



# St John Fisher Catholic Primary School

URN: 102671

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

24–25 April 2024

## Summary of key findings

### Overall effectiveness

The overall quality of Catholic education provided by the school

#### Catholic life and mission (p.3)

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

#### Religious education (p.5)

The quality of curriculum religious education

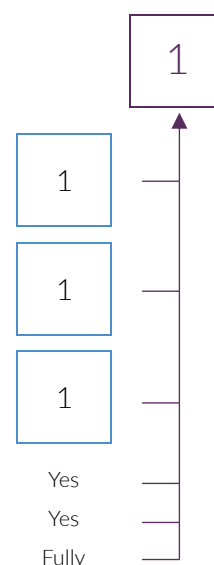
#### Collective worship (p.7)

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

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

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

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



## What the school does well

- Relationships across the school are very strong, based on mutual respect and exemplary pastoral support for pupils, their families, staff and the wider community.
- Religious education provided by the school is well planned and enjoyed by the pupils who talk about their learning confidently, showing good subject knowledge.
- The environment celebrates the Catholic ethos and mission of the school community. The well-planned spaces both inside and outside for quiet reflection, and displays that celebrate children's contributions, inspire everyone to live out the mission of the school.
- Behaviour is exemplary. School chaplains and staff provide inspiring role models. Pupils are kind and thoughtful and mutual respect is promoted and celebrated across the school.
- Leaders and governors ensure that prayer and liturgy are central to school life.

## What the school needs to improve

- Building on the strong example provided by the chaplains, widen opportunities for pupils to independently respond to the demands of Catholic social teaching.
- Provide all pupils with more opportunities to reflect on their learning in Religious Education and understand what they need to do to improve.
- In response to pupil voice, provide more opportunities for pupils to be actively involved in the planning and evaluation of collective worship.

## Catholic life and mission

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

### Catholic life and mission key judgement grade

**Pupil outcomes**

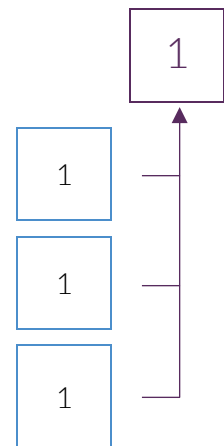
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

**Provision**

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

**Leadership**

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



All members of this caring and happy community of faith embrace the mission statement ‘Together we grow in God’s love, learning to be the best we can be.’ Pupils are very respectful of themselves and others, evident in their exemplary behaviour. Proud of their school, they are ambassadors for Catholic education. Pupils say they can ask anyone for help, speaking warmly about staff. Pupils have an excellent understanding of Catholic social teaching and know they are called to serve. ‘Helping others, that’s what God wants us to do.’ One pupil explained ‘We learn how to work together in our school and the world; how to live our faith.’ Inspired by the words of Pope Francis in *Laudato Si*, pupil chaplains created an eco-code for the school community to follow. Pupils speak proudly about ways they can help others, for example presenting ‘boxes of love’ to elderly parishioners. Parents greatly appreciate the impact school life has on the spiritual and moral development of their children. One parent wrote ‘The school has a strong Catholic ethos that permeates through all areas of school life and the children and parents alike feel very lucky and proud to be a part of such a caring community.’

The close relationships between school, home and parish are a strength of this school. Staff bear witness to the school’s Catholic life and mission and are excellent role models. They describe school as a special place to work, where everyone is part of the team, contributing willingly to the life and mission of the school. Staff, parents and pupils of other faiths describe being welcome members of the community. One pupil said ‘I love being in a Catholic school and learning about the Catholic faith. I was really happy to talk to the class about my faith and they were excited to learn about it.’ The relationship, sex and health education programme, developed in consultation with parents, meets diocesan requirements. Staff provide a high level of care for all pupils including those who are most vulnerable. The school has completed the developer level of the Oscar Romero Award. Themes of Catholic social teaching are promoted and celebrated in beautiful displays featuring children’s work.

A parent wrote 'The Catholic life and mission of St John Fisher radiates as soon as you enter the school site.'

