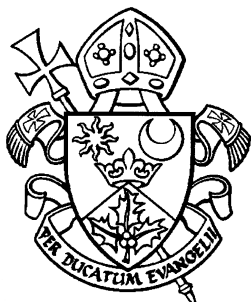


THE VALIDATION REPORT



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.

NAME OF SCHOOL	St George Catholic College for Boys
ADDRESS	Leaside Way Swaythling Southampton SO16 3DQ
CHAIR OF GOVERNORS	Mr Godfrey Doyle
HEADTEACHER	Mr Graham Wilson
NAMES OF VALIDATORS	Mr Paul Barras Mr Michael Antram
DATES OF THE VALIDATION VISIT	4th and 5 th November 2009

Information about the school

Number of pupils on roll	462
Number of boys	462
Number of girls	0
Number of statemented pupils	5
Percentage of Catholic pupils	42%
Number of teaching staff	30
Number of support staff	31
Percentage of Catholic staff	21%

A general statement regarding the school situation and environment, admissions and ethnic composition:

St George Catholic College for Boys is a voluntary aided school serving the Catholic communities in three Larger Pastoral Areas: Southampton Central and West, Southampton East and Solent and Three Rivers. There is a significant minority of pupils who have other ethnic origins. Just over a third of pupils speak English as an additional language.

The school gained specialist school status for science and the humanities in September 2005.

The present headteacher has been in post since September, 2007.

The school's effectiveness in providing Catholic education

St George Catholic College is a rapidly improving Catholic school in which the gospel values are embedded in its daily life. The leadership and management of the school are effective and highly committed to raising standards and to promoting a Christian ethos of hope. Their impact is to be seen throughout the community. All members of the community feel valued and the needs of all groups are met well. The school is an active member of the local cluster of Catholic schools and has a two way partnership with its Catholic community.

Standards in RE are good, being a product of good leadership and management over a number of years. Pupils make good progress and attainment is good, with an improving trend.

The school exerts a strong influence on the attitudes and behaviour of its members. The provision made for the moral development of the pupils is good. Sufficient provision is made currently for their spiritual development. The traditions and practices of the Catholic Church play some part in the life of the school, including within worship, and help support the spiritual development of the pupils.

a) Key strengths of the school

- This is an all-inclusive community in which each person is aware of the value placed on their contribution to the life of the school.
- Leadership and management at all levels are good and having an increasing and positive impact in raising standards throughout the school. The head teacher in particular provides principled and inspiring leadership which in turn gives strong and clear direction for the school.
- Under the strong and confident leadership of its current Chair, the governing body is highly supportive of the school's aims and continues to provide helpful and consistent direction for the school.
- Senior leaders provide high level support for the values of the school, promoting in particular a culture of responsibility, hard work, and respect for each other at all levels
- Pupils' attitude and behaviour are a credit to themselves and the school. Relationships between staff and students, as well as between the students themselves, truly reflect the agreed core values promoted by the school.
- Pupil voice is fully established through a vibrant school council, school captains and prefects
- The considerable contribution being made by the school's focus on supporting individual pupils through 'Trinity' (the learning support and inclusion department) and the transition arrangements from Year 6 into Year 7.
- Strong links have been established with a range of outside agencies, providing individual support to meet pupils' needs.
- The wide range of opportunities and enrichment activities available to students
- Improvement in academic progress, especially at KS4 indicates a strong common purpose.
- The RE department team is making a significant contribution to the school's aim to raise attainment.

b) Key areas for development

Senior staff and governors should take the following actions in order to ensure that the school becomes a truly vibrant Catholic community:

- Make use of the Diocesan Section 48 review process, establishing it as an integral part of the school's self evaluation procedures at all levels.
- Develop the induction and in service training activities to enable all staff to deepen their awareness of the nature of the school's Catholic vision and mission.
- As a matter of urgency, establish the role of lay chaplain, initially on a part-time basis, to coordinate the school's current strategies to provide spiritual guidance and support.
- Review the current leadership structure with a view to strengthen its capacity to develop a deeper sense of spirituality in all areas of school life.
- Use the opportunities presented by the Building Schools for the Future (BSF) project to manifest the distinctive Catholic identity of the school and rigorously appraise the school's core values in the light of the gospel.
- Review the school expectations regarding participation in acts of worship so that a clear and consistent policy is adopted.

