



Archdiocese of Birmingham

Section 48 Inspection Report

ST JOHN FISHER CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Part of the Romeo Catholic Academy
Kineton Road, Wyken, Coventry, CV2 3NR

Inspection dates: 4-5 November 2021
Lead Inspector: Ben McArdle

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS:

Good

Catholic Life: Outstanding

Religious Education: Good

Collective Worship: Outstanding

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection: Outstanding

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FOR PARENTS AND PUPILS

This is a Good Catholic school because:

- Pupils, staff, and parents benefit from leaders' clear vision for the school which, based on the example of Christ, fosters sincere care and love for every member of the community.
- Strong links with the parish priest and parishioners significantly enhance the school's provision of chaplaincy, which the whole community embraces enthusiastically.
- The quality of pastoral care afforded to pupils, their families and staff is excellent.
- Staff are superb role models for pupils. They unfailingly demonstrate high expectations for their pupils, who respond unreservedly.

It is not yet Outstanding because:

- Systems for evaluating Catholic Life are strong, though their capacity for empowering pupil leadership are limited.
- The teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education is good.
- Teachers' feedback in Religious Education does not consistently identify the next steps that pupils need to take to progress their learning.

FULL REPORT**What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Create opportunities for pupils to contribute to the evaluation of Catholic Life in a planned and systematic way, so that they are empowered to lead aspects of improvement.
- Move the majority of lessons from good to outstanding by ensuring all staff understand what makes 'outstanding' teaching in Religious Education, and its impact on successful learning for all groups of learners.
- Develop feedback in Religious Education so that it is consistently effective in contributing to outstanding outcomes for all groups of learners.

THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

The quality of the Catholic Life of the school	Outstanding
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school	Outstanding
The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school	Outstanding
How well leaders and governors promote, monitor, and evaluate the provision of the Catholic Life of the school	Outstanding

CL1 The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school**CL2 The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school**

- The school self-evaluates its outcomes for and provision of Catholic Life as outstanding. Inspectors corroborate this judgement.
- Following a review of the mission statement, which involved all stakeholders, pupils and staff have a secure understanding of the principal's vision for the school. They can talk about its impact on the school community with confidence.
- There is a warmth about the school, that extends to visitors and parents, who are passionately supportive and appreciative of everything the school does for them. There is an atmosphere of genuine care and love throughout the community, due to the intentional discipleship of the principal and the senior leadership team.
- Pupils' behaviour is very good at all times. Because of the high expectations of the school, which are consistently modelled by staff, who are intentional and prophetic in their behaviours, pupils demonstrate a deep respect for themselves and others. They are incredibly polite, well-mannered young people who can articulate the reasons why it is important to listen, give thanks and forgive one another.
- Pupils show great respect for people of other faiths and religions.
- All pupils can play a role in leading Catholic Life. Because of the frequent opportunities the school provides, such as creating artwork representing the life of Oscar Romero, the house saints, and the mission statement and planting bulbs for COP26 alongside other schools in the multi academy company (MAC), pupils' feel ownership and responsibility for promoting the Catholic Life of their school.

- Pupils benefit from a plethora of opportunities to actively engage in the school's mission. Opportunities for partnership and collaboration with local organisations is a key strength of the school. The school ensures that the link between its mission and such activities is made explicit to pupils. For example, pupils took part in the Active Schools Challenge during lockdown, which focussed on supporting their mental health whilst nurturing an appreciation for God's creation; and, in partnership with other local schools, the Coventry Flame of Friendship initiative, which enabled pupils to use drama and dance to portray Olympic sports, focussed on pupils discerning and developing their God-given talents.
- Pupils' response to school's chaplaincy work is truly outstanding. In collaboration with the parish, the school provides an abundance of opportunities, to which pupils always respond enthusiastically and which they value very much. For example, pupil-led services at the start of the academic year are further enhanced by the parish priest's visiting to bless each classroom; the introduction of Catholic Sports enabled pupils who are not naturally competitive to be included in games and physical activities; the Year 6 chaplaincy team and CAFOD team regularly develop and lead initiatives, including a prayer club that started, at the request of pupils. Pupils also benefit from external and internal retreats. St John Fisher Catholic Primary School excels in its provision and response to chaplaincy work.
- The school takes a leading role in developing Catholic Life, including chaplaincy, across the MAC. Staff from St John Fisher lead training for all Romero schools for school councillors, which ensures their expertise is shared with their peers. Furthermore, the school enjoys support from the MAC in this area, including from the Catholic senior executive leader (CSEL), who worked with pupils to enable them to prepare and lead a liturgy.
- Currently, the role that pupils play in evaluating the school's Catholic Life is underutilised. Systems need to be developed that empower pupils to lead on developing aspects of the school's Catholic Life.
- The provision and response to pastoral care is outstanding. The school responds proactively to meet the needs of the children in its care. For example, as a result of the pandemic, leaders identified a need for some of its youngest children to receive additional support to enable them to independently access the school's provision. In response, the Fisher Room was created, whereby children can take time out of the classroom setting to be immersed in sensory and educational stimuli, when it becomes stressful for them. The school utilises the Thrive approach for social and emotional well-being, and staff have been trained in the Rainbows programme, enabling them to manage loss and bereavement. Consequently, staff expertly provide additional care and support, demonstrating that *'through Christ, we live, love and learn in a caring community'*, and almost all pupils are happy, confident, and secure in their own stage of growth.
- Because of the priority the school places on providing opportunities for spiritual, moral, and ethical development, pupils are well-rounded individuals who are acutely aware of their responsibilities as members of a Catholic community. This is further enhanced by retreat experiences provided by the secondary school within the MAC, which contribute towards pupils' sacramental preparation and general spiritual development.
- The school uses the TenTen programme to deliver relationships, sex, and health education. Consequently, pupils have a strong understanding of loving relationships, which is firmly rooted in the teachings of Christ and His Church.
- Pupils have an excellent understanding of the concept of vocation as a call to serve God and the needs of the world. Because of the strong focus on vocation throughout their time at school, and the way the school plans for development in this area, all pupils, from their youngest year, know that God is asking them to do

