



## ARCHDIOCESE OF LIVERPOOL

### INSPECTION REPORT

### ST JOHN FISHER CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

### WIDNES

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Inspection Date 10 June 2014

Inspectors Mrs Marie Connolly Mrs Maria Eves

Unique Reference Number 111392

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

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Type of School Catholic Primary

Age range of pupils 4-11

Number on roll 227

Chair of Governors Mr D Pich

Headteacher Mrs Marcella Armstrong

School address Edward Street  
Widnes  
Cheshire  
WA8 0BW

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Date of last inspection 4 October 2011

# 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 the same name.
- There are 227 children on roll of whom 191 are baptised Catholic. There are 19 children from other Christian denominations and 17 from other religious traditions.
- There are 12 full time teachers, 11 of whom teach Religious Education. Currently 6 have a suitable qualification in Religious Education and a further 3 are currently undertaking the Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies. 8 teachers are baptised Catholic.
- The same headteacher has been in post since the last inspection. However, the deputy has replaced the previous subject lead. Also there has been a significant change in staff.

### Key for inspection grades

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

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Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school.

## Overall effectiveness:

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

## Inspection Judgements

### **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 know and understand the school's Mission Statement and delight in the part they play within it. They are regularly involved in its evaluation.
- The Mission Statement 'Follow Jesus, Enjoy Learning and Achieve the Best You Can' along with its aims and some practical objectives makes explicit the Christian values by which the school operates. Many fabulous display areas created by the whole school using extensive media and resources along with photographic evidence are excellent reminders of how the school puts its mission into practice on a daily basis. It would be good to allow parents and others to walk around the school to enjoy the wide variety of display work. It is truly inspirational.
- Assemblies and Collective Worship regularly reflect the values of the Mission Statement. Pupils have a tremendous sense of belonging to this school family and value and respect others.
- Positive, warm and caring relationships at every level are a key feature of the school. The whole school shares a common vision and their joy in their work is clearly evident in the manner in which individuals share their gifts with each other.
- Pupils are encouraged to take on roles of responsibility in the school and wider community from their earliest years e.g. school councillors, playground buddies, sports ambassadors, etc.
- Pupils are actively involved in developing the Catholic character of the school by planning and delivering Collective Worship, membership of the school council and involvement in charity work e.g. Dress Down and Donate and collecting for Comic Relief. The Key Stage 2 choir which is run by the link governor for Religious Education sing in the parish and local community e.g. at the local nursing home.
- Opportunities are provided to support children's spirituality and social and emotional development e.g. through discussion and times of reflection in Collective Worship and lessons and residential trips. They show curiosity, are imaginative and intuitive and understand what makes them who they are. Their 'Floor Books' books are a great source of evidence.
- Pupils have a good sense of right and wrong and apply this in their personal relationships. They take an increasing responsibility for themselves and their actions. Anti-bullying week and the school's code of conduct support this. Class rules are drawn up collaboratively and rewards and sanctions are appreciated. The children know this is a safe place to make mistakes as well as shine. Children praise and acknowledge the contribution of others freely.
- Pupils embrace opportunities to meet their potential in all aspects of school life. They show a wholehearted readiness to celebrate their lived experiences. Equal opportunities are provided for all. There is a wealth of evidence to supports all of this.
- 'Rainbows' training has taken place to support children who have suffered loss through death, divorce or separation.

- Staff and pupils are involved in service to the local faith and religious communities e.g., fundraising for CAFOD etc.
- They show respect and understanding of other faiths and religions.

