

DIOCESE OF PORTSMOUTH VALIDATION REPORT



St Dominic Savio Catholic Primary School, Woodley

Western Ave, Woodley, Berkshire RG5 3BH

URN: 110041
 Date of previous validation: March 2009
Date of this validation: 13 October 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous validation:	Good
	This 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:	Good	Leadership and management:	Good

This is a good school.

- The school of St Dominic Savio is a community of faith, firmly embedded in Gospel values, where every member is being encouraged to be the best that they can be, aiming to ‘Serve the Lord with Joy’.
- The partnership between the school and parish is very strong and mutually supportive.
- The parish priests are very supportive of the school.
- The personal faith of the headteacher is providing the vision that continues to take the school forward.
- The RE (religious education) leader works tirelessly to support staff in ensuring that RE teaching and learning continue to improve.
- The school effectively communicates with parents, ensuring they are kept up to date with what is happening and are given every opportunity to participate in the life of the school. The Parent Consultation Group is valued by the school leadership as a system by which parent viewpoints can be shared, as the school continues its drive for improvement.
- A large majority of parents is positive about all aspects of school life.
- Standards in RE are good and school leaders are clear about the way forward.
- Spiritual development is outstanding and moral development is good.
- The school embraces the self-review process to drive continuing improvement, with governor involvement as all stages.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

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

- Develop the planning and provision of more focussed and challenging lessons, based on the national attainment levels.
- Continue to improve the quality of the marking and feedback so that they reflect key RE learning and ensure next steps are identified through focussed questioning.
- Embed the assessment process, paying close attention to the levels of attainment and key questions.

Full Report

The school as a Catholic community

The school community:	Outstanding
The wider community:	Good

- The school of St Dominic Savio is a community of faith, firmly embedded in Gospel values, where every member is being encouraged to be the best that they can be, aiming to ‘Serve the Lord with Joy’.
- The school enjoys a good relationship with its parishes. The priest knows the school well and there are many mutually supportive links within this faith community, such as through the school choir singing at services, joint litter picks, an eco-group from church assisting with planting and governors being on parish pastoral councils.
- The high quality relationships between governors, staff, pupils and parents are reflected in the openness, honesty, challenge and support evident across the school.
- Information sharing with staff and pupils, through issuing The Week Ahead, ensures all are aware of planned events, along with allowing an opportunity for spiritual reflection.
- The school effectively communicates with parents, ensuring they are kept up to date with what is happening and are given every opportunity to participate in the life of the school. The Parent Consultation Group is valued by the school leadership as a system by which parent viewpoints can be shared, as the school continues its drive for improvement.
- Parents are very supportive of the school, with high attendance at school events. A large majority is positive about all aspects of school life.
- The school is supportive of diocesan events, such as attending the Good Shepherd Mass and supporting the Bishop’s chosen charities. Meanwhile key personnel attend diocesan training.
- St Dominic Savio has a good relationship with the Woodley cluster schools and is involved in sharing good practice that supports developments in teaching and learning. The school will be developing its relationship with its new Catholic cluster.
- New staff feel welcomed and supported by the school.
- Visitors to the school experience a very warm welcome.

Curriculum religious education

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

- The RE Leader is a key figure within the school and provides support for all staff. Her experience and knowledge are valued and she has contributed to the drive for greater expectations. She supports staff in ensuring that RE teaching and learning continue to improve.
- There is a developing range of self-evaluation procedures, for example, work scrutiny every half term by phase leaders. These monitoring activities are enabling the school to set clear direction and challenging targets.
- Teaching observed on the day ranged from outstanding to requiring improvement. Evidence from work scrutiny shows a growing improvement across all year groups. In the best lessons, teachers used their subject knowledge to plan challenging lessons, where vocabulary was closely linked to differentiated levels of attainment. Planned activities allowed children to demonstrate learning and application of knowledge. Marking and feedback show a growing understanding of challenge and higher order thinking.

