

**DIOCESE OF PLYMOUTH  
VICARIATE FOR EVANGELISATION CATECHESIS AND  
SCHOOLS**

**S48  
INSPECTION REPORT**



St. Mary and St. Joseph's Roman Catholic Primary School  
Folly Lane  
Wareham  
Wool  
Dorset  
BH20 6DS

URN 140770

Head Teacher: Mrs Helen Brown  
Chair of Governors: Mrs Win Sheldon

## Introduction

The inspection of St. Mary and St. Joseph's Roman Catholic Primary School was carried out under the requirements of the Education Act 2005, and in accordance with Plymouth Diocesan Framework and as a multi-academy Trust school (CAST) with the Schedule for Diocesan Canonical inspectors, (S48) approved of by the Bishop of Plymouth.

## Context for the Inspection

St Mary and St. Joseph's is smaller than average sized primary school with 167 children on roll. Of these 15% of children are eligible for pupil premium, 11% of children receive free school meals and 11.9% of children are on the SEN register. One child has a statement of special educational needs. 6% of children have English as an additional language and 9% of children come from British Service Families.

Since the last inspection the school has undergone significant changes:

1. Having been a first school, the school is now a primary school following a review of Purbeck schools. This came in to effect in September 2012, increasing the number of places to 30 per year group.
2. The school has become an academy as part of CAST – a multi-academy trust incorporating all Catholic primary schools within the Diocese of Plymouth.

## Key Finding Grade 1

John 13:14-15

**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 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.*

St. Mary and St. Joseph's is a warm and supportive community where service to one another lies at the heart of the school's mission and vision. The school's Mission Statement, 'Do everything with Love' is a true reflection of how children and adults relate to one another. The stability of the staff, coupled with a long standing Head Teacher and Deputy, is a key factor in the effective provision offered to children who come to the school. Despite a turbulent time during the academic year 2015-2016 following two key bereavements (the child of a member of staff and later a year 4 pupil), the staff have supported one another, the children and their families with dignity, kindness and professionalism.

The Head Teacher's own personal faith, commitment to high standards and a desire to serve, nurture and engage the whole community both within and outside of the school, is inspirational. Service is very definitely at the heart of this thriving school.

### **Summary of Key Findings**

- The spirit of the Gospel permeates all aspects of the school's life. This is tangible in the positive relationships which underpin every dimension of the school's life and is reflected in the school's mission statement, 'Do everything with Love' (1 Cor. 16:14). The Mission Statement clearly reflects the mission of the Church and impacts positively on all members of the community.
- Service lies at the heart of the school's leadership and is reflected in all relationships within the school.
- The school has embraced change with confidence following the move from being a First School to becoming a Primary School. New staff have been welcomed. The need to make the transition smooth, especially for children, has been fully appreciated and carried out with care, including embracing a new name for the school.
- The school has a strong relationship with the parish and the Parish Priest makes a significant contribution to school life. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is fully embedded across all areas of the curriculum.
- The teaching of RE plays an important role and teachers are committed to providing children with engaging and challenging lessons.
- The faith life of the school pervades most areas of the school. Displays, focal points, and children's art work particularly in classrooms, contribute to a deep experience of spiritual well-being and on-going prayer. It is apparent that this is a school firmly rooted in the Catholic Tradition.
- Children's behaviour is consistently excellent. They have a high regard for other people and reflect the modelling of the caring and compassionate adults who look after them.

### **Main areas of Focus for Development**

- To make Gospel values and the school's Catholicity more visually evident in the public areas of the school.
- To ensure that the teaching of RE is consistent across the school.

### **St. Mary and St. Joseph's as a Catholic Community**

(Welcome, Welfare, and Witness)

Grade 1

John 13:14-15

The quality of Welcome, Welfare and Witness at St. Mary and St. Joseph is inspiring, yet humble. The capacity for adults to consistently seek to serve one another and do the very best they can be takes energy, commitment and humility. The children of this school are very blessed to have adults who want to do this primarily for them. 'Do everything with Love' is a fine motto for a school which daily lives this out. Throughout this inspection many examples of gentle interactions and positive affirmation of children confirmed the desire of the school

to live out the message of the Gospel and provide a rich and life-giving environment for all who come into this school.