### **How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education**

- Pupils' achievements and enjoyment in Religious Education is outstanding.
- Their attainment in Religious Education is outstanding.
- They make outstanding progress in relation to their starting points and capabilities.
- On entry to school many children have little or no knowledge and understanding of the Catholic faith.
- There is no difference in performance between pupils of different gender.
- Outcomes for pupils with additional or special needs are outstanding. Excellent differentiation and support of pupils from additional staff is in place.
- Analysis of assessments undertaken provides evidence of pupils generally attaining at least appropriate levels for their age and stage of development in each key stage. A percentage of pupils exceed this.
- Pupils are becoming increasingly more religiously literate. Their knowledge, understanding and skills are developing appropriate to their age or capacity. Assessment indicates that this is improving steadily each year. School tracking reinforces these findings and enables teachers target individuals..
- Pupils are developing the skills that enable them to reflect spiritually, think ethically and theologically and are becoming more aware of the demands of religious commitment in everyday life. They are becoming increasingly more confident in expressing their views. Powerful examples of this are to be found in workbooks. These are exemplary.
- Pupils' engagement in and enjoyment of their learning is outstanding as shown by their interest, enthusiasm and outstanding behaviour.
- Pupils are encouraged to work independently and collaboratively and do so extremely well.
- Their ability to grasp opportunities to extend and improve their knowledge, understanding and develop skills is exceptional.

### **How well pupils respond to and participate in Collective Worship**

- Pupils' response to and participation in Collective Worship is outstanding.
- They show interest, respond wholeheartedly and actively participate in Collective Worship
- They act with reverence and are keen to participate in a variety of gatherings and a range of ways.
- Pupils' knowledge of prayer and liturgy is increasing. They become familiar with a variety of prayer styles. They pray sincerely and movingly, reflect in silence and join in community prayers appropriately and with confidence.
- They appreciate and are open to the Word of God in the scriptures.
- They sing joyfully, and respond with actions most wholeheartedly.
- They are becoming increasingly more confident preparing and leading worship from their earliest years and do so with enthusiasm. This has been an area of significant development since the last inspection. Use of the Archdiocesan resource cards will support them further.

## **The quality of teaching and how purposeful learning is in Religious Education**

- The quality of teaching and purposeful learning in Religious Education is outstanding.
- It is consistently effective in ensuring that pupils are interested and engaged and make outstanding progress. This has improved since the last inspection.
- Teachers display excellent subject knowledge and deploy a wide range of teaching styles to motivate and inspire pupils. The calm but highly creative way this is undertaken consistently throughout the school is a real strength.
- Teaching encourages pupils' enjoyment of and enthusiasm for Religious Education. Expectations are consistently high and pupils respond well to the challenge.
- Teachers take into account pupils' prior learning and ensure differentiated tasks when planning so that the work consolidates, builds and extends their knowledge and understanding. Teaching Assistants contribute significantly by recording children's responses in discussion and plenary sessions.
- Teachers provide opportunities for pupils to work independently and collaboratively. Good use is made of time and excellent resources including other adults e.g. governors and Information Communication Technology to maximise learning. The Parish priest supports Religious Education. This is appreciated by staff and children.
- Pupils are informed of their progress and how to improve both orally and through empathetic and affirming marking. This is undertaken by each class teacher. Effort and achievement are celebrated regularly.
- The quality of work produced by the children is of a consistently high standard. Beautifully presented work is evidence of the secure learning that takes place throughout the school.
- The assessment of pupils work in Religious Education is outstanding.
- The school has excellent assessment and moderation strategies which provide accurate and detailed information on the achievement of all the pupils.
- Teachers are able to identify how well pupils are achieving and tackle underachievement.
- Teachers enable pupils to evaluate their own work simply during the plenary in lessons. When the driver words are used in plenary sessions attainment is much clearer. Pasting curriculum outlines in children's workbooks to identify expectations for each topic and allowing children to highlight their own achievement will further support this.

## **The extent to which the Religious Education Curriculum promotes pupils' learning**

- The extent to which the Religious Education Curriculum promotes pupils' learning is outstanding.
- The curriculum is outstanding in meeting pupils' needs.
- The school, using the *Come and See* programme recommended by the Archdiocese, meets the requirements of the Curriculum Directory for Religious Education. Appropriate levels of the programme are being followed in different classes. This ensures complete Religious Education entitlement for each child and meets National and Archdiocesan requirements.
- Planning ensures full coverage of the Religious Education programme. Imaginative and well planned strategies are deployed to enrich pupils' learning. Teachers are adapting planning as their experience of the programme develops.
- Of the total curriculum time 10% is allocated to Religious Education. This fulfils the requirements of the Bishops of England and Wales.
- The school implements new curriculum developments thoroughly as appropriate.
- Enrichment activities such as role play, art, drama, innovative and excellent use of ICT, music and other creative cross curricular links have a positive impact on the curriculum.

