

St John Fisher Catholic Primary School

Sarsfield Road, Perivale, Greenford, UB6 7AF



Date of inspection by Westminster Diocese: 8 February 2017

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

A. Classroom religious education is outstanding

- The senior leadership team, including governors have ensured that religious education is at the centre of the school's work.
- The well-planned religious education curriculum meets and exceeds the requirements of the Bishops' Conference and enables pupils to deepen their Catholic faith.
- Through their work within the school, deanery and diocese, the headteacher and religious education leader have ensured that staff are well-trained and up-to-date with the latest strategies for teaching religious education.
- Pupils make rapid progress from low starting points, with a half of Year 6 pupils reaching the highest available grades.
- Excellent resources, including video clips made by the children themselves, further enhance pupils' learning and enthusiasm for religious education.
- A key ingredient to pupils' rapid progress in religious education are the positive relationships that exist between staff and pupils and between the pupils themselves.
- Overall, teaching is never less than good and often outstanding. However, leaders acknowledge that pupils do not always receive precise next steps guidance or have enough opportunities to write at length to develop their religious literacy.
- Leaders, governors and the parish priest offer very effective support to staff so that they can secure the very best outcomes for pupils.

B. The Catholic life of the school is outstanding

- Religious education is at the heart of everything the school does.
- Slightly more than 10% of curriculum time is devoted to RE lessons, which meets and exceeds the requirements of the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales.
- Prayer and worship are carefully woven into the school day and provide excellent opportunities for spiritual growth.
- The school's commitment to the Common Good is strong. Pupils are very involved in decision making and have a very clear understanding of the theology underpinning their actions.
- Partnerships between home, school and parish and between the school, the deanery and the diocese are all strong. As a result of these sustained relationships, the school continues to develop and adapt its provision to meet pupils' needs.
- Leaders and governors are very effective in promoting the Catholic life of the school. However, they acknowledge that they need to check the impact of strategies to improve all aspects of Catholic life.
- Self-evaluation is honest and accurate. Nevertheless, leaders recognise that they need to produce a more succinct document so that it is more accessible to all.
- Teachers are very well supported by senior leaders through mentoring and well-considered training. In addition, a large number have or are preparing to embark on additional qualifications in Catholic education.

A. Classroom Religious Education

What has improved since the last inspection?

The last diocesan inspection report identified that the school should review ICT provision in religious education (RE) to provide further opportunities for creativity, research and enhance knowledge and understanding of the wider world. Since that time, evidence gathered from moderation, pupils' books, shows that teachers are providing more opportunities for pupils to use ICT creatively, by undertaking research and problem-solving activities so that they gain a wider understanding of the world. Evidence gathered during the inspection also confirms this. The newly formed leadership team has an 'open-door' policy where colleagues are always available to provide support wherever it is needed to maintain the high standards in RE, by enabling new or less experienced staff to work alongside and collaborate with more experienced leaders.

The content of classroom religious education is outstanding

The school's commercially published schemes of work for religious education outline explicitly the coverage of the Religious Education Curriculum Directory (RECD) at the start of each topic. Well considered training and support has ensured that all staff are fully aware of the requirements of the RECD. Supported well by the headteacher, the RE leader has been instrumental over many years in ensuring that all staff know well the Agreed Understandings of Levels of Attainment for RE and how they are applied to the school's on-going RE assessment and tracking procedures. The religious education curriculum also provides for the study of other faiths, including Judaism, Hinduism, and Islam, and are further supported by visits to places of worship. Cross-curricular work across other study areas complements and re-enforces this learning. Excellent resources, including PowerPoint presentations and video clips, some of which have been made by the children themselves, further enhance pupils' learning and enthusiasm for religious education. Pupils clearly enjoy their RE lessons as was evident in their enthusiastic responses to religious narratives.

Pupil achievement in religious education is outstanding

Pupils' achievement is outstanding. Pupils enter the school with below average levels of skill, with a large proportion of children not being able to speak English. Pupils make rapid progress from low starting points, with a half reaching the highest available grades by the end of Year 6. Pupils attain similarly high levels in core subjects. Although the school has a relatively small proportion of pupils who are eligible for support from the pupil premium funding, leaders identify a larger group of disadvantaged pupils based on their home circumstances and are tracked from their entry into the school. The school's information shows that there is no difference in the rates of progress of disadvantaged pupils, including the most able of them, and the school's other most-able pupils and other groups. Excellent support, in part provided by additional government funding, in class and by withdrawal, is targeted and adjusted as necessary to meet pupils' individual needs, particularly those who are new to learning English. This helps pupils of all abilities to achieve very well. Teachers' checks on pupils' RE work is moderated regularly internally and externally through diocesan and deanery moderation activities.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

