

DIOCESE OF LEEDS DBI



SECTION 48 INSPECTION REPORT

THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL
AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

ST. JOHN FISHER CATHOLIC SECONDARY SCHOOL
DEWSBURY

School URN

17783

Chair of Governors

DR JOSEPH CORTIS

Headteacher

MR KEVIN HIGGINS

RE Subject Leader

Miss MARY MOLLICONE

Date of Inspection

1ST - 2ND MARCH 2010

Section 48 Inspectors

MRS HELEN GILROY
Ms ANNETTE DEWS

The Inspection of St John Fisher Catholic High School was carried out under the requirements of the Education Act 2005, and in accordance with the Leeds Diocesan Framework and Schedule for Section 48 Inspections approved by the Bishop of Leeds.

Description of the school

St. John Fisher Catholic High School is a mixed Catholic 11-18 comprehensive school in the town of Dewsbury in the Diocese of Leeds and in Kirklees Local Authority. The school has six Catholic feeder primary schools in Heckmondwike, Batley Carr and Batley, Dewsbury and Birstall. The intake also includes pupils from a number of local state primary schools. The school serves the eight parishes of the Heavy Woollen Deanery, St Francis Morley and St Brigid's Churwell.

The school's Mission Statement is "Following the example of our Patron, St John Fisher, priest and scholar, we aim to love one another throughout our life at school, to learn and develop our full potential in the image of Christ." The aims of the school include helping students to know and love God and the wonders of creation, to understand and live the Catholic faith, grow in self-esteem and create a community in which individuals respect each other regardless of age, gender, race or position.

Some 90% of the pupils aged 11-16 are baptised Catholics and there is a slightly higher percentage who are not Catholic in the 6th Form. The school has 71 (f.t.e) teachers of who 41 (f.t.e) are Catholics. The percentage of students eligible for free school meals is below average but levels of social disadvantage are above average. The school has fewer than average minority ethnic students. The proportion with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational needs is broadly average.

The school is a Specialist Sports College and has Investors in People status, the Healthy Schools Award, the Safety Mark, Sportsmark and is an FA Focus School. St John Fisher works in partnership with local schools to the benefit of the young people in its care.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL

The overall effectiveness of the provision for the Catholic life of the school, of curriculum RE, and the school's main strengths and areas for development.

St John Fisher School provides an outstanding Catholic education for its students. All aspects of school life inspected are at least good and many are exemplary. The Mission Statement informs policies, planning and activities. It is lived out in the ethos and daily life of the school. The governors and senior leaders are committed to ensuring that the educational mission of the Church is expressed through the school and they have the support of all staff, parents and carers and the primary schools and parishes they serve. The school has high quality and effective provision for Collective Worship. The Leaders of the school have identified key areas for whole school development and are working to ensure that all students fulfill their potential but the school's commitment to RE as a core subject is never compromised and the judgments made in this report bear witness to that.

The effectiveness of any steps taken to promote improvement since the last inspection

- The school has built on existing good practice for Chaplaincy by developing the role of students and staff in the work of Chaplaincy. The recruitment of a priest as a Senior Leader has also strengthened the liturgical and spiritual life of the school.
- The opportunity for students to be involved in the planning, preparation and leadership of Collective Worship has increased.
- Whole school progress on the active engagement of pupils in their learning and a major focus by the RE faculty on this element of a “good” lesson has led to a significant increase in student progress.

The capacity to make further improvements

In 2006, the outcome of the S48 inspection was that St John Fisher was an outstanding school. In the intervening period, the school has acted on the recommendations and has further improved the provision of Catholic education. The Headteacher is committed to continuous school improvement in order to maintain outstanding provision. Teaching and learning in RE is at least good as is student progress and the department has the capacity to further enhance the quality of teaching and learning and maximize achievement. The provision for Collective Worship is outstanding but in preparing to appoint a permanent chaplain, the governors and Head have an excellent opportunity to revisit the direction of Chaplaincy and the contribution it can now make in the liturgical life of the school and in the lives of the students and staff.

What steps need to be taken in order to further improve the provision of Catholic education?

1. To secure the appointment of a permanent Chaplain who will build on the good practice that exists in the school and deepen and enrich the spiritual opportunities for both staff and students.
2. To further develop the role of students as leaders of worship in school and its community.
3. To continue to develop and embed the AFL strategies within RE lessons and share good practice across the department in order to enhance the learning opportunities for students.

THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

How effective are Leadership and Management in developing the Catholic life of the school?

The effectiveness of the leadership and management in developing the Catholic life of the school is judged to be outstanding. The strength of the Governing Body and the close collaboration that exists between Governors, the Headteacher and staff is an outstanding feature of St John Fisher. The Governors maintain, strengthen and monitor the Catholic life of the school. Their commitment to actively promote the Catholic identity of the school is evident in all aspects of their work.

