



# Catholic Schools Inspectorate inspection report for St John Fisher Catholic High School

URN: 106535

Carried out on behalf of the Most Rev. Malcolm McMahon, Archbishop of Liverpool on:

Date: 8<sup>th</sup> -9<sup>th</sup> June 2023

Overall effectiveness The overall quality of Catholic education provided by the school.....	1
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.....	1
Religious education (p.5) The quality of curriculum religious education.....	1
Collective worship (p.7) The quality and range of liturgy and prayer provided by the school.....	1
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	Fully

## Summary of key findings

### What the school does well

- The mission statement is central to the vision of the school and actively lived out by leaders, staff and pupils.
- There is a significantly high level of staff commitment and engagement with Catholic life and mission, and with prayer and liturgy.
- The students are actively engaged in responding to Catholic social teachings, supporting those in need locally and globally.

What the school needs to improve:

- Continue to further strengthen the growth of Chaplaincy.
- Maintain the active development of the school's new campus to reflect its Catholic mission and identity through explicit signs and displays.
- Prioritise the planning and implementation of the new *Religious Education Directory* across years 7-9.

## 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:.....

1

### Pupil outcomes

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

1

### Provision

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

1

### Leadership

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

1

Students and staff are proud of their Catholic school. Students at St John Fisher understand and live out their mission statement, 'Learning together as a community in Christ'. They describe this as to 'Be Christ Like, taking care of each other, helping each other and being respectful'. They can clearly express an understanding that they are valued and cared for as unique persons made in the 'image and likeness,' of God. The students are happy, confident and feel secure. They clearly understand that they are part of a Catholic family whose core values come from Jesus. They experience a very strong sense of identity and belonging, describing school as being, 'like a second home and a second family, because the staff are caring and want us to feel safe and happy and want school to be a great place for us.' Students take a leadership role in responding to the demands of Catholic social teachings and are proactive in finding ways to respond, through the work of the *Student Catholic Life and Mission Ambassadors* and *Faith in Action* group, who lead on fundraising and projects to help care for the environment. They have been successful in providing support for CAFOD, the Ukraine and the *Daffodil Dreams Charity*. A group of students has recently renovated a garden for the local retirement home. One student stated, 'It feels good to be part of something good and to know you are listened to and what you think matters.'

Staff are deeply committed to the school's mission in providing high-quality care for students. There is a culture of welcome, valuing all and acknowledging Christ's presence in others. Students strongly agree that they feel supported and are confident to be the 'individuals that God created us to be.' Some students attend the LGBTQ+ society. A year 8 student stated, 'Whilst I am of a different faith background, I am made to feel welcome and encouraged to use

the chapel for my own prayer.' Staff provide the highest level of pastoral care for the students and there is an explicit and concrete commitment to the most vulnerable. For example, the provision for transition, the *Pastoral Hub* and the SEND provision are exceptional. Staff are excellent role models for the students. They enthusiastically participate in and contribute to those activities which reflect the life and mission of the school and the community it serves. One member stated that, 'staff wear their faith proudly' and, 'every member of staff lives out Gospel Values by bringing people together.' The provision for Relationships, Sex and Health Education is carefully planned and fully meets the diocesan requirements and is incorporated into the wider Personal, Social and Health Education syllabus. The content is underpinned by a clarity of policy, good planning, and expertise in delivery.

Leaders and governors clearly articulate the Church's mission in education. They truly embrace the principle that parents are the first educators of their children and fully support and empower them in meeting the demands of this vocation. All students are valued without exception. Leaders actively respond to current needs and safeguarding of students. Year 9 students benefit from follow up *Bee Well* sessions to support them with self-regulation and positive mental health choices. Parents strongly agree that they are invited to be involved in prayer and that they understand the Catholic life and mission of the school. This is supported by the way leaders embrace and actively promote the principle that Catholic Schools are at the service of the local Church. The parish priest is a pivotal figure in the school, supporting students' journey in faith. The close links and a strong relationship between parish and school is evident and central to the Catholic life and mission of the school.

## Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade:.....

1

### Pupil outcomes

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

1

### Provision

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

1

### Leadership

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

1



Students are developing excellent knowledge and understanding. They have a rich understanding of key religious vocabulary. Students are engaged and active in their learning and state that they enjoy religious education lessons. The department uses recall and retrieval strategies well to provide information about what students have learnt and what they need to learn in order to make progress. Suitable challenge and high expectations are evident. Robust assessment and tracking systems are utilised. These are in line with whole school systems to identify where learners are at and what gaps are apparent. This is acted upon through personalised learning conversations with the class teacher. Time is allocated to review learning and to encourage self-regulated and resilient learners. Reading has been identified as a key priority for the school. The department has designed, planned and implemented a subject specific response to deepen students' engagement with religious literature. Evidence from key stage 4 students' books show that the curriculum intent is being followed and that there is appropriate challenge. There has been an increased level of engagement in curriculum time and greater level of success in outcomes for SEND pupils due to the bespoke curriculum that is now offered. There is an incremental upward trend for outcomes in religious education. Behaviour in lessons is exemplary. The department have high aspirations for their students and work closely to forge strong links with the religious education department at the local Catholic sixth form college.

