

DIOCESE OF PORTSMOUTH S48 VALIDATION REPORT



St Patrick's Catholic Primary School, Southampton

Fort Road, Woolston, Southampton, Hampshire SO19 2JE

URN: 116398
 Date of previous s48 validation 15 June 2015
Date of this s48 validation 12 October 2021

Overall effectiveness	Previous s48 validation: Good
	This s48 validation: Good

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

This is a good school.

- St Patrick's mission statement *'Following the loving example shown by Jesus Christ'* permeates all aspects of school life and all members of the school community live out the Catholic ethos with commitment and enthusiasm.
- The personal faith, ambition and compassion for all staff and children by the headteacher and his leadership team, permeate the entire school. They have made considerable progress in moving the school forward in recent times and should be commended on this.
- The parish priest is extremely supportive of the school and takes an active and regular role in a variety of ways. His commitment to providing weekly worship in the school and to helping teachers and senior leaders, is impressive.
- The quality of teaching and learning in religious education (RE) is good, with standards rising, and is well led by the RE team.
- School governors are very knowledgeable about what the school does well and have a keen interest in how the school lives out its Catholic obligations. The chair in particular, regularly visits classes and is able to see first-hand, the good work that takes place.
- The school works hard to ensure that children receive a range of worship and liturgy that is exemplary in nature. As a result, children have a growing appreciation of prayer and talk enthusiastically about this.
- Moral development is outstanding. Despite the past challenges that some pupils have been through, upon entering St Patrick's they are enveloped in support, so that their outlook and behaviour is positively transformed. All pupils are polite, well-behaved and appreciative of the care and nurture
- Visitors are made to feel welcome in the school and much is done to support pupils and their families, who come from a wide range of backgrounds. This was particularly true during the recent pandemic, when school staff went out of their way to support those in need.
- Parents are very appreciative of the school's provision and the way in which it welcomes them. One commented; *'The whole school is so friendly and approachable, I never expected to feel so welcome and receive such warm greetings from a school, whether it be face to face or by email'*.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

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

- Develop and refine the formative assessment approach the school has recently adopted, in order for standards to continue to rise in RE.
- Further embed the work on Catholic Social Teaching, so that it permeates the whole curriculum.
- Continue to support and develop new and inexperienced staff so that the quality of RE teaching and collective worship is consistently strong across the school.

Full Report

The school as a Catholic community

The school community:	Outstanding
The wider community:	Good

- The mission statement is central to life in the school and displayed in every classroom. Pupils know the mission statement and can talk about what it means to them and how they can follow it.
- School leaders actively demonstrate strong Catholic values in the way in which they lead the community. They are particularly careful to ensure that staff are supported to achieve the best for the children. They are also very sensitive to the needs of the community and respond compassionately through times that are good and those which are more challenging.
- There are excellent links in place with the local parish, which is situated adjacent to the school site. The parish priest takes an exemplary interest in the running of the school and is regularly involved in the delivery of weekly collective worship. His positive influence is felt at all stages; from a strategic level as a school governor, through to his helping individual pupil chaplains in their preparation and leading of school liturgies.
- The work of the family liaison officer is highly commendable. She works tirelessly to provide a range of support, both practical and emotional to children and their families. Whilst much of her work is discreet and thus unnoticed by many, it is highly appreciated by those whom benefit from it.
- Pupils speak very positively about their school. They are able to carry out a variety of roles and responsibilities which enable them to take an active part in the running of the school. Particular care is given to ensure that no any child who wants to rise to the challenge of a responsibility, is left without such a position.
- Parental responses to the online survey showed strong support for the school. One commented; *'The headmaster and staff are actively present in the playground and very approachable in the morning for any concerns... We attend mass on Sundays and all my children can join in with prayers and singing as they have already learnt them from school.'*
- The school corridors, hall, main walkways and most classrooms contain vibrant and colourful displays that reflect the Catholic character. Everyone is proud of the school environment and eager to share their experiences with visitors.

Curriculum religious education

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

- Religious Education is prominent in the school and leaders ensure that the requirement from the Bishop's Conference on the percentage of time spent on RE teaching, is fulfilled. There is also clarity and consistency in the expectations of teaching and learning in RE.
- In the most effective lessons, teachers use a range of strategies to engage and enthuse pupils in RE lessons. Children are given the opportunity to discuss particular issues in RE and gain a good understanding of these.
- The learning activities used by teachers are varied in nature. Children learn about the Catholic faith through a range of ways, such as drama, extended writing, thinking skills activities and open dialogue. They are confident to ask questions, both amongst themselves in group sessions and to the adults who support them.
- RE leaders attend relevant training, including that at Diocesan and cluster level which gives them a very good understanding of current approaches and expectations in relation to RE.
- During the pandemic, teachers were able to maintain strong RE lessons by employing remote learning effectively. This has meant that any subsequent, negative effect on the standards achieved in RE, has been minimised.
- Those responsible for leading RE across the school, work hard to engage in professional dialogue with each teacher on a regular basis, so that they can determine how standards in RE are progressing and what approaches will ensure strong pupil outcomes. Senior leaders appreciate the need to embed and refine this way of working and incorporate it into a systematic way of presenting information to governors, on the standards of RE that pupils are achieving.

