of pupils in receipt of free school meals or from a disadvantaged background is also below the national average.

Most pupils are from white British backgrounds, but the school also has a small proportion of children from other white backgrounds, Asian and Black-African backgrounds. Most pupils are organised into mixed-aged classes. The school also has pre-school provision and before and after school care on site

## 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

Robert Dare	Lead validator
Juanita Dunlop	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 collective worship.
- Observations of teaching and learning in RE, including joint observations with members of the school leadership team.
- Pupil work scrutiny.
- Feedback of key findings.

## Conclusion

The validators would like to express their appreciation for the warmth of welcome they received during their visits, and the support given by the deputy headteacher in the absence of the headteacher during the validation itself.

They would also like to thank the headteacher, deputy headteacher, RE leader, staff, governors, the parish priest, parents and pupils of St Teresa's Catholic Primary School for their preparatory work for the validation, which forms part of the school's regular self-review cycle.