something each and every day. Their age-appropriate understanding of vocation is supported well by external providers (e.g., OneLife Music and local magistrates), which ensures pupils do not think of vocation purely in terms of careers.

- St John Fisher Catholic Primary School enjoys incredible support from its parish priest, who also serves as a governor. He is a beacon of support and inspiration for the whole community. Consequently, the relationship between the school and parish is incredibly strong. There are numerous examples of collaboration, including sacramental preparation, compilation of prayer bags for parishioners and pupils providing an act of service after the annual parish Mass for the Anointing of the Sick. As a result of this, pupils understand the reciprocal identity that is shared between school and parish and are rightfully proud of it.
- Staff are fully committed to the Catholic Life and mission of the school. Their dedication to the school is reflected in the way they each prioritise being living witnesses of the mission to pupils and in their collective length of service.
- Prayer is at the heart of the school community. The priority placed on providing first class acts of Collective Worship is high; as a result, pupils and staff value its role in their day-to-day experiences of school life.
- Building upon this, the school's physical environment is not only an expression of its Catholic identity and mission but is conducive to prayer. Pupils can articulate with confidence how they use various components of the school's decoration to reflect on faith.
- Staff are inspirational role models for their pupils. At all times, they are acutely aware of the responsibility they have in upholding the mission and identity of the school. As a result, they unfailingly demonstrate high expectations for their pupils, who respond unreservedly.
- The school provides high quality pastoral care for its staff. All staff speak exceptionally well of the principal and the way in which she supports them in their work and enables them to experience encounter with Christ through their work.

CL3 How well leaders and governors promote, monitor, and evaluate the provision of the Catholic Life of the school

- The school self-evaluates its leadership and management of Catholic Life as outstanding. Inspectors corroborate this judgement.
- Leaders are deeply committed to the Catholic Life of the school. As a result of the priority and care they afford them, Catholic Life and mission are perceived to be the first priorities in terms of school development, as reflected in associated documentation.
- The principal is an inspiring disciple of Christ, as demonstrated in her leadership of the community. Because of her warmth and passion for the faith life of the school and her personable character, all key stakeholders, including parents, fully support her in her drive to ensure that Christ is at the centre of the school's daily work.
- Monitoring and evaluation of Catholic Life is thorough, robust, and consistent. Systems are in place which ensure that new developments are routinely monitored for impact, and that the school is responding to the needs of its community. For example, in response to parental demand, opportunities have been created for them to visit school to join in class-based prayer and liturgy with their children.
- Catholic Life is a central component to the continuous professional development (CPD) of staff. Because leaders ensure that best practice relating to Catholic Life is routinely shared with staff, for example retreat experiences on the theme of 'Your Kingdom Come' for Lent, the school's provision is securely outstanding.