- The school is actively engaged in promoting Catholic Social Teaching, so that staff and children have a growing understanding of this. Leaders are at the early stages of this approach and should continue to develop practical methods, to ensure that Catholic Social Teaching permeates the whole curriculum.

Spiritual and moral development

Spiritual development:

Outstanding

Moral development:

Outstanding

- The school provides a range of different liturgical experiences for the children, which enable them to develop a growing appreciation of prayer and reflection. These have included the praying of the rosary in October, Eucharist Adoration and the opportunity to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation three times a year.
- Prior to the pandemic, classes had the opportunity to visit the local church to participate in Mass on a weekly basis. Pupils were also actively involved in leading parts of the Sunday Mass in the church, every month. The school hopes that these approaches will continue, when the current situation allows.
- During the pandemic, teachers used video platforms to provide worship to pupils at home. Validators were particularly impressed to hear that many pupils' family members were also keen to participate in these online prayer sessions, further emphasising the collective spirituality of the community.
- The school pupil chaplaincy team are given the opportunity to plan and lead prayer and collective worship. They are enthusiastically and effectively supported by the lay chaplain who is able to guide them to provide liturgy that is meaningful and engaging.
- Much of the worship that pupils currently receive is class-based. Leaders appreciate the potential difficulties and restrictions associated with delivering ongoing liturgy in a classroom setting and should continue to ensure that teachers, particularly the less experienced, are supported to provide meaningful and engaging prayer, within their individual classrooms.
- The school is culturally diverse in nature and pupils come from a range of different backgrounds. This is celebrated and pupils treat each other with respect and courtesy, despite any differences between them.
- All staff are excellent role-models and provide children with a good example of what it means to live and work in a Catholic community. Children's behaviour and attitudes are in turn, extremely good and they genuinely care for each other's well-being. One child commented, *'St Patrick's is one of the best schools you could go to.'*
- The school is in the early stages of employing a new scheme of work, designed to support the teaching of relationships, health and sex education. Leaders rightly have plans in place to review the delivery of this programme so as to determine its effectiveness.

Leadership and management:

Good

- Despite several significant challenges, including those related to the pandemic, the headteacher and his leadership team have enabled the school to make good progress in achieving the targets set out in the previous validation and monitoring visits. This is particularly noticeable in the strong Catholic ethos that now permeates every aspect of school life.
- Leaders are resolute in their desire to ensure that St Patrick's provides a strong and overt Catholic education for all pupils. They work hard to ensure that new and inexperienced staff receive a thorough induction that allows them to quickly settle into life at the school.
- The governing body are highly supportive of the school and take an active role. They have recently developed an RE committee, specifically designed to advance the Catholic life of the school and to enable them to further work with the headteacher and senior leaders in this respect.
- Leaders have clear plans in place to further develop the Catholic dimension of school provision. Starting from the process of self-evaluation (which includes the governing body), they are able to identify strengths and areas to develop and build these into planning documents such as the School Improvement Plan and the RE development plan.
- Leaders have developed an approach to formative assessment which should secure strong outcomes in RE across the school. They understand the need to consistently apply and refine this approach, so that teachers can work towards delivering the very best provision in religious education and so that governors will have a comprehensive appreciation of standards in RE.

School details

Name of school	St Patrick's Catholic Primary School
Age range of pupils:	4 – 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number of pupils on roll:	411
Chair of Governors:	Steve Deadman
Headteacher:	Michael Lobo

St Patrick's Catholic Primary School is a large, two form entry primary school situated in the St Patrick's parish of Southampton. 46% of pupils are Catholic with 21% coming from other Christian faiths and 3% coming from other faiths. The proportion of children who speak English as an additional language is above average at 37%. 15% of the school population are in receipt of pupil premium funding, and 13% of them are on the special educational needs register. There are 6 pupils with an Educational Health Care Plan.

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

Jamie Carroll	Lead Validator
Tricia Opalko	Assistant Validator

Activities carried out as part of the validation

- Discussion on the school's self-evaluation sheets with the senior leadership team.
- Discussions with various members of the school community, including senior leaders, the chair, a governor, parish priest, the family liaison officer, an early careers teacher and school pupils.
- Observations of key stage and class worship.
- Observations of teaching and learning in RE, including joint observations with senior leaders.
- Pupil work scrutiny.
- Feedback of key findings.

Conclusion

The validators would like to thank the headteacher, RE team, staff, governors, parish priest, parents and pupils of St Patrick's 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.