

28 October 2015

Dear Parent/Carer

Notre Dame du Rosaire Catholic Primary School States of Guernsey

Recently, as you may know, my colleagues and I visited your child's school. During our visit, we talked to parents and children and worked closely with the headteacher and staff. We wanted to find out how well children are learning and achieving and how well the school supports children to do their best. The headteacher shared with us the school's successes and priorities for improvement. We looked at some particular aspects of the school's recent work, including the use of digital technology to celebrate and share children's learning, and the Growth Mindset approach to developing children's confidence and resilience. As a result, we were able to find out how good the school is at improving children's education.

How well do children learn and achieve?

Across the school, children are polite, kind to each other and very keen to learn. Children's views and ideas often influence their learning, for example in topic work and through independent research. In the Reception classes, children enjoy taking part in the wide range of learning experiences and can choose to play in different areas of the playrooms, including outdoors. As children move through the stages of the school, they are increasingly involved in making decisions about their learning, for example by setting and reviewing targets for their own work. Teachers often encourage children to reflect on how well they are learning against success criteria. Children are now ready to be involved in setting their own success criteria as part of lessons. Children respond very well in lessons and activities that require a collaborative approach to learning. As a result, they are developing important skills in working together in groups and pairs. Teachers use digital technology very well to share learning with children and their families. For example the use of laptops, tablets, interactive whiteboards, visualisers and motivating apps is well planned and enhances children's learning experiences.

Across the school, children achieve success in a wide variety of ways and are very proud of their achievements. In drama and cultural activities, children perform with confidence and enthusiasm. Children in Year 5 and Year 6 clearly benefit from participation in the challenging 'Shakespeare in Schools' programme. Many children also benefit from taking part in Guernsey's annual Eisteddfod Choral Speaking competition. All children are developing confidence through taking part in stimulating school outings, residential trips and by meeting a variety of visitors to the school. They have a very good understanding of how to keep themselves safe, fit and healthy. At

all stages of the school, children are developing important leadership skills as helpers, monitors and buddies. Children who are members of the School Council feel they are helping their school to improve. They have been directly involved in the refurbishment of the libraries and in choosing resources for the playground. The role of the School Council could now be developed further to include a focus on discussing learning and teaching approaches.

In recent years the school has maintained high levels of attainment in reading, writing and mathematics. The data for year 2014/15 shows a dip in attainment in these areas of learning at the end of Key Stage 2. During their first year in school in Reception classes, almost all children make particularly good progress in their learning and, by the end of the year, almost all are assessed as above the Bailiwick average for children of the same age. In 2015, at Key Stage 1, by the end of Year 2, the majority of children had achieved the Bailiwick expectations of attaining L2b+ in reading, writing and mathematics. Overall, attainment data shows that children make appropriate progress in their learning through Key Stage 1, with the numbers of children making expected or good progress above the Bailiwick average. In 2015, at Key Stage 2, by the end of Year 6, the majority of children had achieved the Bailiwick expectations of attaining L4b+ in reading, writing and mathematics. Overall, attainment data shows that the number of children making expected or good progress in their learning is below the Bailiwick average. These results are lower than in previous years. The school, along with their partners, identify and support less able children to attain and achieve their potential. The school now needs to continue to develop their use of data to target more closely the attainment of the more able and middle section of learners across the school, in order to build on the strong gains made in the early years and to continue to raise attainment overall. At the junior stages, there is capacity to improve the rate of progress for some groups of children, through more challenging tasks and a brisker pace in learning.

In English language, almost all children listen very well to adults and respond appropriately to instructions. They are learning to listen to each other's point of view and to take turns when working in groups. Most children talk enthusiastically and very articulately. They make good use of their reading and research skills, using the Internet and reference books to find relevant information. For example, older children are able to use secondary sources of information to research life during Shakespeare's era. They draw conclusions about life in these times and can interpret portraits of monarchs Elizabeth 1 and James 1. Children make very good use of the very attractive library areas and are encouraged to read for pleasure and appreciate books. Many take part in local reading challenges set by the schools' library service, as well as the school's own creative and exciting 'Extreme Reading' challenge, which encourages children to read a favourite book in an unusual place. Across the school, children benefit from interesting contexts for writing. In Year 2, children enjoy writing alliterative poems about clowns as part of their circus topic. Children at Year 3 and Year 4 understand the key vocabulary and function of parts of the brain. They enjoy using this terminology to create a poster to share their understanding with their classmates. In mathematics, most children are confident in solving problems and doing mental and written calculations. Older children's knowledge and understanding of shapes and angles is developing well. Younger children are developing confidence in adding and subtracting using money. Across the Reception and primary stages, staff should continue to develop ways for children to apply their literacy, numeracy and

mathematical skills in real-life contexts and through the life of the school. We have asked staff to keep under review the effectiveness of 'setting' for mathematics teaching across Key Stages 1 and 2, in order to ensure that this approach adds value to the progress of all children, particularly the high achieving and middle section of learners.

How well does the school support children to develop and learn?

The school has a very welcoming and nurturing atmosphere. Staff have high expectations of children's attendance, behaviour and achievement. Children respond as eager, well-behaved learners. Through the Growth Mindset initiative, staff are encouraging children to achieve their best and to develop confidence and resilience. Staff show care and concern for all children and families. They are aware of their responsibilities in relation to child protection. As a result, children say they feel safe and happy in school. In keeping with the school's Catholic ethos, regular assemblies, time for prayers in class and whole school masses provide very good opportunities for worship and personal reflection. Staff encourage the children to grow in their faith very well with valuable support from the parish clergy.

