

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

**CANON 806
INSPECTION REPORT**



St. Peter's Roman Catholic Primary School
Brentford Avenue
Plymouth
Devon
PL5 4HD

URN 140784

Head Teacher: Kevin Norris
Chair of Governors: Paul Watson

Introduction

The inspection of St. Peter's Roman Catholic Primary School was carried out under the requirements of the Education Act 2005, and in accordance with Plymouth Diocesan Framework and as a multi-academy Trust school (CAST) with the Schedule for Diocesan Canonical inspectors, approved by the Bishop of Plymouth.

Context for the Inspection

St Peter's is an average-sized primary school with 173 pupils on roll. Of these 22.5% of children are eligible for pupil premium, 14.5% receive free school meals and 15.6% have SEN.

Since the last inspection school has undergone significant changes:

1. The school now has an executive Head over two local Catholic Primary schools.
2. Become an academy as part of CAST – a multi-academy trust incorporating all Catholic primary schools within Plymouth Diocese.

Key Finding Grade 2:

John 13:34-35

'I give you a new commandment that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples if you love one another'. John 13:34-35

The greatest of all commandments is that we love one another. Living the Christian life is to live a life of love which ultimately leads to washing one another's feet. This is a journey. There are times when we succeed and there are times when we become distracted. Other priorities take over or we fall susceptible to the secular world which may be offering a different set of priorities or values. Fear, anxiety or a lack of confidence can impact on the capacity of those in leadership to fully respond to the Christian call above all other demands. As a result, although most of the time the community is responding to the call to love, there are times when this gets forgotten and anomalies creep in.

St. Peter's is a friendly school where children and adults work well together in a caring and supportive atmosphere. Parents recognise the commitment of the staff to provide their children with a sound and engaging education so that they can learn and grow into responsible and outgoing young people. The school has a wide catchment area and as a consequence welcomes children from a variety of backgrounds and with a variety of needs. Children are well behaved and caring towards one another, while the adults within the community keep a watchful eye to ensure that all children are well cared for.

The Diocese has introduced a new framework for schools to monitor and evaluate how they are living out the mission of the Church and out of Gospel values. St. Peter's is beginning to engage with this process and is keen to develop its profile as a Catholic School. Areas of focus for development will highlight where the school can make progress and ultimately lead to it accomplishing its goal.

Summary of Key Findings

- The school has a strong and caring ethos where children are encouraged and enabled to become the best that they can be. This is firmly rooted in the teachings of Jesus and the teachings of the Church.
- The school has a positive open door policy and parents know that they are welcome in the school and that staff are available to them. As a matter of goodwill TAs in particular make a point of arriving in school early so that teachers can be available for parents.
- The school maintains good links with the parish and has an excellent relationship with the parish priest who visits the school weekly to celebrate Mass and often more frequently when he can.
- The leadership of the school is continually thinking of new ways to engage all staff to appreciate that they have something to contribute to the ethos of the school.
- The school works hard with the local community and is committed to the welfare of all. As a consequence it is conscious of the hardships that some parents face and the needs of many of the families in its local community.
- The individual needs of all children, regardless of background, are fully met by the school and this is enhanced by the significant contribution of the Parent Support Adviser (PSA).
- Children enjoy their RE lessons and teachers are beginning to grow in confidence to deliver lessons that meet the needs of all children.

Areas of Focus for Development

The school's mission as a Catholic School would be further enhanced by focusing planned development in the following areas.

- That all adults including governors, become familiar with the Diocesan framework and have a planned approach to its full implementation and regular review within a five year cycle.
- That all members of the school community engage in a process of re-visiting the mission statement and re-evaluate its purpose so that Gospel values are more explicitly at the heart of everything that the school does. It will be important that this is not only visibly evident throughout the school but that all members of the community are able to articulate what it means and why it is important to them.

At the heart of St. Peter's is a desire to provide an honest and open welcome to all who come to the school, particularly children and parents. The quality of this welcome is clearly rooted in a deep commitment to care for even the most vulnerable of children. Adults within the community strive to offer a place of safety where children can learn and grow happily. Whilst not always explicit it is clear that Gospel values are lived out in the school and stem from a sound faith base.

