

NAHT ASPIRE Peer Review Report

School:	St John Fisher Catholic Primary School
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Review dates:	25 & 26 September 2019	Completed by: Tracy Higgins
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Format for this report

This report consists of: a graphical summary of the school against the selected Features from the School Development Rubric, a copy of the School Development Rubric with specific descriptors highlighted to show a current baseline, and by implication some of the next steps, and a summary of school strengths and proposed areas for development.

Strengths and possible next steps for the school

Leadership

St John Fisher Catholic Primary is a friendly, welcoming and inclusive school, where children and staff live out the school's vision to achieve their full potential and shine! The vision states this will be achieved through engagement, high expectations and treating all with respect and dignity. Through the Review, it was evident that the vision drives everything at St John Fisher and the whole school community is 100% committed to playing a part in it. As a result, children make good progress academically, personally, socially and spiritually; children are able to give clear examples of how they 'show respect and shine' in lessons and during the school day.

Leaders have a clear, accurate picture of school strengths and have identified three key priorities for 2019-2020 based on self-evaluation:

- developing leadership at all levels
- further improving standards in mathematics and writing
- implementing the curriculum so it has maximum impact on learning

Self-evaluation informs the school development plan, which is concise, focused with clear actions that are evaluated against success criteria. Leaders and Governors have a three-year strategic school development plan and take a long term view of the direction of the school and this includes plans for a designated science block to inspire the children in STEM subjects.

Leadership, including governance, is clearly distributed through school and there is a strong culture of teamwork, openness and relational trust, with all staff and governors appreciating the positive workplace culture that embraces and empowers everyone. Recent additions to the leadership structure have had a positive impact on staff wellbeing and leaders at all levels are clear about their roles and responsibilities and how they link to the vision and school priorities. Leaders, including those newly appointed, are empowered to lead, know what they are accountable for and can articulate the impact of their actions, citing evidence.

Leaders manage change well and ensure the school's vision, mission and school improvement priorities are central to all decision-making and the way new systems and strategies are introduced and implemented. They empower teachers and learners to take risks and be solution focused. Teachers are encouraged to share practice and expertise in

Staff Forums, where teachers prepare and present a 15 minute talk about a field of education they have extensive knowledge and/or a specific interest in. Additionally, the school ensure staff access professional development opportunities in line with school priorities. There are plans to extend this to teaching assistants.

Teamwork is effective and productive and meetings are well planned with clear agendas and protocols. The Review highlighted a culture of collaboration amongst all stakeholders and a genuine willingness to share, support and take collective responsibility.

Across the school, teaching is highly effective and the children's learning to learn behaviours are exemplary, as a result of the 'Learning Powers' which are embedded, linked to vision and the behaviour strategy. During lesson visits, children across all the school were able to explain and demonstrate Learning Powers. For example, a KS2 pupil said 'absorption means fully focused on you work, concentrating and not being distracted.'

The governing body provides exceptionally strong leadership, sharing the school's vision and values. They have a wide range of skills that meet the strategic needs of the school and purposefully seek specific skills when there is a governor vacancy. They have also proved to be highly effective at recruitment, intentionally considering both specific skills and school fit.

Learning Environment

The St John Fisher mission, 'Believe in the light so you will be children of the light.' John 12:36 captures the Catholic distinctiveness of the school and puts children at its heart. The physical environment, positive learning culture and caring relationships all affirm value and importance the school places on each and every child.

Leaders, staff and children show their understanding of behaviour expectations through their exemplary behaviours, attitudes and language. The children feel appreciated and cared for in their inclusive and aspirational school, where learning is exciting and the curriculum innovative.

Learning spaces across the school are purposeful, well designed and used to maximise learning. The newly established nursery classroom and EYFS outdoor landscaping enriches the learning experience and promotes both physical development and the development of children's curiosity. Displays are high quality, stimulating and consistently reflect the vision and values. Learning Powers are evident in all classrooms and regular reference is made to them by staff and pupils, which has a positive impact on metacognition and learning to learn behaviours. Communal displays celebrate whole school project work from summer 2019 and community events. The environment reflects school priorities, e.g. inviting reading areas in classrooms, the well organised library and 'Reading Spine' and the Mr and Mrs Potato Head display to encourage good attendance! Reviewers spoke of there being a constancy and flow to the learning environment that reflects the school ethos.

Learner Voice is valued. The Shining Lights are involved in decision-making and have had direct input into areas such as charitable events and the playgrounds. During the review they articulated school strengths and gave positive feedback about the learning at SJF. It was evident they are proud to attend the school and appreciate how the teachers make learning 'interesting and exciting'. Leaders plan to develop the learner voice system, so that it impacts on teacher planning and lesson design.

