



SECTION 48 INSPECTION REPORT

Canonical Inspection under Canon 806 on behalf of the
Archbishop of Southwark and Inspection of
Denominational Education under Section 48
of the Education Act 2005

URN 102671

**St John Fisher RC Primary School
Grand Drive
London
SW20 9NA**

**Inspection
date:**

**30th January
2017**

Chair of Governors:
Headteacher:
Inspectors:

Mrs K Blom
Miss J Kenna
Mr D Fox
Mrs J Mann

EDUCATION COMMISSION

SECTION 48

St John Fisher Catholic Primary School is situated in the Merton Deanery of the Archdiocese of Southwark. It is in the Merton Local Authority. The principal parish the school serves is St John Fisher in Merton, but pupils also come from Sacred Heart, Wimbledon and St Cecilia's, North Cheam. The proportion of pupils who are baptised Catholics is 94%. Overall, the weekly proportion of curriculum time given to Religious Education across the school is 10%.

The school takes pupils from ages 4 to 11. Currently there are 458 pupils on roll with 52 in the part-time nursery.

The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. The attainment of pupils on entering the school is broadly average. There are five pupils with an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) with a further 61 receiving Special Education Needs (SEN) support. There are 24 pupils for whom the school receives the Pupil Premium. Although the vast majority of pupils are white British, the proportion of pupils from homes where English is an additional language higher than national average.

Date of previous inspection:

21st November 2012

Overall Grade:

2

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1 Outstanding

Grade 3

Requires improvement

Grade 2 Good

Grade 4

Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school in providing Catholic Education

**GRADE
2**

St John Fisher is a good Catholic school with many outstanding features. It is a warm, prayerful school. The excellent pastoral care for pupils is recognised by parents and pupils. A parent commented that the school is very nurturing and "the pastoral care is evident in the children's attitudes towards each other."

Governors are deeply committed to their Catholic mission to serve the staff, pupils and families. They know the strengths of the school. Their plans for further improvement reflect their understanding of what needs to be done to achieve further, sustained development. The Headteacher stated that she and the governing body, "are on a journey." Governors meet regularly and have adopted a strategic approach to recruiting new governors with appropriate skills to improve the effectiveness of their leadership.

The effectiveness of the Headteacher is recognised by parents and pupils. Parents were overwhelmingly appreciative of the smooth transition to the new leadership last year. 79% of parents returned surveys, the vast majority of which strongly agreed/agreed that the school is doing an excellent job for the children.

The school is a family school. There are long established and strong parish links. The Parish Priest and other clergy visit the school regularly and the Parish Sister was described as a "secret weapon" by Governors. Some of the parents and teachers work as Catechists in the parish.

The school environment is enhanced by the religious displays that are prominent throughout the school and in the classrooms. They give the school a clear Catholic identity. Behaviour of the pupils is outstanding. They are overwhelmingly happy with the school and feel safe and cared for.

What steps need to be taken to improve further?

Governors, Headteacher and staff should:

- Continue to strengthen their partnership to ensure the planned extension of the committee structure is established to improve the monitoring of teaching and the Catholic Life of the school
- Develop further the use of questioning in line with whole school priorities:

- To improve the pupils' knowledge and understanding
- To give the pupils opportunities to ask questions of themselves and others
- Give further opportunities for the Chaplaincy Team to grow in confidence in taking a lead in preparing and presenting prayer experiences for the pupils.

Outcomes for pupils

**Grade
1**

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

The school provides many, varied opportunities for pupils to practise and develop their faith. Pupil groups include the new Chaplaincy team, newly recruited anti-bullying ambassadors and school councillors. Members of the Chaplaincy group are proud of taking responsibility for displays and leading acts of worship. For example, they presented a school assembly on Remembrance. One pupil said that the displays "encourage pupils to live in the light of Christ." The Parish Priest said the Chaplaincy group was "one of the best things to be introduced into the school." Pupil surveys confirm their appreciation of the care they receive from teachers. One pupil said the teachers are "firm but they get the job done." Pupils feel safe and happy and have pride in themselves and the school. Behaviour throughout the school is excellent. Pupils love their new motto, LOVE-LEARN-ACHIEVE and it is evident in the classrooms and their behaviour.

The school is currently working towards re-accreditation as a UNICEF school to complement their work embedding Gospel values and the Mission Statement to enhance and support the school's strong Catholic ethos.

