

Email: <mailto:education@dioceseofsalford.org.uk>

INSPECTION REPORT

St. John Fisher R.C. Primary School,
Manor Road
Haughton Green
Denton

Inspection date 5th December 2013
 Reporting Inspectors Mr. A.J. Sowerby Lead Inspector
Mrs D. Kiernan Additional Inspector

Inspection carried out in accordance with Section 48 of the Education Act 2005

Type of School Roman Catholic Primary
 URN 106255
 Age range of pupils 3-11 years
 Number on roll 228
 Appropriate authority The Governing Body
 Chair of Governors Rhodelle Burke Percival
 Headteacher Mrs Helen Hayes
 Religious Education Co-ordinator Miss Charlotte Conlon
 Date of previous inspection May 2007

The Inspection judgements are:	Grade	Explanation of the Grades 1 = Outstanding 2 = Good 3=Requires Improvement 4 = Inadequate
Overall effectiveness of the school	2	
The quality of the Word of God community	2	
The quality of the Welcome community	1	
The quality of Welfare	1	
The quality of Worship	2	
The quality of Witness	2	

The following pages provide reasons to support these judgements

CHARACTERISTICS AND CONTEXT OF THE SCHOOL

St John Fisher Primary School is a smaller than average sized primary school with a nursery in Haughton Green, Manchester. The school provides specially resourced provision for up to 14 pupils most of whom are supported for autistic spectrum disorders. It is situated in an urban area of mainly social housing with some privately owned accommodation. There are currently 228 children on roll, including 26 in the nursery class. 175 pupils are baptised Catholics. The indicative admission number is 30. The pupils who are aged 3-11 years are arranged in single age classes.

Most pupils (88.5%) are from White British backgrounds, with a small number from 11.5% from minority ethnic backgrounds, which is largely in line with national average. There are currently 7 EAL children in school.

10.5% of children are entitled to Free School Meals average for the proportion nationally. The proportion of pupils who are disabled and those with special educational needs is below average where as those who are supported at School Action and with a Statement of Educational Need is above the national average. The needs of these learners range from moderate learning difficulties, to emotional and behavioural difficulties. Currently there are 13 children with a Statement of Special Educational Need who receive individual one to one support.

The school has gained the International School Award, Healthy Schools Status, Read, Write Inc Model School; Sainsbury's Silver Kitemark for School Games, Basic Skills award and is working towards the Investors in Pupils Award.

There are 10 members of the teaching staff of whom 9 are in mainstream and Catholic. All 9 in mainstream and the Headteacher hold the Catholic Teachers Certificate or its equivalent. Level of attendance is high at 96.5% in 2013 and has been consistent for many years. No pupils have been excluded in the last 5 years.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL

St John Fisher's is a good Catholic Primary school. There is a genuinely warm and caring welcome given to all and this extends to the Resource provision based upon the site. All children are offered a Catholic education in a friendly and supportive environment where differences are welcomed and celebrated. The word of God is central to the life of the school. There are good and emerging parish links. St. John Fisher's works collaboratively with the parish priest and the school is firmly at the heart of the parish. This ensures the pastoral and spiritual needs of the learners and their families are well met. The dedicated head teacher and her staff have high expectations of adults and children. Together with the hard working staff she has created an ethos where everyone recognises the need to work together as a "family", showing love and concern for all its members. The children enjoy coming to school and the school council expressed how very proud they are of all the opportunities given to them. Pupils are friendly, polite and welcoming and their behaviour at all times is exemplary. They work hard to achieve the high expectations of the adults who work with them. They enjoyed every opportunity to share with the inspectors their work. The staff and pupils demonstrate a very high level of respect, care and service to others. The quality of relationships is a notable strength of the school.

THE KEY STRENGTHS OF THE SCHOOL INCLUDE

- The quality of welcome
- The high standards of welfare provided to all at the school
- The outstanding relationships that are evident in school

THE QUALITY OF CATHOLIC LEADERSHIP is Good

There is good leadership at all levels of the school community which contributes significantly to the good provision for Catholic Education that the school currently provides. The hard working and dedicated head teacher provides strong and decisive leadership by clearly living her vision for Catholic Education. She is an excellent role model for the whole school community. She ensures that along with her senior staff that the development of the Catholic life of the school is at the forefront of the school's work. They are supported by a knowledgeable Governing Body, an enthusiastic R.E. Co-ordinator and a new parish priest who is a regular visitor to the school. They together with the other senior leadership of the school ensure that the teaching of R.E and the

development of the Catholic Life of the School have an extremely high priority in school. The school has a clear plan for developing R.E across the school and this is reflected in the priority it is given

Evidence for this can be found in the school's clear self-evaluation plan, which is based on the 5Ws model. The school is aware of its next steps and has clear plans for implementing them. As a result the inspectors can verify that this evaluation is both accurate and reflective.

