

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



St. John the Baptist Catholic Primary School  
Trevu Road  
Camborne  
Cornwall  
TR14 7AE

**URN 140763**

Head Teacher: Miss Nicky Texiere  
Chair of Governors: Mrs Becki Wheeler

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Canonical Inspection under Canon Law 806 on behalf of the Diocese of Plymouth and  
inspection of Denominational Education under S48 of the Education Act 2005

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**Date of Inspection 31<sup>st</sup> January – 1<sup>st</sup> February**

Inspectors:  
Miss Sarah Adams  
Mrs Helen Brown

## Context of School

St. John's Catholic Primary School is smaller than the average-sized primary school and is part of the Plymouth Catholic School's Trust (CAST). The school became an academy on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2014. The school welcomes pupils of all denominations and faith backgrounds. There are currently 164 pupils on roll. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is just below the national average at 45 (of which 34 are in receipt of Free School Meals). 10.6% of children receive SEND support. In line with Cornwall and National figures the percentage of children with an EHCP is 1.2% and without is 11.8%. The number of EAL pupils is 14 which is a significant drop over the previous academic year. Attendance has risen steadily over the last three years and currently stands at 95.6%. There have been no exclusions for over 3 years.

<b>Over-All Effectiveness:</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Grade 2</b>
The School as a Catholic Community:	Outstanding	Grade 1
Leadership and Management:	Good	Grade 2
RE Leadership	Outstanding	Grade 1
RE Achievement	Good	Grade 2
Quality of Teaching	Good	Grade 2
Worship and Spiritual Life of the School	Outstanding	Grade 1

This is a school which is **good with a number of outstanding features**

## Summary of Key Findings

1. The school has evaluated itself as a Catholic school with honest and integrity.
2. St. John's is a school rooted in Gospel values which permeate all dimensions of school life and have an impact on the way people treat one another and how the school views the world.
3. Relationships within the school are highly positive and have a significant impact on the success and ethos in a variety of ways.
4. The school's mission statement clearly reflects the mission of the Church and impacts positively on all members of the school community. This is clearly seen on a daily basis through actions, words and relationships.
5. The pupils from a wide range of groups have a strong voice in decisions relating to their learning and well-being.
6. The Head Teacher and her senior leadership team are highly effective and set an example of service and humility, reflecting Christ's call to each of us to love one another. To this end all in the community are highly valued.
7. Through their example of Christian leadership in action, the senior leadership team and other leaders, are conspicuously successful in inspiring the school community to share a strong sense of shared purpose, vision and mission.
8. Curriculum RE has a high status in the school and is valued and seen as important by teachers, leadership, parents and governors.

9. The person responsible for leading and co-ordination RE is a key figure within the school, who actively promotes the highest standards in RE.
10. Induction is taken seriously and new staff are enabled to teach RE with confidence, knowing where they can go to for support and guidance.
11. Pupils enjoy their RE and are keen to do well. They apply themselves diligently in lessons and work hard to produce their best work.
12. A large majority of groups of pupils make at least good progress and some make excellent progress, with nothing that is inadequate.
13. Relationships between teachers, support staff and pupils are positive and contribute to learning.
14. Teaching is consistently effective, ensuring that pupils are motivated and engaged.
15. All aspects of school life contribute to the spiritual development of pupils. They are open to God's presence in all that they encounter.
16. The traditions and practices of the Catholic Church provide a context for all aspects of school life, enrich the worship and stimulate spiritual development of all in the community.
17. The school provides the pupils with a wide variety of high quality, planned and spontaneous spiritual experiences, which enable all pupils to grow in their understanding and appreciation of God's presence in the world.
18. Scripture is highly valued and its relevance understood by all.
19. The school liturgies and worship consistently enable pupils, staff, parents and carers to reflect on and be grateful for the gifts they have received from God.
20. The very positive impact of worship and reflection on scripture can be seen in the words, attitudes and actions of the whole school community.

#### **What does the school need to do to improve further?**

1. Ensure that pupils know and understand the mission statement so that they can make links to it in their everyday experience of school life.
2. Ensure that the governing body is fully and systematically involved in evaluating the school, particularly relating to the Catholic Dimension and show determination in challenging the school to achieve even greater success.
3. To put in place a formal monitoring programme for RE curriculum and worship development.
4. Ensure that all governors take a keen and active interest in curriculum RE so that they are well aware of its strengths and areas for development.
5. Continue to develop assessment procedures in line with on-going diocesan guidance.
6. Ensure that support staff are sufficiently engaged in the planning process so that they can confidently facilitate learning.
7. Ensure that support staff are used in such a way that rich opportunities for independent learning are not lost.
8. Facilitate and guide pupils to develop the skills needed to plan their own acts of worship.
9. Offer further opportunities for individual prayer outside of arranged times.