- The Religious Education curriculum provides outstanding opportunities for pupils' spiritual, moral development and vocation. This was seen first-hand on the day of inspection. The curriculum is customised to meet the needs of groups and individuals.
- Children have explored the beliefs and values of other faiths and religions. This helps to promote tolerance and respect for those who think differently. The school has benefitted from visiting speakers and visits to places of worship for other religions.

### **The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school.**

- The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school is outstanding. It reflects the Catholic character of the school and takes into account the faith backgrounds among the pupils.
- Collective Worship has a high profile and is central to the life of the school. A wide range of liturgical celebrations take place throughout the year.
- Collective Worship plays a key part in meeting the spiritual needs of the pupils. Opportunities are provided to enable full, active and conscious participation of the whole school community. Collective Worship takes place in many venues around the school – indoor and outdoor.(As on the day of Inspection)
- Children are enabled to pray formally and informally using a variety of prayer methods and styles. The school provides opportunities for staff to develop the skills in planning, leading and evaluating Collective Worship. Monitoring of Collective Worship identifies areas of strength and development.
- The teachers provide the necessary resources and opportunities to help children to develop the skills necessary to plan, lead and participate in Collective Worship and to evaluate it effectively. Use of the Collective Worship resource cards provided by the Archdiocese will further help children in planning, leading and evaluating Collective Worship.
- This will also help children grow in confidence and support their liturgical formation.
- Opportunities are provided for parents, carers the local and wider faith communities to participate in a variety of celebrations of the *Come and See* programme and the Church's liturgical year. The Kingfishers prayer/reflection group runs after school each week. All this is greatly appreciated and parents and others have commented on how moving these celebrations are.
- Staff regularly reflect and pray together. This was most moving on the day of Inspection and clearly enhances the 'family life' of the school.

### **How well leaders, governors and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic life of the school and plan and implement improvement to outcomes for pupils.**

- Leaders, governors and managers are outstanding in promoting monitoring and evaluating the provision for the Catholic life of the school and in the way they plan and implement improvement to outcomes for pupils.
- This is reflected in the school's own Mission Statement. All who form part of the school community including parents, clergy, governors and children were involved in the development and review of the Mission Statement.
- Leaders, governors and managers are outstanding in the way they monitor and use their findings to evaluate the schools performance, celebrate, and plan future improvements. The link governor for Religious Education has created a beautiful scrap book of all the newsletters sent to parents this year. The time, care and effort put into creating this record of school life is a perfect example of the love expressed in their work.

- Outstanding opportunities are provided for the staff and pupils to play an active part in Catholic life and Mission of the school e.g. celebrations, services, fundraising projects and community links. Innumerable beautiful displays all around the school serve as a constant reminder to all of the school's Mission and vision. They know, own and live out their Mission beautifully.
- The Self Evaluation Document provides evidence of the schools monitoring, searching analysis and self challenge.
- Their analysis provides a basis to celebrate the school's strengths and outlining areas for development. The inspectors agreed with the school's accurate grading of itself. The experience of Catholic life for the whole school community and witness to it is exemplary.
- The school provides excellent induction and in-service training to enable staff to further understand the Church's Mission in Education and play their unique part in it. Excellent and coherent documentation has been produced to support staff. Items relating to Religious Education and the Catholic life of the school are to be found on the school's website.
- Teachers planning and workbooks are monitored regularly by the Religious Education subject leader, headteacher and link governor and feedback given individually and at staff meetings when common areas need to be identified for celebration or development. Staff are encouraged to attend in-service provided by The Department for Christian Education as well as specific training for Newly qualified teachers. The quality of Collective Worship has been a priority for the school. It is effectively monitored and evaluated by leaders, governors and managers and children. An up to date policy is in place.
- Innumerable opportunities for spiritual and moral developments are provided for staff and pupils such as use of 'Come and See for Yourself, beautiful displays and objects of beauty around the school enable all to appreciate their worth and nurture their self-esteem.
- Leadership at all levels respects difference, values diversity and ensures equal opportunities for all.
- There are positive relationships at every level within the school. Every person knows they are valued and the part they play in the school family is regularly affirmed because of the nurturing approach of the senior leadership team
- Parents are consulted regularly and involved in a variety of ways in the life of the school e.g. through newsletters, meetings and questionnaires.
- Governors are excellent in fulfilling their responsibilities. They have effectively helped to shape the direction of the school through review of the Mission Statement, rigorous monitoring and evaluation, regular involvement in the day to day life of the school and development of the Improvement plan. Along with the leadership team they check timetabling and spending.

