

**DIOCESE OF PLYMOUTH
VICARIATE FOR FORMATION**

**SECTION 48
INSPECTION REPORT**



St. Mary's Catholic Primary School
Peverell Road,
PENZANCE,
TR13 2AT

URN 111999

Head Teacher: Jackie Brant
Chair of Governors: Viv Stuckey

Introduction

The inspection of St. Mary's Roman Catholic School was carried out under the requirements of the Education Act 2005, and in accordance with Plymouth Diocesan Framework and Schedule for Section 48 inspectors approved by the Bishop of Plymouth.

Context for the Inspection

St Mary's is a smaller than average-sized primary school with mainly white British children. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium (additional government funding) is significantly higher (40.6%) than the national average as is the proportion of pupils who have special educational needs, and statements of special educational needs. Over the last few years there has been and continues to be a steady increase in the number of children attending the school with special needs.

Key Finding Grade 2:	John 13:45
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'I give you a new commandment that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples if you love one another'. John 13:34-35

The greatest of all commandments is that we love one another. Living the Christian life is to live a life of love which ultimately leads to washing one another's feet. This is a journey. There are times when we succeed and there are times when we become distracted. Other priorities take over or we fall susceptible to the secular world which may be offering a different set of priorities or values. Fear, anxiety or a lack of confidence can impact on the capacity of those in leadership to fully respond to the Christian call above all other demands. As a result, although most of the time the community is responding to the call to love, there are times when this gets forgotten and anomalies creep in.

There are many excellent dimensions to this school and it has the potential to be a school where the mission of the Church is fully recognised across all aspects of its life. The heart of this school is in the right place and St. Mary's is a school where children grow and learn. A change in RE curriculum has had an impact on the teaching of RE. However there is capacity here for the school to bring it back to the status it has had in the past. Areas of focus for development highlight where the school needs to improve if it is to fully accomplish this goal.

Summary of Key Findings

- The faith life of the school is strongly embedded and continues to be developed, with rich expression in many areas particularly in the way that children are cared for and enabled to grow and develop.

- Children enjoy their RE lessons and some are making excellent progress. With greater focus on planning in RE all children will have the chance of achieving at the highest level.
- This is a very inclusive school and all children are treated with respect and kindness. Adults work hard to support children in their need and children are enjoying working for their Rights Respecting Award.
- Behaviour around the school is very positive which children and adults interacting well. This was particularly evident during the lunch-break and in lessons.
- The Head and her Deputy have a very clear vision and expectations about what they want for the school and have the capacity to achieve this.

Areas of Focus for Development

The school's mission as a Catholic School would be further enhanced by focusing planned development in the following areas.

- Teaching of RE. More regular monitoring of RE teaching and support for teachers to develop their skills to deliver dynamic and engaging lessons consistently.
- Ensuring that all activities offered in RE are appropriate to the needs and abilities of children so that they remain engaged and can respond fully.
- Ensuring that marking is consistent and focused on how children move on in their learning.
- Worship Life of the School. Develop the skills of the adults to support them in offering a variety of liturgical experiences to the children which ultimately lead to the children growing in their ability to create and lead acts of worship.
- Engaging the parents and other members of the community to engage with and participate in the prayer life of the school.

St. Mary's as a Catholic Community (Welcome, Welfare, and Witness)

Gospel values permeate the life of this school and play an enormous part in ensuring that the quality of welcome is rich and warm. The school's mission statement 'We Will Walk with the Lord' is a true reflection of how the community lives and works together and impacts positively on all members of the community. This is evident in the open and generous spirit of engagement between pupils, staff, and parents. It is clear that there is a genuine desire to serve one another. The children see this and respond by displaying it in their own relationships and actions.

The Governors, Head Teacher, and her deputy, work hard to maintain a sense of what is important and are clear about their expectations in all areas of school life. Their modelling of behaviour encourages and ensures a genuine desire for people to work for one another. A change in leadership in recent years has brought about a re-focusing of mission and a recognition that changes need to take place if the school is to maintain its reputation as a school that operates at the highest level. The Head Teacher is clear about how and where the school needs to grow and is quietly

determined to bring this about. She is both gentle and firm in her expectations of staff. Ultimately this will bring about her desired outcomes for the school. The Head recognises the needs of individual staff and enables them to develop the skills they need to do their job appropriately.