The quality of welcome is reflected in the warm and open disposition of both adults and children. Teachers model their own willingness to listen, to be considerate and supportive. Children are clearly learning from this and respond in turn to one another with the same kind of openness. Parents comment on the quality of welcome they receive and how they feel that this is a school where their child is given every opportunity to succeed and grow to be a fully rounded person. Despite now being a much bigger school, parents report that children across the year groups know one another and the sense of being part of a 'big family' continues to exist. 'Preppy' sessions which take place in the summer term ensure that new children coming to the school in September are prepared and feel welcome. Other children who come mid-year are also helped to settle quickly by the school having a very clear 'check list' and not leaving to chance a child's transition from one school to another. Parents comment on how happy they are with the way the school looks after their children.

The school has strong links with the local parish and the Parish Priest is a significant member of the school community. He is a regular visitor to the school and a supportive presence for both adults and children. In addition parishioners are made very welcome in the school and contribute to its life in a variety of ways including participation in school Masses and other liturgical events, and for volunteer reading and leading a prayer group. In its turn the school contributes to the annual parish fete by running a stall and offering country dancing! Links with the parish were further strengthened when for a period of time the school hall was used for Mass on Sundays while repairs were being carried out in the church.

Children at St. Mary and St Joseph's are well cared for. Those children who may struggle either with learning or with relationships are supported by the school's trained ELSA (Emotional Literacy Support Assistant) practitioner. All children who may have any difficulty that might inhibit their learning are monitored regularly to ensure that they make progress. The school has a clear and robust development plan to ensure that all children learn effectively and achieve in line with expectations and beyond. Wrap around provision for families with most need is having an impact. This provision provides a nurturing environment both at the start of the day and at the end. As a result children feel safe and ready to learn. In addition to ELSA support, all teachers have attended INSET by MOSAIC (A Dorset organisation that provides support for families and children who have been bereaved). When faced with the bereavement of a child in the school this training for the staff was invaluable. It enabled them to support the other children and one another during this difficult time. A prayer space was created for the whole community. It was a place for parents, children and staff to feel comfortable enough to express their feelings and support each other. Out of sensitivity to those parents who might have found this intimidating the school also provided an outdoor space for those who might still wish to express their support for the family.

The school has high expectations with regard to behaviour and in a recent pupil survey, 98% of children feel that they are taught right and wrong by following the example of Christ. One child commented, 'We treat other people like we want to be treated' and another said, 'We show kindness to each other and share friendship'. The school behaviour policy makes clear expectations and is consistently applied. Its model of positive re-enforcement encourages children to respond well. As a result of expectations, interactions enable children to grow in self-esteem, self-discipline and positive relationships.

A knowledge that Christ is present in all things clearly determines the atmosphere at St. Mary's and St. Joseph's. Every member of the school community has ownership of the recently reviewed school mission statement which speaks of everyone being "committed to

this [‘Do everything with Love’] because our faith in God is central and visible in our school, enabling everybody to feel loved and to achieve their very best.” The mission statement has been enhanced by adding to it the school’s core values (rooted in the Gospel) and underpinned by the word ‘Respect’. Each week these core values are reflected upon as part of the Monday morning Act of Worship. Children understand them and are able to articulate these. Each class has had the opportunity to explore in depth one particular value and share their ideas with the rest of the school. As a result the children appreciate why the school does what it does and has the expectations which it has.

Out of the core values and because of the school’s commitment to Catholic Social Teaching, children are becoming more aware of the uniqueness of every person and the reality of the lack of justice or well-being for all people. As a result they take pride in their charitable work and the way in which they can care for others, both home and abroad. Although the school has yet to develop concrete links with communities further afield, they have identified this as an area which they wish to develop so that the children can grow in their understanding of the lives led by the children and families they so often raise money for. These include such charities as shoe boxes, Children in Need and the local food bank. The school has strong links with CAFOD and is planning to work towards becoming a FairTrade school.

Children are encouraged and enabled to take on responsibilities via a range of activities. These include the school council, Environment Squad (who litter pick!) and Bronze Ambassadors, a selected group who run lunch-time activities. Although children can get involved in a number of events, the school is keen to develop a stronger voice for children. It has identified a need to ensure that children have opportunities to express their thoughts and implement their plans, particularly on the School Council. Currently they run a cake raffle to raise money and buy new play equipment. They canvas other children’s opinions on charities to support and what play equipment to buy.

There is no doubt that the quality of Witness at St. Mary and St. Joseph is fundamental to everything that the school does. A particular sign of this can be seen at lunch times with the development of a very strong and committed group of Lunch Time Assistants. This cohesive group who are highly thought of by children and adults, ensure that meal and play times are enjoyable experiences for children and adults. What makes this a particularly successful team stems from the engagement through meetings and training that is offered to them by the leadership team. As a result they do not feel as if they are being expected to do a job with little or no support. Relationships within the team are strong and caring, which leads them to feel confident in their work with the children. They are a particular strength of the school.