Outstanding teaching is reinforced by a collaborative departmental working approach. This provides high quality methodology and an extensive variety of resources, mostly created internally, which optimises learning for all students. There is regular and well attended subject specific continued professional development from the Archdiocese, the examination board

and thorough in-house teaching and learning meetings. Good practice is disseminated to ensure their pedagogy remains current and demonstrates a deep commitment and high expectations for religious education. Teachers' use of questioning is skillfully developed to increase engagement and to encourage a deeper level of understanding. Adaptive teaching to ensure all learners make progress was evident in the lessons observed. There was frequent retrieval practice to allow students to, 'know more, and remember more.' This secured a deeper understanding and a strong connection with core content. Quality assurance of teaching is well implemented. All the lessons observed demonstrated positive learning environments, reflecting relationships built on mutual respect. A strength of the department is the recognition and celebration of their student's efforts and achievement within religious education. Celebration of effort is evident, which leads to high levels of motivation from students. They are particularly encouraged through their use of *religious education stars* and *religious education postcard rewards*.

Leaders and governors ensure religious education has at least full parity with other core curriculum subjects. Curriculum allocation meets the 10% expected time. Religious education is line managed by the head teacher, which gives it status. The subject leader and second in department have an inspiring vision for the department as a whole and the provision for the students. Forensic monitoring and quality assurance practices are evident with scheduled learning walks and work scrutiny according to the same demands and rigour as other subjects. Self-evaluation is strong with the subject lead identifying well-targeted areas for further development. This is shared with the department for their input and remains in-line with the *Whole School Improvement Plan*. Leaders ensure that students are provided with engaging enrichment activities to enhance learning in religious education. Examples included the use of guest speakers from CAFOD and visits to places of religious worship. The department is fully aware of the new *Religious Education Directory* and have started to rigorously plan to ensure they meet the Archdiocesan requirements. They will begin to teach in accordance with the directory from September 2025.

## 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 .....

2

### 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



Most students respond well to the experiences of prayer and liturgy provided by the school. They take part in weekly acts of year group worship and daily acts of form time worship. Acts of worship follow the liturgical calendar of the Church and the Sunday Gospel. The weekly prayer theme is introduced by form tutors at the beginning of the week. Throughout the week, different styles of activities are introduced to encourage students to reflect and deepen their understanding of that week's theme. Students describe this as, 'Our opportunities to grow closer to God.' Mass is celebrated on holy days and other significant events in the school year. These are held within the local parish church and the school. A voluntary Mass was well attended by students, staff and governors during the inspection, for the feast of Corpus Christi. Students plan an active part in the leadership and planning of masses, assemblies and form time worship. The *Catholic Life and Mission Ambassadors*, together with the *Faith in Action* team, allows students' leadership skills to flourish. They plan liturgy and resources, organise prayer rotas, coordinate fund raising and are trained Eucharistic ministers. They state that they are, 'proud to be ambassadors.' The next steps could be to encourage even larger numbers of students to engage with prayer and liturgy. This would increase further their confidence, understanding and skills within liturgical ministries and ongoing capacity for personal evaluation and improvement.

Prayer and liturgy at St John Fisher is outstanding. Its centrality is clear across the school. Form time worship demonstrates a variety of experiential approaches, which are clearly embedded in the daily routines of pupils. The weekly student prayer group *Breakfast with God* is well attended in the chapel. Students are attentive and respectful whilst listening to God's Word and understand how to reflect on their experiences of prayer and liturgy that helps shape how

they think about themselves. One Year 8 student spoke about the ways that, 'It impacts on the decisions we make, like how to treat people and how I have just been confirmed.' Staff are highly skilled in helping to confidently plan and lead well-constructed prayer and liturgy. This is evident with the work and commitment of the staff chaplaincy team. Notable support for new members of the staff team is excellent and continued professional development has been delivered to all staff. Selected examples include, ethos and spirituality, gospel values and CAFOD. One member of staff said, 'As a non-Catholic new member of staff, I have received great support from the induction programme. I am now confident with leading and planning my own form group assemblies and worship.' Staff and pupils partake in the retreat programme and a number attend the annual Archdiocesan pilgrimage to Lourdes. A significant number of staff attend the weekly *Prayer and Pastries* reflection. The parish priest has a visible presence in school as priest chaplain, with the celebration of the Eucharist, the sacrament of reconciliation and his overall role on the wider chaplaincy team. He supports the school and the work of the Archdiocesan youth team *Animate* as they help prepare the young people for Confirmation.

Leaders systematically evaluate the provision for prayer and liturgy. The policy is carefully formulated and regularly reviewed due to the implementation of the *Chaplaincy Improvement Plan*. Leaders have been steadfast in their commitment to their vision for prayer and liturgy. The new school build has an allocated space for the chapel. However, they have ensured that they maintain the centrality of prayer and liturgy in the interim period, with a dedicated chapel space within the temporary religious education block. This sacred space is well utilised by students and staff. It is a place for reflection and connection for the school community. Leaders are highly effective in facilitating others to plan and lead experiences of prayer and liturgy. Leadership has demonstrated foresight by further strengthening the provision of chaplaincy, though the appointment of a temporary chaplaincy consultant to provide guidance and induction. Leaders work hard to ensure the ability of staff and pupils to voluntarily observe holy days of obligation and to have access to the sacraments.



## Information about the school

Full name of school	ST JOHN FISHER CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL
School unique reference number (URN)	106535
Full postal address of the school	Baytree Road, Springfield, Wigan, WN6 7RN
School phone number	01942 510715
Name of head teacher or principal	Alison Rigby
Chair of governing board	David Mallin
School Website	www.sjfhs.co.uk
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	Not Applicable
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Voluntary aided
Age-range of pupils	11-16 Years
Trustees	Archdiocese of Liverpool
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	4 <sup>th</sup> November 2015
Previous denominational inspection grade	Outstanding

## The inspection team

Marie Rishton	Lead inspector
Sarah Daley	Team inspector
Louise Conway	Team inspector

## 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