## **Full Report**

### **Catholic Life**

St. John's is a warm, welcoming and friendly school, where staff and pupils thrive together. As a result an atmosphere of mutual respect and concern for one another is clearly evident. Children are polite and warm in their interactions with one another, staff and visitors. They value highly the way that they are treated by staff and the opportunities they are offered to grow as people, with something to offer the world. The open, warm and honest disposition of the Head Teacher enables every member of the community to grow in their own self-confidence and ability to be true witnesses to the Gospel.

The school's vision and mission; 'to be a place where every child is nurtured and encouraged to reach their full potential in a loving and inclusive environment', is evident throughout the school. The school leadership team is committed to being a place where everyone can 'live, love and learn in Jesus'. Many aspects of the school's life is testament to this. The school is both inclusive and outward looking. As a result there is a strong commitment to serving the poor and the underprivileged. Care of the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children is seen as a priority while the school can also be proud of the fact that it is the only school in Camborne to have achieved the highest level as a Fairtrade school. Children spoke with enthusiasm about how much this means to them and how they really believe in the principals of Fairtrade. Every year they commit themselves to raising money and awareness of the need for trading fairly, as well as supporting both global and national charitable causes.

Gospel values linked with British Values are embedded within the life of the school. Compassion, kindness, inclusivity, forgiveness and hope are all features of school policies and weaved into the curriculum, liturgies, class prayer and expectations regarding behaviour and treatment of others. Children speak positively about how they are treated and how there is little or no bullying or conflict in the school. They are clear about how and what they need to do if any kind of inappropriate behaviour should arise.

Induction is taken seriously and although staff turnover is low, new people are enabled to quickly integrate and embrace the ethos of the school. They are supported effectively by the person responsible for RE who helps them to understand and appreciate how to approach their RE teaching and develop the necessary skills to lead and facilitate prayer in their classroom. New children are helped to settle quickly and become a part of the community. Clear routines and an engaging environment ensure that children feel happy and safe. Parents are appreciative of this and speak of the quality of welcome that enables them to feel that they can approach staff easily.

A new system for communication ensures that all parents are quickly informed of what is happening in the school, including what their children are learning about and how they can support this. As a result more parents are becoming engaged in the life of the school and their children's education.

## **THE SCHOOL AS A CATHOLIC COMMUNITY (LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT)**

Although a relatively new Leadership team is in place, there is a strong sense of cohesiveness and confidence within the team. This comes from a Head teacher who has a clear vision for the school and is herself committed to leading a school which is rooted in the Gospel and there to serve the mission of the Church. Her inspiring leadership, ably supported by other leaders and governors is moving the school forward at a rapid pace. At the heart of this is her own personal faith which guides and sustains her while striving for the best possible outcomes for every child. As a result a genuine desire to serve one another and especially the children is shared by all staff, ensuring that children are educated in the context of a caring, challenging and nurturing environment.

The dedication of the leadership team at St. John's leads all adults within the school to feel valued and appreciated. As a result they are open and respond well to self-evaluation, monitoring and are able to engage in searching analysis. As a result needs are identified quickly and support put in place to develop the skills and talents of all teachers.

Although the governing body is relatively new in its current form, it is committed to ensuring that it challenges effectively to drive progress and meet the needs of all children within the school. The governing body will be even more effective when this kind of challenge incorporates Curriculum RE and the Catholicity of the school so that they become more fully involved in self-evaluating the school as a Catholic Community in all its areas.

The RE leader, who is also the Deputy Head is an excellent leader of RE and the Worship Life of the school. She has a passion for the Catholic Life of the school and works hard to ensure that all staff feel comfortable and able to take on board new curriculum developments. Her high expectations coupled with a supportive and willing capacity to respond to the needs of teachers who may be struggling, ensures that children make progress and enjoy their RE lessons.

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## **THE SCHOOL AS A TEACHING AND LEARNING COMMUNITY (WORD)**

At the heart of teaching within a Catholic School is a recognition that Jesus is the model for anyone who wishes to teach in a way that reflects the Gospel. His actions often spoke louder than words as he reached out to everyone, finding different ways to enable people to hear his message and to learn effectively. At St. John's this model for teaching is clearly visible, with teachers and support staff reflecting Jesus in their manner of engaging with children and their approach to preparation of lessons which leads to positive outcomes. Teaching is typically good across the school. Children enjoy their RE and like the different approaches which teachers have to ensure that lessons are interesting and fun. The knowledge children gain in their lessons, particularly of scripture and its relevance to daily life was consistently evident.