6th form 11/8/09 10:55 AM

Deleted:

c) Progress since the last validation

The validators recognise the school's impressive achievement in raising standards. However, there has been very limited engagement in the diocesan self review process since the last validation in March, 2006. Therefore the governing body must as a matter of urgency bring back to the forefront the establishment of priorities for the leadership and management of a Catholic school.

d) Summary of parents' views of the school

Parents recognise the school's considerable efforts to support their children. They are kept well informed of their child's progress and of events and achievements. Those parents who were interviewed reported on how very much they appreciate the great improvement to the school's atmosphere and to its reputation made under the leadership of the present head teacher. These parents would like to see more regular opportunities for pupils to gather together in worship. Parents feel that they are made welcome and that their children are happy in the school. A very large majority of parents say that they appreciate the caring nature of the school as a supportive Catholic community.

THE SCHOOL AS A CATHOLIC COMMUNITY

WHAT THE SCHOOL SAYS

SECTION A1: The school community	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
		*		

Key strengths identified by the school

- Relationships between students, staff and community is very good
- Good involvement of students in after school activities both academic and sport/social
- Active PTA association who organise Summer Fete and other events
- Communication to parents for events / liturgies is good via newsletter /website
- Active school council and school captains who meet regularly with the headteacher
- Excellent transition plan and involvement with feeder schools from Year five onwards including visits and events including road shows, master classes and “It’s a Knockout”
- A tidy clean environment
- Prefects are a major strength giving tours and being the real face of the school
- Strong BSF working group involving pupils, SMT and governors
- Core values-ASPIRE ,relationships, achievement, respect, spirituality, enjoyment, independence
- Strong emphasis on attitude for learning

Areas identified for development by the school *(include timescale for action)*

- Integrate more celebration into the life of the school of our multi ethnic community
- Establish improved links with the catholic secondary schools in the area
 - Establish improved links with the Polish chaplaincy and the Polish community in the school
 - Provide induction time and materials for non catholic members of staff - ready for September 2010

VALIDATORS’ JUDGEMENT

SECTION A1: The school community	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
		*		

Key strengths

- Validators agree with the school’s overall judgement and with the strengths identified by the school and would highlight the following:
- This is a rapidly improving Catholic school in which the gospel values are embedded in its daily life.
 - All members of the community feel valued and the needs of all groups are met well
 - The wide range of opportunities and enrichment activities available to students
 - A very large majority of parents say that they appreciate the caring nature of the school as a supportive Catholic community.

Areas identified for development

Validators agree with the areas for development identified by the school. We support its planned focus on providing a more coherent approach to further enhance opportunities for pupil voice and leadership. We also support the intention to develop induction and in service training activities to enable all staff to deepen their awareness of the nature of the school’s Catholic vision and mission.

WHAT THE SCHOOL SAYS

SECTION A2: Leadership and management	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
		*		

Key strengths identified by the school

- Strong balanced leadership team with a collegiate approach
- Clear roles and responsibilities within the leadership team, distributed leadership
- Clear line management/communication within structures
- Self evaluation – departments know their strengths and weakness through the review system
- Consistency of approach and message throughout the college
- Development of middle leaders
- Collaboration with other leadership teams in Southampton including Sholing Technology College, Cantell and Bitterne Park and St Anne’s and the catholic cluster group
- Core Values emanating from staff and students – clear what we stand for and why

Areas identified for development by the school *(include timescale for action)*

- Further develop capacity of current leadership team to prepare for deputy headship and headship
- Develop greater independence and distributed leadership within the college
- Develop leadership and management for group for BSF project
- Continue to develop proactive links with diocesan family of schools and parishes

VALIDATORS’ JUDGEMENT

SECTION A2: Leadership and management	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
		*		

Key strengths

Validators fully agree with the school’s judgement and with the strengths identified by the school above and would highlight the following:

- The leadership and management of the school are effective and highly committed to raising standards and to promoting a Christian ethos of hope. Their impact is to be seen throughout the community
- The head teacher provides principled and inspiring leadership which in turn gives strong and clear direction for the school.
- Under the strong and confident leadership of its current Chair, the governing body is highly supportive of the school’s aims and continues to provide helpful and consistent direction for the school.
- Senior leaders provide high level support for the values of the school, promoting in particular a culture of responsibility, hard work, and respect for each other at all levels

Areas identified for development

Validators agree with the areas for development identified by the College. In addition, it must use the Diocesan Section 48 review process, establishing it as integral part of the College’s self evaluation procedures at all levels. There must also be a review undertaken of the current leadership structure with a view to strengthen its capacity to develop a deeper sense of spirituality in all areas of College life.

