

DIOCESE OF PORTSMOUTH VALIDATION REPORT



St Amand's Catholic Primary School

St Mary's Road, East Hendred, Oxfordshire, OX12 8LF

URN: 123224
 Date of previous validation: 6th March 2012
Date of this validation: 28th March 2017

Overall effectiveness	Previous validation:	Satisfactory
	This validation:	Good

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.

- St Amand's 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 dedicated leadership and vision shown by the headteacher is a key strength of the school.
- The links with the parishes are good and local clergy provide outstanding support.
- The approach adopted by school leaders, including governors, to respond to the call by Pope Francis and Bishop Philip to be an evangelising community has led to a number of excellent and successful initiatives which have engaged children and families.
- 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.
- By the time they leave the school the children are able to articulate and demonstrate how scripture can be applied to their lives.
- The partnership between the RE leader and headteacher ensures a systematic approach to subject development and improvement. This is beginning to have a positive impact on standards but needs to be further embedded to ensure all children are appropriately challenged in their learning.
- The quality of teaching is good overall. Book scrutinies and lesson observations carried out on the day show children are making progress in their RE knowledge and understanding.
- Spiritual development is good with some outstanding elements, for example the recent introduction of Eucharistic Adoration, Prayer Stations and Sion Mission.
- Moral development is outstanding.
- There is a wide range of worship, including liturgies, Masses and class worship which provide pupils with good opportunities to develop their relationship with God.
- School leaders, including governors, inspire the community to share in a strong sense of vision and mission. There is a constant drive for improvement and insistence on high standards in all aspects.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

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

- Provide a wider range of opportunities to challenge and extend children's:-
 - RE knowledge and understanding;
 - Involvement in leading and planning worship;
 in order for them to have a deeper understanding of God's presence in their lives.

Full Report

The school as a Catholic community

The school community:	Outstanding
The wider community:	Outstanding

- The school's mission statement and Christian ethos have a very positive impact on school life, this is evident in the daily actions, behaviours and relationships of the school community. The school is welcoming and fully inclusive.
- Staff and pupils work hard to witness Christ at the centre of the community.
- The school, including governors, have established very good communication links with parents.
- Pupils are rightly proud of their school and take an active part in it through their involvement as playground mentors, House Captains and in the school council.
- The links between the parish and school are strong and mutually supportive. School and parish are working closely together to promote evangelisation. The school is keen to continue to develop communication with the four parishes it serves.
- Communication with parents is effective and along with well thought out induction the partnership with parents is good.
- The well-maintained environment, especially the mosaic and shared displays, make explicit the Catholic nature of the school.
- Members of the school community demonstrated their commitment to marking the Year of Mercy, through their support of many local, national and international initiatives, including CAFOD, NSPCC, Helen and Douglas House Hospice Care and local food banks, and liturgical celebrations.

Curriculum religious education

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

- The outstanding relationships create a positive learning environment where pupils are confident to contribute and achievement in RE is good.
- Pupils in the school value RE and recognise it can help them in their daily lives. In the lessons observed as part of the validation, pupils showed good concentration and were keen to work hard.
- Teaching is judged to be good by the school. Teaching observed on the day and evidence in the pupils' books validate this judgement. In the best lessons teachers used a variety of approaches to fully engage children; questions to develop and clarify thinking, and tasks that enabled children to demonstrate their RE knowledge and understanding.
- The school is committed to improving pupil outcomes in RE and validators would recommend continuing to develop activities which challenge children's thinking so that rapid progress will be more evident.
- There is a consistent whole school approach towards providing regular feedback. This shows pupils how well they've done and they appreciate the opportunity to respond to the comments.
- 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.

- RE leadership is good. The RE leader is having a positive impact on standards and is an excellent role model to other staff who are appreciative of the support she offers. The leadership and support provided by the head teacher helps to ensure the place of RE in the school is given a high status. Governors take a keen interest in the subject and have a developing awareness of its strengths and areas for development.
- The monitoring of RE ensures any issues are identified and plans put in place to address them with appropriate follow up.

Spiritual and moral development

Spiritual development:	Good
Moral development:	Outstanding

- There is a varied range of worship, including liturgies, Masses and class worship which all provide children with high quality opportunities to develop their relationship with God. Other activities, such as the Class Prayer Bags involve the whole family.
- The Parish Priest commented that children’s response demonstrated secure knowledge and understanding of Lent.
- During collective worship there were opportunities for children to deepen their relationship with God. The school with the support of the Parish Priest has recently introduced Eucharistic Adoration which, once embedded, will enhance children’s spiritual development.
- At the last validation it was recommended that the school worked towards pupils being more involved in leading and planning liturgies and worship. This needs further development and embedding across the school.
- Staff and children benefit from days of reflection, including the Sion Mission.
- 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 school is committed to responding to the call by Pope Francis and Bishop Philip for evangelisation and to put faith into action and has initiated a number of projects to make this a reality. They effectively marked the Year of Mercy.
- The children in the school demonstrate outstanding behaviour and Christian attitudes in their relationships, with a clear sense of right and wrong. Key factors promoting this include:
 - The very good role models provided by the staff and older children in the school.
 - The consistent reinforcement of Gospel values.
 - The high expectations of pupils.
- Pupils in the school are justly proud of their school, they described the school as a place where “You know everyone – we are like a family to each other.”

Leadership and management:	Good
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- The head teacher provides an outstanding and effective model of Christian leadership where all members of the school community are valued. She, along with other school leaders including governors, inspire the community to share in a strong sense of vision and mission resulting in a highly collaborative and successful school with a positive ethos.
- The governing body are strong supporters of the school and show determination in challenging and supporting the school resulting in further improvements.
- Good progress has been made on some of the issues identified for improvement in the last validation, particularly in improving outcomes for pupils. Further work needs to be done on pupils’ involvement in planning and leading liturgies.
- Staff are committed to supporting the school and work together to further its success.

School details

Name of school	St. Amand's Catholic Primary School
Age range of pupils:	4 – 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number of pupils on roll:	119
Chair of Governors:	Kath Oldham
Headteacher:	Helen Ellery

St Amands is a Voluntary Aided Catholic Primary school serving the Thames Isis Pastoral Area, which includes the parishes of St Mary's, East Hendred, St John Vianney, Wantage and English Martyrs, Didcot. With 119 children on roll, St Amand's is a small primary school. Children are taught in mixed-aged classes other than in Year 6. Of its teaching staff 66% are Catholic, with 60% of support staff also being Catholic. The percentage of children eligible for free school meals is 9%, 19.92% are in receipt of pupil premium funding. Pupils identified by the school as having special educational needs (10%) is below the national average. There are 2 pupils with a statement of special educational needs. The vast majority of children are from a White British background. Approximately 3% are learning English as an additional language which is significantly below the national average and 5% of children are from British service families.

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
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 class worship and Eucharistic Adoration.
- 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 headteacher, RE Leader, staff, governors, the parish priest, parents and pupils of St Amand'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.