



QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW

REVIEW REPORT FOR ST JOHN FISHER CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Name of School:	St John Fisher Catholic Primary School
Headteacher/Principal:	Claire Lewis
Hub:	Aspire
School phase:	Primary (Voluntary Aided)
MAT (if applicable):	Not applicable

Overall Peer Evaluation Estimate at this QA Review:	Effective
Date of this Review:	16/05/2022
Overall Estimate at last Consultancy	Not applicable
Date of last Consultancy	28/06/2021
Grade at last Ofsted inspection:	Good
Date of last Ofsted inspection:	09/06/2021



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Quality Assurance Review

The review team, comprising host school leaders and visiting reviewers agree that evidence indicates these areas are evaluated as follows:

Leadership at all levels Effective

Quality of provision and outcomes Effective

AND

**Quality of provision and
outcomes for disadvantaged
pupils and pupils with additional
needs**

Area of excellence Not applicable

**Previously accredited valid areas
of excellence** 'Driving culture and curriculum
through your vision' 11/03/2020

Overall peer evaluation estimate Effective

***The Quality Assurance Review estimates are not equivalent to Ofsted grades.
The QA Review uses a different framework to Ofsted and the review is
developmental not judgmental.***

1. Context and character of the school

St John Fisher is a one-form entry Catholic voluntary-aided primary school. It has a 30-place Nursery which opened in January 2019, offering 30-hour and flexible provision. Increasing pupil numbers have led the school to be oversubscribed in Reception for the last four years. The school offers before and after school provision led by members of school staff and has a new headteacher who took up post in April 2022.

Situated in Knowsley Village, Merseyside, St John Fisher is part of the Southern Area Schools (SAS) network in Knowsley, where schools collaborate and support each other to achieve high outcomes. It has close links with the parish of St Columba and St John Fisher and the Archdiocese of Liverpool. Leaders support other schools in a variety of areas, including developing a school vision, mathematics and wellbeing. The school is a UNICEF silver 'Rights Respecting School' and specialist teaching is provided for science, music, computing and French.

The proportion of disadvantaged pupils has historically been low but is moving towards the national average. The percentage of pupils requiring support for special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is growing and is now slightly above average. However, the number of pupils with an education, health and care plan is well below the national average, as is the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language.

The school vision, 'to create a school community where children and adults achieve their full potential and SHINE!' is at the heart of everything at St John Fisher. It is achieved through 'engagement', 'high expectations', and by treating all with 'respect' and 'dignity'. This vision is interwoven throughout the curriculum, lived out daily life and underpinned by the strong Catholic ethos.

2.1 Leadership at all levels - What went well

- The quality assurance review provided a perfect opportunity for the new headteacher to quickly learn a great deal about the school. Her passion and drive to take St John Fisher on the next stage of its developmental journey, are clearly evident. In a very short time, she has established strong relationships with her deputy, other leaders, staff and pupils. Her infectious enthusiasm, supported by staff commitment to providing the very best for every pupil in their care, is already enabling the start of a shared next step vision. The highly supportive deputy headteacher has worked unstintingly during his acting headship to ensure stability and continuity.
- Leaders at all levels have high expectations of themselves and provide valuable

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advice and support. For example, leaders of wider curriculum subjects meet with class teachers to discuss the sequence of objectives prior to a new block of learning. Specialist teaching of some subjects, including science, enables continuity and progression and allows teachers to focus on planning other subjects.

- Professional development is accessed through a range of providers, including the North West Maths Hub 3, School Improvement Liverpool, and Knowsley 'Southern Area Collaborative'. There are also opportunities to participate in national qualifications, coaching and research.
- The enthusiasm of staff and their high expectations are reflected in pupils' positive attitudes to learning and conduct. Pupils are proud ambassadors of their school and mirror the respect that is shown to them by all adults. This is underpinned by the strong Catholic ethos and reinforced through the 'Rights Respecting School' articles. These are interwoven through the curriculum and explicitly reinforced during 'Talk Tuesday' debate and discussion sessions, linked to global and current events through 'Picture News'. A weekly focus on 'learning powers', such as empathy and listening, perseverance and collaboration, also supports the high levels of respect and care demonstrated by everyone in the school.
- A wide range of enrichment opportunities in the Liverpool area enhances the wider curriculum and develops pupils' cultural capital well. These include a Year 2 visit to Liverpool Museum and the Titanic Hotel as part of their local heritage work on 'The Titanic'. Pupils involvement in 'Knowsley borough of culture' activities include the decoration of a large school owl which will be part of an 'Owl and Pussy Cat' trail to celebrate Edward Lear's association with Knowsley.
- Wider afield, cultural opportunities include theatre and museum visits during a residential in London. During 'conservation week', Year 5 pupils, whilst studying 'climate change', considered the effect of this on birds. They made bird boxes with the design technology teacher from a local high school and gave out wild-flower seed packs in the local community. A range of well attended extra-curricular clubs has now also been reintroduced.
- Pupils' personal development and wellbeing are a real strength of the school. Taught through the Catholic lens, the well-planned PSHE scheme uses high quality texts to introduce pertinent topics. For example, in Year 6, the book 'King and King' is used to explore same sex relationships. Personal development is further enhanced through strong spiritual, moral social and cultural provision. Consequently, pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.

2.2 Leadership at all levels - Even better if...

- ... leaders of foundation subjects had further professional development opportunities to support them in refining curriculum progression and to enable increased ownership of their subject.
- ... senior leaders adopted a less onerous system of data analysis which can be

readily utilised to inform next steps.

