

DIOCESE OF PORTSMOUTH VALIDATION REPORT



St. Mary and St. Michael Catholic Primary School

Rue des Monts, St. Sampson, Guernsey, GY2 4HU

Date of previous validation June 2012

Dates of this validation 20th & 21st March 2018

Overall effectiveness

Previous validation: Good

This validation: Good with outstanding features

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

This is a good school with outstanding features

- St. Mary and St. Michael's is an example of an outstanding Catholic community, where the mission to '*learn together as we follow in the footsteps of Christ*' is truly lived out and celebrated in all aspects of school life.
- The leadership and vision of the headteacher, as stated by a parent, '*in living like a true Christian through her words and actions*' are a key strength of the school.
- St. Mary and St. Michael's is a school that knows itself well. Strengths are recognised and celebrated and any areas for development that are identified are quickly addressed.
- Pupils are outstanding ambassadors for the school and speak about their school with pride. Their outstanding behaviour and attitudes are underpinned by their knowledge and living out of the school's mission statement: children said '*we follow in the footsteps of Christ and he is always there for us*'.
- Religious education (RE) is central to the life of the school. The support of the RE leader; who is also the headteacher, has ensured that progress and attainment are good. Her commitment to monitoring and evaluation ensure that standards in teaching and learning will improve even further.
- The links with the parish are particularly strong. All members of the school community recognise the contribution they have to play in being of service to the parish.
- The assistant priest provides outstanding support to the school, staff appreciate the time he gives in advising them on aspects of the RE curriculum.
- Parents are very supportive of the school. A very large majority was positive about all aspects of school life.
- The very positive impact of stewardship can be seen in the daily life of the community.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

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

- Implement the opportunities planned for days of reflection and class Eucharistic and non-Eucharistic celebrations in the church.
- Ensure that the RE planning is led by the key driver words and that activities enable pupils to achieve the assessment criteria.
- Enable staff and pupils to take greater ownership of the development of collective worship and religious education.
- Involve all stakeholders in the evaluation of the school.

Full Report

The school as a Catholic community

The school community:	Outstanding
The wider community:	Outstanding

- Throughout the school there is firm evidence that you are within a community of faith. Particularly strong examples include:
 - The centrality of the mission statement in the life of the school and the community and the attractive displays throughout the school that are a constant reminder of the living out of that mission.
 - The warmth of the welcome received by visitors from all members of the community.
 - The care, kindness and support in evidence among all staff, pupils, school committee, priests and parents.
 - The outstanding attitudes and behaviour of the pupils.
- School leaders inspire and enthuse the community to share in a strong sense of vision and mission. The headteacher, deputy headteacher and school committee share a determination to continually strive for improvement.
- The Catholic ethos is evident within the welcome and support given to pupils with additional needs.
- The quality of the learning environment is outstanding.
- Within the geographical constraints, St. Mary and St. Michael's is very much a diocesan school. The headteacher and deputy headteacher always engage with diocesan training and meetings. The school links with local Catholic schools where appropriate and recognises the benefit of this support.
- The induction of new families into the school and parish is highly effective, supportive and valued by those families.
- 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.
- There is a strong partnership between the school and its adjacent church. This ensures that all members of staff, parents and pupils know they belong to the parish and are encouraged to become more active members.

Curriculum religious education

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

- RE is central to the life of the school. Attainment and progress in RE are good as evidenced by the quality of teaching, the evidence in pupils' books and class books and the discussions with pupils.
- Pupils are able to work collaboratively to reflect on issues raised in RE, apply it to their own lives and as they progress through the school, they are beginning to justify their conclusions using appropriate religious language. They would benefit from drawing on a wider range of scripture to support their understanding.
- Marking is generally supportive and is sometimes used to further challenge the children's thinking, care must be taken to ensure that inaccuracies in religious language are corrected.
- Planning and tasks have a clear RE focus, although they are not yet closely enough matched to the national levels of attainment to enable the children to reach the standards they are capable of. The school needs to ensure there is a consistency of approach across all classes.

