

# St John Fisher Catholic Primary School

Melrose Rd, Pinner, Middlesex, HA5 5RA

Date of inspection by Westminster Diocese: 13 June 2019

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils



### A. Classroom religious education is outstanding

- The rich, creative and inspirational curriculum is carefully mapped against the content of the Religious Education Curriculum Directory in an exceptional way, ensuring the needs of all pupils are met.
- Achievement is excellent and pupils are enthusiastic and make outstanding progress. Religious education is delivered with the highest expectations and as a result, pupils have very strong religious literacy.
- Teaching is creative and inspiring, the typicality of teaching is outstanding and never less than good. Teachers demonstrate very good questioning skills that ensures achievement is excellent and pupils make outstanding progress. In Early Years, outstanding teaching ensured that pupils could confidently lead learning independently.
- The subject leader is ably supported by the head teacher; her thorough subject knowledge is shared in a highly effective training programme impacting on teaching throughout. Leadership of religious education models excellent practice and staff work exceptionally well together.
- Structures are in place to ensure teaching is of the highest quality. In order to monitor standards, moderation both in-house and within the deanery is carried out regularly.
- Governors make a passionate and outstanding contribution to developing religious education. They hold the head teacher to account by analysing religious education data, visiting lessons, assemblies and liturgies. There is a shared vision for religious education as the core of all learning in this school.

### B. The Catholic life of the school is outstanding

- Pupils are offered an exceptional experience of Catholic life in this vibrant and creative environment. As a result pupils demonstrate a sound understanding of what it means to live according to Catholic teaching and traditions.
- It is evident to everybody who enters this school that Christ is at its heart, the unseen teacher in every classroom. Religious education has priority on the timetable, it is allocated 10% of curriculum time, as required by the Bishops' Conference. The resourcing of religious education compares favourably with other core subjects.
- Worship and prayer are central to school life, pupils experience a very wide range of prayers and effectively lead worship. Pupils' liturgical formation is well planned to ensure the widest possible experiences of the breadth and richness of the Catholic tradition of prayer and worship.
- This school has a very dynamic and creative response to the call to 'human flourishing'. Pupils' response to human flourishing is relevant and thoughtful. Pupils demonstrate a deep understanding of their call to witness.
- There are strong and vibrant links with both St. John Fisher parish and St. Luke's parish. Relationships between home, school and parishes are vibrant and engaging creating a community centred on Christ.
- Leadership is creative and dynamic in enabling of pupils and staff to experience a richness of opportunities of a Catholic way of living. No aspect of the daily life of the school is left unobserved in reflecting its mission.

## A. Classroom Religious Education

### What has improved since the last inspection?

The school has made sustained progress in all areas outlined in the last inspection. Parents are kept very well informed about school expectations with regard to the study of religious education (RE). Homework each week encourages participation in discussion about gospel themes, leading to a deepening of understanding and impacting on pupils' religious literacy. The school demonstrates good use of technology and has developed online forums to prompt discussion on religious themes thereby enabling discussions at home to be considered in class. It is clear that coaching and mentoring of new staff has impacted on consistency of practice in all key stages and greatly supported staff new to St. John Fisher.

### The content of classroom religious education is outstanding

The rich, creative and inspirational curriculum is carefully mapped against the content of the Religious Education Curriculum Directory (RECD) in an exceptional way ensuring the needs of all pupils are met. The programmes of study demonstrate a thorough and systematic approach to understanding the life and teaching of Jesus and the Church. Pupils encounter Christ in a range of topics that show a deepening of understanding in the beliefs that Catholics hold. All staff have a deep understanding of the RECD and it is clear that the vision of having a dynamic curriculum that engages and challenges pupils is central to their practise. Resources are effectively used to facilitate learning in RE and ensure that consistency of high quality practice is ensured.

