

St John Fisher Catholic Primary School

URN: 101460

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Most Rev. John Wilson Archbishop of Southwark

24–25 April 2024

Summary of key findings

Overall effectiveness

The overall quality of Catholic education provided by the school

Catholic life and mission (p.3)

How faithfully the school responds to the call to live as a Catholic community at the service of the Church's educational mission

Religious education (p.5)

The quality of curriculum religious education

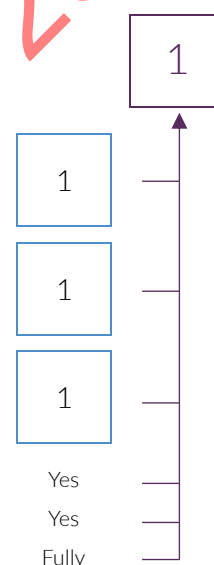
Collective worship (p.7)

The quality and range of liturgy and prayer provided by the school

The school is fully compliant with the curriculum requirements laid down by the Bishops' Conference

The school is fully compliant with all requirements of the diocesan bishop

The school has responded to the areas for improvement from the last inspection



What the school does well

- Pupils' excellent attitude to learning shows there is a genuine desire to learn more and understand more.
- Behaviour around the school is exemplary.
- Pastoral care is a great strength.
- Sense of community and welcome is tangible.
- Pupil engagement with prayer experiences provided by the school is profound and very reverential.

What the school needs to improve

- Identify explicit targets for improvement in the school's evaluation document and ensure that these inform the subject leader action plan.
- Provide regular and explicit opportunities for pupil leadership in whole school prayer and liturgy.
- Review the school mission statement to make it more child-friendly, involving all stakeholders in the community.

Date Published: 16th May 2024

Catholic life and mission

How faithfully the school responds to the call to live as a Catholic community at the service of the Church's educational mission.

Catholic life and mission key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

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

Provision

The quality of provision for the Catholic life and mission of the school

Leadership

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic life and mission of the school

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St John Fisher is a warm, welcoming school which celebrates its distinctive Catholic identity. Pupils understand and embrace this, stating that 'it follows the Catholic faith' and 'makes us grow a better place by being kind to one another.' Pupils describe the school, a 'great school', where Catholic social teaching is embedded and visible. Pupils spoke of the signage about this in the playground stating, 'they link it to all that we do.' Display work reflecting Catholic social teaching uses animals from Cafod which 'tries to promote knowledge of good to improve our world'. Pupils raise money for charities and do this 'because Jesus says we should'. The recently developed and enthusiastic Mini Vinnies led by the parish sisters can articulate their purpose: to 'follow in the footsteps of St Vincent de Paul.' The school recently achieved Oscar Romero Award developer level and has fully embraced teaching in *Laudato Si* led by the pupil Eco-group. Pupils feel safe and know to whom they should speak should the need arise. They know they are cared for as unique, and in the image and likeness of God. For example, older pupils act as playground ambassadors looking after younger pupils, 'because it shows you care.'

The school's mission statement, encapsulated in 'when you love to learn, you learn to love,' is clear, inspiring and rooted in the Gospel. It is known and lived by all members of the community. Most parents know and are supportive of it stating that 'it is a very good mission that has continued to shape my child's life academically, morally and spiritually.' The school is revisiting the school mission statement in the light of today's world and are engaging all stakeholders in this process. Christ is the core of the school community as shown by the very warm welcome received by all and by the joyful relationships prevalent in the school. Teachers say they 'feel blessed' and 'it's a privilege to belong.' Pastoral care and staff wellbeing are great strengths. Recent bereavements experienced by the school community highlighted this. Staff stated, 'you turn any corner and there's someone holding your hand.' Parents stated, 'Catholic values and teaching is a core and paramount element,' and 'we as

parents get to benefit from it and are constantly involved.... through various activities during the academic year.' Relationship, health and sex education is well planned using Ten:Ten resources, and meets statutory and diocesan requirements.