Across the school, staff meet children's learning needs very well overall. Staff know children and their families very well and work together to provide a supportive and caring environment for learning. Support, clerical and caretaking staff contribute significantly to the life and work of the school. Teachers and learning support assistants work together to provide valuable support to children with additional learning needs. Volunteers give freely of their time to add value to children's experiences. Most children with additional support needs are making good progress towards meeting their personal targets for learning. Staff are working very effectively to meet the needs of children for whom English is an additional language. Staff work very well with a range of agencies and specialists to support children's learning.

Staff use a variety of assessments to identify the learning needs of children and match tasks and resources to children's needs well. Staff are taking steps to make learning more active for children. This is particularly effective in the early and infant stages. At times, activities could be extended to challenge the thinking skills of children at the junior stages. Teachers give clear explanations and share the purpose of lessons with children. Most teachers are skilled at explaining what they expect children to learn and use questioning very well to check for understanding. Teachers should share best practice to ensure that their questioning approaches explore fully children's depth of understanding.

Staff are developing ways to involve parents in their child's learning. They keep parents well informed through the use of digital technology, helpful annual progress reports and a range of interesting newsletters. Parents contribute to school life in significant ways, including providing crucial financial donations towards the upkeep and maintenance of the school buildings, as well as practical help in classes and on school trips. The Parent Teacher and Friends Association supports the school very well and helps to raise significant funds. Overall, parents are very supportive of the work of the school. Almost all parents agree that their children enjoy coming to school and that they are developing confidence. They feel that staff prepare children particularly well for transitions into, within and beyond the school. Parents have mixed views about recent changes at the junior stages to the way that homework is set. We

have asked the school to develop ways to engage and consult with parents on key areas of school life, particularly at times when changes are being introduced.

The curriculum is developing well, in line with the aims and values of the school. Staff place a high emphasis on reflecting the Catholic faith through the caring ethos and strong sense of community. Staff are working well together to develop and refresh curricular programmes. Through their 'creative curriculum' approach, they plan exciting cross-curricular topics and lessons that link children's experiences well across different areas of learning. Teachers should continue with their plans to develop the curriculum further to offer more opportunities to provide depth and challenge in learning. Children benefit from the input of a range of visiting specialists, community partners who help to deliver programmes such as health and wellbeing, physical education and music. There are particularly good arrangements to support children and parents in making a smooth start to Reception class. Very good support is also planned for children as they move on through the different stages of the school, and beyond to secondary education.

How well does the school improve the quality of its work?

As a result of effective approaches to evaluating and monitoring the quality of its work, the school has an accurate view overall of its strengths and areas for improvement. The headteacher and promoted staff check on the work of the school in a number of ways, such as carrying out learning walks, lesson observations, scrutinising teachers' planning and tracking children's progress. Staff are actively encouraged to develop leadership skills which results in a strong, shared sense of ownership of school improvement. The school should continue to develop teachers' skills in scrutinising and analysing assessment data to help further improve standards in children's attainment. Increasingly, children are having a say in improving their school. Their views and opinions are sought through class discussions and through the School Council. Staff have recently sought the views of parents on the new format for the end of year reports, and parents and children were recently asked for their views on the transition arrangements for moving from Reception to Year 1. The school should continue to develop approaches to seeking the views of children, parents and partners in order to help identify what is working well and to inform future priorities for improvement.

The headteacher has a very clear sense of purpose and direction. He ensures a high level of care and support for all children and empowers staff to be creative and innovative and lead learning in their own classrooms. The deputy headteacher carries out her remit very effectively and provides valuable support to the headteacher. Phase and subject leaders also have important leadership responsibilities which they manage very well. As a team, they are strongly committed to the improvement agenda and leadership for learning is a key strength of the school. Across the school, staff work well individually and together in groups to develop the curriculum. This is leading to improvements in the way children learn and in linking aspects of learning together. Together, the staff team have a good understanding of what is working well and what needs to be improved. The school is well placed to improve further.

This validation visit found the following key strengths.

- The warm, family ethos, based on Catholic values, that is created by all staff and children.
- Confident, thoughtful and polite children, who are motivated to learn and have a 'can do' attitude.
- High quality approaches to learning and teaching that develop children's independence as learners.
- The valuable support of parents, volunteers and wide range of partners to meet the needs of children.
- Leadership at all levels to ensure that children are valued, respected and very well cared for.

We discussed with staff and the Education Department how they might continue to improve the school. This is what we agreed with them.

- Building on the strong gains made in the early years, continue to raise children's attainment further by developing consistently robust approaches to using assessment data.
- Continue to develop the curriculum, ensuring progression, depth and challenge across all areas of learning.
- Build on ways to seek and act upon the views of the whole school community to help inform future improvements.

Here are the evaluations for Notre Dame du Rosaire Catholic Primary School.

Improvements in performance	good
Learners' experiences	very good
Teaching for effective learning	very good
Meeting learning needs	very good
Improvement through self-evaluation	good
Leadership of improvement and change	very good

What happens at the end of the validation?

We are satisfied with the overall quality of provision. We are confident that the school's self-evaluation processes are leading to improvements. As a result, we will make no further visits in connection with this visit. As part of its arrangements for reporting to parents on the quality of education, the Education Department will inform parents about the school's progress.