Pupils' demonstrate their awareness of the needs of others through fundraising activities such as the Harvest collection with the Wimbledon Guild of local food banks. In 2016, pupils and parents donated over 200 'Christmas boxes of love' for the elderly. As part of Lenten preparations, the school holds a 'wear purple day' to raise money for a chosen charity. The local Chase Hospice and St Raphael's Hospice are a major focus for the school's outreach work.

There are excellent links with the Parish. The school has a visible presence in the parish community. The Parish Priest and the Parish Sister are regular visitors. The Parish Sister promotes the 'Legion of Mary' and 'Crusaders for the Blessed Sacrament.' She runs classes for sacramental preparation in the school. These are also open to children who are not pupils in the school. Pupils from the school take part in leading a parish Mass on Education Sunday every year. Pupils also help with the liturgy at the Sunday family Mass as readers and servers. The school and

parish complement each other and as a result, pupils' faith and understanding of the Mass and the sacraments is enhanced. This was evident in the responses and high level of engagement in the school assembly. Links with local secondary schools are strong. Former pupils have come to share their faith journey with the pupils.

How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education

The school's tracking shows that attainment in Religious Education is above average and broadly similar to English. School monitoring is rigorous and shows the high level of pupil interest in learning. Pupils with EAL and SEN are well supported and make good progress. The school acknowledges that the new tracking system will give a more detailed view of pupils' attainment and progress which will inform further planning for raising standards. Pupils say they enjoy their lessons and are proud of their achievement. As a result, they are confident sharing their views and reflections on their faith. For example, a pupil said, "I like learning about new things." In a letter to Jesus, a pupil wrote, "Thank you for bringing the Holy Spirit to guide my friends and family." Pupils' good levels of religious literacy were evident in lessons. They are confident and articulate in discussions. They are keen to answer questions and contribute answers to class discussion. Written work is of a consistently high standard overall and shows the pride that the pupils have in their work.

How well pupils respond to and participate in Collective Worship

Acts of Collective Worship engage pupils and inspire reverence and respect. In the school assembly, pupils signed the hymns and sang joyfully. Their engagement and enjoyment was sustained by the interaction between them and the Headteacher. They were guided to an understanding of being shining lights in their behaviour and attitudes in school and at home. The period of private reflection was kept with great reverence. The Parish Priest confirmed that pupils' level of participation and response is excellent. Pupils are increasingly active in planning acts of worship in school and in the parish. The Chaplaincy group are proud of being responsible for the prayer corner which is frequently used by individuals and small groups of pupils. One pupil said that they "help everyone come closer to God and follow Jesus' word." Classes also have focussed prayer time together in the morning, although Inspectors advised that the school should ensure that the quality is monitored more closely.

Assemblies are led by the Headteacher and the SLT but pupils are increasingly involved in planning and organising various forms of worship. Each Key Stage 2 class takes it in turn to plan a school Mass. They meet the challenge with enthusiasm and pride.

Once a month, each class presents the school assembly. Pupils compose their own prayers and are given opportunities to offer their own private intentions.

Leaders and Managers

Grade
2

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 demonstrate a deep commitment to the Church's mission in education. Governors play an active role in fostering the development of the Catholicity within the school. They actively review provision for the Catholic Life of the school by visits and by questioning key people. Many governors are also parishioners so they see the impact of the close relationship between the Church and the work the school does to develop prayer and worship.

The School Development Plan reflects a realistic view of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. They know what steps have to be taken to deepen the spiritual life of the school. The restructured Governing body plans to establish a new committee to focus more specifically on Catholic Life and Religious Education this year. This will ensure more focused monitoring and planning.

The personal faith and the vision of the Headteacher has a positive impact on the school and its spiritual and caring ethos. Her leadership is highly effective in ensuring staff and pupils have opportunities to express and share their faith through prayer and worship. A strong ethos of care permeates throughout the school. Parents commented on the smooth and effective transition to a new Headteacher. They said that she was very inclusive and responsive to their views.

The Religious Education leader organises religious celebrations throughout the year. She works effectively with clergy and the Parish Sister to provide opportunities for pupils to pray. Their effectiveness will be enhanced by the Chaplaincy group which is beginning to have a positive impact on the prayer life of the school.

Leaders and governors are committed to recruiting high quality staff through the "Teach Wimbledon" Schools' alliance and a link with St Mary's University.

