



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

URN: 139480

Carried out on behalf of the **Most Rev. Bernard Longley, Archbishop of Birmingham** on:

Date: 20-21 October 2022

|  |                                     |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| <b>Overall effectiveness</b><br>The overall quality of Catholic education provided by the school.....  | <b>3</b>                            |
| <b>Catholic life and mission (p.3)</b><br>How faithfully the school responds to the call to live as a Catholic community at the service of the Church's educational mission..... | 2                                   |
| <b>Religious education (p.5)</b><br>The quality of curriculum religious education.....   | 3                                   |
| <b>Collective worship (p.7)</b><br>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

- There is a strong sense of community at St John Fisher, which places Christ at its heart.
- Staff are positive role models for pupils, showing love and care for one another, and bearing witness to the school's Catholic life and mission.
- Pupils can articulate their knowledge of vocation as a calling from God to holiness and to the mission of evangelising the world.
- Teachers are committed to the value of religious education and its status as a core subject.
- Scripture and the Catholic tradition are central in prayer and liturgy, and in religious education, to spread God's word. Pupils are confident in using it.

What the school needs to improve:

- Raise standards in religious education so that they are consistently no less than good.
- Develop a robust and coherent training programme to ensure that all staff are empowered to contribute towards the further development of Catholic life and mission, religious education, and collective worship confidently and securely.
- Meet the requirements of the *Memorandum on Appointment of Staff in Catholic Schools*.

## 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:**.....

### Pupil outcomes

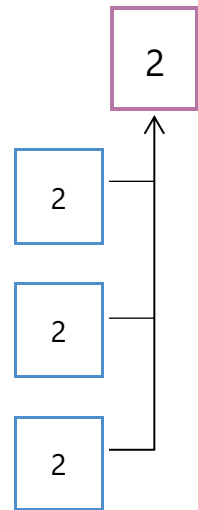
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school .....

### Provision

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

### Leadership

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



Pupils' knowledge of the mission statement, 'Let all you do be done in love', gives pupils a clear understanding of the school's Catholic identity, which they are proud to talk about and can articulate how the school's activity is influenced by it. They clearly understand that everyone is created in God's image and likeness and therefore feel happy and secure at school. Pupils understand that Jesus is essential to the community, and because of his Good News, they are responsible for caring for our common home and the common good. They are given opportunities to respond to Catholic Social Teaching through fundraising for Cafod and the Good Shepherd Appeal, and by organising litter picks in the local community. Some pupils have continued this independently near their homes without direction from the school. Pupils' response to chaplaincy activities, particularly the Mini Vinnies, is good and enjoys a celebrated status within the school.

The mission is known and lived throughout the school community because it forms a routine part of the school's provision for daily prayer. All staff are committed to promoting the school's values, which are frequently used with pupils. Staff shape the mission in various ways, such as coordinating the Bambinelli project during Advent, creating artwork for The God Who Speaks initiative, entering the diocesan vocations art competition, and coordinating the Cafod 'World Gifts' programme each Christmas. One excellent pupil-driven initiative involved the Mini Vinnies selling hand-painted coasters and using the money raised to support two new enterprise initiatives, reinforcing the concept that they can also 'loan with love'. Staff are very positive role models; they seek to personify the values at the heart of the mission and of the Catholic Schools' Pupil Profile; because they do this so successfully, they provide a good level

of pastoral care to their pupils. However, there are limited opportunities for pupils' spiritual and moral development because this is not an explicit focus of planned chaplaincy activities. Relationships, sex, and health education is planned and taught within a Catholic context, resulting in pupils' ability to talk about what they have learned in these lessons with ease and eloquence.

