



## ARCHDIOCESE OF LIVERPOOL

### INSPECTION REPORT

### ST JOHN FISHER CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL

#### WIGAN

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Inspection Date 4 November 2015  
Inspectors Dcn. Paul Mannings Mrs Elizabeth Dolan  
Unique Reference Number 106535  
Inspection carried out under Section 48 of the Education Acts 2005 and 2011

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Type of School Catholic, voluntary aided, mixed comprehensive  
Age range of pupils 11-16  
Number on roll 903  
Chair of Governors Mr. David Mallin  
Executive Headteacher Mr. Jonathan Smart  
Head of School Mr. Stephen Coyle  
School address Baytree Road  
Springfield  
Wigan  
WN6 7RN  
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Date of last inspection Wednesday 20 October 2010

## Introduction

This inspection was carried out under Section 48 of the Education Acts 2005 and 2011

The report of the inspection is produced for the Archbishop of Liverpool (Code of Canon Law 804 and 806) and for the governors of the school.

The inspectors are members of the Christian Education Department and their associates approved by the Archbishop of Liverpool for this purpose.

## Information about this school

- St John Fisher is a Catholic 11-16, co-educational high school situated within and under the trusteeship of the Archdiocese of Liverpool.
- There are 903 pupils on roll of whom 85% are baptised Catholics, with 6% from other Christian denominations and 2% from other world faith or religious traditions.
- Pupils from six parishes in the pastoral area account for 83% of the roll.
- The school has 76 teaching staff, 59% of whom are Catholic.
- For the current academic year there are two pro-tem joint heads of Religious Education.
- The Religious Education Department has seven members. All are qualified in Religious Education.

### Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Requires Improvement
Grade 4	Inadequate

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Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school.

## **Overall effectiveness:**

St John Fisher High School provides outstanding Catholic Education.

## **Inspection Judgements**

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

- The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life of the school is outstanding.
- They understand the wide ranging significance of the Gospel call expressed in the Mission Statement to focus upon, "Learning together as a community in Christ."
- Pupils are proud of their school. During a guided tour and an interview session they highlighted and discussed the wide ranging charitable and social interaction undertaken by the school. They confidently linked these to the aims of the Mission Statement.
- When asked to provide further examples of living the mission they included safe and secure pastoral systems. They were clear in their understanding that Catholic life embraces the whole person in terms of personal and academic development. They spoke of the dedication of their staff to the success of all pupils.
- Religious Education was cited as their key motivator in working toward improving the lives of others.
- In class and around the school pupils behaviour is outstanding. When commended for this pupils declared it was a consequence of mutual respect.
- They were able to define spiritual development as a Catholic guiding hand in all that they do. Nor were they insular and did time and again make clear that Catholic life nurtures the whole community, respecting individual faith or world view.
- Equally they identified moral development in terms of their knowledge and understanding of right behaviour, founded on Gospel values. This too was identified by practical examples.
- Pupils regard spiritual and moral development as a community responsibility rooted in the school's mission.

### **How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education**

- Pupils' achievements and enjoyment in Religious Education is outstanding.
- The school is to be commended, overall, for its continued work in practically closing the gaps between achievement rates between advantaged and disadvantaged pupils.
- The Religious Education department has focused upon strategies for teaching and learning linked to this rate of progress. Pupils aspire to challenging targets, which nourish their enthusiasm and motivation to achieve in Religious Education.
- Currently, Religious Education is the highest performing core subject. Some 70% of pupils make three levels of progress with 41% making four and 18% making five. Achievement at GCSE A\*-C in 2015 was 81%, with 29% gaining A\*-A. This rate of progress typifies and for the most part has increased performance rates over the past three years.
- Pupils are well used to contributing to their own study pathways through both peer and self assessment. This supports their confidence to make progress and support each other.
- In lessons, teachers' intervention strategies ensure that every minute counts toward personal pupil progress.

- Since the last inspection much headway has been made with assessment. The process is now well defined. Pupils have personal target logs to record progress. Marking is diagnostic, formative and challenging. There is encouraging teacher commentary. Pupils make their own comments. Areas for development are thoroughly pursued. Consequently pupils take great pride in their written work. They know it is valued. They know too that the standards set offer a thorough grounding for their revision.