The Headteacher and his team have a clear vision for the school and give outstanding Catholic leadership. The distinctive Catholic ethos underpins all the work of the school. The development of

the mission, ethos and distinctive character of the school is a key area in the School Improvement Plan. The school's mission is revisited in inset when staff are given time to share and reflect on their distinctive work. The school's Catholic identity is recognized in its partnership work and the school's contribution to the promotion of social cohesion is outstanding.

The school undoubtedly benefits from the considerable support and involvement of local clergy. Four members of the clergy are members of the Governing Body. Links between St John Fisher and parishes are good and are maintained in many ways. Pupils attend Mass on Feast days for example in the local parish and the Head and members of staff visit the parishes to speak to parishioners. Many staff are active members of the parishes the school serves and the priests of the Deanery are welcome visitors in school and celebrate Mass at St John Fisher throughout the Liturgical year and on other special occasions. Links between St John Fisher and the Catholic Primary schools are strong and lead to effective transition for students.

Care, respect and a belief in the value of each person are fundamental to the ethos of the school. This is evident in the embedded Pastoral system, in the Curriculum, in the extensive extra-curricular provision and in the links with external providers which include Catholic Care. Students report that they feel safe, know who they can seek help from, "are not a number but are known" (student quote) and talk of the school as a family and community. Staff also see the school as a community where all are valued and supported. Provision for vulnerable students is very good and effective mentoring ensures that student needs are met and barriers to learning addressed. Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural provision is outstanding and staff contributions to spiritual development can be evidenced for example in curriculum plans.

Students' involvement in school life is actively promoted and students report their views are sought and listened to. Students are given many opportunities to show responsibility and take on leadership roles which they enjoy. They raise considerable amounts of money for charity. There is great loyalty to the school from students and staff and this is shared by parents/carers who feel equally valued and that their voice is heard. Parent representatives reported high levels of satisfaction with the school.

PSHCE is lead by an RE specialist and taught by RE staff who ensure that the Catholic perspective is reflected in the programme. This is again a particular strength of the school.

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

How good is the quality of Collective Worship?

The quality of Collective Worship is judged to be outstanding. The Eucharist and prayer are central to the life of St John Fisher. The liturgical life of the school is well planned, varied and appropriate to the needs of the pupils. Many departments, especially music, drama and dance contribute to the quality of religious services. Collective Worship has a significant impact on the spiritual and moral development of students.

Students respond reverently and respectfully and are willing to lead prayer in assemblies, in lessons and in form tutor periods. They also contribute to the planning and preparation of worship: this is nurtured in Year 7 and continues throughout the years so that older students can confidently plan, prepare and lead worship in school as evidenced in the 6th Form reflection.

The Chapel, which is open at all times, is situated at the heart of the school and is available for class Masses and various prayer services which are held regularly but it is also a place for quiet reflection and prayer for staff and students. Staff meet in the Chapel for a reflection and prayer at the start of the briefing session.

The Chaplain makes an important contribution to the school and is supported in her work by staff and by priests from the local parishes. The school is very fortunate to have appointed a Deputy Head who is also a priest and who line manages the Chaplain. The Chaplain assists with the preparation of resources for Collective Worship for staff, all of whom fully support the prayer life of the school. Staff and pupils' planners also contain prayers. The school is aware that although the percentage of baptized Catholics is high, for many students school is their only experience of church. The school has a small number of Muslim students who attend acts of worship with their peers.

The school has a programme of retreats open to students in all years and students participate in the Diocesan Pilgrimage to Lourdes. Students are involved in the community and the parishes and their willingness to give public witness to their faith through events such as the live crib and the re-enactment of Christ's Passion which are performed in Dewsbury is impressive. Curricular and extra-curricular activities have a spiritual dimension as evidenced in the trip to New York which will include Mass at St Patrick's Cathedral.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

ACHIEVEMENT AND STANDARDS IN RE

How well do pupils achieve in RE?

The standards achieved by pupils in RE are good. For AS and A2 level Theology, development is needed in order to raise attainment and to improve the ALPS score for the department. Student achievement in RE at GCSE level is a strength. The GCSE results are above that of the other core subjects with a positive residual of 3.11. Boys and Girls achieved higher grades in RE than in other subjects. Significant groups are clearly catered for within lessons RE lessons and consequently achieve their predicted grades. At KS3 level, students follow the ICONS programme of study. Students are assessed regularly and are monitored carefully. Students at KS3 level make good progress. All lessons have clear objectives which are differentiated and the work is differentiated so that pupils reach their potential. Overall, pupils make good progress.

THE QUALITY OF PROVISION IN RE

How effective are Teaching and learning in RE?

