



# Catholic Schools Inspectorate inspection report for St John Fisher Catholic Voluntary Academy

URN: 138090

Carried out on behalf of the **Right Rev. Patrick McKinney, Bishop of Nottingham** on:

Date: 15-16 November 2023

<b>Overall effectiveness</b> The overall quality of Catholic education provided by the school.....	<b>2</b>
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The school is fully compliant with the curriculum requirements laid down by the Bishops' Conference	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
The school is fully compliant with all requirements of the diocesan bishop	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
The school has responded to the areas for improvement from the last inspection	Fully

## Summary of key findings

### What the school does well

- The school is a caring community where pupils experience the love of God for everyone.
- An overriding culture of respect between all members of the school community leads to outstanding behaviour from pupils.
- Leaders and governors are totally committed to the work of the Catholic Church.
- Religious education has a high status in the school, which is linked closely to its Catholic life and mission, prayer and liturgy.
- Pupils learn the value of prayer and how to pray through the regularity and variety of prayer opportunities.

### What the school needs to improve:

- Include in staff training the principles and practices of Catholic Social Teaching.
- Link the spiritual, moral and cultural development found within the school's Catholic ethos to the wider curriculum.
- Ensure a consistently varied approach to tasks in religious education lessons which build securely on prior learning, match needs and develop pupils' understanding.

## 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

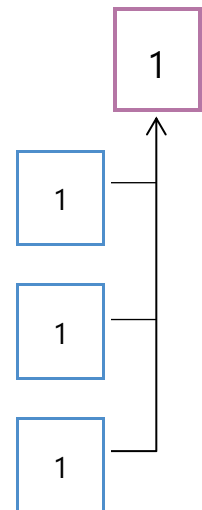
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school .....

### 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 .....



Pupils have a strong understanding of the mission statement of the school because they played a part in its creation, and the values which it represents are reiterated constantly. Pupils experience the love of Jesus and know that they are to reflect this in their own lives. They are respectful of each other and of their teachers; as a consequence, behaviour is exemplary. This is a safe school community which is vibrantly joyful and immediately welcoming to all newcomers. Pupils know that they are well cared for and this enables them to interact positively and confidently. They develop a growing awareness of how they can support those in hardship locally, nationally and globally. Although they cannot articulate fully the principles of Catholic Social Teaching, pupils are already active in working for the common good. Many acts of charity within the school are initiated by pupils, for example by fundraising for the victims of the recent earthquake in Syria and Turkey, which inspired other schools. Pupils respond enthusiastically to opportunities to be part of the ever-growing chaplaincy team, and to learn from pupils of other faiths.

Chaplaincy plays a major role in the provision for the Catholic life and mission of the school. The high standard of pastoral care both for pupils and teachers flows from this and is motivated by a vocation to Catholic education. Pupils know where they can seek support. Staff are exceptionally sound and enthusiastic role models and clearly want every child to flourish. Teaching assistants are a notable support at all times. All staff go the extra mile to provide after-school clubs for pupils and to ensure that all pupils are included in activities. They successfully provide for the spiritual and moral development of pupils through the insistence on the centrality of the school's Catholic life and mission. Activities are well planned to develop an awareness of the needs of others and consider how pupils can respond, for example to Menphys, a local charity supporting children and young people with disabilities. An eco team promotes care for the environment, and every care is taken to create displays to reflect the Catholic life of the school. Relationship, health and sex education is carefully planned and is linked to areas of the curriculum. It reflects Catholic teaching and meets statutory and diocesan requirements.

