



# St John Fisher Catholic Primary School

URN: 104476

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Archbishop of Liverpool

14–15 March 2024

## Summary of key findings

### Overall effectiveness

The overall quality of Catholic education provided by the school

1

#### Catholic life and mission (p.3)

How faithfully the school responds to the call to live as a Catholic community at the service of the Church's educational mission

1

#### Religious education (p.5)

The quality of curriculum religious education

1

#### Collective worship (p.7)

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

1

The school is fully compliant with the curriculum requirements laid down by the Bishops' Conference

Yes

The school is fully compliant with all requirements of the diocesan bishop

Yes

The school has responded to the areas for improvement from the last inspection

Fully

## What the school does well

- The whole school lives out the Catholic life and mission of St John Fisher. They shine together as 'a community in the light'.
- Staff and governors, led by an inspirational headteacher, have high expectations in all areas of Catholic life, religious education and collective worship, so that pupils receive the very best in Catholic education.
- The school environment is a beautiful expression of its Catholic life and mission.
- Pupils are socially mature, kind, caring and helpful and their behaviour is exemplary. They show Gospel values, through their actions.
- Teaching in religious education is exceptionally strong and creative, resulting in excellent progress and high attainment.

## What the school needs to improve

- Work collaboratively with other Catholic schools to share and celebrate the excellent practice in religious education at St John Fisher.
- Update the school website to include detailed information about the religious education curriculum in each year group.

## 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

1

**Provision**

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

1

**Leadership**

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

1

1

Pupils embrace the distinctive Catholic identity of their school. They know and deeply appreciate their mission statement. One pupil explained, “We believe in the Lord, who is our light, we become His children.’ They clearly express understanding that they are valued as unique human beings who are happy, confident and secure. They like to share how their individual skills and attitudes are developed, so that they ‘shine’. They are willing leaders, who take on roles of responsibility with enthusiasm and commitment. The *Shining Lights* make presentations to their classes to support decision making and the Play Leaders organise sporting events, for example, a football tournament for International Women’s Day.

Pupils have a clear understanding of Gospel values and gladly embrace their personal responsibility to support those in need. They can clearly articulate the demands and actions of Catholic Social Teaching. They are committed to supporting charities, through fundraising and making donations, for example, collecting blankets and clothing for local people in need. They know that it is important to be in solidarity with others. Worship Warriors explained that they are making friendship bracelets to sell in school to raise money for the Good Shepherd Collection and Cafod. Behaviour of pupils around the school and in classrooms is exemplary.

The mission statement is clear and provides inspiration for the whole school community. Its content is embraced by the staff and implemented across all spheres of school life. Christ is at the heart of this school, which is, ‘a community in the light’. This is evident in the exceptionally supportive and joyful relationships lived out by all. Staff are exemplary role models and provide the highest levels of pastoral care for pupils. One member of staff stated, “Our mission is at the heart of everything we do. Children are celebrated for being children of the light and encouraged to SHINE as individuals.” The beautiful school environment is a tangible expression of its Catholic

character. The entrance space presents the mission statement, alongside creative displays which include scripture, lanterns, pictures and artefacts to reflect and celebrate the liturgical seasons. Each year group has two special gospel values, which provide a focus for pupils to explore and live out. Displays in the hall, promote the school's work towards the Cafod Live Simply Award, demonstrating their responsibility for Catholic Social Teaching. Relationships, sex and health education meets archdiocesan and statutory requirements. The programme of study is carefully and sequentially mapped out.

