



Archdiocese of Birmingham

Section 48 Inspection Report

ST JOHN FISHER CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Alvechurch Road, West Heath, Birmingham, B31 3PN

Inspection dates: 21 - 22 October 2019

Lead Inspector: Stephen Godber

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS:

Good

Catholic Life:

Outstanding

Religious Education:

Good

Collective Worship:

Outstanding

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection:

Requires Improvement

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FOR PARENTS AND PUPILS

This is a good Catholic school because:

- The leaders, governors and staff of the school are deeply committed to the school's mission in Catholic education. They have worked hard and successfully to meet all the recommendations made at the previous inspection.
- The staff and children highly value the Catholic mission of the school. This is reflected in the way they behave and treat others.
- Teaching in Religious Education is always at least good. Lessons are well planned with excellent questioning skills evident in all lessons which lead to greater understanding and deeper thinking skills.
- Pupils enjoy Religious Education and make very good progress over time.
- The school calendar is built upon a foundation of prayer and worship. Senior leaders and the Section 48 link governor provide outstanding leadership in the example they set when planning and leading acts of Collective Worship.
- Pupils are keen to take part in Collective Worship and greatly benefit from the opportunities which are being provided for them.

It is not yet Outstanding because:

- Feedback in Religious Education is not consistently applied according to the school's policy.
- Gap tasks in exercise books are not used effectively and do not provide the stretch and challenge that many pupils of all abilities would benefit from.
- Good quality Collective Worship, led by pupils, and its evaluation are not yet embedded across the school community.

FULL REPORT

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- To continue to support newly qualified teachers in their understanding of Catholic Life, Religious Education and what it means to teach in a Catholic school to ensure that teaching across all year groups reflects best practice and strives to become outstanding.
- Embed consistent implementation of its feedback policy and gap tasks so that all pupils are appropriately challenged in Religious Education.
- Develop and embed good practice for all pupils in leading, planning and evaluating Collective Worship.

THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

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

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

The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school.

- The quality of the Catholic Life of the school is outstanding.
- School is ably led by a committed headteacher who is well supported by senior leaders and governors. All recognise their prime responsibility of promoting the Catholic Life of the school.
- Pupils and staff fully embrace the mission of the school. They all contribute to enriching the lives of each other and the wider community through a wide range of outreach activities within the parish, the QUAD (group of four primary schools who support each other) and charitable acts.
- The school actively lives out the Church's mission to ensure the centrality of prayer and commitment to support the needs of others. The pupils have responded to the needs of people beyond the school and they express a desire to care for everyone which they understand means that they are walking in the footsteps of Jesus.
- The school engages in many charitable activities which support the local community and wider global projects. Some are organised by the school council whilst others are led by the newly formed Mini-Vinnies often working in collaboration with the parish St Vincent de Paul (SVP) group. A recent example of this was collections for the homeless. Staff delivered items to the homeless on the streets of Birmingham. The pupils made cards with messages of support and prayers for the homeless people, which were distributed at the same time. Staff reported that these messages were greatly appreciated by the homeless who said they were thankful that someone cared about them. Another project has involved the whole community engaging with the 'Poverty in the UK' drive.
- Excellent relationships are evident throughout the school. Pupils and staff know that they are cared for and nurtured. They accept the shared responsibility to do this for others both in and out of school.

- Pupils show a high level of commitment in serving the school community in many capacities which include acting as liturgy leaders, servers, readers, prayer partners and becoming a mini-vinnie. They are keen to achieve the award given to the pupil who has most lived out the mission of the school during each week. The names of the pupils who have given outstanding service are recorded in the weekly newsletter to parents.
- Nearly all the pupils can identify the sort of person God is calling them to be and have an age appropriate understanding of vocation. The school holds an annual vocations week when the parish priest, religious sisters and parishioners are invited to talk to the pupils and answer questions about vocation. The school is also supported by the three parishes outreach worker.
- Pupils learn about other faiths and religions. The school holds an annual multi-culture week in which visitors attend school to talk about their faith and lifestyle. Visits have also taken place to a range of places of worship.
- Pupils actively participate with enthusiasm in a variety of religious experiences and retreats. They enjoy participating in a plethora of activities based upon prayer and mindfulness, including attending voluntary acts of worship such as lunchtime rosary, praying in the school prayer garden and taking part in the extraordinary month of mission. Pupils have successfully linked with prayer partners from Year 7 at a local Catholic secondary school.
- Sacramental preparation is shared between the school and the parish catechists who provide a programme for both pupils and parents.
- Pupils and parents are proud of their school. They say they are well cared for, feel safe and are part of a big family. This view is confirmed by recent pupil interviews and the outstandingly positive response in a recent survey where 98% of parents were very happy with the levels of care given to their children in school.
- Parents and pupils speak highly of the availability of staff when they have problems and need someone to talk to. The school has developed links with a Father Hudson's worker who has a role in supporting families in need of help.
- The school environment greatly enhances the Catholic Life of the school. The beautifully presented displays enable the pupils to gain an understanding of the liturgical year and the lives of the saints. The use of appropriate artefacts around school and during Collective Worship develop a knowledge of the traditions and beauty of Catholic forms of worship. Each classroom is well resourced and the whole school was observed to have rosary beads that were used in the daily rosary being prayed during October.
- Pupils have a good knowledge of the virtues they encounter through the Catholic Schools' Pupil Profile (CSPP). They can articulate how they can put these into practice in their lives.
- The school is currently reviewing their provision of relationships and sex education to meet the growing requirements of this curriculum area. The school has engaged with recent diocesan training about this.
- School leaders, including the Section 48 governor, have worked hard to ensure that links with the parish church continue to develop. Parishioners have noted that there is improved attendance on a Sunday from pupils at the school. The link between mini-vinnies and the parish SVP group has proved to be particularly successful. Further joint activities have included the May procession, Lourdes prayer intentions, rosary group, the school choir singing at a Church concert, harvest collection and parish afternoon tea. Deacons have led prayer and music in school on several occasions, supported by the parish priest.

