



ARCHDIOCESE OF LIVERPOOL

INSPECTION REPORT

ST. JOHN FISHER CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

HALTON

Inspection Date 1 May 2019

Inspectors Mrs Pat Peel Mrs Anne McNally

Unique Reference Number 111392

Inspection carried out under Section 48 of the Education Acts 2005 and 2011

Type of School Catholic Primary

Age range of pupils 4 - 11

Number on roll 205

Chair of Governors Mr. David Pich

Headteacher Mrs. Nichola Hegarty

School address Edward Street
Widnes
Cheshire
WA8 0BW

Telephone number 0151 424 7794

E-mail address sec.stjohnfisher@halton.gov.uk

Date of last inspection June 2014

Introduction

This inspection was carried out under Section 48 of the Education Acts 2005 and 2011

The report of the inspection is produced for the Archbishop of Liverpool (Code of Canon Law 804 and 806) and for the governors of the school.

The inspectors are members of the Christian Education Department and their associates approved by the Archbishop of Liverpool for this purpose.

Information about this school

- St. John Fisher is an average sized Catholic Primary School situated in Widnes serving the parish of St. Wilfred.
- There are children 205 on roll of whom 171 are baptised Catholic, 17 come from other Christian denominations with 4 from other religious traditions and 13 have no religious affiliation.
- There are ten teachers. Nine of which teach Religious Education. Five teachers are baptised Catholic. Two teachers have a suitable qualification in Religious Education with a further 4 currently undertaking the Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies (CCRS).
- Since the last Section 48 Inspection there has been a new Religious Education subject leader appointed.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Requires Improvement
Grade 4	Inadequate

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OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

St. John Fisher is an outstanding school in providing Catholic Education.

CATHOLIC LIFE

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

- The extent to which the pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life of the school is outstanding.
- Pupils truly appreciate, value and actively participate in the Catholic Life at St. John Fisher. They know, own and live out their Mission Statement, *'Growing through God, we learn, laugh and love'* every day.
- Pupils show a deep respect for themselves and others as made in the image and likeness of God. The behaviour of pupils is exemplary.
- In proportion to their years they show an ability to listen, to give thanks, to forgive and be forgiven. They are quick to congratulate others and have a very good understanding of right and wrong.
- Pupils successes are celebrated and rewarded with certificates at their weekly assemblies. Special awards are given out by the Eco Heroes for classes which conserve electricity by turning off lights and computers when classrooms are not in use e.g. during playtimes and lunchtimes.
- Pupils enthusiastically embrace the demands that members of the school community entails such as becoming student councillors, Eco Heroes, Junior Safety Officers, play leaders, buddies and E-safety ambassadors.
- They take a leading role in those activities which promote the schools' Catholic Life and Mission both within school and in the wider community such as fundraising for numerous charities e.g. *CAFOD, Nugent, MacMillan Cancer research, Operation Christmas Child* and the *British Legion Poppy Appeal* to name but a few. Within the locality they support *the St. Vincent de Paul Society* through their role as Mini Vinnies, the children's version of the society, *and the Widnes Food Bank*. They are alert to the needs of others and seek justice for all.
- Pupils value and fully participate in the opportunities provided by the school including a range of before, lunchtime and after school clubs such as; Mini Vinnies, High Five Netball, art and crafts, dance, homework club, problem solving club, choir and a range of seasonal sports.
- Pupils take full advantage of the opportunities the school provides for their personal support and development. They have an outstanding sense of belonging and are proud of their school. As a result, they are happy, confident and secure in their own stage of physical, emotional and spiritual growth. On the day of inspection, some of the youngest children commented on the *"calmness in the school, fun and laughter"* and that during quiet moments *"...outside places made them feel really happy."*
- Pupils, appropriate to their age and capability, have begun Relationships and Sex Education lessons within the context of a Christian understanding but needs to be further embedded into school life across the school year.

- Pupils in have lots of opportunities to undertake outdoor educational residential visits. Year 2 pupils visit The Outward Education Centre, Burwardsley in Cheshire, Year 4 pupils visit Crosby Hall Education Trust (CHET) in Liverpool and Year 6 pupils visit Conover Hall Activity Centre in Shropshire.
- Pupils enthusiastically embrace a holistic approach to education, understand what it means to have a vocation and recognise the importance of using their gifts in the service of others. They are proactive in supporting a wide range of school and community events. This is a real strength in the school. Pupils in Year 5 visit *Warrington Road Nursery School* to forge links with the youngest children in preparation for becoming their buddies in Year 6.
- The pupils are very proud of being awarded *Dementia Friends* status following training alongside the staff.
- Pupils value and respect the Catholic tradition of the school and its links with the parish community and the Archdiocese. As a result, they are involved with parish celebrations and activities, irrespective of their own faith commitments.
- Pupils feel able to express a pride in their own religious and cultural beliefs.

