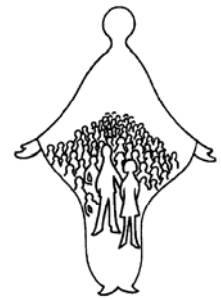


**SALFORD DIOCESE**  
**INSPECTION REPORT**

**ST. JOHN FISHER ROMAN CATHOLIC**  
**PRIMARY SCHOOL**

**Manor Road Haughton Green Tameside M34 7SW**



---

Inspection date September 2008

Reporting Inspector Mrs. K. A. Morris

Inspection carried out in accordance with Section 48 of the Education Act 2005

---

---

Type of School Catholic Primary

URN 106255

Age range of pupils 3 – 11

Number on roll 200

Appropriate authority The governing body

Chair of Governors Mr. Richard Tipping

Headteacher Mr. Robert Ganley

Religious Education Co-ordinator Mr. Robert Ganley

Date of previous inspection September 2004

---

<b>The Inspection judgements are:</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>Explanation of the Grades</b>  1 = Outstanding  2 = Good  3 = Satisfactory  4 = Inadequate
Overall effectiveness of the school	1	
Leadership and management of the Catholic life of the school	1	
The quality of Collective Worship	1	
Achievement and standards in Religious Education	2	
The quality of teaching and learning in Religious Education	2	
The quality of the Religious Education curriculum	1	
Leadership and management of curriculum Religious Education	1	
<i>The following pages provide reasons to support these judgements</i>		

## **CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL**

St. John Fisher is a Roman Catholic voluntary aided primary school in the Diocese of Salford. It serves the parish of St. John Fisher in Haughton Green at the southern end of Denton, Tameside. The school is situated in Denton South ward which is one of the most deprived areas in Tameside. Pupils come from socially mixed backgrounds and live in owner occupied and local authority and housing association rented properties. The age range of pupils is 3 to 11. The indicative admission number is 26 and there are currently 200 learners on roll of whom 140 are baptised Catholics. 14% of the children are eligible for free school meals and 23 learners have been identified as having special educational needs. 11 children have a statutory statement of special educational need 10 of whom are from the Autistic Resource Base attached to the school. Pupils enter the Foundation Stage with skills that are broadly in line with those expected for their age. All 9 teachers (100%) are Catholics and 5 hold the Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies or equivalent.

## **OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL**

St John Fisher's is an outstanding school with an exceptionally strong Catholic ethos. It is highly effective in offering its learners a good traditional Catholic education, cohesive in its nature, in a welcoming, caring, stimulating environment in which all aspects of the learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are outstanding. The school is firmly at the heart of the parish it serves. Throughout the year learners, parents, staff and parishioners are given many opportunities through assemblies, Masses and non-Eucharistic liturgical celebrations to strengthen their relationship with God. The successful Sacramental Programme, well supported by the school and parish priest, promotes and fosters good home, school and parish links. All staff are strong, positive role models for learners and are dedicated, committed and hardworking. They have a shared vision for the school. Learners are very well behaved, friendly and polite. They have good attitudes to their learning. Learners, including gifted and talented and those children with special educational needs, achieve well as a result of the differentiated Religious Education curriculum which meets the needs of all children.

### **Improvement since the last inspection**

Following the last Section 23 inspection in September 2004 the school has successfully addressed all issues arising. Assessment and recording in curriculum Religious Education are well established and the school continues to further this by use of the Diocesan guidelines on levelling and the tracking of learners' work. The school serves Polish, Portuguese, Ghanaian, Nigerian, Chinese and Filipino children. The school's character underwent a significant change when the LEA Autistic Spectrum Disorder Base was attached to the school and the buildings were extended to accommodate the base. Further extensions and renovations have been undertaken to house a classroom and Administration and staff rooms.

### **Capacity to improve**

The school's self-evaluation is thorough, objective and realistic. The leadership and management have a clear, focused vision for the school. There is a genuine commitment to ensuring that all involved in the school community recognise the important role they play in the future development of this successful Catholic school as it lives out its Mission Statement. The school's capacity to improve is therefore excellent.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Continue to embed the use of assessment and levelling and tracking of learners' work throughout curriculum Religious Education as outlined in the school's action plan.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL**

The leadership and management of the Catholic life of the school are outstanding. The Mission Statement, which was drawn up prior to the last inspection in September 2004 is reviewed annually, permeates all aspects of the school's life and is prominently displayed throughout the school. It reflects the establishment of the Autistic Pupils' Resource Base, whose manager is a member of the school's senior management team, and the diverse nationalities of the pupils thus underpinning the cohesive nature of St. John Fisher. The success of the school is due chiefly to the exceptionally strong leadership of the hardworking headteacher, the dedicated leadership team and the wholehearted support of the staff including secretarial and janitorial staff. The school benefits to the full from an active, knowledgeable and supportive governing body which discusses and revises Religious Education policies. Governors are supportive and are involved in shaping the life and direction of the school. A shared vision of the ongoing development of the school as a Catholic community is reflected in governor appointments of committed Catholic teachers to the staff all of whom have a performance management target related to the Catholic nature of the school. The parish priest, who is the link governor for Religious Education is well known to pupils and parents. He is very knowledgeable in the matter of curriculum Religious Education and the school's life of prayer and worship. He is a regular visitor to the school where he celebrates Mass and shares other liturgical celebrations. Governors are informed of all matters relating to Religious Education in the school's termly written report and by regular visits to the school. The school is firmly at the heart of the parish it serves and fully supports the Sacramental Programme which is valued as a successful aspect of parish life.

