



Catholic Schools Inspectorate inspection report for St John Fisher Catholic Primary School

URN: 115295

Carried out on behalf of the Right Rev. Alan Williams sm, Bishop of Brentwood on:

Date: 23-24 March 2023

Overall effectiveness The overall quality of Catholic education provided by the school.....	2
Catholic life and mission (p.3) How faithfully the school responds to the call to live as a Catholic community at the service of the Church's educational mission.....	2
Religious education (p.5) The quality of curriculum religious education.....	2
Collective worship (p.7) The quality and range of liturgy and prayer provided by the school.....	2
The school is fully compliant with the curriculum requirements laid down by the Bishops' Conference	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
The school is fully compliant with all requirements of the diocesan bishop	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
The school has responded to the areas for improvement from the last inspection	Fully

Summary of key findings

What the school does well

- The Mission Statement of the school has a visible impact on the daily lives of pupils and staff.
- School leaders know their school well, their understanding of self-evaluation is targeted, and they know what is needed to continue to move the school forward.
- Pupil leadership is developing and pupils seize all the opportunities they are given.
- Pupils are passionate about celebrating their faith in a variety of ways.
- Governors are a real strength of the school. They are highly knowledgeable and ambitious for the school.

What the school needs to improve:

- To consolidate and share good practice across the school, so that the religious education curriculum provides a wider variety of creative opportunities and enrichment.
- To further embed Catholic Social Teaching across all year groups so pupils are influential leaders of learning and agents of change through initiatives such as the Caritas in Action and the Avila groups.

Catholic life and mission

How faithfully the school responds to the call to live as a Catholic community at the service of the Church's educational mission.

Catholic life and mission key judgement grade:.....

2

Pupil outcomes

The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

2

Provision

The quality of provision for the Catholic life and mission of the school

1

Leadership

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic life and mission of the school

2



Pupils are wonderful ambassadors for the school; they are happy, confident and feel secure. They are warm and welcoming to visitors and love to share their experiences of school life. Pupils speak passionately about the many and varied opportunities offered to them to share their school mission and serve their community. The Avila group, the Caritas in Action group and the religious education ambassadors act as inspirational models for their younger peers. They spoke passionately to the inspection team about the impact they are making. They are energetic and confident working with their peers and helping to organise numerous activities which show their care and concern for others, such as reading with the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage, helping in the library or simply performing random acts of kindness around the school. Pupils have a good understanding of Catholic Social Teaching and their responsibility towards the poor and vulnerable. They have embraced Pope Francis' Laudato Si message, linking it to the work they do in school, raising funds for Cafod, local foodbanks, and the recent earthquake appeal. Pupil behaviour in class and around the school is very good.

The school mission statement 'At St John Fisher Catholic School, the love of God helps us all to live, learn and grow to be a happy, caring and welcoming community' is well known and lived by all members of the community. It is said every day and embraced by pupils and staff. The environment, in its use of symbols, artefacts and beautiful displays, strongly reflects the Catholic identity and charism of the school; the entrance to the school, with its beautiful images, immediately gives the message that St John Fisher is a Catholic school. Pastoral care is very strong and there is a clear commitment to the most vulnerable. The spiritual, emotional and physical well-being of all is given the highest priority and the school takes advantage of a school counsellor from the Brentwood Catholic Children's Society and the Rainbows

Programme to support pupils further. Staff act as positive role models for pupils; one parent said that 'teachers place Christ at the heart of the curriculum', whilst another commented, 'The school has a fantastic relationship with the local church... I feel the partnership enables my son to thrive and grow up in an environment with strong Catholic values throughout all aspects of education.' Based on four saints, the school house system enjoys a high profile in the school and is enthusiastically embraced by pupils. A wide range of well-planned chaplaincy activities are organised, many of which are developed with Year 5 and 6 pupils. Areas for prayer, both inside and outside, have been created to engage and inspire pupils. Pupils belonging to the Caritas in Action group are immensely proud of their efforts in rejuvenating the prayer garden. The many signs of the school's Catholic character mean that pupils are constantly reminded that they belong to a loving faith community with Christ at its centre. Personal, social and health education and relationships, sex and health education are taught within the Catholic Church's context. Details of the schemes of learning have been shared with governors and parents.

School leaders and governors share a common vision and ambition for the school and strive to make it the best it can be. They ensure that all policy documents fully reflect the school's Catholic identity and mission. Senior leaders encourage and foster a strong partnership with the local parish. The parish priest is a regular and welcome visitor to school, not only to lead the many liturgical celebrations on offer but also to join pupils and teachers in class. Parents comment that the parish priest is 'a guiding presence for the children.' A beautifully decorated altar, donated by the parish, is added testimony to this strong partnership. The link governor for religious education is committed, well organised and conscientious in her work to support the school. Governance in general, led by a highly knowledgeable chair, is a real strength of the school, providing support and challenge. Parents are invited to assemblies and are kept well informed through newsletters. The innovative Caritas curriculum pervades all subjects as well as promoting an understanding of the unique person and supporting the spiritual and moral development of all.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade:.....

2

Pupil outcomes

How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education.....

2

Provision

The quality of teaching, learning, and assessment in religious education.....

2

Leadership

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor, and evaluate the provision for religious education.....

2



Pupils are developing secure knowledge, skills and understanding in religious education as they journey through the school. The carefully-planned curriculum, based around the diocesan approved programme ensures that these skills are built on year by year, enabling pupils to know more, remember more and do more. They demonstrate good levels of religious literacy, which is clearly evident in both discussions and written work. Written tasks show a growing theological understanding of scripture. Pupils enjoy their learning; and work in books clearly evidences the pride they take in their work and the respect they have for the subject. Pupils achieve well in religious education; and achievement and attainment are in line with other core subjects. Pupils speak with confidence about what they have learnt. From an early age, pupils are using Bibles confidently during lessons. Behaviour for learning is good and pupils actively engage with their learning. They work both collaboratively and independently to achieve success.