The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school

- The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school is outstanding.
- The school Mission Statement, "*Growing through God, we learn, laugh and love,*" truly reflects the educational mission of the Church at St. John Fisher. It underpins every aspect of school life.
- All staff are fully committed to its implementation across the curriculum. They enthusiastically participate in school activities which reflect the Catholic Life and mission of the school.
- St. John Fisher is an extremely warm, welcoming and supportive school. There is a keen sense of community at all levels, evident in the high-quality relationships and the centrality of prayer to the whole community. Laughter is certainly a key element in the school and joy is experienced everywhere.
- The school environment reflects its mission and identity through concrete and effective signs of the school's Catholic character. The aesthetically pleasing displays, classroom focus' and reflective prayer spaces all create an overwhelming yet calm ambience which exudes St. John Fisher's catholicity and ethos. This is tangible throughout the school.
- Staff, children and parents have added to a fabulous piece of artwork in the school hall which reflects the Mission Statement and what it means for them.
- Staff promote high standards of behaviour and are exemplary role models of mutual respect and forgiveness for pupils inside and outside of the classroom.
- The school benefits from a woodland area and this is used extensively across the school for all aspects of the curriculum, prayer and worship.
- The entire curriculum reflects a commitment to Catholic Social Teaching, to care for our common home and to the dignity of every human person through its fundraising, eco stewardship and numerous outreach opportunities. This is a real strength in the school.
- The school provides opportunities for the spiritual and moral development of all pupils and staff through prayer, enrichment days and continuous professional development opportunities i.e. accessing Archdiocesan training and attending Widnes schools' in-service days.
- Clear policies and structures are in place, which provide the highest levels of pastoral care for pupils, and there is an explicit and concrete commitment to the most vulnerable and needy in both policy and practice.

- The school has a nurture room and offers a variety of therapies e.g. music and art to support children who benefit greatly from this aspect of the curriculum.
- The school provides lots of opportunities for staff and pupils to undertake and support the wider community links through the Widnes Catholic school's events and transition work with St. Peter and Paul's High School.
- The school is equally attentive to the pastoral needs of members of staff and pupils and ensures that every member's needs are understood and catered for. They have an excellent relationship with the parish community and the Mini Vinnies group champion the St. Vincent de Paul Society to support a variety of local causes.
- The school has a very active Fisher Friends group which supports the school by organising social and fundraising events i.e. coffee mornings, fayres and movie nights.
- The school staff actively supports the pupils and their families undertaking the Sacraments as part of St. Wilfred's wider parish community.
- All the relevant documentation is in place and the school has made a commitment to support Relationships and Sex Education using *Journey in Love* and *No Outsiders* alongside Personal, Social and Health Education and other outside agencies.
- The school hosts 'Extra Club' wrap-around (before and after school) provision throughout the year. This is popular and very well attended.

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

- Leaders and governors are outstanding in promoting, monitoring and evaluating the provision for the Catholic Life of the school.
- The schools' leadership is deeply committed to the Church's mission in education. Leaders are energised by the task and are a source of inspiration for the whole community. The development of the Catholic Life of the school is viewed by leaders and governors as a core leadership responsibility.
- The provision for the Catholic Life of the school is given priority by leaders and is reflected in the school's self-evaluation document which is a coherent reflection of monitoring, analysis and self-challenge and is clearly focused on the Catholic Life of the school.
- Relationships at every level are outstanding. The school operates exclusively as one team who do learn, laugh and love each other and this is the key to its success.
- Continuous Professional Development focusing on the Catholic Life of the school occurs and is effective. Members of the senior leadership team have attended the Archdiocesan Spirituality Conferences and Widnes Schools Inservice days. As a result, staff understanding of the school's mission is outstanding. Staff are regularly involved in shaping and supporting it. The whole school community was recently involved in reviewing the Mission Statement.
- The school has successful strategies for engaging with parents and carers to the benefit of pupils, including those who might traditionally find working with the school difficult. The school offers an open-door policy, sends out regular questionnaires, newsletters and has an up-to-date website with a live blog. As a result, parents and carers have an outstanding understanding of the school's mission and are very supportive of it.
- As leaders, the governing body is highly ambitious for the Catholic Life of the school and leads by example in the way it emphasises Catholic Life as a school improvement priority. There is a link governor for Catholic Life and Religious Education who is proactive in the life of the school.

