

DIOCESE OF PORTSMOUTH VALIDATION REPORT



Blessed Hugh Faringdon Catholic School

Fawley Road, Southcote, Reading, GR30 3EP.

URN: 110107
 Date of previous validation: June 2013
Date of this validation: 21 May and 13 June 2018

Overall effectiveness	Previous validation:	Good
	This validation:	Outstanding

The school community:	Outstanding	Attainment and progress in RE:	Outstanding
The wider community:	Outstanding	Quality of teaching in RE:	Good
Spiritual development:	Outstanding	Leadership and management of RE:	Outstanding
Moral development:	Outstanding	Leadership and management:	Outstanding

This is an outstanding school

- The ‘Blessed Hugh Faringdon Way’ has a positive impact on the life of all members of the school community shaping their contribution to the school ethos.
- There are very strong links to a wide range of outside agencies which lead to a wealth of opportunities for staff and students.
- All leaders, including governors, are taking highly effective steps to improve the educational outcomes of all students. The Catholic vision of the headteacher permeates the school and wider community with a purposeful sense of mission.
- Attainment and progress in RE are outstanding especially in KS3 and KS5. Staff provide many opportunities for students to further their learning and understanding, particularly in the upper key stages.
- Teaching in RE is good with some outstanding features. Students have a clear focus in lessons with feedback and marking in books being good.
- Raising the status of RE has been an outstanding achievement of the new headteacher and is now firmly recognised by stakeholders as being at the heart of the school curriculum.
- Students are empowered to feel closer to God and to be accepting of others. A typical comment included, ‘*The conversations you have in RE and tutor are different from other schools. We learn to accept each other’s beliefs and we are encouraged to ask questions.*’
- There is an inclusive atmosphere within the school, which celebrates the diverse community which it serves.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

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

- To draw upon the Benedictine vision of the school’s patron, Blessed Hugh Faringdon, in order to empower students to be more involved in shaping the development of the Catholic ethos.
- Ensure a greater emphasis on independent learning, on enabling regular classroom discourse, and on a depth of learning in order to consistently achieve high standards in RE across the school.
- To continue to strengthen the existing local, national and international Catholic school relationships and networks in order to share the ideals set out in the ‘Blessed Hugh Faringdon Way’.

Full Report

The school as a Catholic community

The school community:	Outstanding
The wider community:	Outstanding

- The ‘Blessed Hugh Faringdon Way’ has a positive impact on the life of all members of the school community shaping their contribution to the school ethos.
- Increasingly the school’s Benedictine links are recognised, valued and celebrated by the community.
- Very effective and beautifully presented displays around the school celebrate success, provide learning opportunities and enrich the Catholic nature of the school.
- There is a strong international dimension to the school, involving links with schools in France and Slovakia, which actively prepares students for global citizenship.
- Excellent links are firmly established with local clergy, parishes and associated primary schools.
- The headteacher and RE department are active and valued members of the diocesan family of schools.
- The headteacher has fostered links with St Marys University to provide a suite of training opportunities for Catholic teachers and leaders.

Curriculum religious education

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

- Attainment and progress in RE are outstanding especially in KS3 and KS5. Staff provide many opportunities for students to further their learning and understanding particularly in the upper key stages.
- Progress in lessons observed was good, pupils were enthusiastic to succeed and extend their learning.
- Students appreciated the individual attention and commitment by teachers to ensure they meet their targets.
- Students experience a varied diet of strategies to acquire knowledge, develop understanding and learn and practice skills.
- The very best practice in assessment for learning enables solid progress over time.
- Teaching in RE is good with some outstanding features. Students have a clear focus in lessons with feedback and marking in books being mostly good.
- Teachers need to ensure there is a greater emphasis on independent learning, on enabling regular classroom discourse, and a depth of learning in order to consistently achieve high standards in RE across the school.
- Student understanding during lessons is checked effectively by teachers.
- Teachers outstanding subject knowledge inspires and encourages a good level of religious literacy throughout the key stages.
- Highly structured lessons enable students with special educational needs or disabilities to engage and achieve in line with their peers.
- Teachers have created a positive learning environment, encouraging a dynamic classroom culture that supports learning.
- Raising the status of RE has been an outstanding achievement of the headteacher and is now firmly recognised by stakeholders as being at the heart of the school curriculum.