### **How well pupils respond to and participate in Collective Worship**

- Pupils' response to and participation in Collective Worship is outstanding.
- They are enabled to be part of prayer and worship through active participation. This includes particularly creative instances of their own leadership, discussion within the praying community and demonstration of individual talents.
- There is also abundant scope for their personal reflection. This enables pupils to appreciate that prayer can be about stillness, personal time and a means of spending some moments focussing on their own priorities.
- Pupils show strong appreciation for how Collective Worship challenges their responses through prayer and by action.
- They understand how prayer and worship enables them to keep track of the Liturgical Year through voluntary masses and services which in their estimation are well prepared and focussed on community needs.
- They appreciate the inclusion of other world faiths and traditions. This deepens their knowledge and understanding. It provides awareness of the celebration of a range of feasts, festivals that increases their awareness and understanding of life within a multicultural and diverse society.
- Pupils are supportive of the Emmaus Room as a place for formal worship and for private time. For them this space is an example of how to ensure a family feel when praying for the intentions of others.
- Year 7 link the retreat experiences as a valuable expression of prayer. In the same way those members of Year 11 who attend the diocesan pilgrimage to Lourdes speak with confidence about their participation in the liturgies and prayer, expressed through services to other pilgrims.
- Pupils are clear of the essential difference between prayer time and assembly. Equally they know how the two aspects can be linked through prayers of intercession or thanksgiving.
- Consequently they know how collective Worship is implicit to living Catholic life.

### **The quality of teaching and how purposeful learning is in Religious Education**

- The quality of teaching and purposeful learning in Religious Education is outstanding.
- The process for performance management includes sharing good practice across different subject departments.
- Teachers are secure and confident in their subject knowledge. This enables personal flair and creativity.
- Religious Education is well planned. This includes effective use of prior learning in both the presentation of the current main task and the preparation of extension tasks.
- Differentiation is evident in every written and practical aspect, according to the needs of individual pupils.
- For the most part skilful monitoring of pupil progress is consistent throughout every activity.
- Teachers are skilful in their styles of questioning. There is much challenge. Pupils respond with confidence and so demonstrate the progress made.

- Starter, main and plenary tasks are thorough and well balanced to support the whole lesson.
- Pupils have much experience in collaborative learning. For the most part they remain well on task. Shared activities included balanced scope for personal contributions. They are encouraged to listen to each other.
- As independent learners they demonstrate high levels of personal focus.
- Pupils are well motivated by clear study pathways. They are enabled to practice skills to full development.
- In the course of lessons pupils show reasons for and understanding of the work being undertaken. They are as clear about the next stages in progression.
- There is much celebration of completed work.
- Pupils are well trained in mutual affirmation of learning.

### **The extent to which the Religious Education Curriculum promotes pupils' learning**

- The extent to which the content of the Religious Education Curriculum promotes pupils' learning is outstanding.
- The Bishops' requirement of 10% curriculum time is evident in all but Year 9, where there are two weekly lessons instead of three. This will be rectified by September 2016.
- In Key Stage 3 the new framework "People of God – Called to Serve" has been implemented.
- The current GCSE specification is entirely fit for purpose and undertaken by all but a very small minority of the cohort. The department is on course to embrace GCSE reform in 2016.
- The content of the whole curriculum is firmly rooted in Church Teaching. Pupils are enabled to develop faith informed Gospel values. It is from this basis that Religious Education provides a firm foundation for understanding and living British Values.
- Pupils have abundant access to Catholic Social Teaching.
- They are enabled to refer to Scripture, regularly and proficiently.
- Their use of religious vocabulary is informed, accurate and well applied.
- The content includes knowledge, understanding and where appropriate, the celebration of other world faiths and traditions.
- Consequently the entire content is firmly in accordance with the 2012 Religious Education Curriculum Directory for Catholic Schools and Colleges in England and Wales.
- The content is well resourced by the department's own resources.
- There is a generous programme of extra- curricular support through access to the website and by the provision of GCSE revision classes.
- The curriculum is strong in its support of pupils' personal reflection and evaluation. This in turn encourages their application to Religious Education within their contemporary society.