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision of the Catholic Life of the School.

- Catholic Life is given high priority; school leaders and governors are vigorous in monitoring and evaluating it. They have developed an extensive and effective calendar of monitoring for the school year which has enabled them to have a clear view and has resulted in the creation of thorough and detailed one-year and three-year plans for improvements.
- The reporting of Catholic Life is given high priority at both governor and staff meetings. Minutes of meetings give a very clear picture of the actions taken and the impact of these on the Catholic Life of the school.
- All staff have a Catholic Life target as part of their performance management linked to their roles and responsibilities in school.
- Governors are well informed and knowledgeable about the Catholic Life of the school. They support all school events.
- School leaders and governors lead by example. They provide outstanding role models for the pupils to learn from and develop their own Catholic lives.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

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

How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education. The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education.

- The quality of Religious Education at St John Fisher school is good. Most pupils from varying starting points make very good progress over time. Different groups of pupils make good progress comparable to others.
- On entry most pupils have a very poor knowledge of Religious Education. The Religious Education lead teacher works hard to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding of Catholic teaching and traditions on entry to the school.
- Most pupils are religiously literate and can use their knowledge, understanding and skills to reflect. Pupils need more opportunities to develop this skill to allow it to become deeper embedded across the curriculum.
- Most pupils have good scriptural knowledge. They can speak with understanding about the miracles and parables of Jesus. They can explain the meaning of parables and how they guide us to lead a life following Jesus.
- Pupils are engaged in their lessons. They enjoy the activities offered and most concentrate very well.
- Consistently good planning was observed in all classes. The lead teacher for Religious Education has ensured that there is a common structured approach in place, which leads to a clear understanding of what is to be taught in each lesson. All classes identify key vocabulary at the start of each module which ensures that the pupils use it in their oral and written work.
- Pupils enjoy exploring the themes and key events of the liturgical year, the lives of the saints and the structures of the Church. They can make links between the

events of the Gospel and their own lives, but this needs to be further developed and emphasised by providing more evidence in exercise books.

- Most teachers are confident in their subject expertise, whilst those who are new to the school are developing well through the regular and effective support provided for them in and out of school. New teachers speak highly of the support they are given in school and greatly value the opportunities provided to enable them to plan and moderate work with more experienced members of staff and other new teachers in the QUAD. The work being undertaken by the school in this area should continue to develop.
- The quality of pupils' current work in books is good. The pupils take great pride in the presentation of their work. They would benefit from being given more opportunities to write at greater length.
- A good range of teaching strategies are deployed that engage the pupils in their learning. High quality and wide range of questioning skills across all year groups is a strength of teaching. Effective questioning ensures that deeper learning takes place and enables teachers to assess how well pupils understand topics.
- The pace of most lessons observed was appropriate, but some teachers spend too much time at the start of lessons talking to the pupils which leaves too little time for them to develop their ideas and complete tasks effectively.
- Some teachers use a range of learning strategies which include talking to a learning partner and then feeding back to the rest of the class. This improved the quality of pupils' answers and enabled them to start to understand how to improve their work.
- Marking is usually in line with school policy however, it could benefit from more emphasis on what pupils need to do to improve their work.
- The school has decided to largely move away from planning differentiated tasks in class because they believe these were limiting the outcomes for some lower ability pupils. The school should continue its work on ensuring all pupils are stretched and challenged in order to secure the best standards they are capable of.
- Unit markers are used as a tool for self-assessment at the beginning of a new unit. It would benefit pupils to have an end of unit self-assessment whereby they could note the progress they have made and any new learning that has taken place.
- There is a need to make the use of Attainment Target 2 ('learning from religion') strands more explicit and evident in exercise books and classroom displays. In Key Stage 2 teachers need to start to use and embed Attainment Target 3 ('analysis and judgement') activities into their lessons. Increased use of inspirational sources and quotations could greatly enrich pupils' learning experiences.