- The school is continuing to develop the use of assessment, based on the national levels of attainment, which will help to further improve standards and ensure that all children are challenged in their learning.
- There is a range of evidence to support the value placed on learning in RE. The school now needs to focus on the provision of more focussed and challenging tasks based on the attainment levels, as it continues to consolidate good learning.
- Teachers work very hard to ensure there are examples of children's work for every RE topic. However, they need to ensure that the work evidences the levels of attainment and that marking and focussed questioning encourage 'next steps'.

Spiritual and moral development

Spiritual development:

Outstanding

Moral development:

Good

- St Dominic Savio is a spiritual school, with Christ at the centre of all aspects of school life. Children experience a wide range of worship opportunities throughout the year: school Masses, liturgies, celebration assemblies, penitential services, the Rosary and Mass for all the children who have made their Holy Communion.
- Opportunities to foster children's spiritual development can be found across the school curriculum. This is evident in school displays and in the children's attitude towards worship.
- The acts of worship observed demonstrated an eagerness of the children to develop a deeper connection with God.
- The mission statement underpins the moral development of all pupils, with staff providing worthy role models for the children. As a result, pupil behaviour at St Dominic Savio is good.
- 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 such as Celebration Assembly, Savio Stars and awarding of Dojos and are not limited to academic achievement.
- Pupils are thoughtful and reflective, demonstrating the school's provision for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Children have the opportunity to pray in the Sanctus Locus (central prayer area) and within the developing Reflection Garden.
- Pupils from a wide range of groups have a strong and highly valued voice through the school council, Playground Pals, Head Boy and Head Girl and Year 6 pupils are buddies for reception children. The school will continue to develop systems that enable pupils to make responsible decisions and serve the community.
- Members of the school community have a good understanding that their gifts are to be used to demonstrate the school's commitment to Gospel values and support for others. The Lent Enterprise encourages the older children to be innovative in their approach to raising money and CAFOD is a regular benefactor of the children's efforts.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school. They describe the school as being a place where 'when we learn about Jesus it helps us to be better all-round achievers at school and later on in life'.

Leadership and management:

Good

- The personal faith of the headteacher is providing the vision that continues to take the school forward.
- The governing body takes a keen interest in the mission, development and success of St Dominic Savio School and has the capacity to meet the school's needs and be influential in determining the strategic direction of the school. Governors are fully involved in evaluating the school, including diocesan self-review and in supporting and challenging the headteacher.

- This capacity to continue moving forward is also evident in the appointment of a new deputy headteacher.
- There is a culture of reflection and rigorous self-review by the senior leaders, staff and governors, which leads to challenge and aiming for high standards in all aspects of school life.
- Staff are committed to supporting the school and work purposefully in their drive for improvement.
- Progress has been made on the issues identified for improvement in the last validation.
- The annual reconciliation service is valued by many. The leadership team continues to build upon spiritual development throughout the curriculum and to develop differentiation in RE, as well as challenge for the more able.

School details

Name of school	St Dominic Savio Catholic Primary School
Age range of pupils:	4 – 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number of pupils on roll:	382
Chair of Governors:	John McKendrick
Headteacher:	James Broadbridge

St Dominic Savio is a two-form entry school situated on the outskirts of Reading, in Woodley. The school mainly serves the parishes of St John Bosco, Woodley, Our Lady of Peace and Blessed Dominic Barberi, Earley and St Thomas More, Twyford. The majority of its pupils are Catholic. 18% of pupils have English as an additional language. The percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals is well below 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
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 whole school and class worship.
- Observations of teaching and learning in RE, including joint observations with the headteacher.
- Pupil work scrutiny.
- Feedback of key findings to the senior leadership team.

Conclusion

The validators would like to thank the headteacher, deputy headteacher, RE leader, staff, governors, the parish priest, parents and pupils of St Dominic Savio 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.