### **The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school**

- The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school is outstanding.
- Governors and leadership require Collective Worship to live and to express the Liturgical Year through participation and by the availability of many prayer experiences.
- There is a clear system of line management provided by lay chaplaincy.
- This is further supported by the commitment of school leadership and form tutors, who are all involved in its delivery.
- Monitoring is straightforward and efficient. Learning walks are undertaken by members of leadership.
- Collective Worship is celebrated consistently in year and form groups with a balanced mix of pupil and staff leadership and participation.
- Provision is supported by resources shared with staff. They include resources that celebrate other world faith and religious traditions. These are not in any sense prescriptive or

exhaustive. Participants are encouraged to use them as benchmarks for their personal contribution.

- There is a highly creative approach with much use of art poetry and music.
- In service programmes include the sharing of good practice in Collective Worship. It also serves to maximise the use of available resources.
- The school should consider providing specific training in public speaking for pupils who wish to further improve their strong levels of presentation.
- There is implicit provision for deep levels of reflection and for personal challenge.
- There is solid support for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development that is inclusive of religious and world views both in the school and the local community.

### **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**

- Leaders, governors and managers are outstanding in promoting monitoring and evaluating the provision for the Catholic life of the school and in the way they plan and implement improvement to outcomes for pupils. This includes commitment to diocesan requirements, though membership of the Wigan and West Lancashire Catholic School Direct programme.
- The school's philosophy is founded entirely on the Mission Statement last reviewed during Mission Week in 2014.
- Governors and leaders express their commitment to, "Getting the Catholic life right so that everything else can fall into place." They refer to St John Fisher as, "A school of second chances"; a community in which everyone has the right and appropriate guidance to succeed.
- Catholic life is monitored partially on a business like basis through sharing in school self evaluation and departmental plans. It includes written statements and personal interviews that assess the quality of Catholic life.
- Equally as important, the process ensures the living of Catholic life through effective pastoral care and safeguarding. A key example is the Nurture Centre, open to any pupil in need of extra care and support during, before and after school.
- The provision of a well established and successful lay chaplaincy ensures availability for and assistance in care for the whole community. Pupils value this ministry. The role involved facilitation of a voluntary chaplaincy team.
- The living of Catholic life is the launch base for pupils own awareness of mission and ethos through enabling their participation and expression. The latter is tangible in the high quality displays around the school. It is equally as evident in the outstanding artistic definitions of spiritual and moral development.

### **How well leaders, governors and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Religious Education of the school and plan and implement improvement to outcomes for pupils**

- Leaders, governors and managers are outstanding in promoting monitoring and evaluating the provision for the Religious Education of the school and in the way they plan and implement improvement to outcomes for pupils.
- Governors and senior leadership continually succeed in their securing of Religious Education as the core department in the school, with a unique but not exclusive role in upholding Catholic life.

- This commitment is shared by the current process for joint departmental leadership which is outstanding. This process was necessitated by the full time post holder's secondment to senior leadership to facilitate closing the achievement gap between advantaged and disadvantaged pupils. Here is further testimony to the school's commitment to the common good. The two leaders are time served and successful members of the department.
- The Self Evaluation Document clearly identifies areas of strength, together with those requiring development.
- This document is supported by the Departmental Improvement Plan. Consequently both are entirely fit for purpose.
- The process for departmental management is amplified within the detailed and practical departmental handbook.
- In the last inspection the required area for action was the further strengthening of the process of Assessment for Learning. This has been well implemented. The department has in fact identified further strands for ongoing enrichment.
- The department works as a professional and dedicated team that is committed to continually raising the bar for quality. This is amplified through pupil performance and the development of teaching and learning. Each member of the department is supported through access to in-house and to diocesan in-service training.

**What the school needs to do to improve further?**

- Further enrichment of the existing strong process for assessment by:
  - Implementation of the remaining areas for enrichment, identified by the department, which are explicit in the Self Evaluation Document.

**INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS**

***OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS***

How effective the school is in providing Catholic Education	1
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***OUTCOMES FOR PUPILS***

How good outcomes are for individuals and groups of pupils
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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	1
How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship	1

### ***PROVISION***

<b>How effective the provision is for Catholic Education</b>	
The quality of teaching and how purposeful learning is in Religious Education	1
The extent to which the Religious Education curriculum promotes pupils' learning	1
The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school	1

### ***LEADERS AND MANAGERS***

<b>How effective leaders, governors and managers are in developing the Catholic Life of the School</b>	
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 improvement to outcomes for pupils	1

<b><i>Key to judgements: Grade 1 is outstanding, Grade 2 good, Grade 3 requires improvement and Grade 4 inadequate</i></b>
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