--

WHAT THE SCHOOL SAYS

SECTION A3: The wider community	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
		*		

Key strengths identified by the school
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very good links with feeder schools especially catholic feeder schools • Strong presence in Black History Month run by City Council • The school’s Ofsted report (June 2009) stated that community cohesion was ‘satisfactory with elements of good’ • Strong links to chosen charities with money raised for CAFOD and other catholic charities • Large groups of students attend local colleges for courses • Student musicians play at school events for the wider community such as battle of the bands and the Christmas concert • Poitier project supported by the school helps some of the disadvantaged families within the college • School is linked to school in Kenya where materials are sent and staff member visits • Flower festival held with parishes, Dinner dance for Golden Celebration • Carol Concert at St Edmund’s Church

Areas identified for development by the school <i>(include timescale for action)</i>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop further links with local parishes • Develop a link with a polish school / parish in Poland • Start a link with one of the well known catholic independent schools i.e. Worth, Farley or the Oratory

VALIDATORS’ JUDGEMENT

SECTION A3: The wider community	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
		*		

Key strengths
<p>Validators fully agree with the school’s judgement and with the strengths identified by the school above and would highlight the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school is an active member of the local and diocesan family of schools and has a two way partnership with the local Catholic community • The considerable contribution being made by the school’s focus on supporting individual pupils through ‘Trinity’ and the transition arrangements from Year 6 into Year 7. • Strong links have been established with a range of outside agencies, providing individual support to meet pupils’ needs.

Areas identified for development
Validators agree with the areas for development identified by the College. In particular, we endorse its intended focus on increasing parental and parish involvement and we would encourage close collaboration with the parish priests in order to build stronger ties.

CURRICULUM RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

WHAT THE SCHOOL SAYS

SECTION B1: Leadership and co-ordination of religious education	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
		*		

Key strengths identified by the school

- Well organised and led department with SOW and resources in place at all levels
- Appointment to leadership team of assistant head teacher in charge of Catholic ethos and RE department issues now at forefront of college development
- RE dept consistently scoring 'Good' in many areas of review cycle and overall
- RE a core subject taught across the college at KS3, KS4 and KS5
- Regular contribution to school newsletter and displays
- Help set up catholic cluster mass in Southampton

Areas identified for development by the school *(include timescale for action)*

- Induction for new staff on role of RE in a catholic school and its importance
- Continue with training for new GCSE OCR philosophy and ethics course and new KS3 steering group
- Increase amount of curriculum time for RE
- Hold cluster mass at the school

VALIDATORS' JUDGEMENT

SECTION B1: Leadership and co-ordination of religious education	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
		*		

Key strengths

Validators agree that the RE department is the result of good leadership and management over a number of years, and are optimistic that the present subject leader has the capacity to raise the profile of the subject, and its academic standards higher still.

In particular we note the following strengths:

- A commitment to ensuring that RE takes the lead in modelling leadership that secures high academic standards combined with a deliberate provision for the spiritual and moral development of pupils.
- RE is now taught by a smaller team of dedicated, experienced teachers.
- The opportunity for study of RE at AS level provides challenge for the most able, and is much valued by students, who wholeheartedly engage in their learning.
- The selection of a syllabus at KS4 that takes aims to take account of the diversity of pupils following the course.

Areas identified for development

Validators affirm the targets selected, but also emphasise the need for significant support for the leadership of RE both through partnership with Diocesan secondary schools and the pursuit of the CCRS by the subject leader as a priority. Furthermore, validators would urge the restoration of a Catholic paper at KS4 at the earliest opportunity.

WHAT THE SCHOOL SAYS

SECTION B2: Attainment and progress in religious education	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
		*		

Key strengths identified by the school

- Students have ownership of attitudinal data which they record themselves and is then fed into whole school rewards programme
- Standards at KS4 have been good last two years this is even better if compared as a subject in most schools that is not an option
- Baseline assessment conducted for all year 7 on entry
- Target grades in all student books
- Regular half term assessment across the key stages

Areas identified for development by the school *(include timescale for action)*

- Improve attainment figures for KS3 these are slowly rising but not fast enough at the appropriate level
- Give more inset for teaching EAL students
- Standardised marking policy to be put in place as part of a wider school process

VALIDATORS' JUDGEMENT

SECTION B2: Attainment and progress in religious education	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
		*		

Key strengths

Validators affirm the strong academic profile of RE at the school, and in particular, attainment at Key stage 4. We also note the following strengths:

- The use of level assessment is well established, and is used consistently for pupils to evaluate their own progress, and the steps necessary to make further improvements.
- Progress at KS4 is broadly in line with expectation, with provision for study at KS5 providing further challenge.
- Diocesan assessments are embedded in the programme of learning at KS3.
- Relationships with pupils are good, creating an atmosphere conducive to learning, where good effort is rewarded, and poor behaviour effectively managed.
- RE participates fully in the school's effective self-review process.

