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October 2018

Mrs A. Rigby
Headteacher
St. John Fisher Catholic High School
Baytree Road
Springfield
Wigan
WN6 7RN

Dear Mrs Rigby,

Department for Christian Education Monitoring Visit of St. John Fisher Catholic High School on 10 October 2018

I am writing on behalf of the Department of Christian Education, Archdiocese of Liverpool to confirm our findings following the monitoring visit to your school.

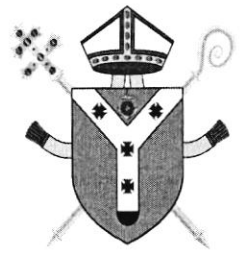
Thank you for your help and the time yourself, governors, lay chaplaincy, senior and departmental leadership, staff and pupils offered on the day.

The basis for the visit was the Self Evaluation document and what improvement has been made since the last inspection. The main findings of the visit are enclosed with this letter.

The school's Section 48 inspection will take place during the academic year 2020 to 2021.

Yours sincerely,

Rev Des Seddon
Director of Christian Education



**Department for
Christian Education**

**MONITORING VISIT at St. John Fisher Catholic High School on Wednesday 10
October 2018**

THESE ARE AREAS TO CELEBRATE

- The Mission Statement of the school is a lived expression of its commitment to, "Learning together as a community in Christ." This philosophy is embedded within the Section 48 Self Evaluation Document. The content is a team response that directs school development in every aspect of Catholic Life, Religious Education and Collective Worship. It is concise, practical and regularly monitored.
- Catholic Life is steered by the commitment of the head teacher whose knowledge, understanding and enthusiasm is shared by governors, staff and pupils. There is regular priest chaplaincy with a significant contribution from one member of the pastoral area. The work of the school's lay chaplaincy is well directed with ever increasing review and scope for links between home, school and parish. The school is justifiably proud of its history of vocations to the priesthood and religious life, a factor that is used to motivate pupils along their own life journeys. Pupils themselves speak about their school with pride and confidence. Their "pupil voice" counts. They are listened to. There is much enthusiasm for their participation in the school's established high levels of charitable work and social interaction. Governors and leaders hold the school to account in ensuring that Catholic Life is readily identifiable within the pastoral system that ensures a safe, secure and productive environment. The Pastoral Hub, Nurture Base and Emmaus Room are key examples of this provision. St John Fisher is proactive in its Archdiocesan links and work towards the forthcoming School Mission (already heralded through its contributions to the Eucharistic Congress and Pilgrimage) to ensure active participation in Synod 2020.
- Relationships and Sex Education is managed with precision by the co-ordinator of Personal Health and Social Education. The content is delivered within the context of Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Education. Provision is made within extended form period and dedicated days. The policy document clearly identifies the areas of study, which are entirely in accordance with Catholic Social Teaching.

- Increasing the levels of pupils' attainment and achievement across the whole curriculum is the specific drive of the school, especially in the closing of achievement gaps between advantaged and disadvantaged pupils. This is significantly reflected in Religious Education in class. Pupils are closely tracked according to their prior and baseline rates of performance, in line with their individual capabilities and starting points. Their target logs and flight paths are subject to frequent formative and summative assessments. Marking and annotation is thorough and includes pupils' involvement in their progress routes. There are regular learning conversations between staff, who set consequent intervention strategies. Governors and senior leadership are accurately and regularly informed. Consequent appropriate target setting is both realistic and aspirational, so providing appropriate levels of pupil challenge.
- Teaching and learning observed during monitoring reflected the same high standards reported by the school. Lessons were well planned. Tasks to secure pupils' knowledge and understanding, were underpinned by Scripture and Church Teaching. Progress rates were challenging and developmental. Pupils were well used to peer assessment and independent study. Styles of teaching and learning motivated pupils. Their success was celebrated. Their behaviour at all times was exemplary. They have a high regard for Religious Education because it is meaningful and relevant both to personal development and to life.
- The curriculum fulfils Bishops and Archdiocesan requirements. There is 10% curriculum time. *People of God – Called to Serve* is fully implemented. All pupils in Year 11 are entered for the required GCSE specification. British Values are founded upon Gospel Values. There is regular and informative inclusion of other world faiths and religions. The school ensures that Religious Education is secure within *The Core Four* subjects.
- Religious Education has been re-structured since the last inspection. The head and second in department are highly efficient (and respected) in management and leadership of a team of five. Teachers work extremely well together and have scope to develop their own styles and expertise. They are regular contributors to Archdiocesan continued professional development.
- Collective Worship remains well managed, with occasional assistance from Religious Education. During monitoring there was an opportunity to share prayer and worship with a form group. The experience was meaningful and reflective. Pupils spoke well. Singing was joyful. The community were respectful and invited to contribute. During interview pupils said they regard Collective Worship as relevant because it supports their works in serving the needs of others. They explained how it enables them to make sense of their lives and to feel a sense of purpose in their work. There are well chosen, planned and creative themes that

support the Liturgical Year. These are shared weekly with staff for year group and form time prayer. All form groups take part in leading Collective Worship, so providing ample scope for pupil participation and involvement. Pupils have been encouraged to be commissioned as Ministers of the Eucharist. Masses and services held in school throughout the year are truly inclusive. Pupils want to attend these voluntary celebrations because they are given a sense of belonging and meaning. The school is conscientious in its provision of retreat opportunities to enable pupils to understand the range and diversity of Collective Worship. This includes annual support for the Lourdes pilgrimage. There is training for staff and pupils in all aspects of Collective Worship. The process for monitoring ensures consistency and quality.

AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT

- Continue to address all areas identified for development in the qualitative Section 48 Self-Evaluation Document.
- In Catholic Life maintain the drive of lay chaplaincy toward increasing pupils' participation in Faith in Action, to further enrich links between home, school and parish.
- This year's glitch in GCSE performance was caused by the significantly challenging expectations of the new specification. The staff has the expertise (and the confidence of others) to move on and address this issue. Results for the predecessor specification in recent years have been high. The process for raising achievement and attainment is highly structured. There is high quality teaching and learning. Consequently, the department is well set for improvement. Members should remain as active contributors to Archdiocesan provision in sharing GCSE teaching styles and techniques. Continued practical experience with the new specification will ensure significant progress.
- Persevere in entering all pupils for GCSE using the school's existing process for class setting, which will maintain appropriate and meaningful differentiation.

Monitoring Visitor

Deacon Paul Mannings
Adviser for Secondary Religious Education
Archdiocese of Liverpool