Lesley A Johnstone
HM Inspector

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Appendix 1

<p>Excellent</p> <p>6</p>	<p>Outstanding or sector leading</p> <p>An evaluation of excellent applies to provision which is sector leading. Pupils' experiences and achievements are of a very high quality. An evaluation of excellent represents an outstanding standard of provision which exemplifies very best practice and is worth disseminating beyond the school. It implies that very high levels of performance are sustainable and will be maintained.</p>
<p>Very good</p> <p>5</p>	<p>Major strengths</p> <p>An evaluation of very good applies to provision characterised by major strengths. There are very few areas for improvement and any that do exist do not significantly diminish pupils' experiences. Whilst an evaluation of very good represents a high standard of provision, it is a standard that should be achievable by all. It implies that it is fully appropriate to continue to make provision without significant adjustment. However, there is an expectation that the school will take opportunities to improve and strive to raise performance to excellent.</p>
<p>Good</p> <p>4</p>	<p>Important strengths with areas for improvement</p> <p>An evaluation of good applies to provision characterised by important strengths which, taken together, clearly outweigh any areas for improvement. An evaluation of good represents a standard of provision in which the strengths have a significantly positive impact. However, the quality of pupils' experiences is diminished in some way by aspects in which improvement is required. It implies that the school should seek to improve further the areas of important strength, but take action to address the areas for improvement.</p>
<p>Satisfactory</p> <p>3</p>	<p>Strengths just outweigh weaknesses</p> <p>An evaluation of satisfactory applies to provision characterised by strengths which just outweigh weaknesses. An evaluation of satisfactory indicates that pupils have access to a basic level of provision. It represents a standard where the strengths have a positive impact on pupils' experiences. However, while the weaknesses are not important enough to have a substantially adverse impact, they do constrain the overall quality of pupils' experiences. It implies that the school should take action to address areas of weakness by building on its strengths.</p>
<p>Weak</p> <p>2</p>	<p>Important weaknesses</p> <p>An evaluation of weak applies to provision which has some strengths, but where there are important weaknesses. In general, an evaluation of weak may be arrived at in a number of circumstances. While there may be some strength, important weaknesses will, either individually or collectively, be sufficient to diminish pupils' experiences in substantial ways. It implies the need for prompt, structured and planned action on the part of the school.</p>
<p>Unsatisfactory</p> <p>1</p>	<p>An evaluation of unsatisfactory applies when there are major weaknesses in provision requiring immediate remedial action. Pupils' experiences are at risk in significant respects. In almost all cases, staff responsible for provision evaluated as unsatisfactory will require support from senior managers in planning and carrying out the necessary actions to effect improvement. This may involve working alongside other staff or agencies in or beyond the school.</p>

Validation report: **Notre Dame du Rosaire Catholic
Primary School**

Validation dates: **w/c 5 October 2015**

Managing Inspector: **Lesley Johnstone**

Type of school: **Voluntary primary**

Age range of learners: **4 – 11**

Gender of learners: **Mixed**

Number on roll: **250**

Introduction

The validation was carried out by a team of three HM Inspectors, who spent three days in the school observing lessons, talking with learners and looking at their work, engaging in discussions with staff and parents, looking at school records and other documentation, and scrutinising responses to the pre-validation questionnaires.

The context of the school

Notre Dame du Rosaire is a voluntary primary school providing education for Roman Catholic children between the ages of 4 and 11 years. The school operates on two sites which are around one third of a mile apart. The States of Guernsey Education Department is responsible for meeting the costs of teachers' salaries and all running expenses, such as books, energy and water costs. The Catholic Church maintains the fabric of the school buildings. The proportion of children at Notre Dame du Rosaire Catholic Primary School who have a home language other than English is well above the average for Guernsey schools. A small number of children are at an early stage of learning English. Portuguese and Polish are the most frequently spoken home languages other than English. There have been a number of staffing changes in recent months, including the appointment of new phase leaders in the junior and foundation stages, and a new subject leader for mathematics.

How well do children learn and achieve?

Learners' experiences

Across all stages of the school children are polite, thoughtful and very well behaved. Almost all children are clearly motivated by their learning. Staff are implementing approaches to cooperative learning to help make learning more active and to encourage children to take responsibility for their own learning. Children respond very well to these approaches and they are developing important skills in working together in groups and pairs. The school community has fully embraced implementing a Growth Mindset to developing children's personal, social and emotional skills. As a result across all stages of the school, children's confidence and resilience is improving. They are developing a 'can do' approach to their learning.

Teachers use digital technology very well to share learning with children and their families. For example, children and parents are positive about the use of the 'Dojo' application and quick response codes to celebrate children's efforts and achievements. Children across the school are becoming increasingly aware of how they can improve their work, particularly for writing and mathematics. In the infant stages, children are clear about their writing targets which are displayed attractively in the classroom. In all classes, teachers share with children the intended learning objectives at the beginning of lessons. Teachers often encourage children to reflect on how well they are learning against success criteria. Children are now ready to be involved in setting their own success criteria as part of lessons. Teachers give children helpful feedback on how to improve their work, for example in writing and mathematics exercise books. They should build on this good practice further to provide high quality feedback to children across the different areas of the curriculum.

Teachers and staff working with younger children in the Reception classes are delivering high quality learning experiences for children through play. They are keen to research and implement new approaches in early learning to encourage creative and imaginative play. As a result, learning in the early years is very well structured to allow for children to use resources creatively and lead their own play experiences, alongside focused, group times to learn new skills in literacy and numeracy. Children at all stages of the school benefit from participating in visits and trips around the island and further afield. For example, children at the junior stages develop resilience and teambuilding skills on residential trips to Lihou, Herm and France. Younger children in the Reception class enjoy a trip to the park each Friday. The school has very strong links with St Mary and St Michael Primary School which helps children to develop friendships with other children on the island. Children also benefit from the school's regular contact with the clergy in the adjoining church. Children also benefit from a range of visitors to the school which further enhances their experiences. Parents often play a key role in coming into school to share their own expertise in areas such as science, the arts and literacy.