The school welcomes children from a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds and strives to ensure that all children are able to access fully the curriculum on offer and make the progress they are capable of making. This sense of working for the 'common good' is important to the school community and as a consequence the school is known for the quality of care it offers to the children.

The quality of welcome offered to children is also experienced by new members of staff and students. As a result new members of staff are made to feel at home and quickly settle into the way of doing things at St. Peter's. The school has a relatively young staff as a result of student teachers wanting to work full time in the school. Where possible the school is keen to employ successful students who work in the school and then nurture them to develop and deepen their potential. The friendly and warm atmosphere in the school makes this a good place to work.

The school makes good use of space to try and make it as welcoming as possible. Throughout the school there are many displays which reflect the learning journey of the different year groups. In addition some of the displays reflect the faith life of the school.

With the wider community the school has strong links and actively supports diocesan initiatives and activities within the local Plymouth cluster group and area forums. In addition the school engages fruitfully with other schools in the community and wider diocesan groups.

As a community, St. Peter's has a strong commitment to CAFOD and encourages children to have a deep awareness of their own wealth while being conscious of the poverty of others. Supporting charities is an important dimension of the school life and children are actively encouraged through the school council to consider appropriate charities to support.

Focus for Development

1. To ensure that the School's evaluation of itself as a Catholic School clearly reflects its Gospel values and Catholic mission so that how and why the school does what it does is clearly a 'Witness' to the Gospel of Christ.
2. Work on establishing a robust self-evaluation process to reflect the SCC framework with clear monitoring and assessment of the process incorporated into the programme.

The School as a Catholic Community – Leadership and Management

Grade 2

John 13:34-35

St. Peter's leadership team work well together, with a genuine desire to be consultative and collective in its decision making processes. The emphasis in the school has been to ensure that standards in English and Maths are improved and a great deal of work has been put into monitoring the success of these improvements. This emphasis has meant that the implementation of the SCC framework for the Catholic life of the school has only recently been given any focus. From the discussions with the SLT it is clear that there is a desire on the part of the leadership team to have a consistent approach and a planned development strategy so that all who work in the school have a shared understanding of the school's Christian vision and purpose.

The governing body expressed their commitment to embracing the SCC framework and include it as a standing item on their agenda for future meetings. This will be important if they are to be fully accountable for how the school is developing its vision and mission.

The RE co-ordinator has particular strengths and provides an enthusiastic leadership rooted in a model of service and humility, reflecting the way Christ calls each one of us to love one another. Her work has been both supportive and influential. She is keen to learn and actively seeks help and understanding to ensure that she delivers appropriate support and guidance to her colleagues. Her attendance at diocesan meetings has enabled her to grow in her own confidence to cascade and disseminate appropriately. Her work is to be commended.

Focus for Development

The Catholic leadership of the school will be strengthened by development in the following key areas:

1. In relation to SCC have measurable milestones for success with clear actions of how these are achieved.
2. Link the training needs of staff to the strategic plan, working with other schools within the CAST network.
3. Explicitly state how RE is monitored and how it is evaluated and reported on to governors.
4. Ensure that governors are in a position to take greater ownership of the strategic leadership of RE.

The School as a Teaching and learning Community

Word

Grade 2

John 13:34-35

As a subject curriculum RE is given prominence at St. Peter's and teachers in particular ensure that children not only enjoy their RE but also grow in their appreciation and understanding of the subject.

As already mentioned the person responsible for RE is a key figure in the school. She actively promotes high standards and leads by example in her own aspirations for the subject. Her

humility ensures that she is not afraid to seek greater understanding of the subject. As yet monitoring RE is in its early stages and it is recognised that this is an area for development. Planning on the other hand is more highly developed with teachers developing their skills in focused and differentiated lessons. Throughout the inspection, observation of lessons revealed a commitment to providing lessons that offered a variety of activities suited to the religious literacy of the children. Differentiation is seen to be about the knowledge and understanding of the children and not based on literacy skills. As a consequence most children were given the means to make progress. TA support in lessons was universally supportive with TAs being very clear about expectations and enabled to do their job effectively by the clear instructions given to them by teachers.