THE QUALITY OF THE WORD OF GOD is good because:

- The Mission Statement is clearly displayed throughout the school. It is known, lived and witnessed to and is evident at every level of the school. A child friendly version is visible in every classroom and in other appropriate places around the school. The policies and procedures have a significant impact on learning and the life of the school.
- The Religious Education of the pupils is at the heart of the school curriculum. The staffing and resources devoted to RE are of a high standard, reflecting its significance and importance in the school.
- Teaching is consistently good across the school with some outstanding practice. Pupils are challenged to engage with the Big Questions of the purpose and meaning of life throughout the curriculum. This could be seen particularly in those lessons where children were challenged to implement the gospel message in their own lives. Examples of this were seen in reception where children asked to reflect upon the need to help others who are poor, in Year 2 where the children were asked to reflect upon whether gifts had to be paid for or not and in Year 6 where the children were asked to consider how they have a responsibility to care for God's world. A further example of how the staff linked teaching in other subjects to the R.E. curriculum was in a "Forest Schools" session where children reminded of the need to care for all of God's creation.
- Scripture is clearly known, understood and made relevant throughout the school. There is clear evidence of the Word of God informing teaching and learning across the curriculum. There is evidence on the displays in the classroom and halls of the importance of this.

The Inspectors cite the following evidence to confirm their judgement:

- The home, school and parish links are creative and effective. Pupils are actively trained in outreach to the local community. This can be seen in the number of charities that the school supports. These are not just the Catholic charities such as CAFOD and St Joseph's Penny but also the support the school gives to other local charities such as Cornerstones and the St Mary's Food Bank
- Overall the standards of attainment, progress and hence achievement are good. As the curriculum is based on the mission it is challenging, interesting and fulfilling. The children are developing the age appropriate knowledge and skills.
- The school has begun to incorporate "The Way, The Truth and the Life" scheme. This is well supplemented by other R.E. resources so that as a result standards of teaching are good. Experienced teachers act as mentors and good role models for new staff coming into school irrespective of their faith background.
- Work in R.E is clearly as good as work in other subjects due to the high priority given to it in school. This was seen by inspectors in during the scrutiny of both the R.E and Literacy books. Marking however was not as good in R.E as in literacy as it tended to focus too much on literacy skills rather than on the content of the R.E. work
- Standards in RE are good. The children are encouraged to take the initiative and lead their own learning thereby developing their independence. This is particularly evident in Year 2. The children use ICT confidently and other resources well and enjoy learning set prayers and special aspects of their faith.
- The school has worked collaboratively to gather evidence so that the school has a clear strategy that includes all members of the school community in implementing the 5Ws across the school.

THE QUALITY OF WELCOME is outstanding because:

- There is a culture of welcome and all the pupils and staff demonstrate a very high level of confidence and outreach to all within the school community. This is evident in the way that the school welcomes new children to the school especially those who attend the resourced provision attached to the school.
- Visitors are welcomed with love and respectful care. The importance of the dignity of the individual is clearly evident at all levels. Clear structures and procedures are followed by all staff and pupils who consistently witness to Christ being at the heart of the community through excellent communication, relationships and happy approach to daily life.
- All members of the school community demonstrate a very high level of belonging and ownership of the school. Pupils are given a high level of responsibility in creating and sustaining the schools sense of welcome. This could be seen in the way that the School Council spoke about their responsibilities in maintaining and improving the school's environment
- Parents are very welcome into school and are encouraged to engage in their child's learning. This could clearly be seen in the way that staff from the nursery and reception classes met parents at the start of the school day and discussed with them any concerns that they had. Evidence of this was witnessed at the start of the day in the way that all staff welcomed the children and parents and took the time to discuss their concerns with them. This enabled all members of the school community to feel valued.

The inspectors cite the following evidence to confirm their judgement::

- New families are welcomed into the school with warmth by the opportunities which are created to visit the school and meet the whole team. Parents voiced to the inspectors how wonderful and special this made them feel. "The Head Teacher and staff are always available at the start of the day to discuss any concerns I may have"
- Parents are kept informed and up to date about the curriculum and events in school through the use of the school newsletter and school website. The school also ensures that the voice of the children is heard and respected. The School Council were keen to express their opinion about the changes they had brought about in school such as the provision of improved play facilities.
- All children irrespective of their faith are made to feel welcome and respected and as a result play a full role in the life of the school. As a result of the strong Catholic ethos all children are taught to respect each other so that everyone at the school feels part of the St. John Fisher family.
- Those who attend the resourced provision at the school are well cared for and made to feel an integral part of the St John Fisher family.
- Members of the Governing Body and the newly appointed parish priest expressed clearly how welcome they felt in school and that they believed it was a happy school where children thrived.