## **THE QUALITY OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP**

Provision for collective worship is outstanding. It is a key feature of the school and pervades all aspects of school life. It is underpinned by a clear Religious Education policy which was reviewed in 2006 following the establishment of the Autistic Spectrum Resource Base and the increasing admission of pupils learning English as an additional language. The prayer and worship policy contains detailed guidelines for the development of this aspect of the school to include specifically the diversity of the pupils and thus reflecting the cohesive nature of the school. Learners, parents and staff are offered a range of rich and meaningful opportunities to develop their relationship with God. Whole school Masses are celebrated in school. Assemblies and services reflecting the liturgical calendar are planned by the pupils and involve music singing and drama and reading their own bidding prayers. The quality of collective worship and the children's response are monitored regularly by the headteacher. During the inspection the theme of Nursery worship was "God's Wonderful World". Pupils sat in a circle wearing their own "creation" of an animal and flowers hats and each child said a thank you prayer to God. The Key Stage 1 assembly was teacher led with the pupils taking an active part in asking God to help them to do the right thing by using their talents well. On both occasions the children took part enthusiastically and sang their hymns well. All pupils prayed reverently and with respect and were given the opportunity for reflective prayer. They are familiar with prayers relating to their age.

## **ACHIEVEMENT AND STANDARDS IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

Achievement and standards in Religious Education are good. Very clear strategies and systems introduced since the last inspection have ensured that high standards be achieved and maintained. Scrutiny of work, assessment records and the portfolio of work indicate that pupils make at least good progress and often better. Learners enter Reception with skills broadly in line with national expectations after a good start in the Nursery. Progress in Religious Education in Foundation and Key Stage 1 is very good. By the end of Key Stage 1 learners are knowledgeable about God's creation and understand that they are members of His family. They are familiar with the stories of the Holy Family and are able to relate bible stories. Key Stage 2 pupils have a good factual knowledge of their faith. They are familiar with the Old and New Testaments and are able to compose their own psalms. They are familiar with the Gospels and use religious vocabulary and language with understanding. During the inspection learners were able to demonstrate that God chose each individual and gave us different talents and that we are special to Him. Across the whole community there is a feeling of self-worth and self-esteem. Children have a sense of responsibility based on Gospel values. They are aware of others and this is evidenced by their financial generosity to a number of world-wide and local charities but mainly by their peaceful co-existence within both school and community.

## **THE QUALITY OF TEACHING AND LEARNING IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

The inspector agrees that teaching and learning in Religious Education are good with some outstanding features. Teachers have high expectations for themselves and their learners and work hard using a variety of interactive teaching strategies. They demonstrate good subject knowledge and an understanding of Religious Education and make good use of *Revision 2000* and *Moving On* guidelines, which have been adapted to cater for ages and abilities. Detailed planning with clearly stated objectives that are fully explained to the learners lead to well structured lessons incorporating a good range of activities and resources. Assessment systems have been introduced and are in the process of further development to evaluate teaching and learning and to provide a focus for future planning. The school is encouraged to further these systems according to its action plan. Marking provides feedback and direction for improvement. Information Technology is used to support teaching and learning and teachers capitalise on opportunities to link Religious Education across the curriculum. Classroom management and organisation are highly effective. Behaviour is excellent throughout the school with pupils co-operating when working with others or independently. Pupils listen attentively, respond to questions and use appropriate religious vocabulary. They show an interest in their work and an eagerness to learn. Teaching assistants provide very good support to those pupils requiring extra help.

## **THE QUALITY OF THE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CURRICULUM**

The Religious Education curriculum is outstanding. Religious Education features both as a key element in school improvement planning and also in spending plans. At least 10% of teaching time is allocated to the subject. *REvision2000* and *Moving On* guidelines are supplemented by activities relating to the liturgical year. The curriculum is further enhanced by the use of diocesan guidelines on other World Faiths. Themed weeks, for example one on Africa, help pupils to gain an excellent insight into the richness of the cultures and crafts of the continent. This topic is an excellent example of the benefits the school enjoys as a result of the Autistic Spectrum Resource Base as staff in the base led this event. The Year 6 passion play “The Man From Galilee” was linked to the Judaism Passover meal the learners had experienced. The learners enjoy an impressive extra curricular provision including an activity based residential visit to Winmarleigh Hall in Lancashire for Year 4, 5 and 6 and also a weekend visit to Paris. Retreat days run by the Marist Sisters in Chorlton are also arranged for Years 4, 5 and 6. Teachers’ planning is thorough and together with pupils’ learning is monitored by the headteacher through scrutiny of work and lesson observation. Religious Education has a high priority at St. John Fisher and together with collective worship features regularly in staff meetings. Religious practices and curriculum are under constant review. Appropriate feedback is given and acted upon by individuals and whole staff to ensure good quality teaching and learning. Curriculum Religious Education and prayer and worship are linked effectively to ensure that both knowledge and understanding and spiritual development are promoted to the full.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF CURRICULUM RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

The school has assessed the leadership and management of curriculum Religious Education as good. Inspection evidence gathered judges this to be outstanding. The headteacher who is also the co-ordinator for Religious Education has excellent knowledge of his subject and is well placed to advise and support his motivated staff and knowledgeable governors. He has a clear vision of his role within the school and provides strong leadership and direction. His key strategic position as headteacher helps to ensure that Religious Education is held first and foremost in the life of the school. He can appreciate and promote the way in which Religious Education pervades the whole school and fully involves the stakeholders at all levels of decision making. Governors are kept fully informed of Religious Education and prayer and worship by written and verbal reports from the headteacher and parish priest, who is the link governor, and by visits to the school and by attending various celebrations and functions. They are seen as critical friends who hold the school to account for its performance. Their input is valued. Resources for Religious Education and prayer and worship are plentiful. Attractive displays throughout the premises reflect the faith life of St. John Fisher’s school where Religious Education and prayer and worship have a very high profile. The school lives up to its Mission Statement “...we value each member of our school family”.