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

Leaders, governors and managers have a good understanding of standards in Religious Education. The Chair meets with the Headteacher each month for an update on progress in Religious Education and to ensure that the plans for development are in line with the School Development Plan. Governors are actively involved in monitoring the work of the school through regular visits to meet the subject leader, pupils and staff. They have a good understanding of the standards

of teaching and learning and further monitoring will be improved with the new committee planned for this year.

The Headteacher has introduced an effective process where the development plan for Religious Education is rigorously scrutinised to ensure it is in line with whole school priorities. With the Senior Leadership Team, she has developed detailed and effective plans for monitoring and improving teaching and learning.

Leadership of Religious Education is good. The Religious Education leader leads with enthusiasm and her knowledge of the curriculum is sound. With the Deputy Headteacher, she is developing more rigorous and consistent assessment procedures in line with current practice. The annual cycle of monitoring teaching and learning ensures that school leaders know the strengths and areas for development in Religious Education. Detailed tracking systems are used to inform them of pupils' progress from year to year. The Religious Education leader conducts frequent learning walks and pupil workbook reviews.

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

Teaching is at least good with examples of outstanding practice. There is good subject knowledge. Lessons have specific learning objectives and written work is mostly differentiated by outcome. Building on prior learning is a strength. More effective teaching was characterised by good pace and high level of challenge. Teachers are good at engaging pupils with effective use of resources. As a result, pupils behave well and are engaged in learning. Other adults in the room contribute well. They are informed and their support for pupils shows their knowledge of pupils' needs. A major priority for the school is developing the "Big Question" in order to improve pupils' knowledge and understanding. It will also develop questioning skills to ensure pupils can learn and give them opportunities to ask questions of themselves and each other. There was evidence of this in one of the lessons observed where pupils were asked to use the visual aids to work out what the theme of the lesson might be. This was successful in stimulating thought and collaboration. The school's observation evidence shows that teachers are increasingly confident in challenging pupils, especially reticent ones.

Marking and dialogue between teachers and pupils is regular and meaningful. It is in line with the school's marking policy. The school is beginning to implement a new strategy for marking and feedback which is expected to enhance learning.

Learning is enhanced by the meaningful use of the focal area for prayer in each classroom. For example, one teacher directed the pupils' attention to this area and encouraged them to pray "in the stillness of your heart." The Parish Priest said he was impressed by the pupils' religious knowledge and literacy when they visited the church.

The extent to which the Religious Education curriculum promotes pupils' learning

Religious Education is allocated 10% throughout the school. "Come and See" is adapted and personalised to meet the needs and experiences of pupils. There were many examples of good cross curricular links with literacy. Pupils respond positively to the topics and tasks in lessons and in the presentation of their work. Two weeks of the year are spent studying Judaism and one other faith on a rota basis. Other faiths are celebrated through school assemblies and the visitors who come to share their own faith experiences. There are yearly Religious Education

focus weeks which broaden the pupils' understanding of the relevance of Gospel values to daily life. This year will be devoted to the centenary of the visions at Fatima. The Parish 'LIFE' group visit the school to talk to Year 6 pupils as part of the Relationship & sex Education (RSE) programme.

In a wider sense, the curriculum is excellent. Relationships throughout the school are excellent and pupils' behaviour is exemplary. The Catholic identity is evident everywhere and it reflects the school's understanding of the mission to serve. Pupils' religious work and prayers complement the symbols of the faith in every part of the school.

A central prayer corner is located in the school hall. The Chaplaincy group work very hard at creating an environment in which to pray. It is increasingly used for groups to pray together in line with the liturgical year. A day of exposition of the Blessed Sacrament was warmly welcomed pupils and was impressively well attended.

The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school

Collective Worship and prayer are the foundation of the school day. Whole school assemblies are held on Monday and Friday. Key Stage 1 have a further assembly and Key Stage 2 have focused prayer time together in their class. The school is aware that these times should be monitored more closely. The whole school assembly was excellent. The Headteacher was highly effective in engaging pupils in prayer, reflection and singing. It was a very spiritual and meaningful act of worship. A strength of the school is the environment where prayer and worship take place, especially the prayer corner. An impressive opportunity for pupils is the introduction of Exposition which was well attended. The Parish Sister confirmed that pupils went in groups and individually to pray.

There is a school Mass each month. The Parish Priest and parish Sister were impressed by the commitment of staff to delivering deeply spiritual experiences for pupils and by the variety of prayers, formal and those written by pupils.