The school has strong partnerships with other schools both within the locality and in particular the network of CAST schools to which they belong. As a result the sharing of good practice in many areas is helping to further develop the adults and ensure that they grow in their own confidence and practice.

### **Focus for Development**

- To develop the voice of pupils so that they can grow in their capacity to make decisions including within the area of leading on their learning.
- To develop opportunities for children to further engage with the wider community so that it becomes more integrated with their own lives.

As has been observed earlier, this is a school where the desire to serve one another lies at the heart of the school. This does not happen by accident. Leadership comes in many models and at St. Mary and St. Joseph's it is quite clear that a model of servant leadership, where people are willing to wash the feet of others, prevails. This is a true reflection of how the school is led and managed. At the heart of the leadership team is a humility and wisdom that seeks to enable others and ensure that decisions and actions are not dictated but embraced. This can be seen in the way that staff support one another to be the very best they can be for the sake of the children. No one underestimates the pressures that everyone is under. People take responsibility seriously and are committed to responding to the needs of the children and adults. The Head and the Deputy inspire confidence and are prepared to get involved at all levels to ensure the smooth running of the school. Consistently parents speak of how approachable the Head Teacher is whilst also having high expectations for behaviour and achievement.

Following a recent independent review of governance the school now has a newly formed governing body which is growing in its capacity to be effective and engaged with the school. They are a known presence in school and visit regularly to support staff and work collaboratively. This has included supporting a prayer space in the school and participating in learning walks, monitoring of books and discussing progress in RE. They are developing a clear picture of the school's needs and are increasingly asking challenging questions to ensure that the needs of children are being met. At the same time they are keen to develop their understanding of the School as a Catholic Community and, in line with the school's own identified areas for development as a Catholic school, support them to do this.

RE leadership has a high priority in the school and as former RE co-ordinators both the Head Teacher and the Deputy have an understanding of the role and a commitment to supporting the current post-holder. She reports annually to the governing body and is a regular attendee at Diocesan training days and events to develop her own capacity to lead RE in the school. She has a clearly defined action plan which links with the school development plan. Her plan has clearly identified areas for development which this inspection would concur with. Her relationship with staff is highly positive and ensures that people can turn to her for support as and when they need.

### **Focus for Development**

- To put in place identified actions and time-lines to demonstrate impact of monitoring.
- To provide staff with appropriate CPD so that they can help children to fully appreciate and understand Catholic Social Teaching.

St. Mary and St. Joseph's is a school with a highly dedicated group of teachers who are keen to provide the best possible education for the children in their care. First and foremost they model Christ in the way that they teach, particularly in the way they are compassionate, thoughtful, nurturing and engaging. Children come to this school wanting to learn and behave in such a way that it is possible for teaching and learning to be strong in every lesson. Children spoke positively about their RE and said how much they enjoyed it.

Teachers have an open, thoughtful approach to teaching. Classes are calm and purposeful. A mutual respect between teachers and children prevails in every class. TAs are employed effectively and work kindly and constructively. Seven lessons were observed in total and in almost all lessons there was a very high level of engagement. For the most part lessons are planned well, are focused and enable children to develop their understanding within the course of a lesson. On the rare occasion when this did not happen it was because the nature of challenge was limited or not possible for children to achieve. In one or two lessons the pace and challenge was lacking and though children behaved well and worked hard they tended to be passive in their learning. In other lessons where there was a high level of expectation and the lesson was pacy, children rose to the challenge and responded well. In many of the lessons the questioning of children was of a high standard allowing children to really think and go deeper. A number of children showed a growing depth of understanding beyond their years. Their books reflected a variety of activities and a range of opportunities for children to make a personal response to what they had been learning. Marking of books, is not yet consistent across every class. Although most teachers offer children opportunities to go further with their learning, they do not ensure that children have responded to their questions or comments.

Teachers use a 'must, should, could' approach to differentiation but there is some confusion as to what this looks like in RE. As a consequence some children are not being challenged sufficiently or not enabled to engage with the more challenging activities because time runs out. Some CPD for staff in this area would help them to overcome this issue.

The school has embraced the work of the Diocesan RE curriculum writers' group and use this to inform their planning and guide the work that they do. As this is still in its infancy as a project, it is important for teachers to adapt this material to suit the needs of their own class. In most cases the teachers here are doing this appropriately.

### **Focus for Development**

- To ensure that all lessons are delivered with pace and employ a variety of learning resources.
- To develop a bank of challenging activities to develop resilience in children when it comes to learning.