The school offers a wide range of extra-curricular activities, which enhance the curriculum and promote the development of personal and social skills. Pupils benefit from a range of visits and experiences. It was evident through pupil and parent discussion that the broad range of opportunities on offer motivate and engage pupils and enhance their learning.

Pedagogy and Curriculum

Leaders have a determined focus to ensure teaching and learning is as effective as possible and have a sophisticated grasp of the elements of effective teaching, which they have captured under the headings: *High Expectation, Engagement, Feedback and Independence*. This model underpins monitoring and evaluation, helps focus professional development and provides a common language to discuss teaching strengths and next steps. Lesson visits highlighted that lessons are well designed with clear learning intentions. Tasks are pitched to meet learners needs with pre-teach sessions used to support children in keeping up. Challenge extend learning. Teacher subject knowledge is good and teaching is highly effective across the school.

Staff take ownership of their professional development and talk articulately about what they are teaching and the pedagogical approaches used. There is a culture of professionalism and Teaching Assistants are involved in most aspects of CPD. Staff led presentations (Forums) are established and staff rise to the challenge of imparting information on specific areas of interest, such as, 'tummy time' 'learning disposition' 'metacognition' and 'well-being'. These Forums take place during staff meetings, are varied and research based.

The school ensure teachers have opportunities to visit lessons in other schools and within St John Fisher; sharing good practice is part of the culture and staff support for each other high. The school could develop this practice by establishing coaching pairs to share best practice, in particular focused on how GD pupils are supported through visiting lessons.

Reviewers commented upon the genuine teaching – with no show! Teaching is authentic. Routines and structures are well developed and language i.e. Learning Powers, embedded. Teachers engage and inspire the children, e.g. in the Y6 maths lesson, further challenges were represented in a new format to challenge thinking. Through school, teachers use questions to support deeper thinking. The school are ambitious to improve outcomes for GD pupils. They use Comparative Judgement to support the standardisation of work across a range of subjects, highlighting age-related and greater depth pieces.

Curriculum coverage is well thought through and the school have adapted their approach to foundation subjects, timetabling subjects in discrete lessons and/or learning blocks. Subject Leaders are clear about the vision for the curriculum and how their subject contributes to this; they champion their subjects, provide staff with clear overview of the intended coverage in the form of 'knowledge organisers' and skills documentation. Learning is well designed, learning objectives and success criteria are understood and used by pupils to support progress. All lessons were pitched well and high expectations are evident across the school. Investing in the development of leaders across the school is a school priority.

Assessment for Learning

Leaders have an in depth understanding of the performance of cohorts, groups, sub-groups and individual pupils. Until recently, the Headteacher took a lead role on assessment. In light of the new leadership structure, there is a focus on ensuring senior, middle, subject leaders and teachers have ownership of data and use data analysis to inform and adapt pedagogical approaches to support individual and groups of pupils.

Targeted data is collected termly, analysed efficiently and used to focus pupil progress meetings and discussions between leaders and class teachers. Class teachers prepare for the meetings which are solution focused. Target groups of pupils are carefully monitored throughout the year with teachers ensuring provision is well matched enabling the learners to make good progress. In Pupil Progress Meetings teachers discuss children who are not making expected progress or who need to make accelerated progress to achieve ARE or GD.

The school has a culture of informal dialogue and staff take collective responsibility for the pupils in their care. As a result, informal dialogue about pupils not making expected progress is a regular feature of staffroom discussion.

Learners enjoy a range of focused feedback to which they respond well. They are clear about what they need to do to improve and are able to talk with confidence about their progress. When asked to share pieces of work that they were proud of the majority of learners chose pieces that had been challenging at first, but where they had succeeded in overcoming hurdles and making progress.

Changes to the marking and feedback policy have improved its efficiency and had an impact on improving pupil self-assessment. The use of visualisers was observed to address misconceptions and model expectations. The school is now working on further improving pupil response to feedback to improve consistency.

Foundation subjects tracking is clear, manageable and provides an overview of pupil attainment and progress. It is less in depth than core subjects but enables foundation subject leads to know the strengths, development areas and trends in their subjects. Subject Leads monitor and evaluate learners' work and learning and have a good grasp of standards. End of year data shows attainment and progress across foundation subjects. Subject leaders have an accurate picture of strengths and development areas. The school aims to review this in December 2019 when newly established staff have analysed data.