Teachers are confident in their subject knowledge and have a good understanding of how pupils learn; they value religious education and have high expectations of their pupils. Planning takes into consideration the needs of all pupils, and additional adults are deployed well to support identified pupils. Additional adults have good subject knowledge and move learning forward through effective questioning and the use of resources, and ensure pupils make progress in lessons. Moderation with colleagues across the Our Lady of Fatima Catholic Multi Academy Trust ensures that teacher assessment is an accurate judgement of pupils' work. The structure of lessons ensures that building on previous knowledge and use of subject driver words improve writing outcomes. Marking in the moment allows pupils to have some understanding of how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. Scripture is firmly embedded in lessons. The parish priest visits classrooms regularly to support the

teaching and learning of the religious education curriculum. Pupils have enjoyed learning topics such as Baptism and Vocation with him. The learning environment is purposeful and focused, with classroom displays supporting learning and celebrating pupils' achievement.

Senior leaders and governors ensure that the curriculum for religious education fully meets the requirements of the Religious Education Curriculum Directory. It is given full parity with other core subjects in terms of resources, timetabling and accommodation. Leaders are fully committed to ensuring that high-quality professional development opportunities are readily available for staff, enabling them to thrive as role models within a faith-filled community. Staff in the early stages of their career are well supported both by the school and the diocese and there is a real sense of collaboration. The subject leader for religious education has a clear vision for teaching and learning for the subject, and a very good level of expertise in securing this vision which is shared by all leaders. She ensures that teaching and learning are monitored regularly via lesson observations, learning walks, work scrutiny and training opportunities. The changes she has implemented are raising standards. Effective self-evaluation by school leaders and governors ensures that areas for development are identified quickly and acted upon swiftly. The executive headteacher and all leaders strive to maintain a focus on improvement and on providing high quality experiences of learning in faith for all pupils.

Collective worship

The quality and range of liturgy and prayer provided by the school.

Collective worship key judgement grade:.....

2

Pupil outcomes

How well pupils participate in and respond to the school's collective worship

2

Provision

The quality of collective worship provided by the school

1

Leadership

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for collective worship

2



Pupils respond well to the experience of prayer and liturgy provided by the school. They are respectful and join in fully and prayerfully. From an early age pupils join in with both the traditional prayers of their rich Catholic heritage as well as composing their own prayers. The school has a number of non-Catholic pupils who fully appreciate and participate in the Catholic ethos of the school. Older pupils work well with teachers to prepare engaging experiences of prayer and liturgy. All pupils embrace opportunities to pray and sing and do so with great enthusiasm; singing is a real strength of the school during assemblies and liturgies. Pupils undertake ministries to support liturgical events with enthusiasm, relishing their roles as religious education ambassadors. The Avila pupils take their role very seriously; they are confident in praying using Visio Divina, reading scripture and singing with their younger peers. They are able to clearly explain how and why they use the resources of candle, Bible and rock when they are working with younger pupils. They are already thinking about how they can develop their practice to make their sessions even more enjoyable and meaningful.

The centrality of prayer and worship is evident throughout the school. Pupils have a good knowledge and understanding of daily prayer and can talk about the prayers they say at various times throughout the day. Pupils' prayer journals give them the opportunity to reflect on scripture and make a personal response. A prayer room and the newly-rejuvenated prayer garden provide pupils with the opportunity for quiet reflection. Classroom prayer focal areas and vibrant displays around the school are supportive of prayer. There is a strong and flourishing partnership between the school and the parish to support pupils' participation in the carefully planned liturgical life of the school and many opportunities to celebrate special events together as a community. Inspectors observed seasonally appropriate scripture passages in worship, a year assembly, a celebration assembly and a Reconciliation service. In

all these celebrations pupils led prayers and read passages from scripture, and the music and hymns chosen enhanced the experience for all. Pupils speak with great enthusiasm of celebrating special feast days and being able to lead praying the Stations of the Cross. Pupils are proud to be able to use a cross made for them by a member of the parish community during this celebration.

The school's policy for prayer and liturgy follows the diocesan model; it is well formulated and easily accessible. Senior leaders ensure that the Eucharist is celebrated at key times throughout the year, specifically at the start of the school year, Christmas, Ash Wednesday, Easter and Holy Days of Obligation. Prayer and liturgy are clearly given a high priority within the school. Staff are well supported by senior leaders and the subject leader for religious education in planning, leading and delivering prayer and liturgy. This strong emphasis is reflected in the resources offered in terms of time, commitment and funding. Senior leaders and governors regularly undertake monitoring of prayer and liturgy as part of their cycle of self-evaluation to identify strengths and areas for development. The views of pupils are now being sought as part of this self-evaluation.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St John Fisher Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	115295
Full postal address of the school	Burney Drive. Loughton. IG10 2DY
School phone number	020 8508 6315
Name of head teacher or principal	Mr Ian Kendal
Chair of governing board	Mr John Johnson
School Website	st-johnfisher.essex.sch.uk
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	Our Lady of Fatima Catholic Multi Academy Trust
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy
Age-range of pupils	4-11
Trustees	Click or tap here to enter text.
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	12 th October 2016
Previous denominational inspection grade	Good

The inspection team

Angela Podmore	Lead inspector
Isabel Quinn	Team inspector
Laura White	Shadow Inspector
Name of inspector	Lead/team

Key to grade judgements

Grade	England	Wales
1	Outstanding	Excellent
2	Good	Good
3	Requires improvement	Adequate and requires improvement
4	Inadequate	Unsatisfactory and in need of urgent improvement