<b>The School as a Celebrating Community</b> <b>Grade 1</b>
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<b>Worship</b> <b>John 13:13-14</b>
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There is no doubt that this is a school which holds prayer at the heart of all that it does. The quality of prayer and liturgy truly reflects a community which values the spiritual life of every member of the community. Whether it is in a whole school Act of Worship, a class time of prayer or a KS liturgy, children and adults engage in a rich and meaningful way. A beautiful upper Key Stage Two liturgy spoke volumes for the richness of experience offered to the children. Continuing on from the whole school Act of Worship, this liturgy offered children the opportunity to reflect on 'Blessed are the Peace Makers' from a personal, local and global perspective. The ability of the children to reflect silently and move from one prayer activity to another was deeply moving. This was clearly something that they are accustomed to doing and enjoy participating in. Little children are enabled and encouraged to reflect in silence and so can be seen to grow spiritually as they move through the school. Music, images and thoughtful reflections allow the whole community to live the Gospel from the Sunday, throughout the week.

Excellent focal points meaningfully reflect the engagement of the children and often flow from the work they have been doing in RE. A lunch time prayer group run by a parishioner is well attended by children and reflects the value the community places on providing children with a variety of opportunities for growing spiritually. A diocesan INSET on Prayer Spaces in Schools has been embraced by the school and the ideas within it used to enhance class prayer as well as having a bigger impact when offered to the whole school.

Links with the parish are strong and on a regular basis the school attends Mass with the parishioners in the Church. These are positive experiences for the children not least because parents are keen to attend. In addition the children celebrate their Advent liturgy in the Church and attract many visitors to this moving and enriching preparation for Christmas.

As can be clearly seen from everything that has been said so far, there is no doubt that everything that the school does contributes to the spiritual and moral development of the children at St. Mary and St. Joseph's. Through the traditions and practices of the Catholic Church children are being given a context for learning about right and wrong and what is just. Through the core values they are given the opportunity to develop a critical conscience which ultimately shows them what will give them life and how they can live it fully.

### **Focus for Development**

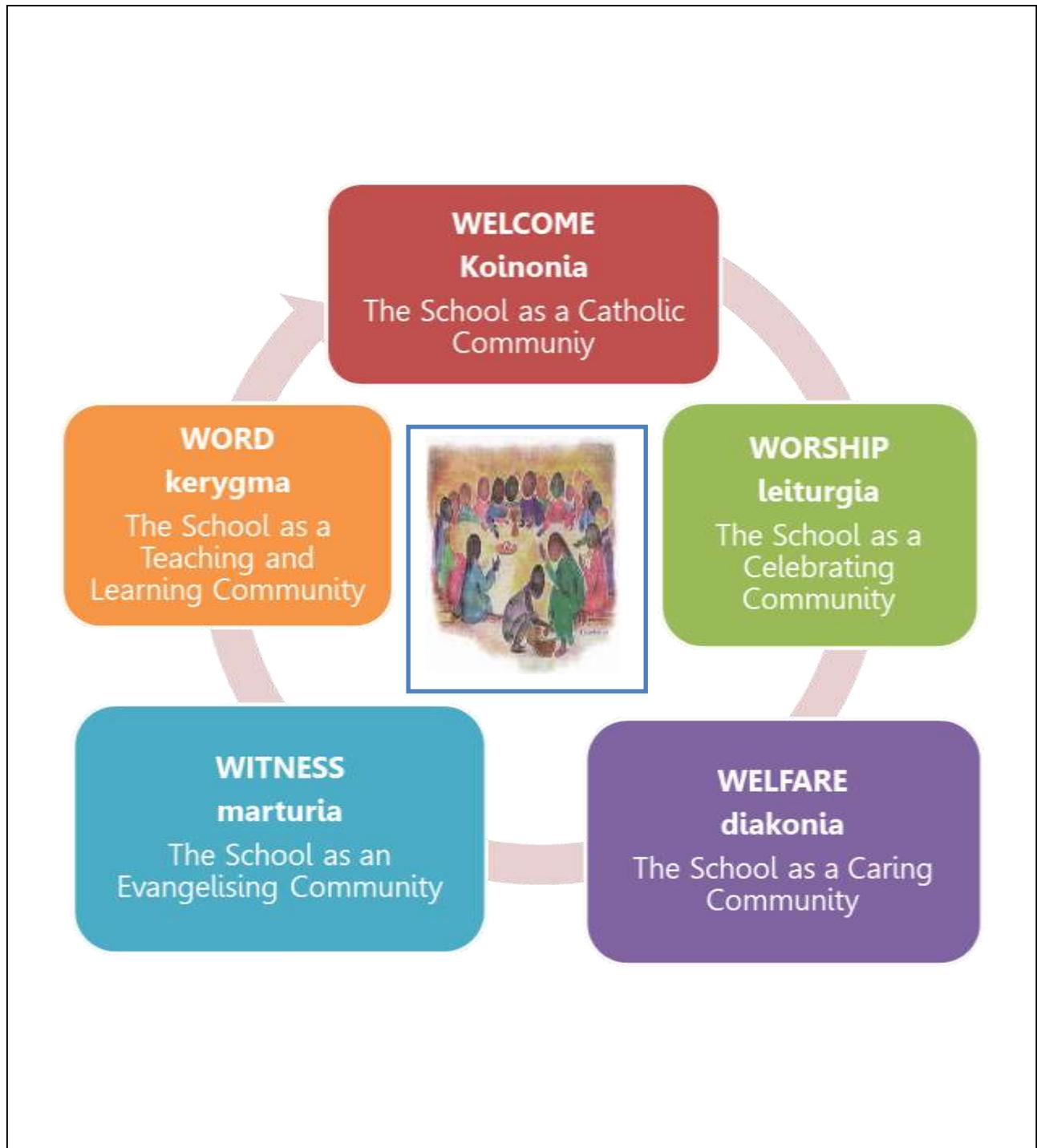
- To develop the Monday 'Act of Worship' so that it becomes less adult dependent and offers children the opportunity to take on roles of leadership. In addition, to develop it so that it is less an assembly and more a liturgy with strong ritual content.

