

DIOCESE OF PORTSMOUTH S48 VALIDATION REPORT



St Edmund's Catholic Primary School, Abingdon

Radley Road, Abingdon, Oxfordshire OX14 3PP

URN 123225
Date of previous validation November 2014
Date of this validation 5th March 2020

Overall effectiveness	Previous s48 validation:	Good
	This s48 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 Edmund's Catholic Primary School is a community of faith, firmly embedded in Gospel values, recognising themselves as 'A learning community celebrating Christ in all, building a kingdom of love, hope and joy'.
- The personal faith, leadership and dedication of the headteacher provides the vision that continues to take the school forward.
- St. Edmund's is a school that knows itself well. The leadership team and governing body have an open and trusting relationship of challenge and support. Governors demonstrate an enthusiasm and dedication to the school.
- The regular support of the parish priest is of benefit to the school, leading Masses and welcoming the school to the parish church and integrating school and parish. He very much sees the Catholic ethos as a key strength of the school.
- Parents, who responded to the survey, were very positive about all aspects of school life.
- Leaders in the school have shown a strong commitment to improving standards in RE. Their efforts have been successful and the school recognises it needs to maintain consistency across the school on ensuring elements of challenge within all lessons.
- Pupils are able to demonstrate learning through a variety of strategies e.g. written work, art, drama and discussion. Relationships within and beyond the classroom enhance learning.
- Moral development is outstanding. Pupils are wonderful ambassadors for the school and speak about their school with pride. Their behaviour and attitudes are underpinned by their knowledge and living out of the school's mission statement. Children said, "We try to be the best we can be".
- Through an increasingly wide range of worship opportunities, the children are opened to God's presence in their lives and in the lives of others.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

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

- Ensure a greater consistency across the school in incorporating an element of challenge within each RE lesson.
- Provide greater opportunities for children to take responsibility for planning and leading prayer as the school continues to enhance its variety of worship.
- Continue to develop a more creative curriculum that links RE to the wider curriculum through the 'Building the Kingdom' diocesan project.

Full Report

The school as a Catholic community

The school community: Outstanding

The wider community: Outstanding

- The spirit of the Gospel permeates all aspects of school life. St Edmund's is a community of faith, recognising, through their mission statement that they are, 'A learning community celebrating Christ in all, building a kingdom of love, hope and joy.'
- The school has a positive relationship with the different groups that make up its community, and which are involved in the life of the school in a variety of ways. The school values diversity, as the 'Mother Tongue Day' during Pentecost highlights.
- The parish priest is supportive and the school benefits from the service of a variety of priests. Links with the parish community are strong, through participation in parish Masses, links to charity work and Mini-Vinnies being involved in parish initiatives. Parishioners join the community for worship, help lead the Mini Vinnies and the annual Prayer Spaces week.
- Links are good with other Catholic schools, including biennial cluster training days. Currently a group of schools are working on 'Building the Kingdom' where RE is woven throughout the curriculum. The school also works actively within the local cluster of schools on projects such as the Hope not Hate ambassadors.
- The school effectively communicates with parents ensuring they are kept up to date with what is happening through headteacher newsletters, regular Parent Mails and accessibility of staff. There is a positive and trusting relationship between home and the school. One parent shared, 'I know that I've left my children in a wonderful school. My children feel that 'faith is normal' which in today's society it isn't.'
- Parents are very supportive of the school. All parental survey returns were very positive.
- Pupils contribute to school life through school council, Mini-Vinnies, Eco-warriors and Hope not Hate Ambassadors. The children are justifiably proud of their school.
- All members of the school community demonstrate their commitment to the principles of stewardship through supporting many local, national and international initiatives including; Cafod, NSPCC, Mary's Meals, Prayer Spaces, collections for the homeless and the local Food Bank, Shoe Box and Back Pack appeals and the Dar Mariam School, Sudan.