Leaders and governors ensure Christ is at the heart of the school, and the ongoing development of this mission is a core responsibility. Governors are involved in revisiting the mission statement and have involved diocesan agencies to facilitate this. Monitoring and evaluation of Catholic life involves learning walks, meetings with pupils and staff and pupil faith leaders have made presentations to governing body meetings to contribute to the evaluation of the Catholic life of the school. Governors ensure that policies reflect the Catholic mission of the school and have prioritised resources in this area. Senior leaders are well supported by a committed governing body who also offer challenge which leads to strategic development. Governors and leaders ensure that the whole taught curriculum with religious education at its core is a clear expression of a Catholic understanding of reality. Catholic social teaching as illustrated through active involvement with the Oscar Romero Award, is greatly valued by parents stating, 'the school encourages children to live right, teaches them to pray and help improve their Christian morals. Teaches them to love one another.' New staff spoke of a highly effective induction programme which built their confidence in working in Catholic education.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

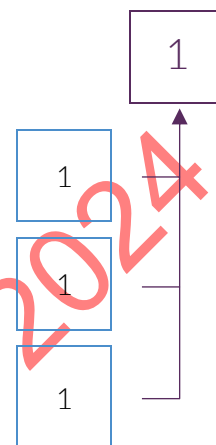
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

Provision

The quality of teaching, learning, and assessment in religious education

Leadership

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for religious education



Pupils find religious education fun. They spoke of different activities such as drama, art and music and the use of the Bible within lessons which help them to love learning. Pupils know their targets and how to improve and so are developing excellent knowledge, understanding and skills. This is shown in pupils' work which is both of a high quality and high standard equivalent to that of other core subjects. Key strengths include the quantity, feedback and variety of tasks in which the pupils engage. Assessment is in line with school policy clearly identifying next steps. Data is strong showing consistently good progress across all groups of pupils and above average compared with other core subjects. Parents stated, 'My children look forward to talking to me about what they have learnt in their religious education lessons,' Pupils are engaged in lessons and give confident responses to questioning. For example, to a question about the Holy Spirit, a pupil responded, 'The Holy Spirit is a helper for everyone,' in another lesson using art to draw pupils into the Eucharist pupils spoke confidently and with understanding. Behaviour in lessons is impeccable with engaged pupils actively participating in their learning.

Teaching is at least good with much outstanding. Teachers have sound subject knowledge, and they demonstrate a deep commitment to religious education communicated to pupils and parents. 96% of parents stated they know how well their child is doing in religious education, they can 'see the level of development in their academic work.' Planning is linked to assessment with lessons consolidating previous knowledge and skilful questioning helps pupils to deepen their learning. Parents said their children are 'taught really well' and feel a 'close partnership with teachers to meet their needs.' The school uses a traffic light system and star of the week with certificates to celebrate pupils' effort both academically and socially. Teachers know the impact religious education has on pupils' morally and spiritually. They stated that 'religious education is taught to increase pupil's faith.' They also 'educate pupils about other faiths so that they are aware and understand other religions.' Time in lesson allows pupils to reflect upon their learning. Pupils are still with eyes closed and, after this time, are invited to

share their thoughts. Books showed pupils have extensive opportunities to present their work using a variety of forms including art, extended writing, leaflet creation and poetry.

Leaders and governors ensure that the school curriculum for religious education is a faithful expression of the *Religious Education Curriculum Directory* using *Come and See*. The subject leader is undertaking training on the new *Religious Education Directory* to ensure this continues. Resources are used very well and imaginatively to enhance delivery of the curriculum. For example, the parish sisters come to the school weekly to lead Godly Play sessions with the pupils, the delivery of which is outstanding and in which pupils engage fully. Religious education has full parity with core subjects including timetable and budget. The subject leader for religious education has an inspiring vision for outstanding teaching and has a high level of expertise in sharing this vision with all staff. For example, as part of their induction new staff meet with the subject leader fortnightly, gaining from her experience which they said was 'very helpful'. Thus ensuring teaching is never less than good. 100% of staff strongly agree that they are provided with professional development opportunities. The curriculum is well planned and creatively structured meeting the needs of all pupils, and challenging them to deeper learning. Parents describe 'staff at SJFP are very supportive and doing a great job.'