- The school responds well to Archdiocesan policies and initiatives and promotes the Archdiocesan vision for the Archdiocese throughout the school.
- Leaders and governors have made a commitment to further develop Relationships and Sex Education throughout the school alongside Personal, Social and Health Education.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education

- The extent to which pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education is outstanding.
- Pupils, from their varied starting points, make excellent progress in each key stage.
- Groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs, are also making progress comparable to the progress of other pupils.
- Pupils, relative to their age and capacity, are religiously literate and engaged young people; they use their knowledge, understanding and skills, to reflect spiritually, and to think ethically and theologically. Pupils are aware of the demands of religious commitment in everyday life.
- Pupils are actively engaged in lessons and are committed to improving their knowledge, understanding and skills to further develop as competent learners.
- Pupils concentrate well and understand how well they are doing. Discussions with them showed that they were very adept at making links between what they were learning and their everyday lives.
- Pupils are actively involved in further developing their own understanding using talk partners and small group discussions. They are confident and can articulate their thoughts and ideas in a mature way.
- Pupils approach their lessons with interest and enthusiasm. This was evident as pupils quickly settled to tasks and responded positively throughout.
- Pupils enjoy a range of activities and respond well to opportunities which extend their learning. Behaviour for learning is exemplary because pupils enjoy Religious Education and disruptions in lessons are unusual.
- The quality of pupils' current work, orally in class and in books, is outstanding. Pupils take pride in their workbooks and the presentation is of a very high standard. The Rejoice celebration big books started in September are a real celebration of all the work which takes place during Religious Education lessons.
- Pupils' are undertaking formal assessments in line with Archdiocesan guidance and evidence kept.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education is outstanding.
- On the day of inspection there was some outstanding practice observed with nothing less than good. Teachers and other adults used the language of the standards i.e. driver words routinely as part of their repertoire to enhance pupils growing awareness of challenge during lessons. The school has recognised that they need to address this further to enable more able pupils to attain greater depth.
- Staff are using the most up to date Archdiocesan template for planning Religious Education.

- Teachers plan very good lessons and use the language of the standards i.e. driver words. It is linked to pupils' on-going assessment and will improve even further as the new interim standards become more familiar over the coming months.
- Teachers are confident in their subject knowledge and have a very good understanding of how pupils learn.
- Teachers employ a range of appropriate strategies, including individual, paired and collaborative work. Consequently, pupils are inspired, motivated and concentrate extremely well in lessons.
- There is evidence in books of continuity in lessons and across sequences of lessons. Parents are routinely invited to celebration assemblies where pupils share aspects of their Religious Education topics.
- Throughout lessons teachers used questioning techniques very well. They adapted explanations and tasks using the language of the standards i.e. driver words catering for the needs of all pupils.
- Formal assessments are undertaken in line with Archdiocesan guidance and portfolios of evidence kept. These are shared and moderated at the Widnes school's cluster meetings to ensure exemplars of best practice are up to date and relevant.
- Enjoyment of and enthusiasm for Religious Education is promoted using high-quality resources e.g. Come and See website, God's and Church's Story, audio and visual media, iPads, etc.
- Other adults are used very effectively to optimise learning for pupils who need their support. During lessons they work hard to develop pupils' confidence in undertaking and completing tasks.
- Evidence in books shows that marking is very positive.
- Achievement and effort are celebrated immediately leading to outstanding levels of motivation from pupils.
- Pupils have studied Judaism. This is an area the school has recognised needs further development to enhance this area of the curriculum. This helps to promote tolerance and respect for others of a different Faith or religion.

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education

- Leaders and governors are outstanding in promoting, monitoring and evaluating the provision for Religious Education.
- Leaders and governors ensure that the Religious Education curriculum meets the requirements of the Bishops' Conference in every respect in each key stage.
- Leaders and governors ensure that Religious Education has full parity with other core curriculum subjects including professional development, resourcing, staffing and accommodation. The subject leader regularly attends Archdiocesan in-service training and meets together with the Widnes school's cluster to support monitoring and evaluation of the subject. There is a great commitment to staff undertaking Continuous Professional Development in all aspects of leadership in the school.
- Since the last inspection the *Come and See* programme has been fully implemented across the school and all relevant documentation e.g. planning, monitoring and tracking are fully embedded.
- Leaders' and governors' self-evaluation of Religious Education is a coherent reflection of rigorous assessment, tracking, monitoring, searching analysis and self-challenge which is informed by best practice in Religious Education.

