
The Diocese of Hallam Section 48 Report

The Catholic Life of the School and Religious Education

St John Fisher Primary, A Catholic Voluntary Academy

Diocese of Hallam



SECTION 48 INSPECTION REPORT

THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

ST JOHN FISHER PRIMARY, A CATHOLIC VOLUNTARY ACADEMY

School URN	140025
Name of Chair of Governors	Mrs S Ludlam
Name of Headteacher	Frank Barratt
Date of inspection	6 th December 2016
Section 48 Inspector	Alan Dewhurst

“ An enthusiasm for the things of God”

Introduction

The Inspection of St John Fisher Primary has been carried out under the requirements of the Education Act 2005, and in accordance with the Diocese of Hallam Framework and Schedule for Section 48 Inspections as approved by the Bishop of Hallam.

The process of inspection in the Diocese of Hallam has been developed as an activity of the Church to support schools in further deepening the quality of Catholic education provided.

Description of the School

St John Fisher Primary school is a Catholic voluntary academy in the Hallam Schools Partnership Academy Trust. It is a one form entry school, with 212 pupils on roll. 61% of the pupils are Catholic.

Five teachers and four support staff are Catholic. The school has a wide catchment area including Gleadless, Frecheville, Ridgeway, Southall, Beighton, Mosborough and Hackenthorpe. It serves the parish of Our Lady of Lourdes, Hackenthorpe and the parish church is next door to the school.

Type of School	Catholic Voluntary Academy
Age profile of students	4-11
Number on roll	212
Number of students on Special Needs and Disabilities Register	22
Number of students with a Statement of Special Educational Needs	0
Number of Catholics on roll	130
Number of Other Christian Denominations	60
Number of other Faiths No religious affiliation	10
School Address	Spring Water Avenue Hackenthorpe Sheffield S12 4HU
Telephone Number	0114 2485009
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Email	enquiries@stjohnfisherlearning.co.uk
School Website	www.st-johnfisher.org

SUMMARY JUDGEMENTS

OUTCOMES FOR PUPILS

1

THE PROVISION FOR CATHOLIC EDUCATION

1

LEADERS AND MANAGERS

1

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS:

How effective the school is in providing Catholic Education.

1

The overall effectiveness judgement is based on all the evidence available.

- Outcomes for pupils,
- The provision for Catholic Education
- Leaders and Managers

Inspection Grades: 1 is Outstanding, 2 is Good, 3 requires improvement in order to be good, 4 is Inadequate

OUTCOMES FOR PUPILS

How good outcomes are for pupils, taking into account variations between groups.

The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life of the school.	1
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education.	2
How well pupils respond to and participate in the schools' Collective Worship	1

The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life of the school is outstanding.

- Pupils are very proud of their school and recognise that its Catholicity is central to all that takes place therein. They take ownership of the school motto – “Happy, Safe and Loved” – acknowledging that it is the duty of everyone in the school to look after each other and ensure that the whole community thrives.
- Pupils are keen to take responsibility for shaping activities with a religious character. The Chaplaincy team (‘God’s Unique Angels’), now in its second year of formation with new members, is very evident in showing example to others in planning and leading liturgies, monthly prayer groups and weekly class worship. The outgoing chaplaincy team is assisting the development of their successors. Both groups had memorable input from the diocesan In-Reality team in helping to prepare for their roles.
- There is a deep appreciation of all that the school offers, and pupils are keen to praise other and share in their achievements. Well-thought-out rewards, such as for a ‘Citizen of the Week’ who has lived out the weekly ‘Statement of Belief’, and for a ‘Golden Child’, have helped to teach the children the values that the school holds dear. The family groups that sit together in the dining room is another example of the building of Catholic character.
- Charity giving is a strong feature of the school. House groups adopt a particular charity to support through the year, and do this through a variety of activities, including the ‘50p Friday’ initiative.

- Residential trips for years 4, 5 and 6, and retreat days or special celebrations, such as the Year of Mercy Pilgrimage and the Pentecost feast, give pupils the opportunity to live and worship in community in a special way.
- Pupils recognise that they are well supported by each other, and by adults, including within the links with the parish. They have particular praise for the school's provision for any child who is in need, or any groups who have experienced bereavement or loss. Examples of this care are seen through the Friendship Club, the Craft Club and the Pet Club organised by the learning mentor. They stated firmly that the 'Anti-Bullying Club' was formed once upon a time but was no longer needed because "there is no bullying".