Almost all children say that staff listen to them and that the school is helping them to become more independent and confident. Children are encouraged to have a say in the life of their school. They express their views articulately as elected representatives on the School Council, and show pride in their achievements in, for example, improving the school environment, the refurbishment of the libraries and in

choosing resources for the playground. The role of the School Council could now be developed further to include a focus on discussing learning and teaching. In the Reception classes, younger children help to direct their learning in ways that capture their interest. For example a few children were keen to build a den, and staff provided the materials and encouragement for them to do this. At the junior stages, children have very good opportunities to take the lead role in groups. They support each other thoughtfully to learn and act as group leaders, managing their time well and ensuring there is focus on the given task.

Improvements in performance

Children are very proud of their school and of their successes, which are celebrated well in classes and at assemblies. Overall, they achieve widely and very well across different contexts of school life. The school provides a range of after-school and lunchtime activities such as physical education (PE) clubs, netball, football and tag rugby. Guernsey Sports Commission staff deliver a programme of mini-games which helps to develop children's teambuilding skills. Children often take part in inter-schools sports festivals which allows them to practice their skills and compete alongside children from other schools on the island. Children in Year 5 and Year 6 clearly benefit from participation in the challenging 'Shakespeare in Schools' programme. This provides particularly meaningful ways for older children to gain confidence through joining with others to perform in front of an audience. Children also benefit from taking part in Guernsey's annual Eisteddfod Choral Speaking competition. Many children benefit from specialist music lessons at school. The 'Wider Opportunities' music initiative has allowed all children in Year 4 to learn drumming skills. We have asked staff to consider ways to track the wider achievements and participation levels of all children, such as extra-curricular activities and learning in their own time, to ensure, as far as possible, that no child misses out.

Children respond enthusiastically to the many opportunities to become responsible members of the school community. These include acting as house captains, members of the School Council, various monitor roles and as football referees. Children in Year 6 benefit from leadership training, delivered in partnership with the Red Cross. As a result, they are able to offer valuable peer support to other children. Older children enthusiastically take responsibility for a younger 'buddy' during whole school Masses and special events such as Christmas parties. Reading buddies in Year 6 regularly help children in Years 3 and 4 to develop their literacy skills. Younger children in Year 3 also get the chance to develop early leadership skills by buddying children in the infant department, in preparation for them making the transition to the junior school building. Across the school, staff, children and parents raise considerable funds for a wide range of international projects and national charities. Visiting speakers from a variety of organisations and participation in fundraising events helps children to develop an awareness of global, environmental and cultural issues.

In recent years the school has maintained high levels of attainment in reading, writing and mathematics. The data for year 2014/15 shows a dip in attainment in these areas of learning at the end of Key Stage 2. During their first year in school in Reception classes, almost all children make particularly good progress in their learning and, by the end of the year, almost all are assessed as above the Bailiwick average for children of the same age. In 2015, at Key Stage 1, by the end of Year 2, the majority

of children had achieved the Bailiwick expectations of attaining L2b+ in reading, writing and mathematics. Overall, attainment data shows that children make appropriate progress in their learning through Key Stage 1, with the numbers of children making expected or good progress above the Bailiwick average. In 2015, at Key Stage 2 by the end of Year 6, the majority of children had achieved the Bailiwick expectations of attaining L4b+ in reading, writing and mathematics. Overall, attainment data shows that the number of children making expected or good progress in their learning is below the Bailiwick average. These results are lower than in previous years. The school, along with their partners, identify and support less able children to attain and achieve their potential. The school now needs to continue to develop their use of data to target more closely the attainment of the more able and middle section of learners across the school, in order to build on the strong gains made in the early years and to continue to raise attainment overall. At the junior stages, there is capacity to improve the rate of progress for some groups of children, through more challenging tasks and a brisker pace in learning.

Across the school, children are effective communicators and confidently engage with adults and peers alike. Almost all children listen and speak very well. They are articulate and can talk in a variety of situations to share information, convey emotions and express their views, such as in creating their own prayers. Children work very well together in pairs and small groups. For example children in Year 2 listened carefully to each other when identifying adjectives to include in an alliterative poem about a clown, linked to their circus topic. Children in Reception and Year 3 consistently perform very well in English Speaking Board examinations, which helps to develop their confidence by making a presentation to a critical audience. Across all stages teachers provide relevant and often motivating opportunities for children to develop their writing skills. For example, children in the Year 2/1 class have used their literacy skills well to produce their own project files about the circus. At Year 3 and Year 4, children know about alliteration and rhyme and can demonstrate these features well in their own writing. As part of learning about the works of Shakespeare, children at Year 6 write comprehensive arguments for and against Macbeth becoming King. The standards of handwriting and presentation in children's exercise books is high across the school, with almost all children taking care and pride in their written work.

The school is taking proactive steps to ensure children are motivated to read. In Reception classes, children are benefitting from the active approaches to learning letters and sounds. Although the validation visit took place only a few weeks after children had started school, almost all children were observed to be making good progress already. Younger children really enjoy listening to and talking about stories. Early years teachers are highly skilled in storytelling techniques, which clearly captivate and fully involve all children. In addition to core reading texts which teachers use to support the development of reading skills across all stages, the school has identified a wider range of fiction and non-fiction texts to offer children broad and challenging reading opportunities in school and for taking home. This is well supported by parents and the wider community, especially in the improvements to the recently refurbished school libraries in both buildings. Children are encouraged to develop and maintain a love of reading by taking part in local reading challenges set by the schools' library service, as well as the school's own creative and exciting 'Extreme Reading' challenge, which encourages children to read a favourite book in an unusual place.