Leaders and governors engage well with the archdiocese in terms of Catholic life and mission, as demonstrated through their support of the charities His Grace identifies and their engagement with the Diocesan Vocations Office, which has helped them to resolve an area for improvement identified in the school's previous diocesan monitoring visit. Leaders facilitate an effective partnership with the two parishes the school serves; for example, after pupils had learnt about the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick, they wrote prayers of healing, which one of the parish priests took back to his church and is using whenever he administers the sacrament to parishioners. The whole school curriculum isn't yet planned through a Catholic lens; as such, different subject leaders are not collaborating to provide learning that reflects the richness of Catholic contributions to culture. An abundance of meticulous monitoring occurs concerning Catholic life and mission, ensuring that school improvement remains focused. However, pupils are not routinely involved in the evaluation cycle and consequently do not contribute to improvement planning. Staff training is provided, though determined by role rather than by need; targeted, bespoke training which enables staff to contribute towards making progress against the school's development plans is not currently offered. However, new staff fully engage with diocesan induction training, which is well received. To date, no evaluation has taken place against the national standards for Catholic life and mission.

## Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

**Religious education key judgement grade:**.....

### Pupil outcomes

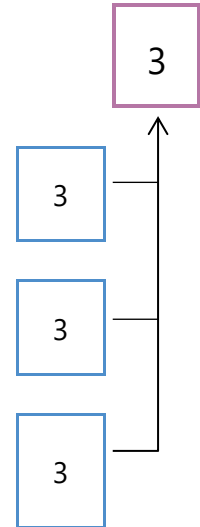
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education.....

### Provision

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

### Leadership

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



Pupils work well to do more and remember more during individual lessons, meaning most pupils progress well, particularly those with lower prior attainment. Pupils make some use of their learning to think ethically and theologically; however, teachers do not provide enough opportunities for this to happen. When teachers do write reflective questions in exercise books, pupils do not always respond, which teachers accept. Because lessons focus on teachers imparting knowledge, pupils are not given enough opportunity to ask thought-provoking questions on what they are learning about. Work produced by older pupils is more consistent in quality and presentation than that produced by younger pupils. There is an over-reliance on worksheets, which is not comparable with other core subjects and limits pupils' outcomes, particularly for those with higher prior attainment. Pupils engage well and desire to do as their teacher directs. However, when lessons are not planned to meet the needs of all, behaviour is varied. Many pupils told inspectors they frequently find it difficult to concentrate in the classroom and wished the learning environment was calmer. There are limited opportunities for pupils to self-assess their achievements; consequently, they are unclear on what they need to do to improve. Data shows that attainment is good but the assessment of the work of pupils with higher prior attainment is inaccurate; this is because they are seldom given a chance to demonstrate their achievement against the more challenging learning outcomes identified in the scheme of work.

Teachers' subject knowledge is secure, as is their commitment to the subject. However, planning is not always linked to pupils' current assessment; this is because most pupils complete the same task to the same expectation level, limiting progress. Nevertheless, pupils

with lower prior attainment and those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) learn well because teaching assistants are comprehensively prepared and highly skilled in moving learning on effectively. In the best lessons, teachers' questioning is targeted to individuals and focused on the learning objective, enabling pupils to make progress; however, this is inconsistent. Most teachers rely on hands-up when questioning, enabling pupils to opt out of learning. Adults celebrate pupils' achievements with verbal affirmations which motivate them; written feedback, however, does not align with the school's policy and so infrequently contributes to progress. Lessons across the school use a variety of teaching styles, which pupils appreciate, and are supported by good quality teaching resources.

The school is undergoing a period of change; the newly appointed subject leader has an exciting, inspiring vision for the subject and competently demonstrates the skills needed to achieve it, though he has not yet been in school long enough to implement it fully. He has, however, already begun to create opportunities to provide enrichment to the curriculum. Leaders and governors ensure that religious education has parity with other core subjects regarding timetabling and staffing; however, it is not financially resourced to the same level. The implementation of the feedback policy is also unmonitored and generally poor. Leaders do not currently ensure that teachers' planning meets the needs of all pupils, especially those with higher prior attainment; demonstrated by the fact that assessment monitoring has not identified that the more challenging learning objectives are not being provided for in classrooms. The challenge levied at religious education by leaders and governors is not as rigorous as it is for Catholic life and mission, meaning it does not advance strategic action against improvement plans as effectively. Staff training occurs and, historically, is frequent and accessible to all. To date, no evaluation has taken place against the national standards for religious education.