Pupils reported that they thoroughly enjoy their religious education lessons and take great pride in talking about their accomplishments. Classroom resources are of high quality and stimulating displays show pupils' high standards of work. A key ingredient to pupils' rapid progress is the positive relationships that exist between staff and pupils and between the pupils themselves. Staff are well supported by leaders to ensure that pupils learn develop positive attitudes to learning. Teaching assistants are used very effectively, to guide and support pupils in their learning, particularly those who are new to learning English. Lessons are meticulously planned using the information on pupils'

skills and abilities and what they learned in the previous lesson. Pupils respond very willingly to teachers' positive comments to encourage their learning. However, pupils do not always receive precise next steps guidance to deepen their understanding of religious concepts. Also, pupils do not always have enough opportunities to write at length to develop their religious literacy.

The effectiveness of leadership and management in promoting religious education

is outstanding

The leadership and management of RE are outstanding. The senior leadership team, including governors have ensured that religious education is at the centre of the school's work. The RE leader is at the forefront of innovation with regard to moderation of teachers' checks on pupils' work both within the school, deanery and diocese. As a class-based senior leader, she works very successfully to monitor, improve and support teaching in RE so that it is never less than good. Rigorous and robust arrangements are in place for tracking and assessing pupils' progress. Leaders have high aspirations which focus on pupils' achievement, the deepening of their faith, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Governors know the school exceptionally well and are committed to seeing it succeed. They visit often and gain valuable first-hand knowledge about the school. They understand the school's strengths and areas for improvement. Regular training events, organised by the school, the diocese and the deanery have ensured that both staff and governors are up-to-date with the latest developments in the teaching of RE.

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

- Provide pupils with more precise feedback on how to improve their work so that it further deepens their knowledge and understanding of religious concepts.
- Provide more opportunities for pupils to write at length to develop further their religious literacy skills.

B. The Catholic life of the school

What has improved since the last inspection?

The last diocesan inspection report identified that the school should further develop opportunities for spiritual development through the creation of focused 'prayer areas'. Since that time, two prayer gardens have been created. The 'Peace Garden' in the Junior School playground, was designed by the children and is used by them both as a place for quiet reflection and for acts of worship. Our Lady is the focus for prayer in the early years' prayer garden. The creation of this garden was supported by parents who donated pots and plants.

The place of religious education as the core of the curriculum

is outstanding

Religious education is at the heart of the school's curriculum. This generous allocation of slightly more than 10% of curriculum time is devoted to RE lessons, meets and exceeds the requirements of the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales. In addition, the budget allocated to RE over the last three years, is in line with other core subjects, and has ensured that RE is well-resourced. Senior leaders and governors place a high priority to developing, reviewing and improving all aspects of the Catholic life, and have ensured that the school development plan and teachers' performance management targets reflect this. The very clean and attractive school environment, is further enhanced by the many prayer focuses and religious artworks which give a clear indication that this is a Catholic school. Teachers are very well supported by senior leaders through mentoring and well-considered training. In addition, a large number have, or are preparing to embark on the Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies programme. Leaders, governors and the parish priest offer very effective support to staff so that they are able to secure the very best outcomes for pupils.

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

is outstanding

Leaders and governors have ensured that the prayer life of the school is rich and engages all members of its community. Daily prayer and worship based on the liturgical cycle, are the heart-beat of school life. Pupils have several different prayer spaces, with two outdoor prayer areas and a Heart of Mercy prayer altar in the school building. The liturgy programme provides many opportunities for children to celebrate the Eucharist throughout the year, with special attention given to the school feast day. Pupils' spiritual development is enabled through many different prayer opportunities, including the established practice of pupils planning and leading their own acts of worship both in class and in assemblies. During these prayers, pupils are very well behaved, engaged and able to participate respectfully in moments of quiet reflection. Pupil voice opportunities provided by the 'Mini Vinnies' ensures that pupils are very involved in the Catholic life of the school. Assemblies link closely to the RE programme and have a clear scriptural message and are very well attended by parents. The school has a very small minority of pupils from other faiths but ensures that their values and traditions are respected; for example, the school also works very effectively with a neighbouring school who have a largely Muslim community.