- As a result of recent CPD, the governing body have a very secure understanding of current best practice pertaining to Catholic Life and mission. Subsequently, they offer effective support and challenge to school leaders and discharge their canonical responsibilities competently and effectively.
- Leaders' promotion, monitoring and evaluation of pupils' spiritual and moral development is outstanding. As a result of robust monitoring, including within the MAC, the principal has contributed significantly to two initiatives that are beacons of excellence within Catholic education: the Romero Child Charter, in which a pathway of experience is mapped out for pupils in every phase to help them explore the world as God intends for them; and the Catholic curriculum, which is beginning to embed virtue questions in different areas of the curriculum, enabling pupils to see the importance and impact of faith in the world.
- Leaders ensure that the school is fully compliant with the archbishop's decisions relating to Catholic Life. As a result, pupils experience the Catholic School Pupil Profile in their daily school life and engage in diocesan-wide Catholic Life initiatives, such as *Bambinelli*.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

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

RE1 How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education

RE2 The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education

- The school self-evaluates its outcomes for and provision of Religious Education as good. Inspectors corroborate this judgement.
- Progress in Religious Education is good for most pupils in each key stage. In lessons, pupils are generally enabled to move on to the next phase of their learning, though this is not always consistent.
- Pupils use the knowledge they have acquired in lessons to think spiritually in lessons, helping them to be aware of the effect of religious beliefs in their everyday lives. Primarily initiated using 'gap tasks' and 'I wonder' questions, pupils are encouraged to reflect on some of the key themes encountered in their lessons. However, pupils across different classes are not yet challenged to think at a consistently deep level.
- Pupils engage well in their Religious Education lessons. Most aspire to complete all the work they are set and show great interest in the paired and group discussions they are directed towards.
- The proportion of pupils who attain or surpass age related standards is good. Their attainment in Religious Education is at least in line with other core subjects.
- Leaders have rightfully identified the need to improve outcomes for disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) as an area for development. Work in pupils' exercise books and learning observed during the

inspection demonstrate that tasks do not always meet the needs of these pupils in order to narrow the gap in their attainment swiftly. There is some very good practice in this area, particularly when involving pupils with complex needs, but it is limited and not yet consistently embedded for other pupils throughout the school.

- Pupils speak of their high level of enjoyment of Religious Education. They find Religious Education exciting and are keen to learn because a good stock of creative tasks is made available to pupils, including opportunities for extended writing.
- The quality of pupils' work in their exercise books and in class is good and comparable to that of other core subjects. There is evidence of the impact of the school's improvement work relating to this area.
- Questioning is a routine feature of lessons. Because teachers rely heavily on the 'hands-up' strategy, not all pupils are actively involved in whole class discussions, and it is easy for pupils to be passive in Religious Education lessons if they choose to be. Teachers do not use high quality questioning to engage all learners or to draw out pupils' deeper understanding of the issues covered in lessons.
- Teachers must be consistently courageous in dealing with pupils' misconceptions and thus ensure pupils have a clear understanding of the subject content being covered at all times.
- Teachers effectively plan work that enables pupils to achieve the learning outcomes that *most* children should achieve. Where planning is outstanding, SEND pupils are supported to effectively access the curriculum content and more able pupils are challenged to securely attain the more demanding outcomes, however the practice of this is yet to be consistently embedded as in most lessons, pupils complete the same activities, regardless of their ability and teachers' questioning is rarely targeted to specific groups of pupils.
- The subject knowledge of teaching staff is generally secure. Where this is not the case, leaders have identified so and provide support.
- Through reflecting on teacher modelling and paired work, most pupils are involved in evaluating how well they are achieving in Religious Education lessons. Where this is most effective, pupils are subsequently provided with the opportunity to further improve their work by responding to feedback.
- Teachers manage time well: lessons are well paced, and pupils respond well to the resources they are provided with.
- Feedback in Religious Education broadly follows the school's policy, in that: effort is recognised and celebrated; teachers focus on aspects of the work; pupils are given time to respond to 'gap tasks'; it is positive and uses appropriate language. However, other elements of the policy, which would help pupils to advance their understanding of what they need to do to improve, are missing either in whole or in part (i.e., relating feedback to learning objectives and success criteria that are shared with the pupils; ensuring feedback is always given before the next lesson; and implementation of the policy is consistent throughout the school). As a result, pupils told inspectors that they do not always understand their level of achievement or know what they need to do next to make further progress.
- When appropriate, teachers create opportune moments for prayer in Religious Education lessons. Their skilful management of the class guarantees that children experience wonderful moments of awe in the presence of God that enhance their learning experiences.
- Teachers celebrate pupils' achievements through a variety of means, including house points, the 'golden box' and 'star of the week'. Pupils value teachers' recognition of their success in Religious Education.