It is clear that Curriculum RE has a high status and is seen as important to teachers and leaders. As has been noted the RE leader is an asset to the school and is instrumental in ensuring that with all the other pressures RE is not side-lined. Her consistent attendance at Diocesan meetings means that she is able to support teachers so that they feel confident and reassured to deliver thought provoking lessons often of a high standard. The commitment of the school to ensure that RE features regularly in staff meetings as an INSET item is ensuring that teachers are given the information and guidance they need to develop their teaching in RE. In addition the school has been generous in releasing a member of staff to attend the Diocesan RE Curriculum Development Group three times a year. She has been a major contributor to all schools across the Diocese benefitting from additional resources and lesson planning direction. The value of this cannot be underestimated.

Lessons are well planned and most of those observed during the inspection were well executed. Challenging tasks lead to positive outcomes but impact may have been greater if more children had been enabled and encouraged to work independently. Instead a high level of adult presence meant that nearly all groups were supported in every lesson. This 'luxury' means that it is almost impossible for children to fail and as a result run the risk of not developing resilience. Occasionally some support staff were not given clear enough information or guidelines and this then prevented children from making appropriate progress. At other times support staff were used very appropriately to engage with groups of children who needed a different kind of support. On these occasions a high level of facilitation by support staff was observed ensuring that children remained on task throughout their activities. At no time was any low level disruption observed in any lesson.

The quality of work in books is consistently good with marking being a strength of the school. Consistently teachers use marking to help children to engage more deeply in the subject. Children understand the marking scheme and respond well to comments and questions which teachers raise to take them further.

Children talk about their RE positively. They think it is 'fun' and interesting and believe that all the adults help them to learn. They are able to make links between their learning in RE and how they then choose to live their lives. They particularly like learning about other Faiths and found it interesting to see the differences and similarities with Christianity.

### **THE SCHOOL AS A CELEBRATING COMMUNITY (WORSHIP AND SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT)**

St John's has a rich and developing liturgical life which serves to support the ethos of the school and all which it holds to be significant and important. Throughout the school in classrooms and the more communal areas there are signs that this is a well-established Catholic School with an alive prayer life that is inclusive and joyful. Children appreciate the many opportunities that they are given to grow in their relationship with God. The RE leader has been committed to bringing about different ways of praying including how the school approaches whole school Acts of Worship. As a result children and staff participate fully and different members of staff lead on a rota basis. Within classes, children can speak about the formal times of prayer but also the opportunities they have to meditate and to have a quiet 'candle prayer' prayer which is short but meaningful. This 'candle prayer' time is a relatively new venture for the teachers but they have embraced it with a desire to develop it to the

best of their ability. The RE leader has supported teachers in developing this by modelling it for them in each class. This has led to a consistency of approach while allowing teachers to remain creative and reflective. Children commented on how they like this way of praying, saying that it allowed them to be still and quiet. A number of children were able to understand that this is their time to talk to God and for God to talk to them. All Acts of Worship experienced during the inspection were prayerful, reflective and engaging. The children showed a great capacity for stillness and a willingness to join in responses and singing with enthusiasm. Increasingly children are taking on different roles within whole school liturgy and as a consequence are growing in their understanding of how to participate in the liturgy.

The school has a positive relationship with the parish and different classes attend Mass with the parish community on a weekly basis. This has been a positive experience for the children and parishioners who are growing in their desire to support the school. In addition to Mass, children are supported by the school to join with the parish in preparing for First Communion and Reconciliation. These activities and the different forms of prayer in the school demonstrate that the traditions and prayers of the Catholic Church are firmly rooted in the school and provide a context for the school's life and work, enabling the community to grow as people of faith and service.

Focal points around the school are a significant dimension of life in the classroom. They often flow into the RE wall and ensure that children can make a link between their learning, the liturgical season and their prayer life. These focal points are engaging and child focused ensuring that children feel that they are for them. Prayer journals are an important dimension of the prayer life of the school when children are given time in the week to simply write or draw how they are feeling as a way of talking to God and if they wish to write a prayer. These are not marked or shared, unless children wish to share, but are a positive way of helping the children to reflect.

In all aspects of the life of the school the spiritual and moral development of the children is clear to see. Children are taught and nurtured to understand the difference between right and wrong. They understand the concepts of forgiveness and reconciliation and demonstrate a genuine desire to overcome conflict and be a community of peace. The children have a strong sense of justice and could speak eloquently about this in relation to why Fair Trade is important and why they like to support it.

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## **Conclusion**

St. John's is a genuine example of what it means to be a Catholic School, rooted in the Gospel and proud to profess a faith in Jesus Christ. This Faith is the heartbeat of the school which strives daily to live out the mission of the Church to bring Christ to the world. It is a school which staff, children parents, governors and the Bishop of the Diocese can be justly proud.