THE QUALITY OF WELFARE is outstanding because:

- The staff and pupils demonstrate a very high level of respect, care and service to others. This was witnessed in all classes where children feel confident and secure enough to tend to their personal needs without interrupting the learning or having their dignity abused. Further evidence of this was witnessed at the start of the day when a child with special educational needs who arrived at school in a distressed state was shown real understanding and sympathy.
- The structures and procedures ensure that all pupils and staff feel safe and are treated with respect and dignity. The Christ-centred ethos is loving, creative, highly positive and fosters understanding, empathy and forgiveness.
- All pupils and staff feel safe and free to express their opinions and know that these will be valued. Importance and recognition is given equally to all.
- The budget, staffing and resourcing decisions demonstrate a consistent commitment to Catholic stewardship throughout the school.
- The parents and friends play a highly significant part in school life and their contributions are valued throughout the school.

- **The Inspectors cite the following evidence to confirm their judgement:**
- The physical, spiritual and mental well-being of each person is central to the school's mission. The school council discussed with the inspectors the need to reach out with kindness to others for example those less fortunate in the world. Children are caring and have a true sense of right and wrong.
- The school is a very caring community where everyone is valued! Children during lessons listened respectfully to other pupils' ideas. Play partners and buddies look after and care for younger children.
- Calm support is offered by sensitive adults when children have difficulty remaining on task. Such role models ensure learning and loving friendships develop.
- Maturity and self-responsibility are strongly encouraged. This is evident in the work of the School Council and appointment of a Head Boy and Head Girl. Those appointed explained how this made them feel valued and provided them with additional responsibility.
- The school stresses the importance of reaching out beyond its own community so that children feel part of God's world. The charity work is a living example of this as children support CAFOD, St Joseph's Penny and many local ones such as Cornerstones and St Mary's Food Bank
- The children of the school council confirmed they feel very safe! The school goes to great lengths to ensure as far as possible children are free from worry and a happy, calm atmosphere is the norm. The school provides a variety of activities in order to ensure that this occurs. The mission is continued after school with a host of excellent clubs that are extremely varied hence meeting the needs and interests of all the children.

THE QUALITY OF WORSHIP is good because:

- The school provides a variety of worship opportunities for pupils throughout the school (prayer, reflection, liturgies) including small and large groups – which are appropriate to their backgrounds and faith experiences.
- The development of opportunities for pupils to worship according to their intellectual and life experience needs and stages of faith development is clearly evident.
- Worshipping opportunities promote a strong community sense of service for each other.
- Inclusive worship helps pupils to grow in confidence in prayer and develop a relationship with God. This could be seen in the Foundation Stage morning liturgy, where all the children and a large number of parents were engaged in the prayer service and were provided with the opportunity to reflect quietly upon the meaning of the gospel message.
- Further evidence was provided in a Year 4 prayer service where the children were provided with the opportunity to reflect through the use of drama the meaning of the term trust and how they can trust in God in their life.
- Most staff are well trained and supported in the formation and education of the prayer life of the school.

The inspector cites the following evidence to confirm his judgement:

- The school shares the celebration of mass with the parish. Key events are celebrated with special masses: at the beginning of each school year, the parish and school feast day, Holy Days and at the end of the year.
- There are strong links between the parish and the school particular with regard to the preparation of the children for the Sacraments of Initiation. Here the use of "Faith Friends" to support the children helps to develop these links. The newly appointed parish priest has begun to further enhance the good relationship that exists between the school and parish.
- The use of Pupil Chaplains has further enhanced the prayer life of the school as they now plan and lead voluntarily prayer services on a weekly basis. These provide children with the opportunity to pray for their own special needs as well as reflect on the gospel message connected to the Liturgical Year.
- During Advent, Lent and the Easter season the school holds assemblies, liturgies and times of reflection/ reconciliation that are all shared by the whole school community. The children are encouraged to voluntarily say the rosary during the month of October and the Stations of the Cross during Lent.

- There is a daily act of collective worship. These take place in a variety of formats. Children pray in classes, small groups and individually with great reverence, respect and thought. Those children who are not Catholic either join in or show great reverence to the worship taking place.
- Pupils are comfortable with their feelings and have a good and knowledgeable vocabulary. Each class has a special area of focus. The children know many school prayers and compose powerful prayers for themselves. In many classes there were examples of displays of the children's own prayers.
- Attractive displays which were seen around school are used to show and stimulate prayer opportunities.
- The Gospel values are clearly evidenced throughout all the policies and procedures and have a significant impact on learning and the life of the school.