Student and Family Support

The Inclusion Team are passionate about supporting vulnerable children and have extensive subject knowledge. The SENCO and Learning Mentor roles are invaluable in providing targeted and ongoing support to the staff team, who are keen to ensure no vulnerable child is missed. Teachers are aware of the vulnerable learners and take responsibility for planning for their individual needs. Professional development is focused on ensuring staff are equipped to support the children in their care. Recently, staff have embarked on mental health training and have had opportunities to share concerns and approaches.

Strategies to promote and ensure equality and inclusion are central to all aspects of school life. This was confirmed through pupil, parent, teaching and support staff, feedback, as well as in SLT discussions throughout the Peer Review. The Inclusion Team are dedicated to serving children and families, and this was noted and appreciated by governors, staff and parents. The inclusion meeting cycle is effective, embedded and ensures the needs of all vulnerable learners are addressed in timely way. Systems are simple, manageable and staff are proactive and on board. The school work well with external agencies and evaluate their effectiveness but this is not formally evidenced. The Inclusion Team are considering introducing a benchmarking agenda item onto Inclusion Team Meetings.

Parents spoke with warmth and affection about the school. They appreciate the range of activities on offer. They say home-school communication is good. They feel respected, valued and that their ideas are sought and acted upon. There is a good partnership between the school and home and the parents are very supportive of the school. Attendance at Parents evenings is high. Some pupils attend parent consultations and play an active part in them. The school are considering developing this further in the form of a teacher/parent/child conference which leads to all three parties agreeing and committing to specific next steps to improve the child's progress.

The parents interviewed appreciate the ethos, say teachers are approachable, their children make excellent progress and are delighted their children attend St John Fisher. They said their overwhelmingly positive views were representative of all parents.

Vulnerabilities

Vulnerabilities are defined as likely to cause performance issues that could lead to an RI Ofsted judgement and/or likely to cause significant limitation on further improvement of achievement.

No vulnerabilities were identified from the self-evaluation or peer review process.

Suggested opportunities and strategies for development

1. To build on the learner voice opportunities already established in the school, by establishing more formal learner voice systems and ensure that learners actively engage and participate in the decision making processes that influence learning provision and the learning environment, including displays. This will support the focus on metacognition and develop the learner voice system, so that it impacts on teacher planning and lesson design.
2. To align the best strengths in teaching to further improve pupil progress and consistency across school, by developing a cycle of planned opportunities for teachers to visit each other's lessons and these are structured to ensure professional development. The school could develop this practice by establishing coaching pairs to share best practice, in particular focused on the provision for 'greater depth'.
3. Leaders are keen to formalise and evidence teacher discussions. Additionally, Edison Learning Achievement Teams could be a useful forum for teachers to solution plan in teacher teams, adapting pedagogical approaches to accelerate progress for named students.
4. Consider introducing Pupil led Parent Conferences where children explain and explore their learning with parents and teachers sharing evidence of their successes and recognising their challenges. To do this effectively learners prepare for the meetings by self and peer assessing, discussing their progress and attainment with adults in class and sharing learner voice.

Tracy Higgins
Lead Reviewer

Summative Review Outcomes

Key to stage of development

	Emerging
	Developing
	Established
	Leading

Leadership		Learning Environment	
Feature	Stage	Feature	Stage
A Vision and values		A Core values	
B Distributed leadership		B Behaviour and relationships	
C A culture of teamwork		C Using spaces to promote learning	
D Leadership structure and the role of the Leadership Team		D Displays for learning	
E Leading teaching and learning		E Learner voice	
F Self-evaluation and development planning		F Learner enrichment	
G Commitment to school improvement priorities			
H Accountability and recognition			
I Change management			
J Teacher development and effectiveness			
K Governance			

Pedagogy & Curriculum		Assessment for Learning	
Feature	Stage	Feature	Stage
A Effective learning and teaching		A Data driven decision making	
B Matching teaching with learning		B Tracking learner progress	
C Teachers' planning for learning		C Teacher teamwork to improve learner progress	
D Teachers' application of subject knowledge, understanding and skills		D Assessment and goal setting	
E Learning and life skills		E Language for learning: objectives and next steps	
F Mathematical and literacy skills		F Self and peer assessment	
G Formative feedback			
H Curriculum entitlement			
I Professional learning			
J Collaborative planning and sharing of best practice			

K Teachers' commitment to reflection and self-improvement			
Student and Family Support			
Feature	Stage		
A Planning for the needs of all learners			
B Teamwork to support vulnerable learners			
C Learner support team			
D Learning conversations with vulnerable learners			
E Partnering with external agencies			
F Learner-led meetings with parents			
G Engaging families			