Leaders and governors ensure that activities for Catholic life and mission are constantly moving forward ahead of policy renewal. Leaders are totally committed to the expression of faith through their vocation as teachers in a Catholic school. There are clear links to the bishop's vision, diocesan initiatives and requirements, particularly to the theme of 'encounter' highlighting a growing relationship with God and providing a framework for in-school developments and outreach. The school works closely with the diocese and with the St Thomas Aquinas Multi-Academy Trust, and teachers in the early stages of their careers benefit greatly from the training provided within the family of schools. Collaboration with the local parish is developing and there are especially strong links in the preparation of pupils for the sacrament of First Holy Communion. Despite the considerable distance involved, the school is working with the parish to provide the venue for a church fund-raising activity. Leaders have a strong commitment to the wellbeing of staff and to communication with parents, who praise the safe and happy experience provided for their children. They enjoy the many opportunities to visit the school. One parent remarked that she had very much enjoyed her first experience of a school Mass, and another, when speaking of her daughter, stated that 'she loves school'.

## Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

**Religious education key judgement grade:**.....

### Pupil outcomes

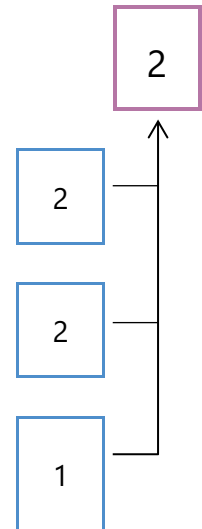
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education.....

### 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.....



By the end of Year 6, pupils attain well in religious education. This is because of the enjoyment which pupils gain from lessons and the attention they give to learning. Progress is accelerated in the final years. Their ability to reflect upon topics in lessons is enhanced by exposure to prayer and liturgy; equally, religious education lessons enable pupils to develop an awareness of the implications of topics in their daily lives. The pupils' books are often exemplary in the presentation of work. Pupils show good understanding of the tasks and settle to them readily. They enjoy illustrating their work, and have benefitted from the occasional analysis of a picture from the heritage of Catholic art. Where their prior knowledge is checked thoroughly before it is developed along new lines, pupils make better progress. Pupils are encouraged by rewards for good work, but opportunities for their own questions or research of topics is not a regular feature of planning. Pupils understand the importance of the Bible and have very good knowledge of Bible stories, drawing out the relevant spiritual and moral teaching. Pupils are beginning to develop a sense of vocation as a calling from God to serve.

Teachers plan lessons well, with good use of creativity and a variety of tasks. There are examples of outstanding teaching, which enable more rapid progress in learning. The new and comprehensive marking policy for the school, which has been closely researched, is gradually being implemented. Marking of work indicates the pupils' levels of understanding, and teachers use this assessment as the basis of lesson planning. However, at times the recall of prior knowledge is not totally secure, and questioning does not fully bridge gaps. Teachers' subject knowledge is constantly developed, and they and their pupils are well supported by teaching assistants. Teachers are enthusiastic in their delivery of lessons and pupils are rewarded for good work. Expectations for some pupils are, at times, insufficient to create a real buzz of challenge leading to more independent work. The provision of visitors to the school provides a welcome opportunity for pupils to ask questions: for example, the parish priest, a speaker from Cafod, and a member of the Jewish community have all been involved. Religious education has a great

impact on pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development. Wider curriculum links are beginning to be explored.

For leaders, securing good subject knowledge for all staff is a priority. Within the school there is a growing and successful system of coaching to ensure high quality teaching strategies. Staff also benefit from external courses and from support to implement the new curriculum requirements. Parity with other core subjects is assured. At a time of significant staffing changes in the leadership of religious education, the acting subject leader is exemplary in his dedication to settling staff into new year groups and ensuring support and resources. This is substantiated by comments, such as: 'I have felt so welcome and part of the school community'. The acting subject leader is ambitious for the enrichment of the curriculum, for example in visiting places of worship of other faiths. This was accomplished recently when two year groups visited a local synagogue. There is outstanding support from the wider leadership team, and there is capacity to support other schools. Staff are a coherent team and very positive in their appreciation of the opportunities afforded to them. The curriculum for religious education is well planned, with topics revisited at significant times during the year. There is regular monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning. Governors visit the school regularly in order to involve themselves and learn of the challenges and initiatives at first hand.