THE QUALITY OF WITNESS is good because:

- All staff act as excellent role models for the children and help them in recognising that God is with them in every aspect of school life.
- Adults and pupils witness to the Mission Statement of the school, which informs everything and is explicit in policies and the lived experience of the whole community.
- The staff and pupils feel confident and secure in their witness to Christ, the Gospel and the teachings of the Church.
- Pupils are confident in witnessing to the beliefs and values of a Christian community and are actively encouraged and supported in being pro-active citizens who participate in the decision-making processes at a local and national level. This is seen in the way the school promotes support for various charities so as to promote support for the Common Good.
- Members of the Governing Body also witness to their faith through attendance at the various acts of worship provided by the school.

The Inspectors cite the following evidence to confirm their judgement:

- The school mission is known and understood by all at appropriate levels. It is in 'child and adult speak', but is powerful in its ambition. It is discussed and shared in assemblies, in class and in RE lessons. The statement can be seen displayed in school.
- Relationships are outstanding at St John Fisher's and a strong sense of teamwork and belonging exist. The school and parish were described by parents as "a big family", where relationships are built on love and trust.
- Children showed a clear understanding of the beauty and mystery of God's world.
- The children have a highly defined sense of fairness and justice. They know their responsibilities in terms of equal opportunities, stewardship and reconciliation.
- The inspectors noted at all times behaviour was outstanding. Children are respectful of each other. Adults working as a committed team have high expectations of the children and in this atmosphere the children thrive.

AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT:

- 1. To ensure that marking in R.E. is more focussed on the content of the subject rather than on simply literacy and language skills**
- 2. To further develop and embed assessment in R.E. across the school**

10th December 2013

Dear Pupils

Thank you for making our visit to St John Fisher's so enjoyable when we came to inspect your school for the Bishop. We really enjoyed being with you. Thank you for looking after us so well and helping us to feel very welcome. St John Fisher's is a good school.

We enjoyed being part of your lessons and were sorry not to see everyone. Thank you for showing us so much of your work and activities. We could see that you are very proud of your school and all that you have achieved together. We were particularly impressed that you thought that the most important part of your learning and life together was that you '*felt connected to one another as all part of God's family*'. We know the Bishop will be delighted to hear this.

Your teachers are really helping you to learn very well and we were very impressed by your excellent relationships and behaviour. It was good to see so much of your Mission Statement coming through everything you are learning; your relationships and the special way you make everyone feel valued. It is wonderful to see a school made up of pupils and adults who get on so well together so that everyone is cared for as a member of God's family. This is a true reflection of being part of a Catholic community where everyone is welcome and has a place.

You have started using your new RE programme and are doing well. You are a very creative school and we were most impressed by the way you work together so co-operatively in your lessons. The prayer services we saw were very good and uplifting experiences. Your teachers have started to develop an excellent way of assessing your knowledge of R.E. and we have asked them to continue to develop this with you. We have especially asked them to develop the way that they mark your work in R.E. so as to help you understand more about your faith and relationship with God.

God bless you all and have a really happy Christmas holiday.

Yours sincerely,

Mr A.J Sowerby
Mrs D Kiernan
(Section 48 Inspectors)

Summary Report to Parents

On 5th December 2013 the school was inspected in accordance with Section 48 of the Education Act 2005. The full report has been made available to the school and can also be accessed via both the school website and the Education section on the website of the Diocese of Salford.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL

St John Fisher's is a good Catholic Primary school. There is a genuinely warm and caring welcome given to all and this extends to the Resource provision based upon the site. All children are offered a Catholic education in a friendly and supportive environment where differences are welcomed and celebrated. The word of God is central to the life of the school. There are good and emerging parish links. St. John Fisher's works collaboratively with the parish priest and the school is firmly at the heart of the parish. This ensures the pastoral and spiritual needs of the learners and their families are well met. The dedicated head teacher and her staff have high expectations of adults and children. Together with the hard working staff she has created an ethos where everyone recognises the need to work together as a "family", showing love and concern for all its members. The children enjoy coming to school and the school council expressed how very proud they are of all the opportunities given to them. Pupils are friendly, polite and welcoming and their behaviour at all times is exemplary. They work hard to achieve the high expectations of the adults who work with them. They enjoyed every opportunity to share with the inspectors their work. The staff and pupils demonstrate a very high level of respect, care and service to others. The quality of relationships is a notable strength of the school.

THE KEY STRENGTHS OF THE SCHOOL INCLUDE

- The quality of welcome
- The high standards of welfare provided to all at the school
- The outstanding relationships that are evident in school

AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT:

1. To ensure that marking in R.E. is more focussed on the content of the subject rather than on simply literacy and language skills
2. To further develop and embed assessment in R.E. across the school