

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

**CANON 806
INSPECTION REPORT**



St. Mary's Catholic Primary School
Mongleath Road
Falmouth
Cornwall
TR11 4PW

URN 140775

Head Teacher: Mrs Jacqui Scarborough
Chair of Governors: Matt Higham

Introduction

The inspection of St. Mary's Falmouth was carried out under the requirements of the Education Act 2005, and in accordance with Plymouth Diocesan Framework and as the school is an academy the Schedule for Diocesan Canonical Inspections, approved by the Bishop of Plymouth.

Context for the Inspection

St. Mary's is an average sized primary school serving the community of Falmouth in Cornwall and parishes in both Falmouth and Helston. A small percentage (6.4%) of children are registered as having special educational needs with one child having a statement. 3.6% of children have English as an additional language and 5% of children receive free school meals. 15.9% of children are in receipt of pupil premium funding.

Since the last inspection the school has become a part of CAST (a multi academy trust incorporating all the Catholic schools in Plymouth Diocese).

Key Finding Grade 1:

John 13:14-15

**"If I the 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.

St. Mary's is a vibrant and dynamic school where children are at the heart of everything that the school does. Nothing is ever done within the school which does not consider their needs and development as a primary priority. To this end all the adults attached to the school work with ever increasing commitment to provide the best possible learning environment for the children. The desire to achieve this is inspired by the life and teachings of Jesus, and reflective of the Gospel values which the school so clearly lives out.

Achieving the best results possible needs people who are prepared to work together in a meaningful and consistent way, often going the extra mile. At St. Mary's there is a genuine sense that all who work here are at the service not just of the children but of one another. People really care and support each other, particularly when there are challenges to be faced or difficulties to be overcome. A consistent message over the two days related to the selfless responses of people to support those in need. A particular example of this was the love, care and concern not only expressed but acted out by staff when a colleague went through a major bereavement.

Summary of Key Findings

- Gospel values permeate every aspect of school life and hold fast to the school's motto, "I am the way, the Truth and the Life".
- Relationships within the school are very positive. The quality of welcome ensures that every member of the community feels valued and respected.
- Children are the centre of all activities and everything the adults do is to ensure that they experience the best possible care and development. They are nurtured and nourished academically, spiritually and physically to become the best they can be.
- Children's behaviour is exemplary. They come to school to learn and respond positively and with great resilience.
- St. Mary's is a National Support School and is regularly visited by other professionals from within and outside of CAST. Their experience of welcome is regularly reported.
- The Faith life of the school is rich and diverse. Excellent relationships with the parish ensure that the school is supported and valued by the local community. The parish priest in particular has invested significantly in engaging with the school and seeing it as very much a part of parish life.
- The school has worked hard to improve and develop all its focal points and displays. These now provide an engaging and reflective aid to the work of the children. The children's engagement with these was an act of faith on the part of the staff but it has paid off.
- Teaching and learning in RE is strong and has, with appropriate support the potential to be even better. Teachers want to deliver the best they can and work hard to do this.
- There are many opportunities for children to express their views in the school. In addition to the school council being instrumental in bringing about a more traditional uniform, other groups highlight the needs of the world and caring for the environment. A number of reports highlight the respect that the children have in the local community. They are the best ambassadors for the school and do this well in the parish and in the local community.

Areas of Focus for Development

- To continue working with the School as a Catholic Community framework and fully embed it in all aspects of the school's life, including this on the website where appropriate.

St. Mary's as a Catholic Community

(Welcome, Welfare, and Witness)

Grade 1:

John 13:14-15

From the moment of arriving at St. Mary's it is evident that this is a vibrant, friendly school with a high level of purpose and intent. Rooted in Gospel teaching the atmosphere exudes calmness, joy and engagement. Adults and children are open and warm in their disposition to one another and to visitors. Throughout the inspection the atmosphere was calm. Children were very well behaved and courteous in their interactions with each other and the adults around them.

Although Falmouth is not an area of great diversity culturally, the school is committed to celebrating diversity whenever opportunities arise. They are keen to develop greater links between schools and communities which are different in make up to their own. During the

inspection everyone in the school took part in the CAFOD, 'Run for Women' highlighting the plight of young women who are denied access to any form of education. The children thoroughly enjoyed this event and were able to talk about why they were doing it because the school had helped them to understand the plight of women in the developing world.