Inclusion of pupils from a wide range of backgrounds and increasingly pupils with specific learning and emotional needs is a high priority and the standard of care and attention given to these children who can present very challenging and demanding needs is exceptional. Children feel valued and well-cared for. There are many opportunities for children to develop through visits and projects which take the children into exciting and nurturing environments. Children feel that they have a voice and that they will be listened to when they turn to adults for help. The school is currently working towards the Level 1 'Rights Respecting' award and feel very positive about this. Throughout the school evidence of this is to be found on boards, focal points and class-room doors. This adds to the attractive and engaging environment within the school which clearly reflects the Catholic nature of the school.

Focus for Development

- Continue to work on efforts to engage hard to reach parents.
- Review parents' questionnaire and make sure events are in diary well ahead.

Grade 1:

John 13:14-15

The School as a Teaching and learning Community
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Word

Although Curriculum RE is valued and is respected as a core subject the quality of teaching is very varied and on the day of this inspection ranged from excellent to poor. Too often lessons lacked pace, creativity, and relied too much on the teacher imparting information. Where this differed there was an excellent standard of interaction taking place. The use of ICT varied considerably and differentiated activities did not always ensure that children could demonstrate their learning and take the next step. Children are keen to learn and respond well to challenges when presented with them. Generally teachers are confident about their subject knowledge but not in their delivery. Careful planning and support with this will ensure that the quality of teaching does improve.

Regular attendance at Diocesan INSET and twilight sessions demonstrates that the school is committed to improving standards and developing teacher's skills.

Focus for Development

- More regular monitoring of RE teaching and support for teachers to develop their skills to deliver dynamic and engaging lessons consistently.

- Ensuring that all activities offered in RE are appropriate to the needs and abilities of children so that they remain engaged and can respond fully.
- Ensuring that marking is consistent and focused on how children move on in their learning.
- Ensure that displays are up to date and reflect teaching and learning.

Grade 3	John 5:6-8
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The School as a Celebrating Community	Worship
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There is a strong commitment to developing the spiritual lives of the children at St. Mary's. Regular school Masses, assemblies and class prayer times provide the children with opportunities to be still and to reflect. Prayer is a regular part of the school day and children are enabled to participate and take leadership roles in worship. Adults within the school community are encouraged to participate in all acts of worship. Children sing well and are very respectful of one another by listening and responding with enthusiasm where appropriate. On the day of the visit the school's 'Rights Respecting' ambassadors led an assembly. They presented awards to other children that they had determined. In their preparation of this assembly they had remembered to include a prayer at the beginning and also included a prayer written by members of the group. Greater adult help with the preparation of this would have given the children more confidence in their delivery of the assembly.

Focus for Development

- Develop acts of worship so that children are offered a greater variety of experiences and opportunities to discover different ways of praying.
- Provide more opportunities for individual prayer outside of the arranged times
- Ensure that Scripture is a key component of all liturgy/acts of worship
- Develop opportunities for children to gradually learn how to craft an act of worship and deliver it.
- Find ways to encourage parents and parishioners to participate in acts of worship.