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

- The provision for the Religious Education curriculum meets the requirements of the Bishop's Conference in every respect and in each key stage.
- Religious Education is well supported as a core curriculum subject in the school in terms of professional development and resourcing. Staff and governor minutes of meetings clearly reflect that the highest priority is given to the effective delivery of the Religious Education curriculum.
- The Religious Education lead teacher, along with senior leaders and the Section 48 link governor, carry out well focused and regular monitoring and evaluation procedures covering all aspects of curriculum delivery. The outcomes of these are reported back to staff regularly and at governors' meetings.
- The leadership team and governors are involved regularly in learning walks, lesson observations and book scrutinies. Discussions with pupils have also taken place with the Religious Education lead teacher and the Section 48 link governor.
- As a result of pupil interviews the school has tried to develop lessons by including more role play, videos, music and the opportunity to ask a friend for help when they

are unsure of something.

- The school now needs to ensure that the impact of their improvement planning and strategies is made evident in all documentation.
- Staff are regularly involved in the moderation of work in school with other class teachers and the Religious Education lead teacher. Opportunities to meet with their relevant partners in the QUAD to moderate examples of work are also greatly valued and helpful.
- The professional development offered in school by the Religious Education lead teacher is highly regarded. Regular updates are evidenced in the minutes of staff meetings and through the PowerPoint presentations prepared for the start of the school year which highlight the key areas for improvement and development during the year.
- Staff greatly benefit from the opportunities for professional development provided through the QUAD, where joint planning, moderation of work and joint spiritual days are a regular feature.

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

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

How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship. The quality of Collective Worship provided by the School.

- Prayer and Collective Worship is central to the life of the school. Pupils and staff pray together. Each gathering begins and ends with prayer.
- All pupils respond with reverence, interest and enthusiasm to the varied opportunities for Collective Worship provided by the school throughout the academic year.
- A minority of pupils do not concentrate as well as the majority during class Collective Worship. Staff need to ensure that all pupils are fully involved in the class activities and ensure that their expectations for pupils' active participation and good behaviour are made clear.
- Mass is celebrated in school or church every four weeks. The parish priest serves another primary school and the local secondary school. Good relationships were evident between the parish priest, staff and pupils.
- In Mass and assembly pupils and staff fully participate by joining in all the responses clearly, they sing beautifully with confidence and affirmation and they read and serve effectively. The same can be said of the daily rosary being offered during the month of October. Procedures and expectations are clearly embedded across the school.
- All pupils engaged well during the daily rosary being led by senior leaders. They entered the darkened hall with reverence and chose to sit in circles around the central display which provided a focus for the act of worship. All pupils held a set of rosary beads and used them to help them concentrate whilst they joined in a decade of the rosary. All the pupils behaved extremely well throughout. A good number of pupils chose to remain behind after the whole school rosary to sit and pray quietly with staff as a voluntary act of worship.

- A further voluntary opportunity to pray the rosary is offered by one of the religious sisters from the parish at lunchtimes. This is well attended. There is an opportunity for the pupils to ask questions about the mystery they are praying.
- When interviewed, pupils described the many opportunities that they have in school to pray. They use a wide range of traditional prayers and they are encouraged to write their own prayers.
- Pupils value the moments when they can be quiet and on their own to pray. Several spoke of their use of the school prayer garden which is available to them at break times.
- Pupils understand the value of prayer and accept their responsibility to pray for others as well as themselves. They recognise the need to give thanks as well as asking for forgiveness.
- Opportunities for pupils to lead and plan Collective Worship are becoming embedded across the school. A full calendar linked to the liturgical year outlines the expectations that over time all pupils will have the opportunity to plan and lead Collective Worship.
- Pupils prepare and lead Collective Worship, within their own classes and for both key stage and whole school assemblies. The liturgy group takes a strong lead in this area and lead by example to others, taking responsibility for developing and leading prayer across the school. This is particularly evident during the various Holy Week liturgies and Advent.
- Pupils would benefit from being given more opportunities and help in evaluating their Collective Worship so that areas for improvement can be identified and implemented in the future.
- Pupils and staff use a variety of approaches to prayer including scripture, religious artefacts and music. They show a good knowledge of the Church's liturgical year, its seasons and feasts. They know a wide range of different prayers and use these regularly in their daily acts of worship. Each class has a book of the recommended prayers and they also have a collection of their own prayer requests and intentions.
- Staff are becoming more confident in supporting pupils to plan and lead high quality Collective Worship. They have been well supported by senior leaders who have ensured opportunities are provided for developing all staff and particularly newly qualified teachers.
- There is a special staff prayer which is always used for staff gatherings and formal meetings. It has a strong message outlining the school's commitment to its pupils and community.
- The Headteacher recently led a whole school and QUAD retreat day with the Columban missionaries in developing the school's mission and charitable outreach.
- Parents and families are always invited to Mass, special assemblies, workshops and prayer services. They are kept informed through the weekly newsletter which includes information about the Sunday Gospel reading, and prayer reflections which feature in the praise assembly.
- During the inspection a range of parents and members of the local parish spoke very positively about the opportunities made available to them to engage with the worship life of the school and the welcome they are given in school.
- Parents and families are encouraged to actively engage in the prayer life of the school through making use of the prayer bags sent home, the prayer focus for families in the newsletter and the sacramental programmes which are specifically aimed to be used at home.