RE3 How well leaders and governors promote, monitor, and evaluate the provision for Religious Education

- The school self-evaluates its leadership and management of Religious Education as good. Inspectors corroborate this judgement.
- Because leaders follow the *Learning and Growing as the People of God* curriculum and ensure the directed amount of time is allocated to the teaching of Religious Education, St John Fisher Catholic Primary School meets the requirements of the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales and the additional requirements of the Archbishop of Birmingham, relating to Religious Education.
- The leaders and governors of St John Fisher Catholic Primary School ensured that the teaching of Religious Education remained top priority throughout periods of lockdown caused by the pandemic. Situated near an NHS hospital, the community experienced very high levels of attendance throughout periods of time when schools were open only to children of key workers. Furthermore, in their self-evaluation, the school states that teachers adapted planning to provide continuous remote learning for those pupils who worked from home. To safeguard Religious Education as much as was possible, leaders and governors promptly secured CPD relating to remote learning, ensuring that all staff had the skills necessitated by such practice. Leaders are commended for their superb efforts in this area.
- Governors ensure that Religious Education is afforded the same priority status as other core subjects. For example, in addition to allocating an equitable budget for the subject, governors afford appropriate CPD for the subject leader to ensure her knowledge remains current, such as input on the Year of the Word from an external provider.
- Leaders plan the monitoring of Religious Education on a termly basis using diocesan proformas. Consequently, areas for development are routinely identified and actioned. The subject leader checks back to ensure actions have been implemented and assesses whether further action is then required. Analysis of monitoring is shared to the governors through reports written by the principal. However, monitoring has not accurately identified the precise barriers that limit much of the teaching in Religious Education to being good and, as a result, the teaching of Religious Education is not rapidly moving towards securing an outstanding judgement.
- The MAC has further contributed to the monitoring of Religious Education (as well as Catholic Life and Collective Worship) by commissioning a review of the school undertaken by one of its directors.
- There is some evidence that leaders and governors use monitoring and evaluation to plan improvements to Religious Education. For example, equipping the Fisher Room with resources to aid learning for pupils who need to use it.
- The leader for Religious Education has a secure vision for the subject and a good level of expertise for securing it. Staff respond very well to her and cherish the relationship she has with each of them. She is passionate about Religious Education and the school, and this is her motivation for the role. Staff value her 'can do' attitude and the systems she has in place for colleague support.

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

The quality of Collective Worship	Outstanding
How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship	Outstanding
The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school	Outstanding
How well leaders and governors promote, monitor, and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship	Outstanding

CW1 How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship**CW2 The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school**

- The school self-evaluates its outcomes for and provision of Collective Worship as outstanding. Inspectors corroborate this judgement.
- Pupils respond exceptionally well to prayer and liturgy. In response to deeply embedded routines built around high expectations, all instances of prayer are genuine moments of spiritual encounter.
- Because prayer is presented to pupils using a variety of approaches, their interest is always captured, which evokes sincere responses from them. During the inspection, the principal ingeniously used a cartoon featuring some of the Church's saints presented as superheroes to initiate spiritual reflection on God's call to sainthood.
- Prayer is central to the life of the school. As a result, pupils are normally confident in designing and leading their own liturgies and acts of worship. For example, pupils prepare class-based worship, thanksgiving services and take part in the 'prayer partners' initiative. Leaders are currently seeking to resurrect these routines into the heart of the community again, following some disruption over the last eighteen months.
- Pupils are keen to resurrect their involvement in planning and leading Collective Worship and are excited about the prospect of doing this.
- Pupils can talk about how they use a variety of artefacts, including the Bible and music, to pray. This has a profound effect on their spiritual development.
- Because all members of staff ensure that the prayer is planned around suitable themes, that the liturgical year is prominently reflected in displays around the school site, and is routinely mentioned during instances of prayer, pupils have an excellent understanding of the Church's key seasons and feasts and can articulate why the relevance of them to their own lives.
- Staff understanding of the liturgical year is secure. This is because the subject leader for Religious Education shares the liturgical calendar with all staff and routinely refers to it during staff meetings. Consequently, they are confident in supporting pupils to use it to plan their own prayers.
- Prayer features prominently in the school's work on pupils' transition to secondary education. Because pupils in Years 5 and 6 are invited to celebrate Mass with pupils from the secondary school in the MAC, pupils are instilled with confidence during what can be a daunting experience for some.
- The parish priest is invaluable in facilitating the attendance of other adults associated with the school to prayer. In addition to being a familiar presence in school, he schedules daily Mass in the parish to converge with the start of the school day, so that he can reinforce the excellent work being done with the pupils in

school to parents. Consequently, this contributes to further developing parents' confidence in engaging in prayer with their families.