## Collective worship

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

Collective worship key judgement grade:.....

1

### Pupil outcomes

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

.....

1

### Provision

The quality of collective worship provided by the school

.....

1

### Leadership

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

1

Pupils participate enthusiastically and thoughtfully in a range of prayer opportunities, including silent meditation, singing, and personal prayer led by their peers from the chaplaincy group. They treat whole school celebrations of the word as very special occasions, entering and leaving with respect and reverence, and participating keenly. As they progress through the school, they become increasingly confident and skilled in leading prayer sessions because staff, led by the lay chaplain, are highly committed to their role in teaching pupils to pray. Reception pupils present prayer intentions for their departed loved ones in drawings whilst older pupils use their own words and familiar prayers, and act as role models for younger pupils. Pupils understand the rhythm of the liturgical seasons, and the wide implications of weekly themes such as remembrance. Their knowledge of Bible stories as a stimulus for prayer and moral behaviour is profound, arising often from the introduction of meditation on scripture in lectio divina sessions. Pupils are able to look back on experiences of leading prayer and work out how to improve next time. They are fully aware of the fundamental daily routine of prayer, four times each day, and are increasingly engaged in its delivery.

Prayer is central to the life of the school. Days are punctuated by positive experiences of prayer. With routines firmly established, pupils are encouraged and supported to develop ownership through their own contributions, both personal and in leadership. A pupil expressed the view that prayer makes her feel 'part of God's family'. The variety of prayer reflects that of the Catholic Church, with a firm culture of working on common ground with other faiths, for example in the celebration of Diwali. This enhances the community of prayer and enables understanding of the joy of local celebrations. Mass is celebrated in school for important feast days by the parish priest, followed by the availability of the sacrament of Reconciliation. As the parish church is a considerable distance away, pupils do not have a regular experience of being in church together, and the school does not have its own chapel. However, there are very small and well used areas dedicated to prayer, in which contributions to the prayer trees are prominently displayed and subsequently blessed by the parish priest. As a centre for the Catholic faith,

the school invites parents to join them in worship. This is a highly supportive opportunity for parents as well as the pupils.

For leaders and governors, an inspiring policy for prayer and liturgy is of key importance, and therefore worship is routinely monitored and evaluated by them, as well as by pupils and staff from within the school and the trust. There is a sincere desire for constant improvement to the already excellent provision. It is a priority for all staff to be regularly trained and to learn new skills, and this occurs daily through the availability of the lay chaplain as well as through external courses. Teachers and teaching assistants understand and respect the routines and variety of prayer in the school. Each class has its own evaluation 'scrapbook', containing records of celebrations of the word and developments over time, and there are regular staff, parent and pupil surveys which feed into planning. The annual calendar reflects the Church's year, for example, praying the rosary in October. There is an annual Mass in June for the feast of St John Fisher, which includes thanksgiving for First Holy Communion. The senior leadership team is formed to allow for excellent role modelling in the delivery of prayer and liturgy and sets high standards. They are highly supportive and well respected within the school community.



## Information about the school

Full name of school	St John Fisher Catholic Voluntary Academy
School unique reference number (URN)	138090
Full postal address of the school	Shenley Road, Wigston, Leicestershire, L18 3QL
School phone number	0116 2882203
Name of head teacher or principal	Anthony Gallagher
Chair of governing board	Helen Ladkin
School Website	<a href="http://www.stjohnfisher-wigston.leics.sch.uk">www.stjohnfisher-wigston.leics.sch.uk</a>
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	St Thomas Aquinas Catholic Multi-Academy Trust
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy
Age-range of pupils	4-11
Trustees	Diocesan
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	5 July 2016
Previous denominational inspection grade	2

## The inspection team

Janet Mellor	Lead inspector
Tammie McNamara	Team inspector
Name of inspector	Lead/team
Name of inspector	Lead/team

## Key to grade judgements

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