- Teaching assistants where available play a key role in developing religious imagination and vocabulary and help all pupils access the curriculum.
- Lessons have clear learning objectives and teachers use a variety of teaching strategies and activities, to stimulate and challenge the children. The children said, “*we learn in a fun way*”.
- The RE leader, regularly monitors standards in RE, through work sampling and moderation at school, cluster and diocesan level.
- The RE leader’s passion, knowledge and drive underpin her support for all staff, enabling them to deliver RE lessons with confidence and enthusiasm and ensuring that weaknesses in standards in religious education are addressed.

Spiritual and moral development

Spiritual development:

Good

Moral development:

Outstanding

- Prayer and worship are integral to the daily life of the school and focus on the centrality of Scripture and reflection on its message and is highly valued by the children, ‘*we learn a deeper understanding of our faith*’. The school embraces every opportunity to nurture spirituality and give Christian witness. These include: prayer tables in every classroom, central prayer areas, class and Key Stage worship and the introduction of termly adoration for year 5 and 6.
- Children’s behaviour is outstanding. The schools’ rewards and sanctions reinforce a culture of high expectations and positive encouragement. This has been strengthened by the stewardship awards which are linked to a focus given in collective worship.
- The school provides rich and varied opportunities to encourage the children to strengthen their relationship with God. The recently formed collective worship club supports pupils in leading worship throughout the school.
- All staff provide excellent pastoral care, guidance and support to all pupils.
- The school works closely with parents to support pupils’ moral development.
- Pupils willingly take on responsibilities and participate constructively in school life as collective worship leaders.
- A strong commitment to Catholic Social Teaching is encouraged through outreach to the elderly, homeless and those with dementia in the community. Children are keen to be of service to others.
- Pupils are justifiably proud of their school ‘*we are all treated the same and we know everyone*’.

Leadership and management:

Good

- The impact of the strong Christian leadership offered by the headteacher, deputy headteacher and school committee is in evidence throughout the school.
- The effective approach to the monitoring and evaluation of all aspects of school life enable the school to constantly challenge itself. There is a constant drive for improvement and insistence on high standards in all areas. Care needs to be taken to ensure that it is focused on the things that will make a difference in raising standards.
- The school provides effective continuing professional development (CPD) for its staff and is keen to provide opportunities to learn from other schools in the diocese.
- The children take on a variety of leadership roles and are very good role models as play leaders, collective worship leaders and house captains.
- Good progress has been made on the issues identified for improvement in the last validation, particularly in the development of quality collective worship across the school, although further work is still needed.

School details

Name of school	St. Mary and St. Michael Catholic Primary School
URN:	132501
Age range of pupils:	4 – 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number of pupils on roll:	155
Chair of Managers:	Canon Michael Hoare
Headteacher:	Helen Shepherd

St. Mary and St. Michael Catholic Primary School is a one form entry voluntary aided school, maintained by the States of Guernsey, within the Diocese of Portsmouth. It is overseen by a school committee which consists of seven managers, two of whom are the parish priest and the Headteacher. As a voluntary aided school, St. Mary and St. Michael does not receive funding from the States of Guernsey for the maintenance of the school buildings.

The school is on a pleasant and well- maintained site opposite the Catholic Church of Our Lady Star of the Sea. There are 155 children on the school roll and of these 96 % are Catholic, with the remainder being from other Christian traditions. Nearly a quarter of the pupils on roll have special educational needs or disabilities.

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 managers of the school on religious education. For Catholic maintained schools, the report also fulfils the requirements of Section 35(4) of the Guernsey Law 1970.

Validation Team

Catherine Hobbs	Lead validator
Helena Pickering	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 a class and whole school worship.
- Observations of teaching and learning in RE, including a joint observation with the headteacher.
- Pupil work scrutiny.
- Feedback of key findings to the headteacher, deputy headteacher, assistant priest and a member of the school committee.

Conclusion

The validators would like to thank the headteacher, deputy headteacher, staff, school committee, the assistant priest, parents and pupils of St. Mary and St. Michael 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.