Leaders and governors seriously undertake their duties as guardians of this Catholic school. They are energised and determined to ensure that the Catholic mission directs policies, decisions and outcomes. They participate fully in archdiocesan policies and initiatives. They are inspirational witnesses to the Gospel and to Catholic Social Teaching. One governor explained that the mission is regularly reviewed, saying that it is, "Mission in practice, every day." Leaders have developed a flourishing partnership with the local parish. The school attends the weekday parish Mass, enabling pupils to be active participants as readers and in singing hymns to enhance the liturgy. There are highly successful strategies for engaging parents and carers, who highly value the mission statement. School staff lead the preparation programme for First Holy Communion. One parent stated, "The sessions which involve parents are lovely and delivered at the right level for our children." Staff greatly value the high level of pastoral care provided by leaders and governors. They access regular professional development and induction for new staff is given high priority. Subject leaders plan opportunities to make connections between discrete subject areas, for example developing learning about the Islamic civilisation in history. Rigorous monitoring and evaluation from pupils and leaders at all levels results in strategic improvements which benefit the whole school community.

## Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

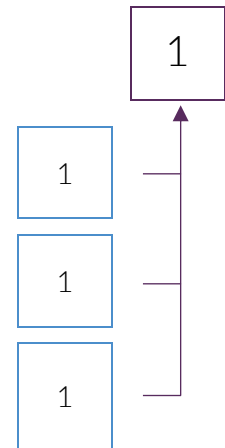
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

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 are developing high levels of knowledge, understanding and skills in religious education. They make consistently good progress by knowing more and remembering more. Attainment is high and in-line with other core subjects. Pupils are religiously literate, they use mature vocabulary and are engaged young people. They reflect spiritually and speak very articulately about what they have learned. They begin lessons by successfully recalling previous learning. The youngest pupils know about Lent and what happened on Palm Sunday. They enjoy retelling the story using palms and singing Hosanna. Older pupils explore the theme of self-giving. One pupil explained that this means, "To give yourself up, for the benefit of others." Pupils concentrate and collaborate well, producing work of a consistently high quality. They greatly enjoy religious education, which is evidenced through their outstanding behaviour for learning. Pupils listen carefully to other's ideas. They add further details during discussions, ask relevant questions, and are confident to express alternative viewpoints with sensitivity. They have a clear understanding of how well they are doing and can self-evaluate their own work. They know what they need to do to make improvements and move their learning forward. As a result, pupils 'shine' in religious education.

Teachers demonstrate a deep commitment and high expectations for religious education. They are highly confident in their subject knowledge, which clearly reflects the teaching of the Church. Creatively planned lessons consolidate and extend pupils' knowledge, so that they learn extremely well. High priority is given to partner discussions and verbal sharing of ideas, which leads to mature interactions. Key ideas are communicated through excellent storytelling, using beautiful resources, for example, a wooden figure of Jesus riding into Jerusalem on a donkey. A variety of carefully selected photographs inspire debates about sacrifice, dignity and loss with older pupils. The use of a timelapse video of a growing baby enables younger pupils to develop

their understanding of seasonal change. Skilful questioning is used to assess pupils' ideas. Time is given for purposeful reflection in lessons, which teachers confidently use to provide higher levels of challenge. Pupils present their work through a range of creative forms, including role play, poetry, artwork and writing. Teachers provide specific feedback, including celebration of effort, to ensure that all pupils are motivated and their learning is maximised.

Leaders and governors ensure that the curriculum for religious education meets the requirements of the Religious Education Directory. It has full parity with other core subjects including, continuous professional development, timetabling and resourcing. The inspirational vision of the headteacher, together with high levels of expertise from senior leaders has effectively improved teaching and learning in religious education. Leaders have ensured that consistent teaching strategies for example, overlearning, are well embedded, so that prior learning is enhanced. Regular staff meetings and sharing of expertise within the school has developed staff skills in planning, teaching and assessment. Training for the new Directory continues to be prioritised and the school is now part of a new collaborative cluster group of Catholic schools. Religious education is thoughtfully enriched through a programme of visits and visitors, for example, to support learning about Islam. Knowledgeable governors are frequent visitors. They work with leaders to ensure robust self-evaluation of religious education. They use the school's own model of 'show, share, shine', which is highly effective and leads to strategic actions, resulting in outstanding outcomes. Governors and leaders have passion and drive. As one governor stated, "Religious education and Catholic life is central to the life of our school, together we are going in a fantastic direction."