Curriculum religious education

Attainment and progress: Good

Quality of teaching: Good

Leadership and management of RE: Good

- Pupils in the school value RE and recognise that it can help them in their daily lives. In the lessons observed as part of the validation, pupils were able to draw on knowledge of scripture and relate the messages to everyday life. Pupils acquire knowledge, develop understanding and learn and practise the skills well. They take pride in their work.
- Progress, since September, is noticeable in all year groups. Teachers have been given clear direction and support to ensure good outcomes in RE and have worked hard to make the necessary changes. Teaching is effective and pupils are motivated and engaged. To improve outcomes still further, teachers need to ensure all pupils are regularly challenged in RE and leaders need to ensure there is a greater consistency in approach and expectations across the school.
- Teaching standards have benefited from moderation both internally and across the Greater Reading Cluster - with good practice being shared and greater confidence in making judgements. The school values continuous professional development for staff.

- The pupils seek to produce their best work in RE and the books are valued and well presented, with a range of work which displays their enjoyment of RE.
- In all the lessons observed during the inspection, teachers showed good subject knowledge which contributed to the good progress pupils made in the lessons.
- RE is at the core of St Edmund's Curriculum with great future plans to further develop Catholic Social Teaching across the wider curriculum.
- Pupils are able to demonstrate learning through a variety of strategies e.g. written work, music, art, drama and discussion. Children show respect for the opinions and ideas of others and work well demonstrating cooperation and negotiation.
- St Edmund's is engaging in the Developer Level of the Oscar Romero Award that will continue to enhance the school's approach to Catholic Social Teaching.
- The two new RE leaders in post have worked well with the headteacher and governors which has resulted in a positive impact that is clearly evident in books and practice. Leaders are focused on continuing the drive for improvement through regular monitoring activities and professional development.

Spiritual and moral development

Spiritual development:

Good

Moral development:

Outstanding

- The children's spiritual development is good. The school brings children of all different backgrounds to a greater knowledge and love of God.
- The school provides a range of 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 is embracing opportunities to nurture spirituality and give Christian witness, through including retreat days for Year 6 and Mini-Vinnies, annual prayer stations, May Procession and Mass in the parish church. The leadership is beginning to draw on the 'Building the Kingdom' project to further enhance and enrich the spiritual life of the children, for example, burying the 'alleluia' on Ash Wednesday.
- More opportunities for children to plan and deliver worship would enhance further the prayer life of St Edmund's.
- The children in the school demonstrate very good behaviour and Christian attitudes in their relationships, with a clear sense of right and wrong. This is achieved through high expectations with children being nurtured and challenged to think about how their choices and actions affect others in light of the school's mission statement. The Discipleship Award celebrates children living out the Gospel values.
- Pupils are very proud of their school. They describe the school as being a place 'that helps us change our ways and be like a disciple of Jesus. I feel special and valued'.

Leadership and management:

Good

- The personal witness of the faith of the headteacher, provides a strong vision and direction for the work of the school.
- The headteacher, senior leadership team, governors and other leaders share a common Christian vision and, through example, inspire a strong sense of purpose, vision and mission.
- The comprehensive approach to the monitoring of all aspects of the life of the school enables the school to constantly challenge itself and there is a strong drive for improvement.
- Staff are encouraged to take on roles and responsibilities using their strengths and talents to the best effect. New roles are undertaken with enthusiasm and energy.
- The governing body are strong supporters of the school and also act as a critical friend.
- Progress has been made on the issues identified for improvement in the last validation, particularly in the embedding and ownership of the school mission statement.

School details

Name of school	St Edmund's Catholic Primary School
Age range of pupils:	4 – 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number of pupils on roll:	205
Chair of Governors:	Debbie Brooks
Headteacher:	Maria Delany-White

St Edmund's Catholic Primary School is situated within the parish of Our Lady and St Edmund of Abingdon. Currently 57% of the pupils are Catholic, with a further 25% from other Christian traditions. An increasing percentage of pupils have English as an additional language and come from a variety of ethnic minorities. The percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals is 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

Louise Buxton	Lead Validator
Roxy Ashworth	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 key stage worships
- Observations of teaching and learning in RE, including joint learning walks
- Pupil work scrutiny.
- Feedback of key findings to the senior leadership team.

Conclusion

The validators would like to thank the headteacher, staff, governors, the parish priest, parents and pupils of St Edmund'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