The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that students are well-taught in RE is outstanding. St John Fisher benefits from a strong RE department where there is outstanding leadership from an enthusiastic and experienced Head of department, who has been instrumental in raising GCSE attainment in RE over the past four years. The RE department is currently one of the leading departments in the school. The RE department is a dedicated team who share a consistency of approach towards the delivery of their lessons. Lessons incorporate Assessment for Learning and PLTS. Students have a good working relationship with their teachers and engage appropriately in their learning.

How well does the RE curriculum meet the needs and interests of pupils?

The RE curriculum meets external requirements. KS3, the schemes of work and lesson plans adhere to the Catholic Curriculum Directory. World faiths are part of the KS3 and KS4 provision. The leveled assessments and approach to leveling at KS3 is purposeful and links directly in to KS4. Pupils are aware of their levels of attainment and what they need to do in order to reach or

exceed their target grades. 6th Form provision is delivered through the accredited NOCN course L2 and L3. Students have responded positively and successfully to this provision. PSHCE is delivered well by the RE staff, thus securing the Catholic perspective on the teaching of family life, sex education and education in personal relationships. Students engage with and contribute to PSHCE lessons in a mature and responsible manner. The extent to which the curriculum in RE contributes to the spiritual and moral development of pupils is outstanding as is the extent to which RE contributes to social cohesion

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF RE

How effective are Leadership and Management in raising achievement and supporting all pupils in RE?

The effectiveness of leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all students in RE is outstanding. The Head of RE has a clear vision of the direction and purpose of catholic education and the role of the RE faculty in the school. The Head of RE sets challenging targets for the RE staff and these are monitored and evaluated in line with the school's quality assurance system. The RE Faculty is committed to equality of opportunity and the RE curriculum is adapted to meet the needs of all pupils. The RE Faculty benefits from a suite of specialist teaching rooms with the school chapel adjacent to the department. The governors have ensured that RE has 10% teaching time and that the RE Faculty is well staffed and resourced. The Head of RE sets clear direction and provides support to her team leading to improvement. The work she has done and continues to do is having a significant impact on raising attainment and on the professional development of the RE team.

INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS ANNEX

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

How effective and efficient is the provision of Catholic education in meeting the needs of pupils and why?	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the effectiveness of steps taken to promote improvement since the last inspection 	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the capacity to make further improvements 	1

THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

How effective are leadership and management in developing the Catholic life of the school?	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> how well the governing body fulfils its role in relation to the school's Catholic foundation 	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> how effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality care and education 	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the quality of the leadership of the headteacher and senior staff in leading and developing the Catholic life of the school 	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> how effectively the Catholic life of the school is monitored and evaluated 	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> how effectively leadership at all levels in the school promotes pupils' spiritual and moral development 	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> how effectively leadership at all levels in the school promotes and provides opportunities for the spiritual development and prayer life of the staff 	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the impact of the involvement of the clergy and/or chaplaincy team on the work of the school 	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> how effectively leadership at all levels promotes the school's contribution to social cohesion 	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> how effectively leadership at all levels encourages the positive behaviour of pupils 	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the extent to which pupils' contribute to the school and broader community 	1

How good is the quality of Collective Worship?	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the frequency and quality of the provision for prayer, Collective Worship and liturgical life of the school 	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> pupils' response to the school's provision for prayer and worship 	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> how well Collective Worship contributes to the spiritual and moral development of the pupils 	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the inclusive nature of the provision for prayer, Collective Worship and liturgical life of the school 	1

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

How well do pupils achieve in RE?	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the standards reached by pupils in RE 	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> how well pupils make progress in RE, taking account of any significant variations between groups of pupils 	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> how well pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress in RE 	2

How effective are teaching and learning in RE?	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that pupils are well taught in RE 	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> how well teaching is used to meet the full range of pupils' needs in RE 	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the effectiveness of planning, monitoring and assessment in RE 	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the extent to which pupils enjoy their work in RE 	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the involvement of parents and carers in their children's learning in RE 	2

How well does the Religious Education curriculum meet the needs and interests of pupils?	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> how far the RE curriculum meets external requirements 	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the extent to which pupils are gaining a knowledge and developing an understanding of the teachings, beliefs, values and way of life of other world faiths 	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the suitability of family life and sex education, education in personal relationships and citizenship education 	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the extent to which the curriculum in RE contributes to the spiritual and moral development of the pupils 	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> how far the RE curriculum promotes social cohesion 	1

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all pupils in Religious Education?	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> how effectively subject leaders in RE set clear direction and provide support leading to improvement 	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> how effectively performance in RE is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets 	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> how well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all pupils achieve as well as they can in RE 	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> how effectively and efficiently RE resources are deployed 	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the extent to which governors discharge their responsibilities in RE 	1