



DIOCESAN CANONICAL INSPECTION REPORT

THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL, COLLECTIVE WORSHIP AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

St John Fisher Catholic Voluntary Academy

Alvaston Street, Alvaston, Derby, DE24 0PA

School URN:	138514
Inspection Date:	25 June 2015
Inspectors:	Mrs Geraldine Willders and Mr Gregory Hughes

Overall Effectiveness	Previous Inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This Inspection:	Good	2
Catholic Life:		Outstanding	1
Collective Worship:		Good	2
Religious Education:		Good	2

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FOR PARENTS AND PUPILS

St John Fisher Catholic Voluntary Academy is a good Catholic school.

- Since the headteacher took up her post in April 2010, there have been significant changes. There is now a new governing body overseeing a well-structured and dedicated staff. Pupils have been included in shaping the school's mission and are able to speak clearly about its distinctive nature. Inspirational leadership and a strong senior leadership team ensure that the Catholic Life of the school is given the highest priority and, as a result, this area is outstanding.
- Prayer is central to the life of the school. Morning Prayer takes place on the playground before entering the school. This is witnessed by parents and is a powerful illustration of how the school community value times of worship.
- Pupil-led liturgy has improved significantly since the last inspection; the establishment of a chaplaincy team has further raised the profile and importance of worship in school.
- Pupils enjoy their learning in Religious Education. They feel challenged in lessons and can talk enthusiastically about their work with increasing spiritual and ethical depth of thought. Behaviour for learning is good. Pupil outcomes have improved significantly and are now in line with diocesan averages. Assessment is robust and clear systems of monitoring are timetabled. A range of approaches are used to ensure that all pupils are catered for and that their abilities are challenged appropriately.

FULL REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

- St John Fisher Catholic Voluntary Academy has 226 pupils on roll and is a smaller than average sized primary school, situated in the south-east side of Derby in the area of Alvaston. It serves primarily the Catholic parish of English Martyrs', Alvaston and St Ralph Sherwin, Chellaston. It is a sponsored academy under direct sponsorship of the Nottingham Roman Catholic Diocesan Education Service.
- The core leadership is comprised of co-headteachers, school business manager and senior leader. They are supported by a middle leader (SENDCO).
- Pupils are organised into seven single-age classes including a Reception class for children in the Foundation Stage.
- 72% of the children are baptised Catholic. There is an upward trend of pupils from a range of mixed ethnic and minority ethnic groups; the largest being East European, mixed White and Black Caribbean, Black British African and Travellers of Irish heritage. Approximately 1 child in 10 speaks English as an additional language; some of them are in the early stages of English language acquisition.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils for whom the school receives pupil premium funding is significantly above national average at 31.5%. This funding is for pupils who are in local authority care and those known to be eligible for free school meals.

WHAT DOES THE SCHOOL NEED TO DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- Further increase the responsibility of the subject leader for Religious Education through their leadership of and involvement in:
 - Developing systems for monitoring the quality of Acts of Collective Worship and Religious Education.
 - Taking greater responsibility for monitoring and evaluating Collective Worship and Religious Education in order to further improve provision.

CATHOLIC LIFE

THE QUALITY OF THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL	1
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- The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school.
- The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school.
- How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school.

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The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school - outstanding

- Pupils and their families have been placed firmly at the centre of the Catholic Life of the school and as a result, pupils benefit significantly from the school's Catholic ethos.
- The school mission statement at St John Fisher is a way of life. This is evident when speaking to pupils; they keep the message at the forefront of their learning and behaviour. In the words of one child, 'We had school rules but we would break them. The mission statement is something that really guides our decisions'.
- Almost all pupils have a deep sense of belonging and are proud to be members of the school community. They value the school as a Catholic school and are proud to take a leading role in activities which promote the school's distinctive ethos.
- Pupils have a strong understanding of vocation and their responsibility in helping those in need. Their fundraising efforts are successfully focused on them having a positive impact on the lives of others in society.
- Pupils in the older year groups speak knowledgeably of the beatitudes and of Catholic social teaching and how this shapes their life and decisions. They have a deep respect for the Catholic traditions of the school and how these impact on their development.
- 'Mission Chaplains' play a key role in the school and beyond. They make their Catholic presence felt by sharing get well wishes with Bishop Malcolm and writing to schools that have experienced tragedy. This is 'mission into action' in its truest sense.

The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school - outstanding

- There is a tangible sense of community at all levels and the positive relationships and respect shown by all stakeholders is exemplary.
- The mission statement is a clear and inspiring expression of the mission of the Church and is central to the life of the school.
- There is an unwavering commitment to the needs of pupils which further demonstrates that provision for the Catholic Life of the school is central to all that they do. The school is proactive in identifying vulnerable pupils and families and actively seeking to put the support needed in place. This is a significant strength of the school.
- Clear policies and structures are in place to provide the highest possible levels of pastoral care for all pupils. These are rooted in Gospel values and reflect the mission of the Church.
- Pupils understand and value the systems that are in place to ensure that pupil behaviour is the best it can be. Again, pupils referred back to the mission of the school; 'You might not get punished for not following it, but you have to live with knowing you've not followed God's way'.