Areas identified for development

The targets selected by the school are appropriate. Validators also feel that the use of diagnostic assessment of written work needs greater consistency within the department, and that in general, wider adoption of assessment principles within AFL needs to take place.

WHAT THE SCHOOL SAYS

SECTION B3: Quality of teaching	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
			*	

Key strengths identified by the school

- Teachers consistently graded as ‘Good’ in dept review over past two years
- Structured assessments as advised by the Diocese across KS3 and regular assessment to inform progress across KS4
- Schemes of work in place for KS3 and KS4 and KS5 , new scheme of work written for new OCR syllabus ethics paper
- Students have target sheets in exercise books to see what level they are at and what their target is

Areas identified for development by the school *(include timescale for action)*

- More structured work for EAL students in particular Polish students
- More AFL strategies in teaching and learning process
- More active learning to engage students at KS4

VALIDATORS’ JUDGEMENT

SECTION B3: Quality of teaching	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
		*		

Key strengths

Validators would judge the quality of teaching to be good overall, based on the observation of lessons during the validation process, judgements within the school’s self review processes, and the good standard of attainment overall. We would also commend the following strengths:

- RE teaching areas make good use of display to celebrate pupils’ work and achievement, to inspire, and to draw attention to levels of progress.
- The use of reward and praise to motivate pupils.
- Well developed schemes of work, which have served the departmental well for a number of years.
- The use of audio-visual resources, such as video-clips from the web, in producing lessons that engage pupils and extend their learning.

Areas identified for development

Validators agree with the selected targets. We urge that the school ensures that all non-specialist or non-Catholic staff delivering RE complete the CCRS. Furthermore, that the centrality of RE in a Catholic school is reflected more fully within the area that classrooms are located.

SPIRITUAL AND MORAL DEVELOPMENT

WHAT THE SCHOOL SAYS

SECTION C1: Spiritual development	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
			*	

Key strengths identified by the school

- Liturgies have been improved to include singing and involvement by Choir and school musicians
- Purchase of daily prayer books in line with liturgical calendar for all tutors and middle leaders
- Some subjects emphasis opportunities for spiritual development in schemes of work i.e. Geography, RE
- Core values chosen by school community as part of BSF have a strong catholic ethos i.e. relationships, spirituality, respect
- Chapel used by tutor groups to perform own liturgies
- Most subject curriculums have a spiritual and moral influence

Areas identified for development by the school *(include timescale for action)*

- Re- instigate ‘away days’ / retreats for students
- Secure greater involvement of local clergy for next two years, including full time chaplain
- Establish regular masses and mass for Polish students
- Put in place a school pilgrimage to Lourdes or to Rome

VALIDATORS’ JUDGEMENT

SECTION C1: Spiritual development	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
			*	

Key strengths

The validators agree with the school’s judgement and with the strengths identified by the school above and would highlight the following:

- Sufficient provision is made for the spiritual and moral development of pupils.
- The traditions and practices of the Catholic Church play some part in the life of the school. including within the worship and help support the spiritual development of the pupil.

Areas identified for development

Validators agree with the areas for development identified by the school. In addition, the school should:

- Establish the role of lay chaplain initially on a part-time basis to coordinate the school’s current strategies to provide spiritual guidance and support. A significant part of the chaplain’s role would be to work with senior leaders to establish a more effective and closer partnership between pupils, staff and parish priests in order to improve further the prayer and liturgical life of the school and to put in place opportunities for retreats and ‘away days’.
- Use the opportunities presented by the BSF project to manifest the distinctive Catholic identity of the school and rigorously appraise the school’s core values in the light of the gospel.
- Increase the level of pupil participation and engagement in assemblies and acts of worship.