Grade 2	John 13:34-35
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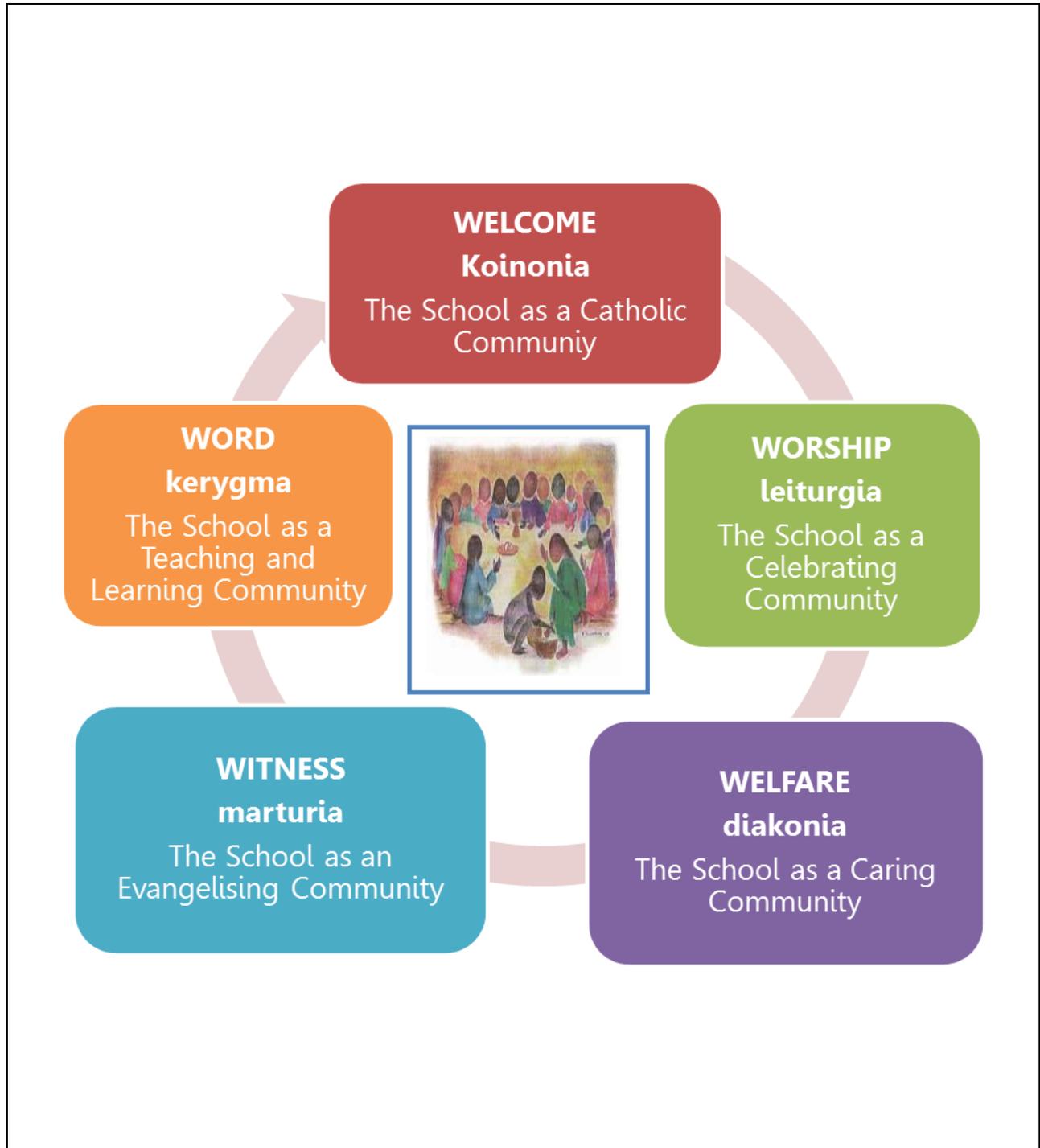
Conclusion

St. Mary's is a school with enormous potential and one that is ably led by the Head Teacher and her Deputy. The quality of nurture and care offered within the school speaks highly of the commitment the school has to its Catholic Mission. The Catholic life of this school is very healthy something which is reflected in the worship life of the school. The energy given to these areas now needs to be extended to the teaching of RE so that children at St. Mary's are given the best possible opportunity

to achieve at the highest levels and leave the school full of confidence in their knowledge, understanding and capacity to express their views when it comes to their religious teaching.

Sarah Adams
November 2013

THE SCHOOL AS A CATHOLIC COMMUNITY



Introduction

The Catholic community is one that is rooted in Baptism, Eucharist and an on-going call to Conversion. The areas of Welcome, Worship, Word, Welfare and Witness can be described as the key components of what it means to live the Christian life. As such, the school as a Catholic community, is called to embrace these as a way of being community and living the mission of the Church. The manner in which these are expressed reveal for us the heart of where the community lies.