### Pupil achievement in religious education is outstanding

Books evidence excellent progress over time as well as progress within a year. Tasks are increasingly challenging and pupils produce work to a high standard making links to levels of attainment and sources of revelation. Pupils are provided with opportunities to extend learning further and feedback challenges pupils, who respond appropriately. In a Year 2 class, pupils were able to confidently explain the message of a parable and relate it to their daily lives. A range of independent and group tasks helped these pupils to refocus and engage throughout the lesson ensuring excellent learning outcomes. Pupils demonstrated a thirst for knowledge exploring a map of Israel and linked this to stories they knew from the Bible. In other lessons, probing questioning encouraged pupils to consider reasons for their actions and the appropriate response for a follower of Jesus. Pupils therefore achieved very good outcomes. Progress in books was outstanding. In Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), pupils led learning both indoors and outdoors; pupils achieved well, they were articulate and responded articulately to effective questioning by staff. The reflection activity was practical but also provided opportunity for quiet prayer. Pupils could demonstrate good subject knowledge and could justify answers by providing real life examples in response to scripture. In Year 5, pupils were actively engaged in debate and could share opinions, respond and question in very well planned lessons that considered the relevance of the parable studied and the world today. In all year groups observed, pupils were adept at moving from an energised classroom learning situation to a reflective and prayerful response to scripture. Technology was well used to inspire and engage learners. Pupils with additional needs make excellent progress in their learning, they are very well supported and enthusiastic to learners. Attainment is exceptionally good and in line with other core subjects, teachers have very high expectations of learners and, as a result, pupils are articulate and confident in their responses. Their religious vocabulary illustrates excellent knowledge and understanding. Pupils set targets in their learning and show a keen enthusiasm for RE.

**The quality of teaching****is outstanding**

Pupils in this school are provided with a rich curriculum that tracks the RECD to ensure excellent progress is made by all in religious literacy. Pupils demonstrate that they are able to access text and scripture and have a good knowledge of key vocabulary related to scripture. In a Year 1 talk partners' discussion, pupils demonstrated their understanding of a parable as a story that tells followers of Jesus how to live. Teachers demonstrate very good questioning skills that ensures achievement is excellent and pupils make outstanding progress. This is further demonstrated in the books where it was evident that there was great progress over time from starting points. Feedback offers good challenge for next steps. The environment is stimulating and enhances learning for pupils. A Year 4 lesson demonstrated how pupils confidently led learning and in a Year 5 lesson on moral dilemma challenging questioning enabled pupils to relate debate to sources of revelation in a meaningful way. In Year 6 pupils demonstrated confidence in their religious literacy. In a challenging argument they were able to debate confidently from the disagree point of view culminating in an awe inspiring plenary. In a Year 3 lesson, pupils were adept at really drawing out the reasons the characters acted as they did. In Year 1 highly effective teaching strategies provided pupils with the tools to respond and engage with Luke's account of the Good Samaritan parable. In EYFS, pupils could confidently lead learning independently. All lessons observed were creative, inspiring and actively engaging. Pupils with additional needs are very well supported. Staff subject knowledge is very strong resulting in extremely confident pupils' responses. There was a good focus on questioning at AT2 (Learning from religion) and this challenging questioning is consistently applied. In Year 4, a lovely prayer for reflection showed staff are adept and comfortable relating scripture to everyday life. Teaching in all key stages is outstanding and never less than good.

**The effectiveness of leadership and management in promoting religious education****is outstanding**

The leader of religious education has a clear and dynamic vision for the subject, and ensures that all staff are equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge to deliver the planned curriculum. It is clear that there is a dynamic vision for religious education and that this vision is shared by all who work in this school. The leader is relentless in her pursuit of excellence and ensures that the place of religious education in the curriculum is central and impacts on the daily life of the school. The leader manages this cohesion through a planned programme of induction in religious education and focuses uncompromisingly on improving teaching and learning in her subject. Together with the newly appointed head teacher, they ensure that sound and effective systems are in place to ensure teaching is outstanding and never less than good. Staff are offered the highest quality continuous professional development and the result is that all staff have an excellent understanding of the expectations for religious education. Self-assessment is thorough and accurate, teachers have targets linked to the development of religious education throughout the school. Governors actively promote religious education; the parish priest, governor for religious education, works with the staff to enhance their knowledge of scripture. Governors have been involved in writing the self-evaluation documents and hold the head teacher to account by analysing religious education data, visiting lessons, assemblies and liturgies. There is a shared vision for religious education as the core of all learning in this school.

**What should the school do to develop further in classroom religious education?**

- Consider strategies to further challenge targeted groups to work more independently.

## B. The Catholic life of the school

### What has improved since the last inspection?

Since the last inspection the school has worked tirelessly to involve parents in the Catholic life of the school. Parents are welcomed into Masses, liturgies, assemblies and collective worship. Parents from both St John Fisher's parish and St. Luke's parish indicated that they felt very welcome to come into school and felt very much part of the school community.