Children spoke confidently and positively about their RE lessons. Their depth of knowledge was evident in discussions. At present AT2 is not being sufficiently developed and so children were less able to talk about the significance of their learning in relation to their own life. Children are provided with helpful feedback both orally and through marking. They can see how well they have done and occasionally some children can speak of what they need to do to sustain progress. This is yet to be embedded across the school.

Teachers have not always been able to fully access appropriate INSET on offer to them for teaching RE but the leadership team does recognise that this has to be a priority in the future.

Focus for Development

1. To establish a consistent and regular programme of professional development of staff based on an evaluation of their needs. For example it is important that teachers are supported in developing their theological understanding for each topic.
2. To embed further understanding and application of differentiation in lessons based on religious literacy and the experience of the child.
3. To build resources and support for teachers to develop and apply their understanding of AT2.
4. To put in place a tracking system for monitoring attainment in RE.

The School as a Celebrating Community	Worship
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Grade 3	John 5:6-8
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Whilst St. Peter's is a school with a meaningful commitment to its Catholic Life, its worship and prayer life is currently limited in what it offers to the children and adult members of the community. This is not out of any ill will but primarily because of a lack of knowledge, understanding and skill base to deliver creative and consistently prayerful opportunities for the children to deepen their natural spiritual selves.

One of the reasons for this is that the school has become 'stuck' in a particular way of thinking about prayer and worship in the Catholic school. What is on offer is positive but limited. The school is very fortunate to have the opportunity to celebrate Mass on a weekly basis in its own chapel (which is also used for sport and lunch). Children are actively involved in this and different classes take responsibility to lead with readings and prayers. All children in year 6 learn how to serve and have this opportunity during the school year to carry out this ministry. Children speak of enjoying the singing in particular.

Outside of Mass, scripture is seen as an important part of worship and in some classrooms it is clear that artefacts help to make prayer conducive and accessible.

At other times children say formal prayers with their teachers and key stage assemblies have a moral lesson or theme to follow. Primarily it is within the RE curriculum that children are given opportunities to share their faith or have any time for reflection in a quiet and meaningful way. In addition and depending on the confidence of the teacher some classes are given the opportunity to meditate with music and images. When these occasions arise children respond very well and where it is consistent it is clear that children are developing a real capacity for stillness and thoughtful reflection. At the moment these opportunities are inconsistently provided. There are few, if any, real opportunities for children to pray outside of formal times and as yet the adult community have not had this opportunity either.

Although the worship life of the school is currently under-developed what is on offer is not without impact. Children are able to make links between worship and their everyday lives and they are sensitive to the needs of others. It is quite clear that the community does recognise all as God's children and have an ever-deepening respect for one another.

Focus for Development

1. To re-evaluate current provision and seek opportunities for developing a variety of liturgical experiences and greater involvement of the children in all Acts of Worship.
2. To provide formation and training for all staff in how to deliver effective and meaningful liturgical experiences for children.
3. To put in place a monitoring and evaluation schedule for all worship.

The School as a Catholic Community

Spiritual and Moral Development
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Grade 2

John 13: 34-35

Although the Worship life of St. Peter's is in need of renewal, the spiritual growth and in particular the moral development of the children roots them in a sense of love for one another.