Across the school, children say that they enjoy mathematics. In Reception classes, children are developing early numeracy skills very well through play and active approaches to learning. For example, they learn how to measure ingredients and follow a sequence when baking apple crumble. At the infant stages, children are good at working together to solve mathematical challenges and problems. In Year 1, most children can work well with practical resources to identify the different coins they need to make up sums of money. Children at Year 2 are becoming confident in explaining their thinking and approaches to tackling their work, for example, when 'partitioning' numbers in order to add them. Children are clearly motivated by the newly introduced Maths Passports which is encouraging them to chart their own progress in their numeracy learning. Children are improving their skills in mental calculations and problem solving. The whole school strategic approach ensures clear lines of progression to support children's progress in these elements of mathematics. In Year 3 and Year 4, most children can add at least three coins together to find the total value. They team up with partners to share strategies for buying items such as cakes, using the correct coins and explaining different ways to achieve the correct cost. Children at Year 5 and Year 6 confidently measure using standard and non-standard units. For example, they can compare and convert millimetres to centimetres and metres to kilometres. Most could describe the properties of perpendicular and parallel lines and recognise these in famous London landmarks. Staff should keep under review the effectiveness of 'setting' for mathematics teaching across Key Stages 1 and 2, in order to ensure that this approach adds value to the progress of all children, particularly the high achieving and middle section of learners. Across the Reception and primary stages, staff should continue to develop ways for children to apply their numeracy and mathematical skills in real-life contexts and through the life of the school.

Children are developing a good awareness of the importance of their own health and wellbeing. Across the school, children demonstrate important social skills, such as listening to each other and supporting each other to feel valued, by recalling important personal strengths shared with them by their peers. Almost all children understand and demonstrate appropriate responses which helps them to work together and support each other to learn and behave appropriately. They are very sensitive to the needs of their classmates and show respect for themselves and others, including visitors to the school.

The school's improvement planning processes are well established and are having a positive impact on learners' experiences and on the life of the school. The priorities in the most recent school's plan have led to improvements in the in development of effective learning and teaching approaches, such as teachers' marking and in setting learning targets with children; and in developing the skills of subject leaders across the school.

How well does the school support children to develop and learn?

Teaching for effective learning

Across the school, there are examples of very strong teaching and models of good practice. Staff use praise very well to support learning and encourage children to persevere in their learning. Relationships between staff and pupils are positive and

supportive, and as a result, children are motivated to learn and try their best. Staff are confident in the use of effective learning and teaching strategies which engage children in their learning. There are many opportunities for children to work collaboratively which sustains their interests and involvement in lessons. Children are skilled in working in a range of settings to complete set tasks and activities. Pupil dialogue in pairs and small groups is well embedded into teaching practice and teachers often facilitate a range of responses from children to open ended tasks. In the best lessons, teachers are skilled at using children's responses to deepen learning and promote higher-order thinking skills. Within the junior stages, there is a need to build on the best practice and assess more closely children's responses to open-ended tasks to ensure that staff more consistently deepen children's learning. At times during a few lessons observed by inspectors, children's responses to teachers' questions were limited to simple recall and ideas and concepts. Staff did not always explore fully children's depth of understanding.

Across the school, teachers routinely share learning intentions and success criteria with children. Teachers encourage children to explain their thinking and ideas in a supportive climate. Teachers could develop these successful approaches further by exploring strategies that increase pace, challenge and differentiation across the curriculum, to ensure they impact positively on learning for all children. Teachers use a good range of pre and post learning assessments. They use this information well to plan the next steps within a block of planned learning. There are many examples across the school of teachers with a deep knowledge in a particular subject area, using questioning techniques very skilfully to extend children's responses to open ended tasks. Digital technology is used well by children and staff to support learning. Children access laptops and tablets across their learning to answer questions, often that they have created themselves. Older children at Year 5 and Year 6 demonstrate a very good awareness of the importance of verifying the reliability of information they find on the Internet. Some teachers make particularly good use of interactive whiteboards to enhance learning, including using a tablet and 'visualiser app' to share children's work with the whole class. As a result, individual children's best efforts are shared instantly and celebrated. In addition, all children are able to see worked examples of what success looks like.

Meeting learning needs

In all lessons observed by inspectors at the early and infant stages, and in almost all lessons at the junior stages, staff plan tasks and activities which are well-matched to the individual abilities of children. They do this through planning a wide range of tasks and activities such as cooperative and collaborative learning, working in pairs and by encouraging children to apply skills they are learning in different contexts within and out with the school environment. All staff show patience and encouragement in engaging children in learning tasks. In most lessons, the pace of learning is brisk and appropriate. Children settle into learning quickly through, for example, quick start tasks and timed learning activities. In all classes, almost all children are motivated and engaged in tasks all of the time. Building on the very good practice observed in some classes, the school should ensure that children are more consistently challenged in their learning, through increased expectations of what they can achieve and by exploring particular areas of learning in more depth, where this is appropriate.

Staff and partner agencies regularly use a good range of resources to support and motivate children to learn, including digital technology, such as interactive whiteboards, tablets, laptops, help cards, written instructions and 'show me' boards. Children with language and communication difficulties are helped to understand and predict what is required of them in lessons through social stories, the use of symbols, visual timetables, visual and written prompts. There is scope to extend the use of visual cues throughout the school environment to support children's understanding of language and their environment.