The high priority placed on the Catholic life and mission of the school by leaders including governors can be seen across all aspects of school life. The mission statement, displayed throughout the school, underpins all policies and procedures. Leaders ensure it is known, understood, and lived out by pupils and staff. Governors are experienced and knowledgeable. Through the Spirituality, Ethos and Wellbeing committee, and regular visits, they demonstrate a clear understanding of the school. The school self-evaluation document, with input from leaders, staff, and pupils, accurately reflects the quality and impact of Catholic life and mission. Leaders have a clear understanding of and commitment to the Bishop's vision for the diocese and its schools. The local parish is central to the Catholic life and mission of the school. Pupils speak enthusiastically about opportunities to share in parish life, for example taking part in washing of the feet on Maundy Thursday. Leaders and governors show a deep commitment to the wellbeing of staff, pupils and families, evident in policies and in their actions. They work closely with parents, many of whom commented on the kindness and commitment of staff. One parent said 'This school feels like one big family, loving and caring for each other. There is always someone available to lend a hand.'

## Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

### Religious education key judgement grade

#### Pupil outcomes

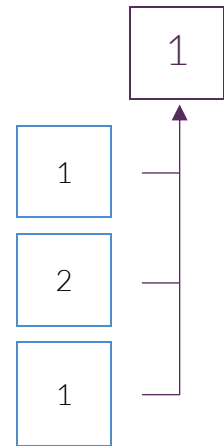
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

#### Provision

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

#### Leadership

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



Pupils are actively engaged in their religious education lessons, showing great enthusiasm and interest. Many pupils describe religious education as their favourite lesson. A pupil commented ‘God is sitting next to me, and I feel calm and relaxed.’ Pupils are confident to ask questions, and to speak out about what they have learned. Relative to their age and capacity, they reflect spiritually and discuss confidently using their knowledge, understanding and skills. As a result, they can relate their learning in religious education to their daily life. Work in books is well presented and pupils are eager to share what they have learned. Behaviour in lessons is excellent. Pupils leave St John Fisher well prepared for the next stage of life as articulate, thinking, and joyful missionary disciples having experienced a high-quality religious education curriculum. Outcomes in religious education for all pupils including those with additional needs, are strong, and above the school average for other subjects. A parent commented ‘School is a hugely positive and spiritually uplifting influence on my child. Catholicism in St John Fisher is taught in an inspiring and enlightened way.’

The school follows the ‘Come and See’ scheme of work. This has been supplemented skilfully to ensure pupils develop knowledge, understanding and skills that reflect the learning required by the *Religious Education Curriculum Directory (2012)*. For example, Catholic social teaching themes have been carefully interwoven into the curriculum. The subject knowledge of teachers is secure. Planning is effective, ensuring that knowledge builds as pupils progress through the school. Feedback, both written and verbal is given to ensure pupils understand what they are doing well in religious education and success is celebrated. More opportunities for pupils to reflect on their learning and to self-assess would deepen their understanding. Although this is done effectively in some classes, it is not yet consistent across the school. Developing the use of questioning has been a key focus for leaders with the use of ‘Big questions’ and the recent introduction of knowledge organisers. Pupils are given the opportunity to explore learning through a variety of forms of expression, including art and drama. These are greatly enjoyed by the pupils. Teachers have a good understanding of how children learn,

and often provide pupils with a range of options for their responses. The teaching of other faiths is well planned. Contributions from pupils and members of staff from other faiths are welcomed and enhance provision.

Leaders and governors ensure that religious education has at least parity with other core subjects. They understand that religious education plays a key part in the formation of a pupil's faith. Leaders say 'It is the core of core subjects.' As a result of careful analysis of data, leaders identify groups who would benefit from additional support. Adaptations are made to enable all pupils to have success. This includes planning a range of ways for pupils to record their learning. The parish priest is a regular visitor to the school and his input in lessons is valued by staff. Professional development for teachers and support staff is carefully planned and provided throughout the school year. Induction for staff new to the school, or new to teaching religious education, is robust. The inspirational leadership of religious education features high expectations for all. This leads to consistently good teaching, which is imaginatively planned and delivered. A member of staff commented 'The religious education lead is very supportive and knowledgeable, providing opportunities to develop our religious teaching skills as well as opportunities for personal spiritual development. Religious education at our school is continually developing with God and the children at its heart.'