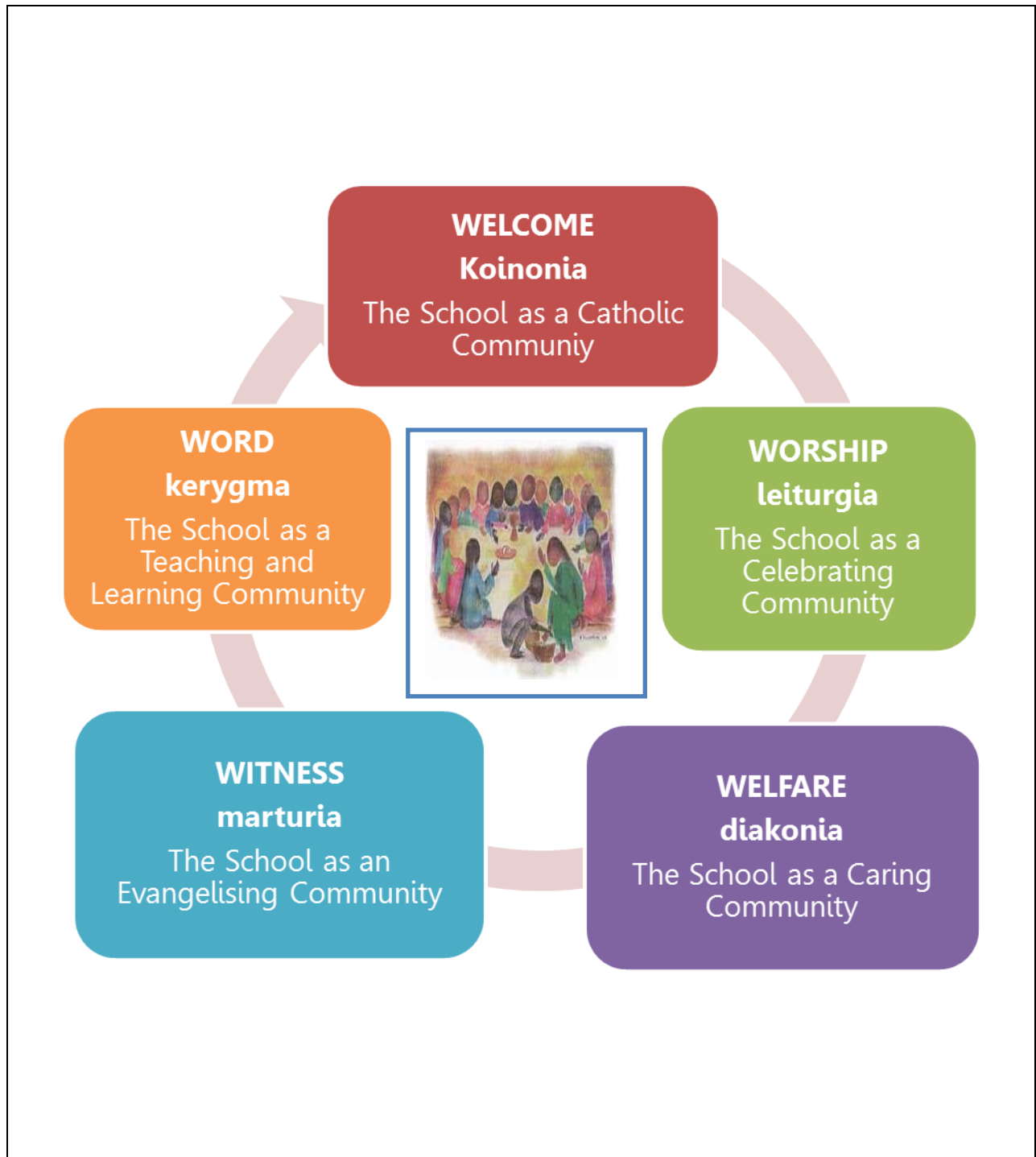
Throughout the inspection children were polite, kind, responsive and respectful. They could speak about the presence of God in their lives and the lives of others and assemblies, Mass and lessons contribute to the children having a clear sense of right and wrong. Adults within the community model these qualities and have high expectations in relation to behaviour in and around the school. As a result the school enjoys a calm and friendly atmosphere where the most vulnerable are helped to feel safe and where all children know that adults are there for them.

Conclusion

St. Peter's is a school with a tremendous amount to offer. An experienced leadership team combined with young and gifted teachers means that this school has the potential to really develop not only as an academic institution but far more as a truly Catholic school that witnesses to Christ in everything that it does.

Sarah Adams
April 2015

THE SCHOOL AS A CATHOLIC COMMUNITY



Introduction

The Catholic community is one that is rooted in Baptism, Eucharist and an on-going call to Conversion. The areas of Welcome, Worship, Word, Welfare and Witness can be described as the key components of what it means to live the Christian life. As such, the school as a Catholic community, is called to embrace these as a way of being community and living the mission of the Church. The manner in which these are expressed reveal for us the heart of where the community lies.