## Collective worship

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

Collective worship key judgement grade

1

Pupil outcomes

How well pupils participate in and respond to the school's collective worship

1

Provision

The quality of collective worship provided by the school

1

Leadership

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

1

The experience of prayer and liturgy provided by the school engages pupils deeply and leads them to full and active participation. Pupils gather around the focus table, for prayer and liturgy with respect and reverence. They know that this is a special time in their day. They begin by making the sign of the cross and offering themselves, saying, 'Here I Am, Lord'. Pupils listen carefully to the scripture as it is read aloud from the Bible. They pray in a variety of ways, using actions, signs, silence and reflection. They know a range of traditional prayers and Mass responses. They are highly engaged and sing a variety of hymns with great joy. Pupils demonstrate an excellent understanding of the liturgical year. Worship Warriors fully understand the colours of drapes which are used across the Church year, for example red for Pentecost. Pupils plan and willingly undertake liturgical ministries with confidence and skill. Worship Warriors in year three, are proud of their leadership with year one pupils, as they explore the Sunday gospel together. Pupils increasingly take more responsibility for class worship as they confidently read scripture, lead a variety of prayer and prepare the inviting focus tables.

Well-chosen scripture passages form the heart of prayer and liturgy. The Word of God is celebrated throughout the school environment. It is central to the life of everyone. Imaginative and creative use of space is made all around the school, providing beautiful areas for personal reflection and prayer. There is a naturally embedded pattern of daily prayer, which includes worship at key times of each day, during assemblies and in classes. Families are invited to participate in these special times which celebrate the richness of the Catholic tradition. The welcome Mass, where new reception pupils, their families and Fisher Friends were blessed by the parish priest, was a highlight for all. Senior leaders are models of exemplary practice. They inspire staff and pupils to confidently plan and lead well-constructed prayer and liturgy. High

quality music significantly enhances the experience, for example hymns to support gathering together and peaceful music to create atmosphere. Special pebbles, lanterns and individual tiny hearts are sensitively distributed by pupils, which support spiritual reflection. Litanies of thanks and praise are shared and responses are encouraged. Everyone goes forth from prayer and liturgy renewed and refreshed in their mission to serve others.

The policy for prayer and liturgy is carefully formulated, regularly reviewed and accessible to staff. The school calendar is carefully planned. There are weekly themes, regular opportunities to celebrate Mass, celebrations for the feast of St John Fisher, as well as other key holy days and special times. Leaders and governors give high priority to the professional development of all staff, for example, attendance at archdiocesan prayer and liturgy training. This has ensured that prayer and liturgy is central to the life of the school and is of high quality. Leaders have attended spirituality conferences which have inspired their ongoing professional development. Consequently they have a thorough knowledge and understanding of a broad range of ways of praying and are able to provide engaging, high quality prayer and liturgy. Good quality resources are prioritised by leaders and governors, who invest finance, time and training. The planning and evaluation of prayer and liturgy by staff, governors and pupils is given high priority. Pupils' views are very important. Therefore time is prioritised to listen to opinions and gather ideas through the many leadership opportunities provided. Worship Warriors are very articulate and know their voices are heard. They are looking forward to the summer when their prayer garden, with flowers and trees can be further developed and re-visited for prayer and liturgy.



## Information about the school

Full name of school	St John Fisher Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	104476
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	3403352
Full postal address of the school	St John Fisher Catholic Primary School, Tithebarn Road, Knowsley, Prescot, L34 0HA
School phone number	01514778590
Headteacher	Claire Lewis
Chair of Governors	Sue Orme
School Website	<a href="http://www.stjohnfisherprimary.co.uk/">www.stjohnfisherprimary.co.uk/</a>
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	N/A
Phase	Primary
Type of school	Voluntary Aided School
Admissions policy	N/A
Age-range of pupils	3-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	7 November 2017
Previous denominational inspection grade	Outstanding

## The inspection team

Christine Mason  
Kathryn Berry

Lead  
Team

## 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