- Staff are excellent role models for pupils, in terms of prayer. They emulate the gestures and high levels of reverence and behaviour demanded. In response, all pupils aspire to be like them during prayer.
- The quality of singing is amazing. Because of high expectations, embedded routines and the way leaders present it to them, pupils sing joyfully and from the very depths of their heart. They see the use of their voices as a way to praise God.

CW3 How well leaders and governors promote, monitor, and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship

- The school self-evaluates its leadership and management of Collective Worship as outstanding. Inspectors corroborate this judgement.
- Leaders have expert knowledge in how to plan and deliver the highest quality of prayer and liturgies. In turn, prayer is at the core of the school's living heartbeat.
- Because leaders have an extensive knowledge of the liturgical year, ensuring even the shortest of feasts are acknowledged and celebrated in school, such as Pentecost, and use a wide variety of traditional and contemporary prayer styles in their work, pupils are exposed to the full wealth of the Church's prayer heritage.
- Leaders model the highest standards when leading prayer. Consequently, staff have a secure understanding of the standards desired for the school, which they attain.
- Governors are steadfast in their commitment to sustaining the highest quality of Collective Worship for the community. This is reflecting their allocation of a substantial budget specifically to Collective Worship. Leaders have used this money to replace computer equipment in the school hall, so that teachers can spend more time planning and delivering high quality prayer, rather than on setting-up technical equipment.
- Leaders have identified an action plan for further developing the quality of prayer. Plans are broken down into termly action steps with associated monitoring opportunities identified. The subject Leader for Religious Education summaries the impact of these, which are used to inform plans. For example, by providing more challenging follow-up work after retreat experiences, and using pupil-led Collective Worship when there was no opportunity to celebrate weekly Mass during periods of lockdown. Furthermore, previous action plans identified the need for the school to address pupils' confidence in singing, which had suffered due to singing not being allowed for an extended period. Subsequently, the peripatetic music teacher recorded several videos of him playing hymns on his guitar and singing along to them, which teachers have used to return pupils' singing to joyous levels.
- Reports to governors are incredibly detailed and comprehensive, enabling them to effectively support and challenge the development of Collective Worship.
- Leaders and governors ensure that the school responds to invitations to prayer from the Archbishop of Birmingham, for example by enabling pupils to take part in Adoremus and the live stream of the rosary from the cathedral.

SCHOOL DETAILS

Unique reference number	142212
Local authority	Coventry
<i>This inspection was carried out under Canon 806 of Canon Law and under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005.</i>	
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy
Age range	3-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on roll	446
Appropriate authority	The board of directors
Chair	Brendan Fawcett
Principal	Deirdre Williams
Telephone number	02476 443 333
Website address	https://www.st-johnfisher.coventry.sch.uk
Email address	admin.sjf@romeromac.com
Date of previous inspection	10-11 June 2015

INFORMATION ABOUT THIS SCHOOL

- St John Fisher Catholic Primary School is a larger than average primary school (with Nursery) that serves the parish of St John Fisher in Coventry.
- The percentage of Catholic pupils is currently 73%.
- The percentage of disadvantaged pupils is in line with the national average.
- The percentage of SEND pupils is in line with the national average.
- The percentage of pupils from minority ethnic origins is broadly in line with the national average.
- The percentage of pupils with EAL is broadly in line with the national average.
- Since the last inspection the school has converted to an academy and joined The Romero Catholic Academy. A new principal has been appointed and, more recently, the school has opened a new nursery and a new parish priest/priest chaplain has been appointed, following the death of the previous priest. There have also been changes to the composition of the local governing body, including the Chair.

INFORMATION ABOUT THIS INSPECTION

- The inspection was carried out by two Diocesan Inspectors: Ben McArdle and Rebecca Nash. In addition, Karyn Oakley shadowed the inspectors.
- The focus of the inspection was on the impact, quality, and leadership of the school's provision of Catholic Life, Religious Education and Collective Worship.
- The inspectors observed teaching across fifteen Religious Education lessons to evaluate the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Most of these lesson observations were conducted jointly with senior leaders.
- The inspectors completed a work scrutiny and held discussions with pupils to evaluate their understanding of Catholic Life, the impact of Religious Education teaching on their learning over time and their experience of Collective Worship.

- Meetings were held with the chair of the board of directors, governors (including the parish priest), the CSEL, the principal, the RE subject leader, pupils, and parents.
- The inspectors attended class-based and whole phase Collective Worship and undertook a learning walk to look at aspects of learning and teaching in Religious Education, the presentation of the Catholic Life of the school and pupils' behaviour.
- The inspectors reviewed a range of documents including the school's self-evaluation, data about pupils' attainment and progress, Analyse School Performance (ASP) data, the school development plan, the RE action plan, teachers' planning and Religious Education exercise books.