Koinonia - (κοινωνία) Welcome

Koinonia is the Greek work for communion, for participation, for the sharing with one another. It is to be welcome an 'other' in fellowship and love. It is to be of an open disposition to receive from another and to respond in love. Within the community it can be minimalized to the gesture of greeting at the front entrance. In school it might simply be seen as the role of the receptionist. Koinonia however, requires a much greater vision of what it means to welcome. Ultimately it speaks of the disposition of every member of the community to be open to the needs of another, be that to listen, to hear, to respond, to act. The idea of welcome will be embedded in all aspects of the school's way of doing things.

Leiturgia – (Λειτουργία) Worship

The Greek word 'leiturgia' means public activity or in a religious sense it means 'respect' or 'service'. When it was adopted by the Church it meant to carry out a religious service. It is a public service as opposed to private prayer and concerns the Christian community gathering first and foremost to celebrate the paschal mystery of Jesus Christ. It is also a time when the community gathers to be reconciled, to celebrate, to be fed, and to be sent out in mission. Central to the Catholic School is its call to be a Eucharistic community in the widest sense – that is to be the body of Christ ready to serve the world in its fullness. All prayer, all liturgy ultimately is intended to lead to this. It is not something that happens once a week and has no further meaning. It is an invitation to live each day what has been received through Word and Eucharist.

Marturia – (μαρτυρία) Witness

The core meaning of the Greek word marturia means to testify, to give witness, from which we get the word martyr. Simply it means to share our values and faith with the world and our local community so that others may come to know the love of Christ. Within the Catholic School community this will mean promoting a shared vision and shared values which stem from a shared sense of the teaching of the Gospel. The Christian is called to witness to Christ's teaching in the way they live their life. Like John the Baptist these values are those which direct others to Christ.

Diakonia - (διακονία) Welfare

The word 'diakonia' comes from the Greek word to mean to serve the poor and the oppressed. The emphasis within the word is on service and care for others. Within the Christian community diakonia is a way of being with others. It encourages care and concern for every person regardless of who they are or where they come from. Within the Catholic school, service lies at the heart of the community. It is about how children are supported in their learning, shown compassion when their behaviour is challenging and cared for when they are unhappy or in need. Equally it is about how adults are cared for and care for one

another. At the same time the community is one that reaches out to the local community and the wider world, recognising the needs of others and responding to these generously.

Kerygma – (κήρυγμα) Word

Kerygma is the New Testament Greek word for preaching or proclaiming the message of Christ. Within the context of the school this is expressed both in how we expose young people to the person of Christ as revealed in scripture, and the manner in which we teach. Access to the WORD of God through scripture and Christian tradition is considered to be a significant part of what the Christian community is about. By the way they are taught children come to know that God speaks to us in the way that we experience and engage with kindness, beauty, justice, the wonders of the natural world, relationships and the needs of others. It is therefore seen as important that in every subject, every lesson, positive values and attitudes are communicated. A confident and open attitude to teaching of lessons well thought about and prepared is central to achieving this.

Self-Review

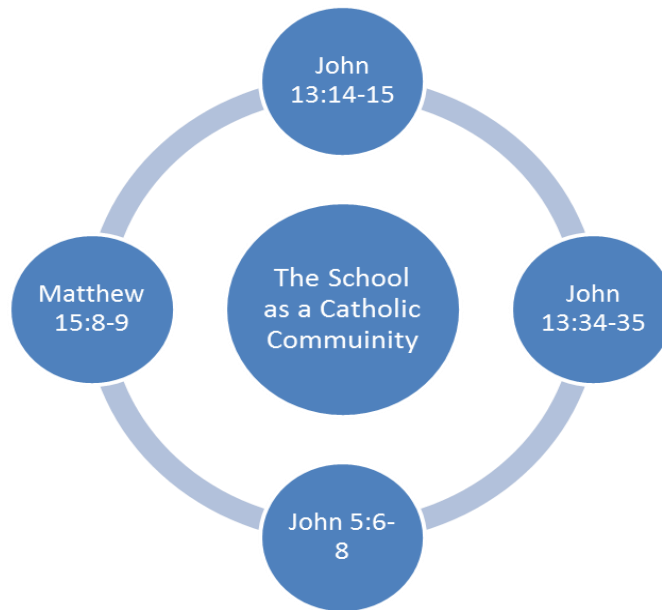
There will be three key areas within which these five elements will be reviewed:

- The School as a Catholic Community (Welcome, Witness and Welfare)
- The School as a Teaching and Learning Community (Word)
- The School as a Celebrating Community (Worship)

For each of these sections focus areas for evaluation are offered and means of gathering evidence to support this work. See appendix for further guidance.

Scripture Passages

Scripture passages have been selected to highlight where the focus for the community may be at any one time. These will act as a guideline for the self-review process when schools consider the health of its community. The approach to these is best considered within the context of a cycle. Any anyone time the school may find different areas of its life at different points on the cycle:



CONTEXT FOR THE CHOICE OF SPECIFIC SCRIPTURE REFERENCES –

Scripture has throughout history been interpreted in a variety of ways and is constantly being reinterpreted. The interpretations given here are one way of looking at how the passages may be understood within our own context. Equally there are many other passages which may have been selected but for now these reflect what is at the heart of our mission and seem appropriate.

Grade 1: ‘If I, your Lord and Teacher have washed your feet, you are also to wash one another’s feet. For I have set you an example, that you should also do as I have done to you’. John 13 14-15

The night before he died Jesus washed the feet of his disciples. Peter, one of the disciples was affronted. To wash another’s feet was the lowest job of all, one done by the servants. Jesus, as the leader of the community he was about to establish, was very clear. The call to Christian ministry is a call to service, a humbling act of giving to one another. Unless we can serve our brothers and sisters we can have no part of in the life of Christ. A secular understanding of leadership often results in a top down mentality and little shared responsibility. The Christian community however, is one where those in authority act out of their desire to serve, not to be served. As a consequence the message of serving one another permeates the whole community.

Grade 2: ‘I give you a new commandment that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples if you love one another’. John 13:34-35

The greatest of all commandments is that we love one another. Living the Christian life is to live a life of love which ultimately leads to washing one another’s feet. This is a journey. There are times when we succeed and there are times when we become distracted. Other priorities take over or we fall susceptible to the secular world which may be offering a different set of priorities or values. Fear, anxiety or a lack of confidence can impact on the

capacity of those in leadership to fully respond to the Christian call above all other demands. As a result, although most of the time the community is responding to the call to love, there are times when this gets forgotten and anomalies creep in.

Grade: 3 'Do you want to be made well? The sick man answered him, 'Sir, I have no one to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up; and while I am making my way someone else steps down ahead of me.' Jesus said to him, 'Stand up, take your mat and walk.' John 5:6-8'

The sick man lying by the pool of Bethsaida has been there for a many years, stuck in the one place. Although he wants to be better he appears not to be able to move without some help. Jesus offers this to him and orders him to get up and walk. It could be said that the sick man has resided for too long in a 'blame someone else way of being'. Sometimes leaders and school communities do become 'stuck'. Leaders blame teachers, teachers blame students or leaders and the culture prevents an honest engagement in what needs to be done for any progress to be made. Schools stuck or struggling in this kind of cycle need help and support to break free. Healing and reconciliation may need to be a part of this journey. Honest clarification of priorities and challenging self-searching needs to take place for change to occur.

Grade 4: 'This people honour me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me; in vain do they worship me, teaching human precepts as doctrines. Matthew 15:8-9

The Pharisees and scribes accuse Jesus and his disciples of breaking the rules. The rules have become more important and the heart has been lost. The Pharisees and Scribes may appear to follow the law but they have forgotten what it all means. Where there is little service, no attention to love and no understanding of what it means to live a fully developed Christian life, there is little heart. When this is the case the school has lost sight of its meaning and purpose. As a consequence children are being failed and adults not supported to do what is right. Only a radical re-evaluation of what it means to be a Catholic community and a Catholic school will lead to a rediscovery of the commandment: 'Love one another' and ultimately to people washing one another's feet.