Koinonia - (κοινωνία) Welcome

Koinonia is the Greek word for communion, for participation, for the sharing with one another. It is to be welcome an 'other' in fellowship and love. It is to be of an open disposition to receive from another and to respond in love. Within the community it can be minimalized to the gesture of greeting at the front entrance. In school it might simply be seen as the role of the receptionist. Koinonia however, requires a much greater vision of what it means to welcome. Ultimately it speaks of the disposition of every member of the community to be open to the needs of another, be that to listen, to hear, to respond, to act. The idea of welcome will be embedded in all aspects of the school's way of doing things.

Leiturgia – (Λειτουργία) Worship

The Greek word 'leiturgia' means public activity or in a religious sense it means 'respect' or 'service'. When it was adopted by the Church it meant to carry out a religious service. It is a public service as opposed to private prayer and concerns the Christian community gathering first and foremost to celebrate the paschal mystery of Jesus Christ. It is also a time when the community gathers to be reconciled, to celebrate, to be fed, and to be sent out in mission. Central to the Catholic School is its call to be a Eucharistic community in the widest sense – that is to be the body of Christ ready to serve the world in its fullness. All prayer, all liturgy ultimately is intended to lead to this. It is not something that happens once a week and has no further meaning. It is an invitation to live each day what has been received through Word and Eucharist.

Marturia – (μαρτυρία) Witness

The core meaning of the Greek word marturia means to testify, to give witness, from which we get the word martyr. Simply it means to share our values and faith with the world and our local community so that others may come to know the love of Christ. Within the Catholic School community this will mean promoting a shared vision and shared values which stem from a shared sense of the teaching of the Gospel. The Christian is called to witness to Christ's teaching in the way they live their life. Like John the Baptist these values are those which direct others to Christ.

Diakonia - (διακονία) Welfare

The word 'diakonia' comes from the Greek word to mean to serve the poor and the oppressed. The emphasis within the word is on service and care for others. Within the Christian community diakonia is a way of being with others. It encourages care and concern for every person regardless of who they are or where they come from. Within the Catholic school, service lies at the heart of the community. It is about how children are supported in their learning, shown compassion when their behaviour is challenging and cared for when they are unhappy or in need. Equally it is about how adults are cared for and care for one another. At the same time the community is one that reaches out to the local community and the wider world, recognising the needs of others and responding to these generously.

Kerygma – (κήρυγμα) Word

Kerygma is the New Testament Greek word for preaching or proclaiming the message of Christ. Within the context of the school this is expressed both in how we expose young people to the person of Christ as revealed in scripture, and the manner in which we teach. Access to the WORD of God through scripture and Christian tradition is considered to be a significant part of what the Christian community is about. By the way they are taught children come to know that God speaks to us in the way that we experience and engage with kindness, beauty, justice, the wonders of the natural world, relationships and the needs of others. It is therefore seen as important that in every subject, every lesson, positive values and attitudes are communicated. A confident and open attitude to teaching of lessons well thought about and prepared is central to achieving this.

Self-Review

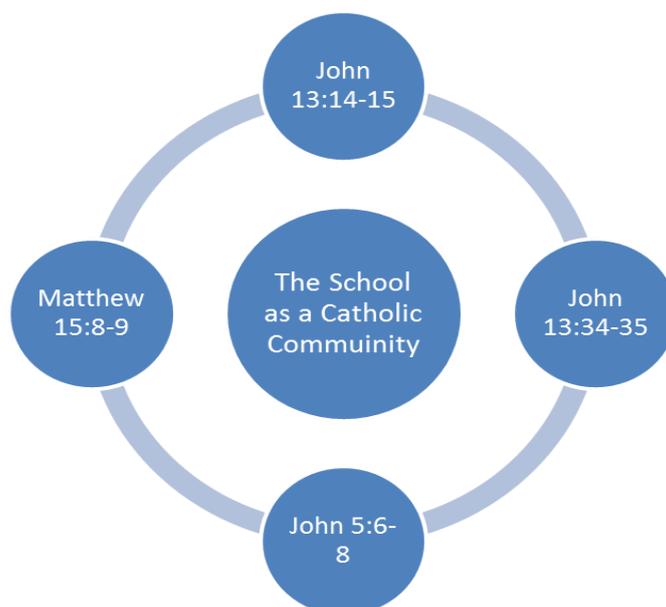
There will be three key areas within which these five elements will be reviewed:

- The School as a Catholic Community (Welcome, Witness and Welfare)
- The School as a Teaching and Learning Community (Word)
- The School as a Celebrating Community (Worship)

For each of these sections focus areas for evaluation are offered and means of gathering evidence to support this work. See appendix for further guidance.

Scripture Passages

Scripture passages have been selected to highlight where the focus for the community may be at any one time. These will act as a guideline for the self-review process when schools consider the health of its community. The approach to these is best considered within the context of a cycle. Any anyone time the school may find different areas of its life at different points on the cycle:



CONTEXT FOR THE CHOICE OF SPECIFIC SCRIPTURE REFERENCES –

Scripture has throughout history been interpreted in a variety of ways and is constantly being reinterpreted. The interpretations given here are one way of looking at how the passages may be understood within our own context. Equally there are many other passages which may have been selected but for now these reflect what is at the heart of our mission and seem appropriate.

Grade 1: 'If I, your Lord and Teacher have washed your feet, you are also to wash one another's feet. For I have set you an example, that you should also do as I have done to you'. John 13 14-15

The night before he died Jesus washed the feet of his disciples. Peter, one of the disciples was affronted. To wash another's feet was the lowest job of all, one done by the servants. Jesus, as the leader of the community he was about to establish, was very clear. The call to Christian ministry is a call to service, a humbling act of giving to one another. Unless we can serve our brothers and sisters we can have no part of in the life of Christ. A secular understanding of leadership often results in a top down mentality and little shared responsibility. The Christian community however, is one where those in authority act out of their desire to serve, not to be served. As a consequence the message of serving one another permeates the whole community.

Grade 2: 'I give you a new commandment that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples if you love one another'. John 13:34-35

The greatest of all commandments is that we love one another. Living the Christian life is to live a life of love which ultimately leads to washing one another's feet. This is a journey. There are times when we succeed and there are times when we become distracted. Other priorities take over or we fall susceptible to the secular world which may be offering a different set of priorities or values. Fear, anxiety or a lack of confidence can impact on the capacity of those in leadership to fully respond to the Christian call above all other demands. As a result, although most of the time the community is responding to the call to love, there are times when this gets forgotten and anomalies creep in.

Grade 3 'Do you want to be made well? The sick man answered him, 'Sir, I have no one to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up; and while I am making my way someone else steps down ahead of me.' Jesus said to him, 'Stand up, take your mat and walk.' John 5:6-8'

The sick man lying by the pool of Bethsaida has been there for a many years, stuck in the one place. Although he wants to be better he appears not to be able to move without some help. Jesus offers this to him and orders him to get up and walk. It could be said that the sick man has resided for too long in a 'blame someone else way of being'. Sometimes leaders and school communities do become 'stuck'. Leaders blame teachers, teachers blame students or leaders and the culture prevents an honest engagement in what needs to be done for any progress to be made. Schools stuck or struggling in this kind of cycle need help and support to break free. Healing and reconciliation may need to be a part of this journey. Honest clarification of priorities and challenging self-searching needs to take place for change to occur.

Grade 4: 'This people honour me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me; in vain do they worship me, teaching human precepts as doctrines. Matthew 15:8-9

The Pharisees and scribes accuse Jesus and his disciples of breaking the rules. The rules have become more important and the heart has been lost. The Pharisees and Scribes may appear to follow the law but they have forgotten what it all means. Where there is little service, no attention to love and no understanding of what it means to live a fully developed Christian life, there is little heart. When this is the case the school has lost sight of its meaning and purpose. As a consequence children are being failed and adults not supported to do what is right. Only a radical re-evaluation of what it means to be a Catholic community and a Catholic school will lead to a rediscovery of the commandment: 'Love one another' and ultimately to people washing one another's feet.