### **Conclusion**

St. Mary and St. Joseph's is a delightful school which is going from strength to strength in living out its mission to the Church and the world. It has much to offer the wider community and is very much a safe and caring environment for all children who attend. It is a school of which the Bishop and the Diocese can be rightly proud

**Sarah Adams**  
**February 2017**

## 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**

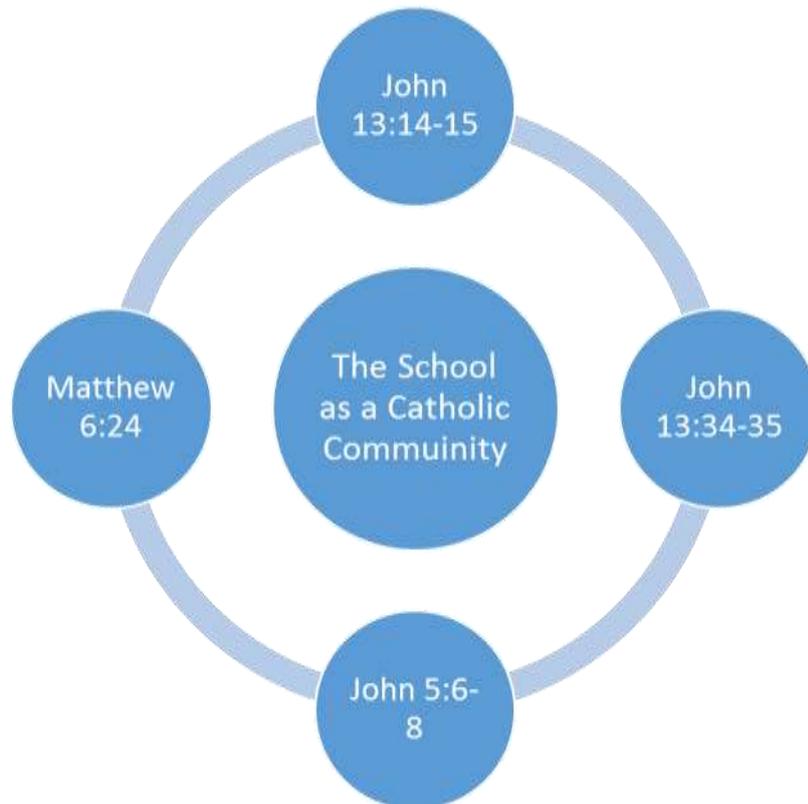
There will be three key areas within which these five elements will be reviewed:

- 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 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 'No one can serve two masters; for a slave will either hate the one and love the other, or be devoted to the one and despise the other. Matthew 6:24**

Throughout Scripture we are taught that we must choose between God and false gods. Jesus wants us to be free, not just of concerns but of all worries, in order to serve God. It is easy when we are under extreme pressure to respond in ways which are detrimental to our core beliefs and vision. Sometimes this happens because we are facing understandable difficulties. At other times we are insufficiently discerning and go with what seems to be more attractive or safe. Schools can fall into this trap when results and progress become more important than the all-round development of the child. 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.