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

is outstanding

It is very evident that St John Fisher Catholic School is a community where each child is valued as an individual. This is demonstrated by the wide range of opportunities available for children to get involved and develop their talents, and the weekly celebration of the children's achievements. The school has a very dynamic and comprehensive understanding of the Church's commitment to the

Common Good. The school supports a wide range of different local, national and international charities, finding creative ways to do this, such as focusing on different corporal and spiritual acts of mercy. Pupils are very actively engaged in directing and designing fundraising activities across the school year. Pupils are proud of their community and understand the importance of working together to put into action the Gospel values, such as compassion and mercy. Pupils reported that, 'Jesus said, we should love our neighbour,' and 'be fishers of men.' They explained that this is the reason why their fundraising is so important. They were also clear about the links between Pope Francis' letter '*Laudato Si*' and our responsibility to look after the world, for example by the school's work in adopting of a tiger.

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

Partnerships are a strong feature of the school's understanding of itself and the wider community. There was a very high number of responses to the inspection survey, and all were overwhelmingly positive, reflecting strongly how positive they feel about the Catholic life of the school and the provision made for their children. The parish priest visits the school often and plays an intrinsic part in the life of the school. For example, he works very closely with the RE leader in helping to monitor the Catholic life of the school. The school attends the key diocesan training and celebratory events and has forged strong links with both Catholic and non-Catholic schools to provide training, support and share good practice. The school engages well with the Westminster Education Service and regularly attends a range of training events organised for staff and governors. The RE leader often leads on diocesan training for newly qualified teachers. Governors regularly participate in diocesan training to enable them to fulfil their roles in the school. Highly effective partnerships with home, school and parish have resulted in a close Catholic community that supports pupils' learning well.

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

is outstanding

The religious education leader, together with the senior leadership of the school, shares a strong commitment and a vision to and for high quality religious education for all pupils. They promote a common sense of purpose and an excellent understanding of the nature of Catholic religious education. There is a strong focus among the school leaders on improving the quality of teaching by working collaboratively with staff to ensure that pupils secure the best outcomes. The headteacher and RE leader are the driving force in developing the vision and are extremely well supported by governors who provide excellent support and challenge for leaders. Well-considered training and development opportunities, both in school and through deanery and diocesan activities, have ensured that staff are kept up-to-date with the latest developments in the teaching of RE. Very good use is made of staff meetings and departmental meetings to discuss new areas within the curriculum, moderation of pupils' work and the celebration of good practice. Self-evaluation is honest and accurate. However, senior leaders and governors acknowledge that the self-evaluation document needs to be more succinct and that they need to evaluate more widely the impact of initiatives to promote the Catholic life of the school.

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

- Produce a more succinct version of the diocesan self-evaluation document so that it is easily accessible for all members of the school community.
- Ensure that leaders and governors evaluate more widely the impact of initiatives to promote the Catholic life of the school.

Information about this school

- The school is a two-form entry Catholic Primary school in the locality of Perivale.
- The school serves the parish of St. John Fisher, Perivale, Middlesex.
- The proportion of pupils who are baptised Catholic is 96%.
- The proportion of pupils who are from other Christian denominations is 3% and from other faiths 1%.
- The percentage of Catholic teachers in the school is 76%.
- The number of teachers with a Catholic qualification is six.
- There are 14% of pupils in the school with special educational needs and /or disabilities of whom seven have statements of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)/ Education Health and Care Plans (EHCP).
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is well above average.
- The number of pupils speaking English as an Additional Language is well above average.
- There is a well below average rate of families claiming free school meals.
- 18 pupils receive the Pupil Premium (4%).

Department for Education Number	307/3504
Unique Reference Number	101921
Local Authority	Ealing

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils	4 – 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on roll	438
The appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair (Acting)	Mrs Teresa Correia
Headteacher	Mrs Tracey Brosnan
Telephone number	020 8799 0970
Website	www.st-johnfisher.ealing.sch.uk
Email address	admin@st-johnfisher.ealing.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	8 December 2011
Grade from previous inspection	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 11 lessons or part lessons were observed.
- The inspectors attended one assembly and two acts of worship.
- Meetings were held with school staff, pupils and the Parish Priest.
- 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 Grades

- Outstanding
- Good
- Requires improvement
- Causing concern

Inspection Team

The inspectors are appointed by the Archbishop.

Mr David Scott

Mrs Lisa Barton

Mrs Liz Doonan

Lead Inspector

Associate Inspector

Associate Inspector

Published by the Diocese of Westminster

This publication 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

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