Visually the school displays many signs which reflect the witness of the school as a Catholic community. These are bright, child friendly and engaging. All the displays clearly had a purpose, for example one made the links between the Diocese and Plymouth CAST so that anyone wanting to understand those links could easily do so, child or adult. Another display reflected the school's commitment to the wider community, both local and far away. This demonstrated the work that the school does to support CAFOD, sending second hand summer uniform to children in Uganda so that 'they have a sense that they belong to a school community', Operation Christmas Child and Homestart to name but a few.

From the parents' survey it is clear that the parents (99%) believe that St. Mary's is a very positive school which serves the needs of their children very well. They believe that they are listened to and that the open door policy of all staff ensures that if they have concerns these will be addressed. The school regularly invites parents to events at the school particularly Acts of Worship and Mass. Through newsletters, the website and induction meetings for new parents the school demonstrates its desire and willingness to work in partnership with parents, whom they consider to have an essential role to play in the education of their child.

Communication across the school ensures that everyone feels confident that they know what is happening and expected of them. This is strengthened by members of the leadership team visiting each class at the start of the day to see how people are and when necessary passing on any crucial information. Induction is also a developing area. The school recognised that it needed to do more and so have created a more user-friendly induction pack for new members of staff. At the same time they also ensure that new-comers are supported to integrate and come to a full appreciation of the ethos and mission of the school.

Focus for Development

- To continue to develop ways of celebrating diversity and to further develop the outreach work to the wider community so that the children deepen their understanding and appreciation of the needs of others beyond the confines of their immediate environment.

The School as a Catholic Community	Leadership and Management
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Grade 1	John 13:14-15
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The leadership and management of St. Mary's play a very key role in ensuring that this dynamic community remains on track. The school works hard to embrace every new demand and development in education without losing sight of its core purpose. Enablement and growth of the individual lies at the heart of Christian service and so it is not surprising that the leadership of St. Mary's successfully inspires the school community to have a strong sense of shared mission which encapsulates shared values which are gospel orientated.

The Head Teacher, who is also a National Leader in Education, has a very clear focus for the school and through her dedication ensures there is effective training, monitoring and support for staff to fulfil the school's goals and not least to develop their own potential. With the Deputy, Assistant Head and RE leader and the significant role which the governors play, the leadership team ensures that the Catholic life of the school is not diminished as a

consequence of the pressures placed on schools to meet government demands and standards. On the contrary the quality of the Catholic life of St. Mary's has a direct bearing on the over-all quality of education experienced by the pupils.

Governors at St. Mary's are to be commended for their robust engagement with the school. Through regular visits they provide support and appropriate challenge as a consequence of monitoring all aspects of the Catholic Life. This leads to the effective raising of standards and encouragement of staff and where necessary identifies further areas for development.

A result of the positive leadership style, morale in the school is high and leads to a genuine desire by all staff to serve one another in a profound way.

Focus for Development

- The current RE leader is leaving at the end of the term and a new RE leader has been identified. It will be important that she is given the support that she will need to meet the needs of the role and grow in her own skills to facilitate the staff in developing further.

The School as a Teaching and learning Community
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Word

Grade 1

John 13:14-15

An important criterion for teaching in a Catholic school is the capacity for teachers and teaching assistants to model Christ in all that they do. They are called to be the face of Christ for the children in their care and be conscious of the fact that it is often actions which speak louder than words. In a school where the desire to 'wash one another's feet' is so evident, it is not surprising to find teachers and teaching assistants reflecting Jesus in their approach to teaching and learning. Consistently, at St. Mary's the adults in the classroom gave real witness to Christ.

Curriculum RE is a high priority and teachers consistently provide lessons which are engaging, challenging and 'fun'. Occasionally lessons have the potential to be too challenging but the children demonstrated an excellent capacity for resilience, not giving up when it was clearly hard work. Children spoke positively and with enthusiasm about RE. They believe they make good progress and teachers are aware of the need they have to help the children with this as an area of development.

From the quality of work in children's books and observing seven lessons it is evident that children are developing a sound knowledge and understanding of religious concepts, Scripture and how to apply this in the circumstances of their own life. Marking is consistently high across the school and enables the children to have a dialogue with their teachers about the work that they are doing. Most lessons observed were engaging and creative, allowing children to demonstrate their previous learning and move on from this. Adults have excellent relationships with the children who feel safe and secure in their learning environment.

Teaching assistants support the children very well. They are well-prepared and know what is expected of them, while at the same time they also engage in a very pastoral way with the children. It is clear that the children appreciate their presence and value their input.