## Collective worship

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

Religious education 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  
.....

2

### Leadership

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

3



Pupils respond well to prayer and liturgy; they want to pray, and they have a good understanding of the importance of talking to God. They participate in various ways and demonstrate competence in silent reflection, formal prayers, praying intercessions and singing. Pupils use various resources to enhance their prayers, including liturgical music and artwork stimuli. Pupils have some opportunities to prepare and lead prayer; when they do, they are doing this with growing confidence, and they relish these opportunities. When older pupils prepare prayer, they do so entirely independently, which is excellent. Pupils do not currently evaluate the quality of the prayer and liturgy they have planned and so do not know how they would improve them in the future. Pupils understand the relationship between prayer and action, as demonstrated through their support for Ukrainian citizens experiencing warfare and refugeeism.

Prayer is central to school life because there is a daily pattern of when prayer takes place; consequently, pupils are confident and proud of their contributions. Prayer provided by the schools offers those who participate in it a range of traditional Catholic ways of praying, which further contributes to pupils' confidence in independently planning prayer. The use of Scripture is a strength at St John Fisher: it is prominent and known, and everyone is confident in using it. Pupils can talk about the lessons they've learnt from the Bible and can incorporate God's word into their prayers with ease. Staff are committed to being role models of good practice – they use gestures accurately and join in with responses confidently. Relevant staff are well-skilled in helping pupils to plan prayer; these skills need to be rolled out to all staff, so everyone is confident in meeting the school's expectations surrounding prayer. Physical space is used well to facilitate prayer; each classroom has a dedicated prayer area, and there is a

permanent outdoor prayer garden, which leaders have rightly identified as needing further development so pupils can start to use it for high quality independent prayer in their free time.

The school's policy on prayer and liturgy is well-formulated and fit for purpose. However, because it has not been made accessible, staff are unaware of what it says and are therefore disempowered from meeting the school's expectations. The 'gather, listen, respond, go forth' structure for prayer is not made explicit throughout the school, meaning pupils sometimes experience a confusing approach to prayer. Leaders know what is appropriate to include at different ages in terms of pupil-led prayer, as reflected in the policy; however, this is not yet implemented consistently as a keystone of prayer in school, resulting in a mixed understanding surrounding expectations. Sacraments, Holy Days of Obligation, and other significant days are well catered for with prayer and liturgy because leaders take this responsibility seriously. Staff training explicitly focussed on prayer is not routinely provided, further contributing to the inconsistency and varied standards in school. Closely linked to this, governors have not committed financial resources for the spiritual formation of staff to develop their understanding of prayer and liturgy; this is important, given that staff are significant influences on pupils' spiritual and moral development. Self-evaluation for prayer and liturgy occurs, though it needs to be more rigorous in how it feeds into strategic improvement planning. Governors do not hold leaders to account regarding prayer as meticulously as they do in other areas of their work. To date, no evaluation has taken place against the national standards for prayer and liturgy.



## Information about the school

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Full name of school                            | St John Fisher Catholic Primary School  |
| School unique reference number (URN)           | 139480  |
| Full postal address of the school              | Sandy Lane West, Littlemore, Oxford, OX4 6LD  |
| School phone number                            | 01865 779 676   |
| Name of head teacher or principal              | Luisa Penman (interim)  |
| Chair of governing board                       | Paul Concannon  |
| School Website                                 | <a href="https://st-john-fisher.oxon.sch.uk">https://st-john-fisher.oxon.sch.uk</a> |
| Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable) | The Pope Francis Catholic Multi Academy Company                                     |
| Type of school                                 | Primary   |
| School category                                | Academy   |
| Age-range of pupils                            | 3 to 11   |
| Trustees                                       | Archdiocese of Birmingham   |
| Gender of pupils                               | Mixed   |
| Date of last denominational inspection         | June 2016   |
| Previous denominational inspection grade       | 2   |

## The inspection team

|             |                |
|-------------|----------------|
| Ben McArdle | Lead inspector |
| Paul Madia  | Team inspector |

## 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 |