The school and its partners have clear systems for identifying children's learning needs, through referrals from teachers and learning support assistants (LSAs), parents and partner agencies including from health and social services. The deputy headteacher, in her role as Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO), ensures that children's needs are regularly reviewed. Meetings with parents and key partners to review the effectiveness of support and children's progress in learning are held regularly. Effective multi-agency planning meetings enable children and their families to access a wide range of services to provide the right kind of help when children and families need it. All staff and partners are highly sensitive to children's needs and anxieties. Communication among teachers, partners and support staff is very effective, ensuring that important information about children is shared promptly, to ensure effective intervention. The school and its partners carry out regular recording and monitoring of children's progress, adapting and reviewing support programmes and sharing children's progress with parents. Where appropriate, specialist staff such as the educational psychologist will carry out specialist assessments of children to further identify learning needs and implement appropriate programmes to address these.

Senior managers, teachers and partners have a very good understanding of their children's pastoral needs and how these impact upon their learning. They make learning active and encourage children to remain focused on their learning and maintain a positive and responsible attitude to learning in keeping with the school's Christian values. LSAs across the school provide high quality support to children. They intervene skilfully to assist children whenever needed, often using their initiative to do so. A number of the staff and the school's partners feel that new approaches to how children's needs are met across the Bailiwick have brought about significant improvements. They feel that relationships are stronger and that communication is much better. They say that consultation between staff in school and partner agencies has improved particularly well over the past year. Teachers and LSAs have regular opportunities to consult with partners for advice and support, and to discuss with them any concerns about children.

Partners work very well with the SENCO to advise on and deliver bespoke programmes of focused intervention for groups of learners. These include Language for Thinking, Reading Recovery and Precision Teaching. These programmes are helping children to make progress, and sometimes significant progress, in improving children's skills in reading, spelling and writing. The educational psychologist and school nurse offer helpful classes for parents, such as in Growth Mindset and Readiness for School. These are helping parents to support their children to maintain a positive attitude towards school and learning. Partner agencies such as the Dyslexia Day Centre, English as an Additional Language teacher and the school nurse provide

direct support for children, and share with staff valuable support strategies and resources in for example, supporting children with autism and communication difficulties.

Along with its key partner agencies, the school keeps under at least annual review the needs of children with identified special educational needs. Parents attend review meetings and teachers, LSAs and partners provide helpful reports on children's progress. According to the school's information, most children are making appropriate progress towards targets set within the very high quality individual education plans (IEPs) or individual behaviour plans (IBPs). The school shares these helpful plans with parents. Where appropriate, the school should include children, or the views of children, in reviews of their progress and ensure they are familiar with their own IEP or IBP targets. The school may find it helpful to now collate children's overall progress across the school towards targets set within IEPs and IBPs. This will help to inform overall progress of children, and highlight particular areas of strength and areas for improvement.

Almost all children told inspectors in the pupil survey that they feel safe and cared for in school. The school follows the Guernsey Education Department's Child Protection Committee procedures for protecting children. All staff are clear about their role in protecting children and keeping them safe. The headteacher shares concerns about particular children with teachers via concern sheets and keeps helpful chronologies of incidents, communications and concerns for individual children. The school promotes equality, respect and racial tolerance through regular events to celebrate other cultures and through the personal, social and health programme. There have been no exclusions in recent years and the school prefers to address issues of conflict proactively through restorative approaches.

Curriculum

The rationale for the curriculum links well to the vision and values of the school. It places a high emphasis on reflecting the Catholic faith through the caring ethos and strong sense of community. The strong positive ethos sets a context in which learning activities take place. Children show a very good understanding of how faith impacts on their daily lives and shapes their attitudes and interactions with others. For example, helping attitudes, collaborative and cooperative approaches to learning are key aspects of learning. The school's 'golden rules' reflect the meaning of learning together and faith. In line with States of Guernsey Education Department's expectations, the curriculum aims to develop children's capabilities as successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens. The school has a clear, strategic overview of the curriculum that incorporates a two-year cycle of topics and themes. The high level curriculum plan is flexible and responsive to topical themes and events of interest, such as the Island Games and the commemoration of Liberation Day. There are examples where children have the opportunity to personalise their learning, through discussions about what they already know and what they are interested in learning.

Staff increasingly plan motivational contexts to link learning across curricular areas, through the 'creative curriculum' approach. For example, learning about Bob the Clown is particularly enjoyed by younger children. Their topic about the circus links

together well their learning in history, personal, social and health education and in the expressive arts. The school follows the religious education (RE) scheme 'God Matters' which is giving children opportunities to discuss concepts such as forgiveness, caring for others, tolerance, exercising responsibility and developing a moral conscience. Children at all stages are developing a strong sense of right and wrong and this is impacting on their behaviour very positively. There are good opportunities for worship at the co-located Notre Dame church, and children in Years 1 and 2 attend Mass in St Joseph's Church weekly. Children are supported to prepare for the sacrament of Holy Communion by catechists within the parish, in RE lessons and can serve at Mass from Year 3 onwards. Many are taking the opportunity to do so. Children at all stages are encouraged to write their prayer intentions on prayer tables across the school. This is helping them to share their feelings and concerns and encouraging them to support and empathise with others.

Staff are very positive about their role in developing the curriculum. They work very well together across the phases of the school to plan and implement learning. Subject leaders in literacy and numeracy take lead roles in the development, monitoring and tracking of these specific curricular areas. As a result, overall, staff have a clear understanding of standards within these areas of learning. Other subject leaders create action plans to take forward different areas of the curriculum. They use identified strengths and areas for improvement within the curricular area to underpin developments. In developing the curriculum further, teachers will need to ensure there is clarity in the expected depth of knowledge across each curriculum area. At present, there is a need for the curriculum overall to offer more opportunities to provide depth and challenge in learning. In taking forward the programmes of study across each curricular area, and in further developing the 'creative curriculum' framework of topics, teachers should create clear lines of progression in order to develop children's skills, knowledge and understanding across their learning. They should also consider carefully the balance between planning learning for enjoyment, and for learning that is also suitably challenging.