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

- Standards pupils achieve within most year groups broadly meet age-related expectations, with some pupils attaining more highly. There is an upward trend of attainment over the last three years.
- By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils show a good understanding of religious concepts and have good knowledge of religious belief, including that of other world religions.
- There is some variation in progress, which the school leadership has identified through its rigorous monitoring and tracking systems. Assessment levels have been moderated appropriately.
- Most pupils are keen to achieve, enjoying their Religious Education lessons and showing curiosity, diligence and thoughtfulness in their approach to learning tasks. They work well collaboratively, sharing discussions in paired or group work, and showing respect to those that they work with.
- They generally take a pride in their work, and engage well with writing tasks, and with a variety of other activities, including art, use of technology and drama.
- Where teaching is outstanding, they are drawn into considering religious matters at a deeper level, and challenged to respond in more detail. Some pupils can lose focus when tasks are not so well pitched at the right level, or where expectations are not so high.

How well pupils respond to and participate in the schools' Collective Worship is outstanding.

- Children enjoy the variety of acts of Collective Worship within the school's provision and are keen to participate actively. They understand the sacred nature of worship, and act with reverence and respect during Mass or other liturgies.
- The school's provision is carefully planned to build pupils' understanding of the rituals of worship in the Catholic tradition, and of the cycle of the liturgical year. Pupils are helped to engage with liturgies through the structures used with consistency, so that they become at ease with what is taking place.
- Pupils are keen to play prominent roles in weekly class liturgies. During the inspection, a class liturgy observation showed pupils engaging the rest of the school energetically in understanding the theme of the presentation, reading aloud their own prayers and acting out roles with confidence. Children sing with enthusiasm, and it was a joy to see dozens of children from all classes volunteering to sing solo or in pairs during the gathering and departing hymns.
- Parents are welcomed to class liturgies, Masses and other short services, such as Advent reflections at the end of the day. They report their children's enthusiasm for taking part and how they have benefited spiritually from such opportunities.
- There are many opportunities for pupils to engage in public or private prayer. Several examples of pupils' own prayers were observed within Religious Education folders, and on focus tables in classrooms there are artefacts and other resources to assist with prayer, such as 'prayer marbles' for instance.
- A 'Sacred Space' has been created recently within school, and is an attractive area, highlighting the current themes of the season. A prayer, for children to write their own messages, has been provided and is used frequently.

PROVISION

How effective the provision is for Catholic Education

The quality of teaching and how purposeful learning is in Religious Education.	2
The extent to which the Religious Education curriculum promotes pupils' learning.	1
The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school.	1

The Quality of teaching and how purposeful learning is in Religious Education is good.

- Lessons in Religious Education are planned with care, with well-differentiated work, following the topics in the 'Come and See' programme. They are delivered with enthusiasm, and teachers work hard to innovate and engage pupils actively, supported by able teaching assistants.
- A significant proportion of teaching is outstanding. In these instances, there is a sense of keen anticipation engendered among the pupils as the lesson starts to be revealed. Their learning tasks build awe and wonder, through the skilful use of a variety of resources, and teachers ensure that scripture and religious concepts are brought alive and made relevant to the class. The pace of the lesson is well measured so that pupils have a sense of urgency, often collaborating together in pairs or small groups. Learning tasks are pitched at the right ability level for pupils, but are also challenging.
- Where teaching is less than outstanding, there can be too much reliance on narrow questioning and 'teacher-talk'; scripture can be presented without appropriate interpretation or tasks can be less clearly defined. In these instances, pupils' oral responses are often short, or go unchallenged if not focused.
- However, teaching quality is never less than good, and the school leadership is well aware of the strategic actions needed to continue to ensure consistent high standards are shared in each classroom, including the building of teachers' subject knowledge and confidence in delivery.

The extent to which the Religious Education Curriculum promotes pupils' learning is outstanding.

- The 'Come and See' scheme of work has been embedded effectively within the Religious Education curriculum, and is supplemented by a range of other resources and learning opportunities.
- The school leadership has worked hard to ensure that pupils benefit from a variety of teaching styles and learning activities within each topic. The class 'scrapbooks' pay testament to the rich range of activity that forms the basis of the curriculum.
- As a result, pupils are able to engage with their learning, and respond enthusiastically to Religious Education as a subject. The school ensures that the curriculum is linked effectively with its Collective Worship programme so that learning is coherent and relevant.
- Teaching of other world faiths is incorporated well: Pupils were able during inspection to talk confidently about recent learning about Judaism and about an earlier focus on Sikhism. A series of trips or visitors, associated with Catholic sites, such as the cathedral, or other world faiths, such as the mosque, are planned for this year.
- The curriculum contributes significantly to pupils' spiritual, moral and vocational development. It fully meets the Bishops' Conference of allocating 10% of the teaching timetable to Religious Education.

The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school is outstanding.

- Collective Worship lies at the heart of all school celebrations. It is planned with rigour and forethought to make it accessible to all the pupils, and to develop in them the understanding and skills necessary for full participation in acts of Collective Worship within the Catholic tradition.
- The school leadership, in partnership with the parish priest and Link-Governor for Religious Education, take care to plan developmentally so that pupils' familiarity with the Mass, Liturgies of the Word and other types of prayer grows as they move through the liturgical year. The school calendar of Collective Worship is an

outstanding example of forward planning, with its links to parish celebrations, and the topics within the ‘Come and See’ programme, carefully integrated.