How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school – outstanding

- The school has come through challenging times and thanks to leaders' and managers' depth of commitment to the Catholic Life of the school, it is a joyful, motivated and enthusiastic community.
- The previous inspection identified the headteacher as 'a beacon in the community' and commended her impact on developing the Catholic Life of the school. This has continued to go from strength to strength and, as a result, leaders and managers as a team including governors, are beacons in the community committed both to the pupils and the Church's mission in education.
- Through rigorous self-evaluation involving all stakeholders, carefully targeted improvements have been put in place which have been relentlessly monitored to the clear benefit of the whole school community. Staff and pupils' awareness of the Catholic Life of the school and their commitment to it is evident.
- The school has highly effective strategies for engaging with parents and considers this a priority for ensuring that pupils get the best possible chances in life.
- Governors are central in promoting, monitoring and evaluating the provision for the Catholic Life of the school. They have worked hard with leaders in the school to provide a safe, secure, Catholic environment for pupils and families to thrive.
- Governors have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. They are highly ambitious for the school and demonstrate a steadfast commitment to moving the school forward in all areas for the benefit of pupils. They are ready to challenge as well as support in order to ensure that this comes to fruition.

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

THE QUALITY OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP	2
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- How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship.
- The quality of provision for the Collective Worship.
- How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship.

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How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship - good

- Pupils act with reverence and are keen to participate in Acts of Worship. They join in all types of prayer and most have a clear understanding of prayer bringing them closer to God.
- The experience of being part of a praying community has had a profound impact on pupils. The introduction of meditation, now well embedded, has had a strong influence on pupils and the way in which they benefit from prayer as individuals.
- Pupils regularly lead worship with confidence and, in the older years, enjoy the opportunities to participate in prayer workshops to experience new and different ways of preparing worship.
- Pupils of all ages have a secure understanding of the differences between different types of worship, both formal and informal. They enjoy celebrating Mass in school and participating in Sunday Mass in the parish.
- There is a deep sense of respect for different faiths and pupils are mindful that they are sensitive to the beliefs of others in worship.

The quality of provision for Collective Worship - good

- Prayer is central to the life of the school and is highly valued by pupils and families. Pupils and families join together in prayer at the start of the day when lined up on the playground and this sets the tone for the day ahead.
- Parents are invited to take part in Collective Worship throughout the year and they speak positively of this, giving positive feedback to the school.
- Acts of Worship are well planned and resourced. Pupil-led liturgy is long-standing and well embedded throughout the school.

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- Chaplaincy is central to the life of the school. Prayer chaplains monitor and review provision in each class, including the quality of prayer focus areas. In addition to this, pupils who take on a range of other roles in the school are given the title 'chaplain', further rooting prayer in the life of the school.
- Staff have a good understanding of the Church's liturgical heritage and are able to plan worship that reflects this. Themes chosen are consistent with the liturgical year and therefore pupils develop a good understanding in turn.

How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship - good

- Leaders and managers have a thorough understanding of the Church's liturgical year, its rites and seasons. They are skilled at planning worship in the school to reflect this and ensure that Collective Worship is given high priority.
- Liturgical and spiritual development is part of the professional development cycle for staff, particularly newly appointed teachers. There is a focus on any training received leading to personal targets for improvement.
- Leaders and managers regularly lead Acts of Worship and are positive role models for pupils, parents, staff and the wider community.
- Collective Worship is regularly evaluated and continuous improvement is seen as a core responsibility of the leadership team. The school has identified that these systems can now be more systematic in ensuring that the quality of Collective Worship continues to improve.
- The development of the subject leader for Religious Education in monitoring and evaluating all aspects of Collective Worship will further improve the capacity of the school in monitoring and evaluating provision and will ultimately lead the school further forward.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

THE QUALITY OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION	2
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- How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education.
- The quality of teaching and assessment in Religious Education.
- How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education.

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How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education – good

- Pupils enjoy their learning in Religious Education. They are settled for work and show good listening skills. Teachers are knowledgeable and there are good relationships with pupils. The use of mini plenaries during lessons would create further focus to enable pupils to consider their responses and to expand on their written answers.
- Behaviour throughout the school during lessons is a strength and has been worked on since the last inspection. Pupils show respect to teachers and there is a clear structure and purpose to lessons. Pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills are matched to age expectations. The senior leadership team has worked hard on incorporating meditation into lessons and indeed the wider school day. Times for reflection ensure that pupils are focussed and thoughtful in lessons.
- Children arrive at St John Fisher with little religious literacy. Yearly cohorts receive strong spiritual guidance from Foundation Stage. Prayer forms a central part of each day. At the end of Key Stage 1, children make good progress with no group being noticeably behind. Further progress occurs throughout Key Stage 2 culminating in pupils who have a faith-filled knowledge which is in line with diocesan expectations.
- Pupils' assessment data for Religious Education is now regularly collected; evidence over the last three years shows that the school is in line with diocesan averages and that gaps which were apparent at the last inspection have now been closed.