Through the staff-led Teacher Learning Community (TLC) group, all teachers share ideas and discuss new approaches, which they implement and review in a supportive manner with each other. Staff's participation in the Kagan training programme are increasingly leading to the development of children's skills in collaborating to complete tasks. Staff plan collaboratively very well across year groups to ensure consistency and progression in experience for children. Staff are encouraged to seek advice about the curriculum and their practice out with the school. For example, teachers have benefited from visiting schools in England to explore innovative approaches to mathematics and in teaching children in mixed-age classes. Staff are increasingly planning literacy and numeracy across the curriculum, through the creative curriculum approach to learning. In Year 6, children benefit from having a helpful bookmark with their personalised targets for English and mathematics that they use across their learning. Teachers identify key vocabulary for lessons which children should know and learn. They embed this vocabulary very well into the delivery of lessons.

There are examples of well-planned partnership working with external agencies to deliver the curriculum. For example, staff work closely with colleagues from the Guernsey Sports Commission in order to deliver the programme for PE. Across the school, indoor facilities for PE are limited to one games hall in the infant building.

Weather permitting; staff also make good use of the school grounds and the local park to also deliver PE. Working with Guernsey Education Department, the school is fully embracing the Growth Mindset approach, which is impacting positively on children's learning and self-esteem.

How well does the school improve the quality of its work?

Improvement through self-evaluation

Everyone associated with Notre Dame du Rosaire Catholic Primary School is very proud of the school and committed to maintaining its strong reputation in the community. All staff, teaching and non-teaching, children and parents are keen to work together to improve the life and work of the school. There is a strong ethos of continuous improvement. The commitment and dedication of all staff supports the school's aim to ensure that children feel valued and encouraged to achieve wholeness, spiritually, emotionally and academically. As a result, the school achieves high quality learning and teaching approaches overall; a strong sense of teamwork in developing the curriculum; and importantly, a very welcoming, family ethos that is based on Catholic values. Opportunities for staff to engage in professional learning are very well judged and support an appropriate blend of local and school priorities for improvement. As a result, staff feel empowered to lead learning within their own classes and in the wider life of the school. Promoted staff, including subject and phase leaders, carry out an ongoing programme of monitoring activities which provides a helpful overview of the school's strengths and areas for development. These monitoring activities include learning walks, lesson observations, scrutinising teachers' planning and monitoring the progress of learners. Teachers use a range of assessments to measure children's progress. They work collaboratively to plan and assess children's learning in phase teams within the school. In addition at Year 2 and Year 6, teachers participate in local and external moderation exercises to check on standards of children's progress. The school should continue to develop teachers' skills in scrutinising and analysing assessment data to help further improve standards in children's attainment.

Overall, parents are very positive about almost all aspects of the work of the school. Parents like the regular newsletters which keeps them up to date with important events. They like the Maths Passports and ways that the school uses digital technology to share the range of skills that their children are learning. Parents themselves add value to the school community in significant ways, including providing crucial financial contributions towards the upkeep and maintenance of the school buildings, as well as practical help in classes and on school trips. The Parent Teacher and Friends Association supports the school very well and helps to raise significant funds. Almost all parents agree that their children enjoy coming to school and that they are developing confidence. They feel that staff prepare children particularly well for transitions into, within and beyond the school. Staff are taking steps to seek the views of parents and children on aspects of the school's work. For example, in the summer term parents were asked for their views on the new format for the end of year reports, and parents and children were recently asked for their views on the transition arrangements for moving from Reception to Year 1. However, around one third of parents who responded to the pre-validation questionnaire did not think that the school asked for their views often enough. Parents have mixed views about the different

approach to homework that has been introduced at the junior stages. We have asked the school to continue to seek the views of all stakeholders, and to develop ways to engage and consult with parents on key areas of school life, particularly at times when changes are being introduced. The views of the many community partners, professionals and visiting specialists who contribute well to school life could also help to inform further improvements.

Leadership of improvement and change

The leadership structure of the school is well organised and provides a range of opportunities for all staff to participate and lead priorities for change and improvement. All staff are highly committed to their leadership roles and actively seek professional learning opportunities to improve further their impact on children's learning. It is clear that leaders at all levels in the school play a strong role in leading improvements in learning and teaching, and have a focus on impact on outcomes. Recent examples of these focused and successful improvements are demonstrated in how the school has improved approaches to reporting to parents, in implementing new strategies for the teaching of writing, and in the development of the Growth Mindset initiative. Individual subject leaders reflect on learning within their curricular area to create an action plan. Staff demonstrate clearly their capacity for improvement and change. They work very well together sharing and improving practice through the TLC and joint planning and assessment meetings. This provides helpful structures for staff to share and reflect together on the implementation of improvements. Commendably, a few teachers are engaging in leadership programmes and are using the results of their professional reading to inform their thinking about some current approaches to learning and teaching and the development of the curriculum.

The pace of change is managed well by promoted staff and staff morale is high. The headteacher and school take part regularly in reviews with the Diocesan validation service, to develop the Catholic life of the school. The improvement plan sets appropriate targets and staff work well to achieve these. At all levels, leaders are pro-active in identifying areas for improvement. Increasingly they take account of views and data to inform targeted areas for improvement. Staff are confident that their individual leadership makes a positive difference to children's experiences within the school. Staff take very good account of their individual and collective responsibility to bring about change. The headteacher knows the staff team well and capitalises on their strengths, talents and interests to take forward areas of leadership. He gives them space and time to develop their leadership roles. Staff are confident in suggesting ideas for change and these are formalised within subject leaders' action plans. The school should continue to develop further the capacity of staff to take forward their leadership roles, for example through formal training, coaching or shadowing opportunities.