The enthusiasm of the RE leader has helped to create an enthusiasm for RE teaching, even when teachers feel anxious or insecure in their own subject knowledge. Throughout her time as RE leader she has been a supportive ally and offered a clarity of expectation that whilst finding it demanding, the teachers have generously responded. Attendance at INSET, RE leadership meetings, Diocesan adult formation conferences and other talks/training ensures that there is on-going formation for the all staff, who are encouraged and enabled by the school to participate in and take advantage of these This is beginning to bear fruit and evident in the careful planning and preparation that goes on in RE.

Focus for Development

- To continue to embed assessment and ensure that all staff, particularly new members of staff understand levels in RE.
- To ensure that RE planning clearly identifies projected levels of attainment and AT1 and AT2 activities.
- With the support of Plymouth CAST to continue developing appropriate AT2 activities which move from the personal expression to critical analysis in relation to beliefs (their own and those of others).

The School as a Celebrating Community Worship, Spiritual and Moral Development

Grade 1

John 13:14-15

In a school where the Gospel permeates all aspects of the school life, it is not surprising that the worship life of St. Mary's plays a significant part in forming ever-growing, spiritually nourished young people. Prayer and worship punctuate the day so that there is a constant rhythm of prayer and praise.

Liturgically the community is blessed to have regular access to the sacramental life and in particular Mass, either as a whole school or within classes. There is a clear programme designed to maximise opportunities for children to celebrate as part of the wider community and within the context of more intimate nature of the classroom. The preparation, sensitivity to the needs of the children and a parish priest who sees it as an important part of school life, ensures that the children have a rich experience in which they are encouraged to participate fully. Children learn how to serve, take turns to read the scripture and write their own prayers of intercession. Music plays a strong part in the quality of the liturgy. The school has an excellent choir which adds to the enthusiastic but prayerful singing of all the children.

The environment of the school also adds to the liturgical experience of the children. Adults use high quality resources to support acts of worship. Images and technology also play their part in adding to the atmosphere and a sense of the sacred. As a result all those who participate, including parents and carers are enabled to deepen their relationship with God.

The school is gradually making the transition from the old format of 'assemblies' to acts of worship which reflect a pattern of liturgical ritual. These are led by different classes on a regular basis. As a result children are developing liturgical skills and an appreciation of how to put together and celebrate liturgies. Through conversations with the children and looking at their preparation it is clear that the children are making progress in this and seem to enjoy this opportunity. Their confidence is beginning to grow in this area. Given that most of the children's experience of Catholic Education will finish in year 6 it is a golden opportunity for them to leave their primary school with these skills so that in future years, if they should need them, they have something to draw upon.

Prayer in other forms takes place regularly in class and voluntarily children attend a pre-school prayer time, led by one of the teachers. This is a quiet meditative opportunity to engage the children in a time of silence before school begins. Numbers for this vary but consistently children do attend. Meditation is something that takes place in a number of classes each day. Children speak positively about this time to be still and silent. They value having some silence in what is ordinarily a busy and potentially noisy day and they value being able to reflect on the presence of God in their life.

The quality of prayer that the children have, in addition to the role modelling of Christ by the adults, results in children who are spiritually and morally well developed. Children at St. Mary's have a strong sense of what is right and what is wrong. Their care for others flows from a sense of God being present in each person and leads them to treat one another with love and respect.

