



DIOCESAN CANONICAL INSPECTION REPORT

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

St John Fisher Catholic Voluntary Academy

Alvaston Street, Alvaston, Derby, DE24 0PA

School URN:	138514
Inspection Date:	4 May 2022
Inspectors:	Mr M Fitzwilliam and Mrs H White

Overall Effectiveness	Previous Inspection:	Good	2
	This Inspection:	Good	2
Catholic Life:		Good	2
Religious Education:		Good	2
Collective Worship:		Good	2

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FOR PARENTS AND PUPILS

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

- St John Fisher is a caring school with a family feel which is evident when you enter the school, and which is spoken about by so many of the stakeholders. Since the last diocesan canonical inspection there has been a change of headteacher and deputy headteacher. The school is now part of the St Ralph Sherwin Catholic Multi-Academy Trust. The school uses action planning well to support Catholic Life, Collective Worship and Religious Education. The school has gone to great lengths to improve communication between home, school and parish.
- The quality of Religious Education is good. Pupils enjoy their lessons and the majority of pupils respond positively. The senior leaders at St John Fisher have worked hard to disseminate the skills of the more experienced staff to other teachers. Pupil outcomes remain in line with diocesan averages. Assessment of pupils' work is clear in the Religious Education workbooks. Monitoring of the subject is planned throughout the year and findings are fed back to the staff. Pupils' learning needs are catered for by using a variety of strategies.
- The quality of the Catholic Life is good at St John Fisher. Pupils enjoy taking part in the charity work and fund raising which is undertaken at the school. There is currently a move to this becoming more child initiated. Links between the church and the school have become stronger since the new headteacher joined the school. Behaviour is good throughout most of the school, and, where behaviour is less than good, senior leaders have responded in order to minimise disruption to learning.
- The quality of Collective Worship is good. There are a variety of styles of Collective Worship throughout the week. Most pupils enjoy taking part in these and participate through responding and singing. Pupils are involved in the planning of worship, but there is still more work to be done to empower pupils to plan and deliver the Acts of Worship independently. The pupils in the chaplaincy team are keen to share their knowledge about and experience within the school.

FULL REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

- St John Fisher Catholic Voluntary Academy has 203 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 part of the St Ralph Sherwin Catholic Multi-Academy Trust.
- The school's senior leadership team is made up of a headteacher, a deputy headteacher and an inclusion leader. The headteacher and the deputy headteacher are new to the school since the last inspection and have been in post since September 2020. They were appointed during the COVID pandemic.
- At the time of the inspection, three teachers were on fixed term contracts due to teachers being on maternity leave.
- Pupils are organised into seven single-age classes, including a Reception class for pupils in the Foundation Stage.
- 62% of pupils are baptised Catholics, 27% of pupils are from other Christian denominations and 11% of pupils have no religious affiliation.
- 14% of pupils are on the school Special Educational Needs Register; this is slightly higher than the national average of 12%.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils for whom the school receives pupil premium funding is 24%; this is higher than the current national average of 20%. Such funding is for pupils who are in local authority care and/or those known to be eligible for free school meals.
- Every lesson seen during the inspection was observed jointly by an inspector and either the headteacher or the Religious Education leader.

WHAT DOES THE SCHOOL NEED TO DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- Catholic Life:
 - Ensure that the behaviour policy is fully understood by all stakeholders and consistently applied by all members of staff in order to challenge the conduct of any pupil at risk of disrupting the learning of others.
 - Agree a consistent method to record the work of pupils in Relationships, Sex and Health Education.
- Religious Education:
 - Reduce the amount of scaffolding for pupils when writing, in order to promote more extended pieces of written work.
 - Continue to support teachers who are new to the school in order to secure their religious subject knowledge and familiarise them with the expectations within the '*Come and See*' scheme of work.
- Collective Worship:
 - Increase opportunities for all pupils to independently plan and prepare child-led liturgy.
 - Raise participation of all pupils in Acts of Worship by ensuring that all staff consistently remind all pupils of the school's expectations.

CATHOLIC LIFE

THE QUALITY OF THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

2

- 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 governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school.

2

2

1

The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school – good

- The Catholic Life of the school is highly valued by all stakeholders and leaders have ensured that it is the driving force for future school improvement across the school. This has a tangible impact on the aspirations that school leaders, staff and parents have for the future of the pupils in their care.
- The parish priest and headteacher are committed to ensuring that links between the school and parish are embedded and allow more families to become witnesses to the teachings of Jesus Christ. Consequently, there is a growing relationship between the local community and the local parish.
- School leaders have recently evaluated and revised the mission statement so that there is greater ownership by all stakeholders. Therefore, the value ‘Guided by Jesus’ love and example, we use our gifts to grow, pray and learn as a community, united in faith’ ensures that pupils recognise the importance of their faith on who they are and what they can achieve.
- Most pupils are proud to be a member of the St John Fisher community. They enjoy the responsibilities the school provides for them, including as part of the chaplaincy team, the pupil council and as eco-champions.
- A very large majority of pupils value opportunities to raise money for local, national and global charities and they have done so with great success. Most importantly, they understand why raising money for those in need is important. A Year 1 pupil said, ‘We raise money because Jesus is our example, and this is how we show we love one another.’
- School leaders have recently reviewed the school’s behaviour policy and are working to ensure that there is a consistent approach to school rules, rewards and consequences. During the inspection, the conduct of some pupils, in different classes, was inconsistent and not to the expected standard. Some pupils say that poor conduct of some individuals disrupts their learning. Some pupils are unsure of what the consequences of unacceptable behaviour are, as rewards and consequences differ between classes.