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

- The senior leadership team plans and delivers high quality Collective Worship in school as witnessed during the inspection and evidenced through evaluations incorporating pupil and staff voice. They are role models of outstanding practice for staff and pupils.
- The leadership team and governors have placed a high priority, in terms of time and resources, on developing staff capability and experience in delivering Collective Worship. This has been delivered through staff meetings, the QUAD group of schools and diocesan training opportunities. Monitoring shows that it has had a significant impact in improving the planning and quality of Collective Worship throughout the school.
- Class Collective Worship is now given greater priority through its inclusion as part of the class timetables. There is an expectation that all pupils will plan, lead and regularly experience class-based Collective Worship.
- The role of the Section 48 link governor has had a very positive impact in school in terms of monitoring and evaluating, and also sharing personal faith experiences. This governor recently led an assembly about her planned attendance at the diocesan pilgrimage to Lourdes in May. As a result of this the pupils were encouraged to find out more about pilgrimages and the life of St Bernadette. The governor took prayer petitions from the whole school with her to Lourdes. A follow up assembly was held in school in June to show the pupils photographs of what happened to their petitions in Lourdes.
- The evaluation of Collective Worship is shared termly with governors through reports and meetings with senior leaders. As a result of effective monitoring the governor with responsibility for Section 48 is very well informed and actively engages in the processes for monitoring activities in school, which lead to informed improvement planning.

SCHOOL DETAILS

Unique reference number	102453
Local authority	Birmingham
<i>This inspection was carried out under canon 806 of Canon Law and under Section 48 of the 2005 Education Act.</i>	
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary Aided
Age range	4-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on roll	207
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Tracey Robinson
Headteacher	Mrs Leanne Rogers
Telephone number	0121 475 3489
Website address	www.stjonfsh.bham.sch.uk
Email address	enquiry@stjonfsh.bham.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	31 October - 1 November 2016

INFORMATION ABOUT THIS SCHOOL

- St John Fisher is a one form entry Catholic Primary School serving the parish of St John Fisher in the West Heath area of Birmingham.
- The percentage of Catholic pupils is currently 93%.
- The percentage of disadvantaged pupils is within the national average.
- The percentage of SEND pupils is 8% which is below the national average.
- The percentage of pupils from minority ethnic origins is 25% which is below the national average.
- The percentage of pupils with EAL is 7% which is below the national average.
- Attainment on entry is below average.
- Since the last inspection there has been a change of headteacher.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION

- The inspection was carried out by two Diocesan Inspectors: Stephen Godber and Tara Davies.
- The focus of the inspection was on the impact, quality and leadership of the school's provision of Catholic Life, Religious Education and Collective Worship.
- The inspectors observed teaching across seven Religious Education lessons to evaluate the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. These lesson observations were conducted jointly with senior leaders.
- The inspectors completed a work scrutiny and held discussions with pupils to evaluate their understanding of Catholic Life, the impact of Religious Education teaching on their learning over time and their experience of Collective Worship.
- Meetings were held with the governors including the Section 48 governor, the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the Religious Education subject leader, parish priest, parents and parishioners.
- The inspectors attended a whole school Gospel assembly, whole school Mass, class Collective Worship and undertook a learning walk to look at aspects of learning and teaching in Religious Education, the presentation of the Catholic Life of the school and pupils' behaviour.
- The inspectors reviewed a range of documents including the school's self-evaluation, data about pupils' attainment and progress, Analyse School Performance (ASP) data, the school development plan, the Religious Education action plan, the Catholic Life action plan, the Collective Worship plan, teachers' planning, Catholic Life file, Religious Education Leaders file, Collective Worship file, performance management targets and reports to governors.