Collective worship

The quality and range of liturgy and prayer provided by the school

Collective worship key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

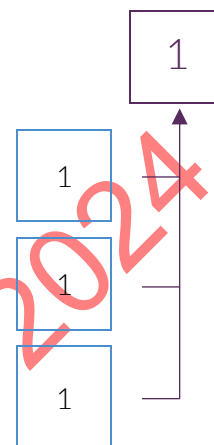
How well pupils participate in and respond to the school's collective worship

Provision

The quality of collective worship provided by the school

Leadership

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for collective worship



The pupils' experience of prayer and liturgy engages them deeply, they behave in a most reverential manner and participate fully. Pupils sing enthusiastically and with meaning, this needs to be encouraged in each morning assembly. Pupils know a wide variety of ways of praying both traditional and extempore. Each class has a prayer book into which pupils write their own prayers. These books are taken home to share with parents, something welcomed by parents. One parent stated, 'the joy in their faces when they come back home with the prayer book is absolutely heartwarming.' The impact of the school prayer life in the home is encapsulated by another parent who stated, 'my little girl prays how she has been taught in school before going to bed every night.' Pupil Faith Leaders are very active in organising and leading prayer and liturgy. They meet as a prayer group sharing well-structured prayer and liturgy which includes a focal area, appropriate hymn, relevant scripture, time for reflection and prayer. In addition, they present well-received reflections to the governing body. Pupils confidently undertake liturgical ministries such as altar servers and readers in the parish and school Masses.

There is a daily rhythm of prayer using both traditional and extempore. For example, pupils lead the Angelus at noon which they do reverently. Seasonally appropriate scripture with explanation is used and pupils relate their prayer life to their daily lives. They enjoy organising and leading, stating, 'it's fun because you organise, and you get to teach people about their faith.' Parents said how their children pray at home using prayers given in school. The school recently suffered several bereavements and staff add that prayer was a source of real comfort for the community. Staff are skilled at supporting pupils in leading prayer and liturgy which begins in reception and grows with the children as they progress. Staff said that their confidence in facilitating prayer and liturgy came from their 'confidence in pupils' leadership and organisation.' Prayer spaces are used creatively in classrooms and 'Prayer Bears' enhance the pupils' experience of liturgy through, for example, the bear's ribbon colour is changed to reflect the liturgical season. The school seeks to work well with the

local parish through the parish sisters and parish priest who regularly celebrates Mass in the school. Parents stated they 'are always invited to attend Masses.' Pupils are involved in reconciliation as 'Thinking Ambassadors.' These meet with pupils who may have challenges with others and provide them with an opportunity for restorative justice.

Prayer and liturgy are central to the life of the school reflected in the policy on prayer and liturgy. Staff model exemplary practice and thus inspire others in the school. The pupils behave with reverence and respect, and all are included. Parents stated, 'all people from other faiths can participate' and Mini Vinnies includes pupils of other faiths. Training for staff is both inhouse and diocesan, and pupil faith leaders meet weekly with the subject leader to evaluate and plan prayer and liturgy. Leaders and governors regularly attend assemblies, school Masses and offer challenge to leaders which form part of planned improvements. The school's policy on prayer and liturgy is carefully formulated and fit for purpose. It is reviewed regularly and almost all staff agreed it was useful to them when preparing prayer and liturgy. Resources for prayer and liturgy are high quality reflecting the broad range of prayer within the Catholic tradition. and staff are very well supported in developing high quality prayer and liturgy. This leads to prayer and liturgy which is consistently engaging and valued by all stakeholders.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St John Fisher Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	101460
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	3033505
Full postal address of the school	St John Fisher Catholic Primary School, Kale Road, Thamesmead, Erith, DA18 4BA
School phone number	02083107311
Headteacher	Sarah Griffin
Chair of Governors	Esther Phillips
School Website	www.sjf.bexley.sch.uk
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	N/A
Phase	Primary
Type of school	Voluntary Aided School
Admissions policy	N/A
Age-range of pupils	4-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	February 2017
Previous denominational inspection grade	1

The inspection team

Stephen Horsman

Patrina Begley

Lead

Team

Key to grade judgements

Grade	England	Wales
1	Outstanding	Excellent
2	Good	Good
3	Requires improvement	Adequate and requires improvement
4	Inadequate	Unsatisfactory and in need of urgent improvement