Focus for Development

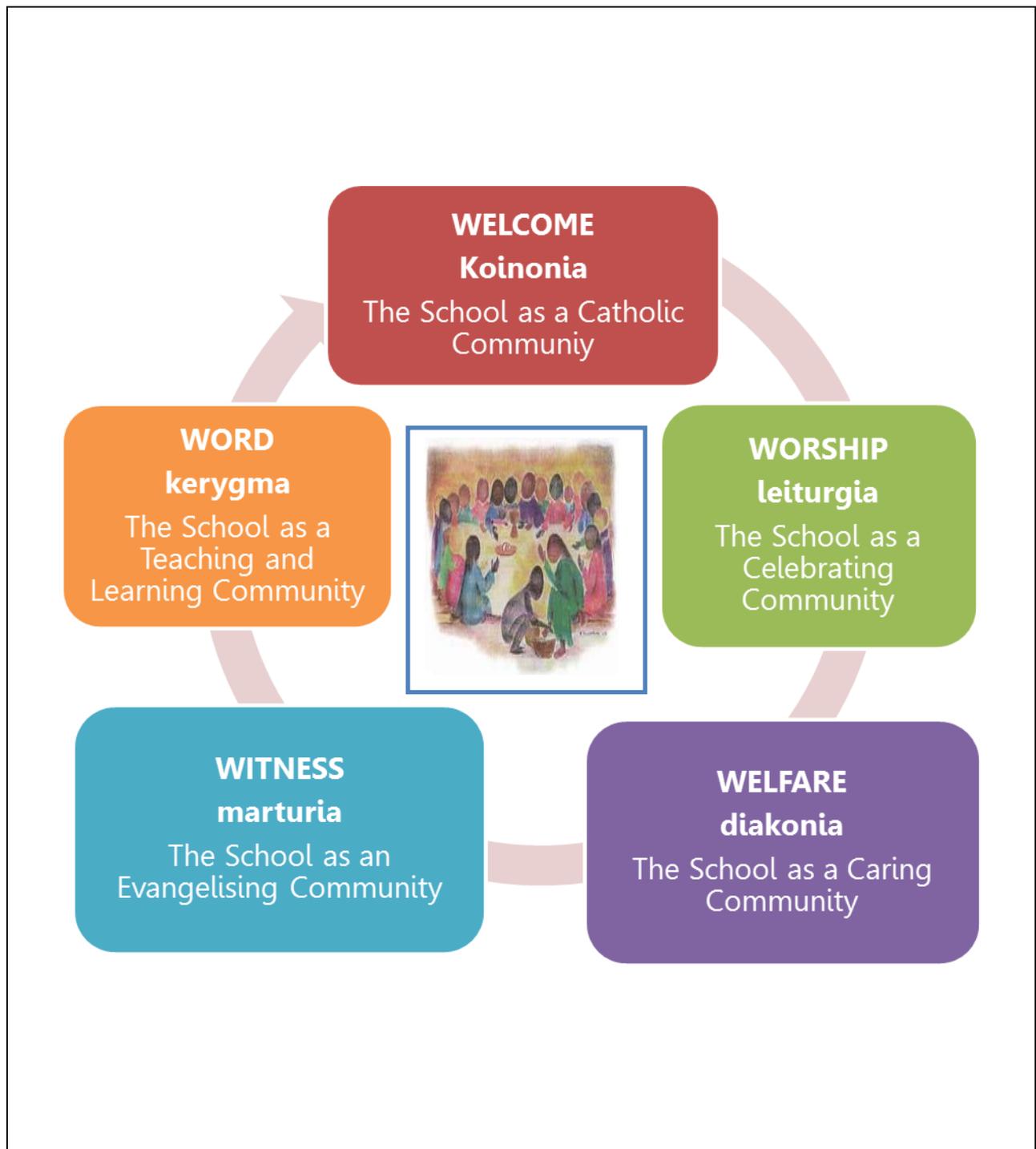
- Ensure that liturgy is monitored and evaluated effectively, gathering from the children and adults insight into the impact of what is being offered and looking for ways to develop and improve the provision.
- To continue to develop all staff to develop their skills to enable them to support pupils to gain a knowledge and understanding of liturgical skills.

Conclusion

St. Mary's, Falmouth is a school firmly rooted in a desire to serve one another as Jesus did when he washed the feet of his disciples. A combination of high standards and expectations, coupled with a deep desire for children to grow spiritually and become the very best that they can be, results in a warm, open and generous centre of learning. Parents, carers, staff and in particular the Bishop of Plymouth can be justly proud of this community.

Sarah Adams
June 2015

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 work 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

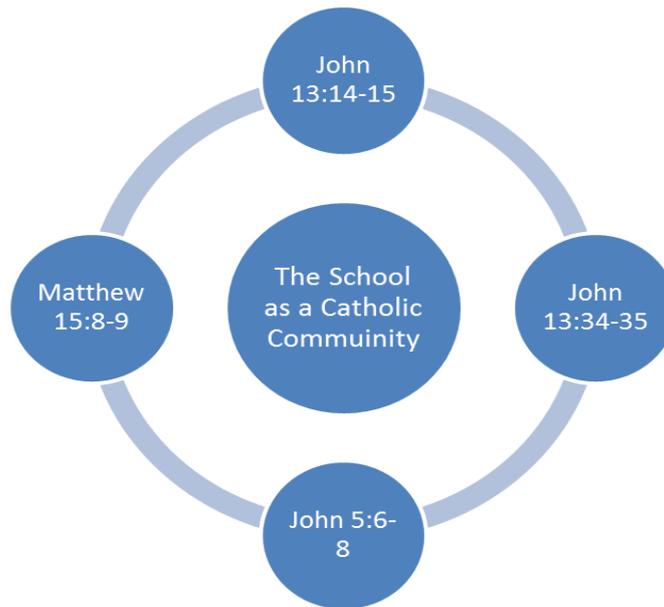
There will be three key areas within which these five elements will be reviewed:

- 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 one 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.