**How well leaders, governors and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Religious Education of the school and plan and implement improvement to outcomes for pupils.**

- Leaders, governors and managers are outstanding in promoting monitoring and evaluating the provision for the Religious Education of the school and in the way they plan and implement improvement to outcomes for pupils.
- Monitoring data is used most effectively to evaluate the schools performance and plan for future improvements.
- There is a robust programme for the monitoring and evaluation cycle. Governors visit the school and meet with the children to discuss their work. This has helped them to see first-hand a broad picture of practice and identify strengths and areas for development alongside the subject leader.
- Teaching and learning is monitored regularly and appropriate feedback and support given as necessary. Good practice is shared and celebrated.

- Continuing professional development opportunities are provided for all.
- Assessment information is collated and tracked by the subject and senior leader and is to be shared and celebrated with governors.
- Formal assessment tasks are undertaken in line with Archdiocesan guidance.
- The subject leader, supported by the headteacher is truly outstanding in guiding Religious Education. She has shown real commitment and creativity introducing new initiatives promptly when appropriate. She is wholehearted in the manner in which she nurtures others. Excellent documentation guides and directs all staff in the delivery of the subject. This is updated as necessary.
- The Self Evaluation Document is rigorous in identifying targets, timescales and lines of accountability. This is updated as soon as new areas for development are identified.
- Curriculum outlines are provided for parents who are consulted on different issues depending on the topic being covered.
- Achievement and effort are celebrated in a multitude of ways. This is a real characteristic of the school and helps to explain the wonderful caring and happy family atmosphere permeating the school.
- The school leadership is wholehearted in its willingness to support other schools in any area relating to Religious Education. This is exemplary.

## **What the school needs to do to improve further?**

Continue to celebrate, consolidate and share the outstanding practice in all areas.

Provide more practical objectives to show how the Mission Statement is being lived out on a daily basis.

Introduce the Archdiocesan resource cards to further support children's planning and leadership of Collective Worship.

Share the detailed findings on school tracking sheets to inform Governors of attainment and progress and celebrate achievement.



# INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

## **OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS**

How effective the school is in providing Catholic Education	1
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## **OUTCOMES FOR PUPILS**

<b>How good outcomes are for individuals and groups of pupils</b>	
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school	1
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education	1
How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship	1

## **PROVISION**

<b>How effective the provision is for Catholic Education</b>	
The quality of teaching and how purposeful learning is in Religious Education	1
The extent to which the Religious Education curriculum promotes pupils' learning	1
The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school	1

## **LEADERS AND MANAGERS**

<b>How effective leaders, governors and managers are in developing the Catholic Life of the School</b>	
How well leaders, governors and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic life of the school and plan and implement improvement to outcomes for pupils	1
How well leaders, governors and managers monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education and plan and implement improvement to outcomes for pupils	1

**Key to judgements: Grade 1 is outstanding, Grade 2 good, Grade 3 requires improvement and Grade 4 inadequate**