## Collective worship

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

### Collective worship key judgement grade

#### Pupil outcomes

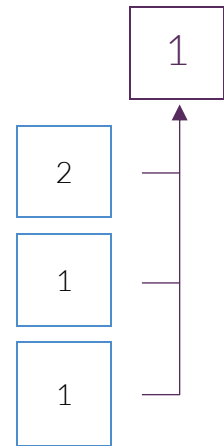
How well pupils participate in and respond to the school's collective worship

#### Provision

The quality of collective worship provided by the school

#### Leadership

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



The reverent and thoughtful participation of pupils in acts of prayer and liturgy is noteworthy. They can explain why prayer is an important part of daily life. They know there are different ways of praying and that 'We can pray at any time or anywhere because God is with us.' Starting from Nursery, children learn to be still and reflect. Prayers written by children called 'Fish Prayers' are placed on the school's altar, read out during whole school liturgies, then displayed around the school. To begin whole school morning prayer, pupil chaplains deliver the 'Thought for the day' based on current events such as World Earth Day. Supported by leaders, they help to plan and lead times of prayer for example Lent and Advent prayers, the Rosary in May and October. They share Bible stories with the younger children. It is a valued and respected role within the school. 'We are ambassadors for chaplaincy, and we inspire younger pupils to want to follow our faith.' There are daily opportunities for other pupils across the school to lead prayer in class. Pupils work together to plan a class liturgy at the end of each unit of work and say they would like more opportunities to be involved in the prayer and liturgical life of the school.

Prayer and liturgy are well planned, thoughtfully delivered and given a high profile across the school - resulting in excellent behaviour, attitudes, and participation. Effective ways to gather; relevant scripture; appropriate ways to respond, and reflective ways to go forth, ensure inspirational worship. Joyful singing and music provided by pupils and staff are celebrated by all. Each child has a prayer journal and a wooden 'hold cross' to support reflection and spirituality. Leaders have developed indoor and outdoor prayer spaces where the children can explore their faith and reflect. Children often choose to take their prayer journal out to the woodland garden or St Catherine outdoor classroom for spontaneous prayer. The quality of prayer and liturgy is reflected in questions raised by pupils, links they make to their learning in religious education and their personal journey in faith. The opportunity to join the school for prayer is highly valued by parents. 'The school is always actively encouraging the involvement of parents (and children on top of their daily prayers) in prayer whether it's through

class Mass, assembly, and prayer group. My children continue their prayers at home due to the encouragement of Catholic life at school.'

A well-structured Prayer and Liturgy policy and inspirational professional development ensure staff understand the centrality of prayer and liturgy to the life of the school. Leaders encourage everyone to respond to the prayer experience offered with reverence and in a heartfelt way. They foster a sense of respect for those of other faiths. Leaders have worked to ensure staff and children are familiar with the format 'gather- listen – respond – go forth.' Staff and children choose appropriate scripture for times of prayer and celebration of the word providing children time to reflect and respond accordingly. The school calendar is planned to include celebration of the Mass, including holy days of obligation and other significant days. Opportunities to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation are provided in Advent and Lent. Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament takes place annually. Leaders appreciate the strong support of governors and the parish clergy. A parent commented 'The school provides many opportunities for the children to take part in activities to enhance and explore their Catholic life. Parents are often invited to join in with prayer groups and share collective worship with the children and each other.'



## Information about the school

Full name of school	St John Fisher Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	102671
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	3153505
Full postal address of the school	St John Fisher Catholic Primary School, Grand Drive, London, SW20 9NA
School phone number	02085402637
Headteacher	Janine Kenna
<b>Chair of Governors</b>	Catherine Blom
School Website	<a href="http://www.st-johnfisher.merton.sch.uk">www.st-johnfisher.merton.sch.uk</a>
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	N/A
Phase	Primary
Type of school	Voluntary Aided School
Admissions policy	N/A
Age-range of pupils	3-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	30 <sup>th</sup> January 2017
Previous denominational inspection grade	Good

## The inspection team

Angela Pitcher	Lead
Benedicta Ajala	Team

## Key to grade judgements

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