... subject leaders had opportunities to present curriculum developments and priorities to governors on a rolling programme.

3.1 Quality of provision and outcomes - What went well

- Children get off to a flying start as soon as they join the Nursery at St John Fisher because of the strong emphasis on communication and language and a focus on developing every child from their individual starting points. The well-organised Early Years Foundation Stage outdoor provision also encourages independence and exploration.
- A return to the strong historic phonics outcomes, which have been affected by the pandemic, is being supported through daily implementation of a well-structured phonics scheme and additional catch-up. Whilst there is clear fidelity to the scheme, planned opportunities for staff update training and increased monitoring opportunities will further accelerate progress.
- The promotion of a love of reading is clearly evident throughout school. The English leader has recently reviewed and streamlined the reading and writing journey, with grammatical progression across the school incorporated within the writing strategy. In a Year 3 lesson, pupils were diligently including 'CPOW' non-negotiables into their writing and were independently sharing examples of causal conjunctions and apostrophes for possession in collaborative discussion about examples of their writing. This well-embedded approach is consistent across school and supported through regular monitoring and follow-up by the proactive English leader. Planned next step developments include increasing opportunities for sustained writing and reviewing the guided reading strategy.
- The experienced mathematics leader has supported the introduction of 'Power Maths' to further embed the mastery approach and shares his expertise through school-based training and supporting other schools. Strong links with the mathematics hub and additional support from the lead mathematics teacher in school are enabling attainment to move towards pre-2019 outcomes, which were above the national average. In a Year 4 lesson, deliberate misconceptions were used well as a teaching tool to enhance learning and reinforce the message that it is 'ok to get it wrong'.
- The wider curriculum has been thoughtfully planned in terms of what pupils learn and when. To further enhance learning, enrichment opportunities, links to other subjects and the locality are also included, along with pertinent texts. All subject leaders conscientiously monitor pupils' work and discuss it with them as part of the school's comprehensive monitoring strategy. They are committed to leading their subject well and welcome opportunities for professional development.

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- Enthusiastic teaching, along with strong relationships, which are at the heart of St John Fisher's learning culture, ensure that pupils are ready to learn. They enjoy coming to school and are eager to talk about their learning and their school.

3.2 Quality of provision and outcomes - Even better if...

- ... all pupils capable of reaching the higher standard were provided with opportunities, resources and challenge to attain this.
- ... connections to prior learning were made explicit and constantly reinforced so that pupils are enabled to confidently articulate how their learning builds from what has gone before.
- ... leaders reviewed the provision and resources for guided reading to ensure clear progression and a refined range of age-related texts.

4.1 Quality of provision and outcomes for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with additional needs - What went well

- Support for pupils with additional needs at St John Fisher is strong. The inclusion team meets formally on a fortnightly basis but liaise daily to ensure that no stone is left unturned in identifying and accessing relevant support for vulnerable pupils and their families. The learning mentor, SENCO and pupil premium leader have created a structured internal referral process and a clear shared system of recording. Communication and language screening in the Early Years Foundation Stage facilitates early identification of need. Appropriate school support is quickly initiated and external support requested without delay. A flexible provision map utilises specialist training undertaken by teaching assistants to deliver interventions such as 'Success@Arithmetic' and 'DESTY'.
- Teachers' planning has a specific section for additional needs to ensure that additional adult support, resources or curriculum adaptation are planned for to enable all pupils access to the curriculum. This is monitored by the SENCO, who provides relevant advice. 'Pupil progress plans' for pupils with additional needs are carefully crafted, regularly monitored and include parental support. Consequently, pupils with SEND make good progress from their starting points.
- Leaders recognise that outcomes for disadvantaged pupils are variable across school and that they are not as high in most year groups as those of their non-disadvantaged peers, especially since the start of the pandemic. They are tracking the progress of disadvantaged pupils separately, with individual needs discussed at inclusion and pupil progress meetings. Relevant actions are identified on the class raising attainment plan (RAP) and addressed. Staff also ensure that disadvantaged pupils have access to a range of cultural and

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enrichment opportunities, including residentials, which they may not otherwise experience.

- In order to support pupils' mental health and wellbeing, staff have participated in attachment awareness and 'ELSA' training and pupils from Years 1 to Year 6 have completed questionnaires. Identified needs are then addressed by the learning mentor through delivery of relevant programmes of emotional support. Activities in the on-site 'forest school' provision also help to develop confidence, independence and resilience. Older pupils requiring sensory support assist younger pupils with similar needs, through regular 'sensory circuit' training, and by acting as coaches. Pupils were seen thoroughly enjoying this opportunity during the visit.

4.2 Quality of provision and outcomes for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with additional needs - Even better if...

... the SENCO was included in termly pupil progress meetings to discuss pupils with SEND.

5. Area of Excellence

Not applicable

6. Following the QA Review

As the headteacher is new to the school, she looks forward to engaging in a range of Challenge Partners opportunities, including work with the Aspire hub. Other leaders look forward to continuing their already established relationship with the Aspire hub.

This review will support the school's continuing improvement. The main findings will be shared within the school's hub in order that it can inform future activities.

Schools can access the School Support Directory; the Challenge Partners online tool that enables schools to connect with other schools in your hub and across the national network of schools.

Schools can also attend Sharing Leading Practice events where schools showcase excellent and/or innovative practice. Sharing Leading Practice events allow school leaders with specific improvement needs to visit a school or attend an online webinar hosted by a school, with outstanding provision in that area.



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Both the School Support Directory and the Shared Leading Practice events can be accessed via the Challenge Partners website.