### The place of religious education as the core of the curriculum

**is outstanding**

Religious education receives 10% of the curriculum in all key stages, as required by the Bishops' Conference. Religious education is clearly at the heart of this school and this is evident to all who enter. Displays are vibrant and informative, the school's commitment to Adoremus, following the National Congress on the Eucharist, is exemplary and creative. The accommodation reflects the teachings of Christ, the place of religious education on the curriculum and the resources allocated leave no doubt that Christ is at the centre of everything that is done in this school. The leadership team, including governors, offer outstanding support and active guidance in reviewing and developing the place of religious education at St. John Fisher. Religious education is at the heart of all that is accomplished in this school. Pupils are provided with an excellent range of experiences. Parents' comments reveal that they are of the opinion that religious education is outstanding. This school community excels at being a community based on traditions and practice.

### The experience of Catholic worship – prayer and liturgy – for the whole school community

**is outstanding**

Worship and prayer are central to the life of St John Fisher; this is an alive and engaging Catholic community where all aspects of life reflect its mission. Pupils have leadership opportunities in school as 'Catholic life ambassadors' and on the pupil council; this group of pupils was extremely confident in expressing their role as Catholic witnesses. They describe their work as the backbone of the school in terms of how they interact with younger pupils and those who need support to plan collective acts of worship. Pupils have many prayer opportunities and have experience of praying the Divine Praises, the Examen and Lectio Divina. Rosary club that began in October now runs weekly and is extremely well attended. Pupils' liturgical formation is well planned to ensure the widest possible experiences of the breadth and richness of the Catholic tradition of prayer and worship. Pupils from other faiths are supported and the school is sensitive to supporting their needs. Pupils' spiritual development is ensured through planned reflections and discussions in lessons. Pupils enter collective acts of worship in a reverent manner, they lead scripture and pose questions about the Word. Inspectors observed that pupils in Year 3 and in Year 1 are clearly familiar with leading worship and are adept at maintaining a prayerful atmosphere. Pupils respond very well to spontaneous personal prayer where they had opportunities to pray aloud for their own intentions. Both priests from the parishes served are regular visitors in school, staff have benefited from theological input to further enhance subject knowledge. Priests, parents and staff are committed to establish an 'Awe and Wonder' garden for the whole school community.

### The contribution to the Common Good – service and social justice –

**is outstanding**

This school has a very dynamic and creative response to the call to 'human flourishing'. Pupils very strongly articulated why they chose to fundraise for Calais, Zimbabwe, Cafod and the local foodbank. Pupils explained to inspectors that because God created us all equally and because of the

teachings of Jesus that they had learned about in scripture, it was their role as Catholics to be witnesses. They had learned about school connections to Kenya and had chosen to support a clinic there and were excited to see the impact of their work as the project that they supported progressed. Pupils were able to relate this work to the scripture that they were studying in class about the Good Samaritan. Pupils also take part in a variety of community events, for example Harvest Festival, supporting local causes such as food bank appeals and community events to support local businesses. Pupils are actively involved in initiatives and understand that they are taking part in Pope Francis' mission to serve others affected by war by supporting Care4Calais.

**The partnership with parents, school and parish, and collaboration as an integral part of the diocese through its relationship with the diocesan Bishop and those acting on his behalf**

**is outstanding**

Parents speak very highly of this school. There were 186 responses to the diocesan questionnaire and the vast majority were overwhelmingly positive. Parents commented on how delighted they were to attend liturgies and how their children were confident talking to them about their faith. Parents were also very positive about the Family Mass links and cite the strengthening of relationships between school and both parishes as an example of the impact of work in this area. Parents also commented 'by the time our older children had reached the end of Year 6, they had been given a really solid understanding of their faith.' They also commented on how at St John Fisher they are shown 'how their faith must be lived each day'. Parents speak of strong and committed leadership. Parents value receiving homework based on the weekly gospel and also value the work of the catechist and parish priests in developing strong links between school and parish.