- Considering the Bishops directive to implement the new standards of assessment, the school has developed whole school tracking in line with other core curriculum subjects. Leaders are currently monitoring this to ensure both its efficiency and effectiveness in raising standards further.
- The subject leader for Religious Education is a real strength in the school and has worked hard to seamlessly take over the role and make it her own. Colleagues say that they value her support and guidance. She has a high level of expertise, is enthusiastic and totally committed to ensuring pupils needs are met. Since the monitoring visit she has continued to drive forward the subject and is endeavouring to further improve teaching and learning in Religious Education.
- Leaders and governors ensure that Religious Education is planned to meet the needs of different groups of pupils. There is a link governor for Religious Education who supports the subject leader in her role. He is proactive in working with the school and has undertaken a learning walk with some of the pupils.

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship

- Pupils response to and participation in the school's Collective Worship is outstanding.
- Pupils are developing a firm foundation for liturgy and join in collective responses appropriately.
- Pupils act with reverence and are keen to participate in Collective Worship. Pupils commented that they really enjoyed their quiet times and *"know Jesus is listening to us when we pray because he is always with us."*
- They sing joyfully, reflect in silence and join in community prayer appropriately and with confidence.
- Pupils are involved in planning, preparing and leading aspects of worship with confidence, enthusiasm and a degree of independence.
- Pupils use a variety of approaches to prayer which includes scripture, religious artefacts, liturgical music and other forms of prayer.
- Pupils value and participate voluntarily in liturgy and prayer and say that they really enjoy taking part in Collective Worship.
- Pupils have an outstanding understanding of the Church's liturgical year, its seasons and feasts and the approaches this requires in the planning of appropriate worship opportunities.
- The experience of living and working in a faithful, praying community has a positive impact on the spiritual and moral development of pupils, irrespective of ability or faith background.

The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school

- The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school is outstanding.
- Collective Worship is a core part of the life at St. John Fisher and prayer is included in all school celebrations. Praying together is part of the daily experience for pupils and staff. On the day of the inspection a member of staff led a very joyous, quality act of worship which was inspired by the heartfelt Mission of the school.

- Staff regularly use 'Come and See for Yourself' Collective Worship materials prior to beginning a new Religious Education topic alongside their own weekly Collective prayer times.
- Collective Worship and resourcing is given a high priority in the school. Portfolios of evidence are collated for monitoring purposes.
- Collective Worship has a clear purpose, message and direction. Evidence suggests these experiences for both pupils and staff are very reflective and prayerful.
- The woodland area and other reflective spaces around school are used to great effect throughout the year to support Collective Worship experiences.
- Relevant staff have an excellent understanding of the Church's liturgical year, seasons and feasts and ensure that pupils have outstanding experiences of the Church's liturgical life.
- Opportunities for Collective Worship are planned in a manner that facilitates attendance by other adults associated with the pupils and school. The school has recognised that this is an area they want to continue developing over the coming months in an effort to reach out to more parents and carers.
- The parish priest supports the work of the school. He presides at celebrations of the Eucharist and at other key celebrations throughout the liturgical year.

How well leaders, governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship

- Leaders and governors are outstanding in promoting, monitoring and evaluating the provision for Collective Worship.
- Leaders know how to provide policies and guidelines to plan and deliver quality Collective Worship. There is a policy in place for Collective Worship.
- Collective Worship resources are regularly audited, and new ones purchased to enhance Collective Worship experiences as necessary.
- Leaders have an excellent understanding of the Church's liturgical year, seasons and feasts.
- Leaders of Collective Worship within the school are excellent models of good practice for staff and pupils.
- Leaders promote pupils' planning and leading Collective Worship. By staff facilitating throughout worship opportunities they ensure meaningful, quality experiences are delivered.
- Leaders and governors have made a commitment to enhance the prayer life of the school. There is a link governor for Collective Worship.

What the school needs to do to improve further

- Further develop the work being undertaken in Catholic Life by:
 - continuing to embed '*Journey in Love*' and '*No Outsiders*' into lessons throughout the school year to support Relationships and Sex Education alongside Personal, Social and Health Education;
 - making a commitment to increase the number of staff undertaking and completing the Catholic Certificate for Religious Studies (CCRS);
 - continuing to address the areas identified on the Self Evaluation Document.
- Raise the Standards of Attainment in Religious Education further by:
 - Continuing to develop and evaluate the new tracking system for Religious Education considering the changes to assessment in line with the requirements of the Bishops of England and Wales.

INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

How effective the school is in providing Catholic Education	1
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CATHOLIC LIFE

The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school	1
The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school	1
How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school	1

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education	1
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education	1
How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education	1

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship	1
The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school	1
How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship	1

Key to judgements: Grade 1 is Outstanding, Grade 2 Outstanding, Grade 3 Requires Improvement and Grade 4 Inadequate