The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school – good

- St John Fisher is a calm and spiritual school community where staff want the best for pupils in their care. Stakeholders work collaboratively to identify areas of Catholic Life they feel can be developed even further. As a result, pupils benefit from a good and improving experience.
- The school environment reflects the high standards and aspirations school leaders desire for all pupils. Displays and working walls demonstrate the expectations class teachers demand pupils to aspire to; pupils benefit from the opportunities given to them to learn from each other.
- All staff are committed to provide the best for pupils. They are proud to be members of the school community and recognise how the school is improving as a direct consequence of the actions of school leaders and the extensive staff training that is provided.
- The school has recently adopted a Relationship and Sex Education curriculum in full consultation with parents and which reflects Catholic teachings. Not all pupils can recall what they have been taught in lessons. Classes are currently trialling different ways of recording work to ensure a consistent approach across the school, to help pupils remember the essential knowledge school leaders want them to retain.

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

- Led by the passionate headteacher and Religious Education leader, all stakeholders at St John Fisher have the highest aspirations and ambitions so that pupils become the best that they can be. The headteacher works tirelessly to prioritise and improve the Catholic Life of the school as she makes tangible differences to the lives of the families in the community she serves.
- St John Fisher is well supported by the St Ralph Sherwin Catholic Multi-Academy Trust. The director of performance and standards has a clear and accurate understanding of what support school leaders must prioritise to enhance the Catholic Life further. The trust is committed to increasing all aspects of school improvement.
- The local governing body knows the many strengths of St John Fisher as well as those areas that are being prioritised to ensure continued improvement. They carefully monitor all aspects of school life and challenge school leaders to deliver nothing but the best for pupils.
- Parents are proud of their school. They praise the efforts of school leaders to ensure that their pupils are safe, happy and aspire to provide the highest quality of education. They are particularly grateful for the support given to families during the recent lockdown caused by COVID 19 and recognise how staff 'went the extra mile' at all times.
- The school responds well to diocesan policies and initiatives and promotes the bishop's vision for the diocese throughout the school.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

THE QUALITY OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION	2
------------------------------------	----------

- How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education.
- How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education.

2
2
2

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

- Pupils make good progress in Religious Education, from varying starting points, which are assessed as they start school. By the time pupils reach the end of Key Stage 2, they leave with levels which are broadly in line with diocesan levels. Most groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs, are also making progress comparable to the progress of other pupils.
- Pupils now need to be provided with more opportunities to record work independently, with less scaffolding in their Religious Education workbooks, since there is currently too much work recorded onto photocopied worksheets. This will encourage pupils to write more lengthy, extended pieces and support the flow of their writing.
- Evidence seen during joint lesson observations, work in books and the response from pupils demonstrates a variety of progress at St John Fisher. Pupils are keen to do well; they make better progress in their work during good and outstanding lessons. Where lessons were not as strong, less progress is made by pupils.
- Most pupils apply themselves and engage well during lessons; they can explain ideas and concepts appropriate to their ages. Older pupils are able to make references to scripture during their lessons. In the Reception classroom, the teacher is very skilled at using strategies to support pupils in retaining a bible story from the Acts of the Apostles - for example, using a story map, signing relevant actions and utilising facial expressions to help pupils empathise with how the disciples were feeling.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education – good

- Teaching in most lessons is of a good standard, with some lessons being below or above this level. Teachers are keen for their pupils to achieve well and most teachers understand the value of Religious Education and can communicate this effectively to their pupils.
- Staff receive regular training to support their teaching of Religious Education. Individual support has been given from the more experienced staff to new teachers, where it has been needed in order to help raise standards in teaching and learning and to support the development of planning and the delivery of the curriculum. The lay chaplain, who is relatively new to post at St John Fisher, is instrumental in supporting the new teachers during Religious Education lessons with subject knowledge.
- Good practice is shared across the school and amongst colleagues within the Catholic Multi-Academy Trust and wider diocesan community, where possible. Staff are open to trialling approaches that have been shared: for example, ‘scripture detectives’ was introduced during the Year of the Word, and this has supported staff and pupils in establishing a good understanding of scripture in order to make strong links within each topic. This is now evident in Key Stage 2 books and is regularly used during lessons.
- Teachers consistently apply their marking policy. This ensures that the teachers have a good understanding of what their pupils have achieved and what the ‘next steps’ are in order to embed learning or develop it further. Pupils are given time in lessons to respond to feedback.
- Differentiation is used across the school in various formats in order to support pupils’ learning. Where pupils have additional learning needs, support is sometimes given to them through a one-to-one learning support assistant working alongside the pupil or through changing the expectations in recording their work. For example, when pupils need support in recording their work, electronic devices are in use in the classrooms.