**The effectiveness of the leadership and management in promoting the Catholic life of the school**

**is outstanding**

This school has reflected carefully on the role of the religious education leader and has split the role so that there is a leader for Catholic life as well as the religious education leader. The impact of this is that leadership is creative and dynamic in enabling of pupils and staff to experience a richness of opportunities of a Catholic way of living. The mission statement "growing and learning together with Christ" is known and lived by everybody in this school. No aspect of the daily life of the school is left unobserved in reflecting its mission, pupils lead reflective and purposeful collective acts of worship. Pupils work with the parish catechist and get involved in parish celebrations, they avail of plenty of opportunities to promote Catholic life. The school's participation in Adoremus has been creative, and displays are vibrant. Pupils have experienced Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament with the parish priests. It is evident that there are high expectations of all staff to promote the Catholic life and a very effective induction programme coupled with an informative handbook supports new staff. The leader for Catholic life makes herself available for one to one support.

**What should the school do to develop further the Catholic life of the school?**

- To provide further opportunities for pupils to experience the call to service through their actions working in partnership in the parish and local community.

## Information about this school

- The school is a two-form entry currently expanding to three forms of entry in the LA of Harrow and the locality of Pinner.
- The school serves the parishes of St. John Fisher, North Harrow, St. Luke's, Pinner and St. Gabriel's, South Harrow and neighbouring parishes.
- The proportion of pupils who are baptised Catholic is 76%.
- The proportion of pupils who are from other Christian denominations is 12% and from other faiths is 10%. The remaining pupils are from families who have no faith or who have not declared a faith.
- The percentage of Catholic teachers in the school is 79%.
- The number of teachers with a Catholic qualification (CCRS) is 8.
- There are 13% of pupils in the school with special educational needs or disabilities of whom 16% have statements of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)/ Education Health and Care Plans (EHCP).
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is above average (69%)
- The number of pupils speaking English as an Additional Language is above average (29%)
- There is a below average rate of families claiming free school meals (6%)
- 35 pupils receive the Pupil Premium (6%).

<b>Department for Education Number</b>	310/3505
<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	102232
<b>Local Authority</b>	Harrow

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary Aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 - 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on roll</b>	561
<b>The appropriate authority</b>	The governing body and academy trust
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Neville Ransley
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Maria Conlon
<b>Telephone number</b>	020 8868 2961
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.stjohnfisherschool.co.uk">www.stjohnfisherschool.co.uk</a>
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:office@st-johnfisher.harrow.sch.uk">office@st-johnfisher.harrow.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	27 February 2014
<b>Grades from previous inspection:</b>	
<b>Classroom religious education</b>	Outstanding
<b>The Catholic life of the school</b>	Outstanding

## Information about this inspection

This inspection was carried out (i) under the requirements of the Canon 806 and (ii) in accordance with the Framework for Diocesan Inspections 2015 approved by the Archbishop of Westminster and (iii) under section 48 of the Education Act 2005.

- The inspectors would like to thank the governors, headteacher, staff, pupils and parents for their co-operation over the conduct of the inspection.
- During the inspection 19 lessons or part lessons were observed.
- The inspectors attended 2 of acts of worship.
- Meetings were held with school staff, pupils and governors.
- Other evidence was gathered from contacts with parents through a questionnaire, scrutiny of a sample of pupils' work, observation of pupils in and out of lessons and examination of school documents.

## Inspection Team

The inspectors are appointed by the Archbishop.

Ms Evelyn Ward

Lead Inspector

Mrs Dee Abbott

Associate Inspector

Mrs Margaret Hanley

Associate Inspector

Mr Michael Ross

Associate Inspector

## Information about inspection

The purpose of Diocesan inspection is to report to and advise the Archbishop on the quality of classroom religious education and the Catholic life of the school. The inspection report is also used to inform parents and carers, and the wider Catholic community. Inspection provides an opportunity to support, challenge, evaluate and promote the work of Catholic schools. It also assists schools in the work of self-evaluation and improvement, and enables the Diocese to celebrate with schools their sense of identity and their strengths as Catholic schools.

### Inspection Grades

- Outstanding
- Good
- Requires improvement
- Causing concern

This report is published by the Diocese of Westminster and is available at:

<http://rcdow.org.uk/education/schools>

Vaughan House  
46 Francis Street,  
London  
SW1P 1QN

T: 020 7798 9005  
E: [education@rcdow.org.uk](mailto:education@rcdow.org.uk)  
W: <http://rcdow.org.uk/education>