- The head of department leads by example and is firmly committed to improving the life chances and relationships of young people through her work.
- There is an appropriate choice of curriculum throughout all the key stages enabling students to experience a variety of theological and moral teachings.
- Rigorous systems are in place to monitor student data allowing teachers to effectively target areas for intervention.

Spiritual and moral development

Spiritual development:

Outstanding

Moral development:

Outstanding

- Students are empowered to feel closer to God and to be accepting to others. A typical comment included, *'The conversations you have in RE and tutor are different from other schools. We learn to accept each other's beliefs and we are encouraged to ask questions.'*
- Opportunities to celebrate the sacraments are widely available and taken up by the majority of students.
- The family atmosphere is enhanced by the welcome given to parents, notably the invitation to take part in the liturgical life of the school.
- The assembly rota ensures that the church's liturgical year is fully reflected and the content is theologically sound.
- The chaplain offers an authentic witness of Christian welcome and service. The whole community values her work and that of the wider pastoral team.
- The Inclusion Unit offers a place of safety and sanctuary for those in need of extra support and time. The school takes inclusion and support for young people with all their complex needs seriously. The ASD Unit exemplifies the school's attitude toward inclusion and its support toward young people.
- Students are clear that they are taught to value and respect the opinions of others. They are treated as individuals and encouraged to use their talents in the service of others.
- The reward system both recognises and encourages achievement and actively promotes a charitable and selfless attitude.
- Staff are well supported by the headteacher and senior leaders. There is a compassionate and open culture centred on a Catholic understanding of the human person and education. Teachers care for each other and their students.
- Pupils are considerate and supportive of each other, and there are low instances of bullying.
- There is an inclusive atmosphere within the school, which celebrates the diverse community which it serves.

Leadership and management:

Outstanding

- The Catholic vision of the headteacher permeates the school and wider community with a purposeful sense of mission. His leadership has been key to the improved academic and wider outcomes of students.
- All leaders are taking highly effective steps to improve the educational outcomes of all students.
- Morale and confidence in the school is high, staff are confident in the plans for the school's success.
- The large and highly effective pastoral team ensures that welfare and care is at the heart of student experience.
- Governance is a strength characterised as a good critical relationship, they are firmly committed to supporting the leadership of the school in its plans for improvement.

School details

Name of school:	Blessed Hugh Farringdon Catholic School
Age range of pupils:	11-18
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number of pupils on roll:	850
Chair of Governors:	Mr Marius Hopley
Headteacher:	Dr Simon Uttley

Blessed Hugh Farringdon is a mixed 11-18 VA Catholic School situated set in urban surroundings in Reading. It has a specialist ASD Unit for around 20 students. 53% of the students are Catholic. Around 8% of the school population qualify for FSM (Free School Meals), which is below the national average). 43% of the students have EAL (English as an additional language), which is above the national average.

Information about this validation

This report to the Bishop of the Diocese under Canon 806 of the Code of Canon Law is also the report to the governors of the school on religious education. For Catholic maintained schools, the report also fulfils the requirements of Section 48 of the Education Act 2005.

Validation Team

Lead Validator:	Mr John Wright
Assistant Validator:	Miss Lyn Bourne
Assistant Validator:	Mr David Walford

Activities carried out as part of the validation

- Ethos walk with VI Form Vice-President and Year 11 Head Boy.
- Discussion on the school's self-review documentation.
- Meetings and discussions with headteacher, leadership team members, head of RE, pastoral leaders, new staff, chaplain and link governor for RE.
- 6 lesson and part-lesson observations.
- 2 tutor observations.
- 1 assembly observation.
- Attendance at staff briefing.
- 3 meetings with students; RE panels and School Council.
- RE work scrutiny.

Conclusion

The team wishes to thank the school for its very warm welcome and co-operation during the validation process.