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

- Leaders and managers use a range of systematic monitoring activities: for example, termly pupil progress meetings have supported the process of identification of pupils who require further help; discussion between staff of helpful strategies supports pupils’ future progress.
- Weekly timetables are set by the senior leadership team to ensure that Religious Education meets the required amount of time. The introduction of ‘Gather as Disciples’ days, which occur every half term, has provided upper Key Stage 2 with more opportunities to build on their writing stamina in Religious Education. Leaders felt this was necessary to work on because of the impact that COVID had on pupils’ ability to write for sustained periods of time.
- Monitoring is carried out by the subject leader, the headteacher and the chair of governors; this is planned out for the entire year. This monitoring system involves pupil interviews, book scrutiny, planning scrutiny and discussion with teachers. The findings provide a clear picture of the learning in Religious Education. Strengths and areas for development are discussed and shared with staff and then additional actions can be implemented to implement further improvements to this subject.
- Where leaders identified challenging behaviour in Year 6, which was impacting on the learning of the cohort, they made the decision to split the class into two groups for some core lessons, including Religious Education, in order to raise standards. The impact of this was evident in pupils’ workbooks, where the quality of learning has improved with the lower ratio of pupils to teacher.
- Leaders take advantage of opportunities provided by the diocese for staff formation and professional development. Any additional requirements of the diocesan bishop regarding the Religious Education curriculum are fully implemented.

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

THE QUALITY OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP	2
-----------------------------------	---

- 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 governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship.

2
2
1

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

- The very large majority of pupils act reverently during Collective Worship. Most pupils are keen to participate in school liturgies and other times of worship, although this is not yet consistent across all year groups. Those who do participate sing joyfully and articulate the importance of prayer, talking about how it can bring them closer to God.
- The chaplaincy team members are great ambassadors for Collective Worship at St John Fisher and are positive role models for younger pupils. Supported by the Religious Education leader and the newly appointed lay chaplain, pupils are developing a growing understanding of the different forms of worship and when each can be best used.
- When given the opportunity, pupils embrace the chance to share prayers they have independently written as part of their lessons. For example, during the inspection, one pupil was observed aiding the class teacher through writing a prayer.
- Most pupils have a good understanding of other faiths, which is evident in pupils' workbooks and in the responses they make. They recognise the similarities and differences between other families in their community, regardless of faith or belief.

The quality of provision for Collective Worship – good

- The recently appointed lay chaplain has already begun to impact positively on the quality of Acts of Worship. There are growing opportunities for pupils to independently plan, prepare and deliver liturgy and, supported by the Religious Education leader, the lay chaplain has begun to provide for staff the training they need to support pupils in leading worship.
- Prayer is central to the life of the school and parents recognise how valuable it is for the development of pupils. Parents are invited and encouraged to take part in Collective Worship regularly and they feedback positively when given the opportunity to do so.
- Opportunities for voluntary worship have recently been introduced and pupils have embraced this chance to attend with great enthusiasm. Facilitated by the lay chaplain, voluntary prayer sessions are well planned and allow those attending to develop a growing understanding of scripture.
- The school has introduced a calendar of school events including the days during which Collective Worship take place. Parents say that this allows them to attend and celebrate at school, even when their own child is not necessarily leading the liturgy.

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship – outstanding

- School leaders have the highest aspirations for the liturgical standards at St John Fisher. Enhanced by the newly appointed lay chaplain, a range of initiatives have been introduced which are being embedded to ensure that the Collective Worship at the school remains of the highest importance and grows from strength to strength.
- Monitoring and evaluation procedures carried out by school leaders, including the local governing body, has ensured that the school has identified which aspects of Collective Worship now need to be prioritised. School leaders are methodical in their approach to ensure that liturgy and prayer is creative whilst ensuring that participation of all pupils in all year groups is high.
- School leaders are highly ambitious for all pupils to develop their knowledge and skills to independently plan, prepare and lead Collective Worship. They are visible examples of the expertise they wish all staff and pupils to develop and model.
- School leaders are committed to provide all staff with the knowledge and skills they need to maximise participation of pupils. There is a clear plan to achieve this and, as a consequence, pupils are growing in confidence when allowed to plan, prepare and deliver Collective Worship independently.

SCHOOL DETAILS

School Name	St John Fisher Catholic Voluntary Academy
Unique Reference Number	138514
CMAT	St Ralph Sherwin Catholic Multi-Academy Trust

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 Acts of Collective Worship.

Meetings were held with the headteacher, the subject leader for Religious Education, the chair of governors and the parish priest. Discussions were also held with pupils and parents.

The inspectors scrutinised a range of documents including reports of the governing body, action plans, the school development plan, monitoring forms, assessment information and parental response forms. Inspectors also examined the work in pupils' Religious Education books.

Chair of Governors:	Mrs Patricia Hurd
Headteacher:	Mrs Angelina Brett
Date of Previous School Inspection:	25 June 2015
Telephone Number:	01332 572154
Email Address:	admin@djf.srscmat.co.uk

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 18 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.