--

WHAT THE SCHOOL SAYS

SECTION C2: Moral development	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
		*		

Key strengths identified by the school

- St George is a small catholic college that prides itself on having close professional relationships with our students, their families and the wider community
- A solid programme of Catholic worship integrated into the college calendar, providing reflection and worship on a daily scale from tutor bases to full scale masses
- Learning is personalised to enable success for all individuals supported by our Integrated Studies department (Trinity) a leading dept within the city
- We have an extensive cultural and ethnic mix of students which helps develop empathy and understanding
- Strong pastoral system in place providing rigorous monitoring and intervention, providing both sanctions and rewards
- All departments contribute fully to the moral development of students in lessons, and out extra-curricular activities and educational visits off site provide unique opportunities for this i.e. the battlefields of France
- Students and staff fund-raise each year in various ways for catholic charities especially CAFOD but also the Medaille Trust and Poitier Project

Areas identified for development by the school *(include timescale for action)*

- Increase involvement of parents in college life especially the PTA (The Friends of St George)
- Review of our modified behaviour policy/analysis by July 2010 giving the new system one year to embed

VALIDATORS' JUDGEMENT

SECTION C2: Moral development	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
		*		

Key strengths

Validators fully agree with the school's judgement and with the strengths identified by the school above and would highlight the following:

- The school exerts a strong influence on the attitudes and behaviour of its members
- Pupils' attitude and behaviour is a credit to themselves and the school: relationships between staff and students, as well as between the students themselves, truly reflect the agreed core values promoted by the school
- Pupil voice is fully established through a vibrant school council, school captains and prefects.

Areas identified for development

Validators agree with the areas for development identified by the school

SOURCES OF EVIDENCE FOR THE VALIDATION

As part of the validation process:

Two validators spent a preliminary day in the school, meeting with the headteacher and the assistant headteacher with responsibility for the RE department and for completing the self review forms, discussing the school's self review report, touring the site of the school, and meeting a range of staff and students.

The validation took place over two school days when interviews and discussions were held with:

The headteacher

The senior leader with responsibility for the RE department

The chair of the governing body whose children have been educated at the school

Two 'progress' leaders with responsibility for the academic and pastoral needs of pupils.

The senior leader with responsibility for 'Trinity'

The senior leader with overall responsibility for assessing, recording and reporting pupil progression

The senior leader with responsibility for transition from Year 6 into Year 7

A teaching assistant working with children to support the transition from Year 6 into Year 7

The local parish priest who regularly visits the school to celebrate Mass

The special needs coordinator

Four parents and a range of support staff

Pupil representatives on the School Council, on the BSF group, and members of the captains and prefect teams

A staff briefing session was observed

Six religious education lessons were observed

Three acts of collective worship were observed

A sample of students' religious education exercise books and work folders was scrutinised and religious education resources were seen

An analysis was made of responses to the parental questionnaire

Informal discussions were held with the staff and students over the three days that the validators were present in school. A range of documentation from the school was scrutinised, including: the school prospectus, the school development plan, the RE handbook, the department evaluation form (DEF) for religious education, examination results, the school development plan and self evaluation form (SEF) and the most recent Ofsted report on the school.

Informal feedback was given to the senior leadership team and to the chair of governors at the end the process

Conclusion

The validators would like to thank the headteacher, staff, parish priest, governors, parents and pupils of St George College for their warmth of welcome and their open and honest contribution to discussions. They would also like to thank in particular the senior leadership team for their preparatory work preceding the validation, and the RE department and the chaplaincy team for their high level of cooperation during the process.

PARENTS' QUESTIONNAIRE (RELIGIOUS EDUCATION)

A total of 87 questionnaires were returned

		Strongly agree	Moderately agree	Neutral	Moderately disagree	Strongly disagree	No response
1	I am made to feel welcome by the school.	76	24	6			
2	My son/daughter is happy at the school.	59	31	3	3	3	
3	I feel the school communicates well with parents.	69	20	8		3	
4	I am satisfied with the RE work pupils are expected to do at home.	40	39	16		6	
5	The school keeps me informed about my son/daughter's progress in religious education.	43	18	28	5	3	
6	I am satisfied with my son/daughter's standard of work in religious education.	51	30	10	7	1	
7	The school welcomes parents to share in the religious and worshipping life of the school.	59	25	16			
8	Links with home, school and parish are well developed.	52	24	7	6	3	
9	The school keeps parents well informed regarding sex and relationships education.	28	21	28	11	4	
10	The school provides good opportunities for pupils' spiritual and moral development.	48	27	22	3	3	
11	I regard the school as a supportive, caring Catholic community.	54	38	4	2	1	