- Pupils are given ample opportunities to experience a variety of prayer styles, public and private, and liturgies in different groups. They develop confidence in planning and leading acts of worship, particularly in conjunction with the Chaplaincy team.
- The school leadership has developed a structured weekly diet of worship: Assemblies and other liturgies have been adapted so as to better meet the needs of pupils. There is a fixed format to class-led liturgies for the school, so that each group of pupils can more easily plan appropriately to an agreed theme. Class-based resources, such as the ‘Let us Pray’ cards, are used frequently by children from an early age. The gospel reading for each Sunday is explored in advance each week, to help pupils gain more from the parish Mass.
- The school welcomes parents and grandparents to its liturgies, happy to include them in all of the acts of Collective Worship; this is greatly appreciated by parents, as noted in their feedback book.
- Pupils who are not Catholics feel included in all Collective Worship. As one parent said: “We are all welcomed into the St John Fisher family”.

LEADERS AND MANAGERS

How effective the provision is for Catholic education

How well leaders, governors and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school and plan and implement improvement to outcomes for pupils.	1
How well leaders, governors and managers monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education and plan and implement for improvement to outcomes for pupils.	1

How well leaders, governors and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school and plan and implement improvement to outcomes for pupils is outstanding.

- The school leadership team keeps the Catholic Life of the school at the forefront of its strategic planning. It is very much a priority for all leaders and governors, and this

is reflected in the school development plan and in all the school's formal documents and communications.

- The headteacher has been inspirational in setting a clear Catholic vision for the school, and making sure that everyone understands the Catholic ethos, and feels ownership of the school's mission. His drive to ensure that pupils learn and grow in the love of God is borne out in the actions of the staff, and has had significant impact on the Catholic life of the school: Each pupil knows that he or she is "happy, safe and loved".
- The school's policies for developing its Catholic Life are exemplary: They give excellent advice to staff and parents, and are easily accessible in their message.
- The school has carefully evaluated its programmes, and has astutely made changes as required in order to improve the Catholic Life. An example of this is seen in the adjustment of the Collective Worship programme in the current academic year.
- Governors are well informed, and provide both challenge and support to the leadership team.

How well leaders, governors and managers monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education and plan and implement for improvement to outcomes for pupils is outstanding.

- Systems for monitoring and evaluating the provision for Religious Education are very effective. There is a rigorous procedure for checking that high standards are maintained and developed through planned monitoring weeks each term. These may include lesson observations, scrutiny of pupils' work, checking the religious displays in each classroom and tracking the progress of pupils through assessment tasks.
- The outcome of these monitoring procedures can be seen in the excellent developmental planning for improvement that the school leadership creates.
- The Religious Education subject leader carries out her role in outstanding manner. She has a clear vision of the strengths of the school and also the areas where improvement can be brought about. She has given very good guidance to teachers and support staff, and has made sure that she has kept abreast of diocesan requirements and developments in Religious Education teaching.

- Staff are also supported well by being able to access 'Come and See' topic days within the diocese on a regular rotational basis.
- Governors have appointed a link governor for Religious Education, and she is ensuring that plans are put into action, and that questions are asked in order to ensure best practice is ongoing.

This final section draws together all the evidence and judgements made in the preceding sections

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

How effective the school is in providing Catholic Education	1
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- St John Fisher Primary is, overall, outstanding in providing Catholic education for its pupils.
- Outcomes for pupils are very good, particularly with regard to their participation in, and how they benefit from, the Catholic Life of the School and Collective Worship. There is a very strong and deep Catholic ethos present, acknowledged by staff, pupils, parents and governors.
- The provision for Catholic Education is also excellent, evidenced in its rich Religious Education curriculum and in the programme for Collective worship planned and delivered by the school leadership and through its links with the parish and diocesan organisations. Teaching is good, but with significant examples of outstanding quality.
- Leadership and Management are outstanding. The school leaders and governors monitor both the Catholic Life and Religious Education very effectively, and use their evaluations in their strategic planning to drive improvement. The Religious Education subject leader has played a significant role in implementing these plans.

Recommendations

In order to continue to build the strengths of the school, leaders and governors should:

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching through
 - Ensuring all teachers have excellent knowledge and understanding of Catholic tradition and belief
 - Providing opportunities for all teachers to benefit from the sharing of existing outstanding practice
- Continue to improve pupils' attainment and progress in Religious Education by
 - Increasing the quality of pupils' oral responses
 - Further embedding in-house moderation of assessment
 - Consistent implementation of the marking policy