The quality of teaching and assessment in Religious Education – good

- Historical weaker teaching and outcomes have been replaced with focussed learning tasks and robust behaviour management. Teaching is now well planned and purposeful. The *Come and See* programme has become embedded in the Religious Education curriculum. The school has worked hard on its 'Red it-Read it' policy which prompts response time from pupils. This is evident throughout the school and now needs to be developed further to elicit even deeper thought and expanded written answers.
- Teachers are able to pitch lessons at the appropriate level and staff are well matched to year groups. Driver words and 'Statements to live by' are used throughout the school to good effect assisting children in their Religious formation. Teachers use a variety of teaching styles. There is a combination of visual, auditory and kinaesthetic stimulus and, as a result, children are enthusiastic. ICT, drama and music are used effectively. Further independent learning opportunities such as using iPads to independently investigate learning objectives would enhance current practice further.
- Teaching assistants are well deployed and have a clear understanding of the outcomes expected by the end of each lesson. They make a positive impact on pupils and are able to support individuals or groups of pupils.
- The majority of teaching is at least good. In Key Stage 1, Religious Education is planned across the curriculum with a range of pupil activities. To improve still further, success criteria need to have a greater emphasis with teachers ensuring that all activities are explained clearly. Pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 make good progress and are verbally more capable than their written work shows. In upper Key Stage 2, co-teaching has been effective with teachers working closely to provide effectively for different ability groups. There is further scope to tease out a greater depth of knowledge through more incisive questioning and teachers need to seek further development of written answers. The school is well placed to address these areas.
- Planning, marking and feedback have whole-school uniformity and increasing depth. Regular scrutiny of work and pupil progress meetings take place each term. Staff moderate samples of work, discuss barriers to learning for vulnerable groups, look at intervention to accelerate learning and close the gap. As a result, pupils in intervention groups make good progress and all groups of pupils are appropriately differentiated for and effectively challenged.

The extent to which leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education – good

- The headteacher and her strong senior leadership team have made a significant impact on the quality of monitoring and evaluation. They have a clear vision for further improvement and have worked extremely hard to place the school on firm foundations. The annual planning and review cycle is becoming firmly embedded. Work scrutiny, observation of lessons and evaluation of outcomes are accurate and inform next steps for improvement.
- Every child matters at St John Fisher. Analysis and collection of data is robust for all ability groups. A considerable amount of money has been spent on staffing, resources and external support. Faith in Families and financial targeting of vulnerable groups has helped to ensure that children feel secure and as a result achieve good standards in Religious Education.
- Training is seen as important and attendance at diocesan events is always assured. *Levels of Attainment in Religious Education* are well known by staff and they are confident in levelling pupils' work accurately. The new Religious Education subject leader is enthusiastic and has received strong support. She is well placed to take over her new role and continue to move the school forward.
- Governance has been overhauled since the last inspection and targets set have been thoroughly addressed. Governors have overseen a comprehensive programme of improving teaching and learning systems and have created a strong distributed leadership with clear succession planning.
- The Religious Education curriculum meets pupils' needs and fulfils the requirements of the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales. Leaders have supported staff to embed the *Come and See* scheme of work and this has been developed in an adequate way focusing on the needs and interests of pupils. The curriculum provides opportunities for pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development.

SCHOOL DETAILS

School Name	St John Fisher Catholic Voluntary Academy
Unique Reference Number	138514
Local Authority	Derby

The inspection of this school was carried out on behalf of the Bishop of Nottingham under Canon 806 of Canon Law in accordance with the *evaluation schedule* for diocesan canonical inspections in the Diocese of Nottingham. The inspection reviews and evaluates how effective the school is in providing Catholic education. The process begins with the school's own self-evaluation and the inspection schedule is in line with the criteria set by the National Board of Religious Inspectors and Advisers (NBRIA).

During the inspection, the inspectors observed 7 Religious Education lessons and 2 pupil-led Acts of Collective Worship in Years 2 and 6. Meetings were held with the headteacher, the subject leader for Religious Education, the senior leadership team and governors. Discussions were also held with pupils and parents.

Inspectors scrutinised a range of documents including the school Improvement plan, the self-evaluation form and additional monitoring and evaluation evidence. Inspectors also examined the work in pupils' Religious Education books.

Chair of Governors:	Mrs Jane Monaghan (Acting Chair)
Headteacher:	Dr Eilis Field
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WHAT INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS MEAN

Within the report, the following grades are used:

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Requires Improvement
Grade 4	Inadequate

In the context of the whole school, the overall effectiveness grades have the following meaning:

Grade 1	Outstanding	The school is a highly effective Catholic school. Pupils' needs are exceptionally well met.
Grade 2	Good	The school is an effective Catholic school. Pupils' needs are met well.
Grade 3	Requires Improvement	The school is not yet a good Catholic school, it is not inadequate however, and there are aspects that require improvement. There will be a monitoring visit within the next 12 months and the school will be re-inspected within 3 years.
Grade 4	Inadequate	There are features in need of urgent and immediate attention. The school is not meeting the basic minimum requirement for adequacy as a Catholic school. The school will receive an annual monitoring visit and will be re-inspected within 3 years.