The headteacher is highly committed to the children and is very proud of the school. Staff feel that he empowers them to be creative and take responsibility. He knows every child very well and takes action to ensure that the right support can be accessed for children needing additional help. He is ably supported by the deputy headteacher whose calm and very purposeful approach enables her to manage her leadership duties and significant teaching commitment very well. Her teaching is a model of good practice, and she has developed very clear systems to keep children with additional

support needs under review. Together, the headteacher and deputy headteacher ensure that children are very well cared for, and they nurture both children and staff alike to grow and develop.

Summary

Capacity for improvement

The school has worked effectively to address the main points for action since their last validation visit. The development of leadership capacity, the use of assessment to promote learning and teaching, and the development of the curriculum have been given high priority. As a result of the purposeful and outward-looking leadership approach, and the willingness and commitment of all staff to improve the school further, Notre Dame du Rosaire Catholic Primary School demonstrates clear capacity for continuous improvement.

HM Inspectors of Education are able to validate most aspects of the schools own self-evaluation.

This validation visit found the following key strengths.

- The warm, family ethos, based on Catholic values, that is created by all staff and children.
- Confident, thoughtful and polite children, who are motivated to learn and have a 'can do' attitude.
- High quality approaches to learning and teaching that develop children's independence as learners.
- The valuable support of parents, volunteers and wide range of partners to meet the needs of children.
- Leadership at all levels to ensure that children are valued, respected and very well cared for.

We discussed with staff and the Education Department how they might continue to improve the school. This is what we agreed with them.

- Building on the strong gains made in the early years, continue to raise children's attainment further by developing consistently robust approaches to using assessment data.
- Continue to develop the curriculum, ensuring progression, depth and challenge across all areas of learning.
- Build on ways to seek and act upon the views of the whole school community to help inform future improvements.

Here are the evaluations for Notre Dame du Rosaire Catholic Primary School.

Improvements in performance	good
Learners' experiences	very good
Teaching for effective learning	very good
Meeting learning needs	very good
Improvement through self-evaluation	good
Leadership of improvement and change	very good

What happens at the end of the validation?

We are satisfied with the overall quality of provision. We are confident that the school's self-evaluation processes are leading to improvements. As a result, we will make no further visits in connection with this validation. As part of its arrangements for reporting to parents on the quality of education, the Education Department will inform parents about the school's progress.

Lesley A Johnstone
HM Inspector

If you would like to receive this letter in a different format, for example, in a translation please contact the administration team on the telephone number which appears at the bottom of the first page of this report.

If you want to give us feedback or make a complaint about our work, please contact us by telephone on 0141 282 5000, or e-mail: complaints@educationscotland.gsi.gov.uk or write to us addressing your letter to the Complaints Manager, Denholm House, Almondvale Business Park, Livingston EH54 6GA.

Appendix 1

<p>Excellent</p> <p>6</p>	<p>Outstanding or sector leading</p> <p>An evaluation of excellent applies to provision which is sector leading. Pupils' experiences and achievements are of a very high quality. An evaluation of excellent represents an outstanding standard of provision which exemplifies very best practice and is worth disseminating beyond the school. It implies that very high levels of performance are sustainable and will be maintained.</p>
<p>Very good</p> <p>5</p>	<p>Major strengths</p> <p>An evaluation of very good applies to provision characterised by major strengths. There are very few areas for improvement and any that do exist do not significantly diminish pupils' experiences. Whilst an evaluation of very good represents a high standard of provision, it is a standard that should be achievable by all. It implies that it is fully appropriate to continue to make provision without significant adjustment. However, there is an expectation that the school will take opportunities to improve and strive to raise performance to excellent.</p>
<p>Good</p> <p>4</p>	<p>Important strengths with areas for improvement</p> <p>An evaluation of good applies to provision characterised by important strengths which, taken together, clearly outweigh any areas for improvement. An evaluation of good represents a standard of provision in which the strengths have a significantly positive impact. However, the quality of pupils' experiences is diminished in some way by aspects in which improvement is required. It implies that the school should seek to improve further the areas of important strength, but take action to address the areas for improvement.</p>
<p>Satisfactory</p> <p>3</p>	<p>Strengths just outweigh weaknesses</p> <p>An evaluation of satisfactory applies to provision characterised by strengths which just outweigh weaknesses. An evaluation of satisfactory indicates that pupils have access to a basic level of provision. It represents a standard where the strengths have a positive impact on pupils' experiences. However, while the weaknesses are not important enough to have a substantially adverse impact, they do constrain the overall quality of pupils' experiences. It implies that the school should take action to address areas of weakness by building on its strengths.</p>
<p>Weak</p> <p>2</p>	<p>Important weaknesses</p> <p>An evaluation of weak applies to provision which has some strengths, but where there are important weaknesses. In general, an evaluation of weak may be arrived at in a number of circumstances. While there may be some strength, important weaknesses will, either individually or collectively, be sufficient to diminish pupils' experiences in substantial ways. It implies the need for prompt, structured and planned action on the part of the school.</p>
<p>Unsatisfactory</p> <p>1</p>	<p>An evaluation of unsatisfactory applies when there are major weaknesses in provision requiring immediate remedial action. Pupils' experiences are at risk in significant respects. In almost all cases, staff responsible for provision evaluated as unsatisfactory will require support from senior managers in planning and carrying out the necessary actions to effect improvement. This may involve working alongside other staff or agencies in or beyond the school.</p>