



St John Fisher Catholic Primary School

URN: 111392

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Archbishop of Liverpool

20 May 2026 – 21 May 2026

Summary of key findings

Overall effectiveness

The overall quality of Catholic education provided by the school

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

Religious education (p.5)

The quality of curriculum religious education RE

Collective worship (p.7)

The quality and range of liturgy and prayer provided by the school

The school is fully compliant with the general norms for religious education laid down by the Bishops' Conference

The school is fully compliant with any additional requirements of the diocesan bishop

The school has responded to the areas for improvement from the last inspection

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Yes

Yes

Fully

What the school does well

- Spaces offered for spontaneous prayer around the school grounds are beautiful and need to be celebrated. They enable pupils to be closer to God when they feel comfortable to do so.
- Pastoral support for the wider community is a strength of the school. Staff go above and beyond the call of service, which is greatly valued and appreciated.
- Work produced in books is of an exceptional standard and should be celebrated and held as a beacon for other schools.
- Pupils fully understand and embrace their call to providing for others both locally and globally through working alongside a wide range of charities and projects. This reflects their aspirations for making a difference to the lives of others.
- Leaders are inspiring to other staff within the school. Their commitment to ensuring the distinctive Catholic nature of the school is intertwined into every aspect of school life is to be admired. They offer advice and support to all. Their warming nature is fully appreciated by staff, parents and pupils.

What the school needs to improve

- In religious education, provide deeper and more challenging questions that enable pupils to expand their knowledge and understanding of concepts taught.
- Complete a thorough analysis of assessments ensuring they support vulnerable pupils in making greater progress in religious education.

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

Pupil outcomes

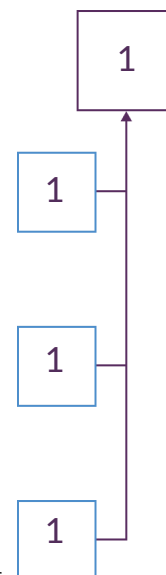
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

Provision

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

Leadership

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



Catholic life and mission is strong. Pupils are proud of their responsibilities in caring for the local and global community. "They know they make a big difference in the world," and clearly articulate how this is done. Through their regular visits to the local care home, pupils show respect for others and their dignity. One pupil stated, "Our visits are fun and bring happiness to the people we meet". Pupils value the opportunity to make a difference to other people's lives through the charities and social projects they support. These include Mary's Meals, Angel Starfish (a project in South Africa) and Cafod. Catholic social teaching is at the heart of the school's chaplaincy. Pupils are enabled to be proactive in finding ways of responding to the greater good through their many leadership roles. Mini Vinnies follow in the footsteps of Jesus, looking after God's creation in many ways including litter picking, growing vegetables in the allotment and making Bags of Hope for the Salvation Army. Throughout the school, pupils are able to show respect for others and their faith. They benefit spiritually, socially and morally, and develop a strong sense of justice, awareness of environmental stewardship, and commitment to serving others.

The school has worked hard in the relaunching of its new mission statement, which reflects its distinctive Catholic nature as "one big family". Staff go above and beyond what is required of them in showing care and compassion for all pupils and their families. The school has a warm welcoming feel and visitors feel this as soon as they enter. Staff are exemplary role models for their pupils by showing them how to nurture relationships. Newer members of staff

commented on how they felt welcomed and supported in the school family and were enjoying “passing the mission” down to the children. Pastoral care is second to none. Parents feel that the school “really looks after their families” when there is a great need, even outside of school hours. The school environment is beautiful and motivates pupils to reflect spiritually and feel closer to God. There is a sense of awe and wonder within the readily accessible prayer spaces inside and out, which pupils take great pride in. The school is compliant in its provision for relationships and sex education. Work with parents has been innovative through the school's invitations to informative workshops. Parents have found these useful, reassuring and insightful.

Leaders and the local church work in a close, flourishing partnership to ensure the mission of the Church is lived out. The parish priest is a regular visitor, offering his service and advice in many ways. His presence and knowledge in supporting staff to deepen their knowledge and understanding is highly valued and respected. This helps to enrich the spiritual journey of the community. Christ is at the centre of all leadership decisions based around policy and practice. Leaders regard “guardianship of the school” as their paramount priority. They want nothing but the best for the children in their care. They work alongside parents ensuring they are fully involved and included in celebrations, invitations to Masses and stay and pray sessions. Leaders have inspired others within the school to provide regular service and support to local charities including Widnes Food Bank and the Salvation Army. Staff have stated that they feel well supported by the valued high levels of pastoral care afforded to them by senior leadership. Pupils know their voices and opinions are heard and valued by leaders in shaping their work on the mission of the school. They are encouraged to have their say within the monitoring process.

Religious education

How faithfully the school responds to the call to live as a Catholic community at the service of the Church's educational mission.

Religious education key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

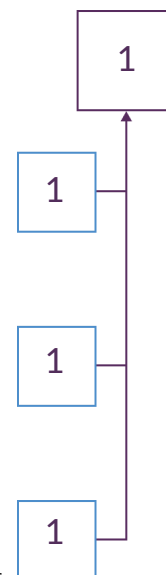
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

Provision

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

Leadership

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



Pupils clearly articulate their knowledge and understanding of scripture in a variety of forms. They are able to translate the messages from each piece of scripture into everyday life for themselves and others. When needed, their teachers help them to explain and evaluate the passages read. Vocabulary is a focus during lessons, concentrating specifically on driver words for the theme or branch. This feeds into the pupils' knowledge and is expressed proudly in their written work. This is of an exceptional standard and should be celebrated and held as a beacon for others to see. Pupils want to show their teachers and visitors their best in every piece of work. The variety of activities and opportunities for pupils to respond is vast and highly creative. This includes appraisal of artwork, photographs, forest school and the creation of cards for others. Behaviour and engagement within lessons is exemplary because pupils clearly enjoy their lessons. During inspection this was evident through the responses during lesson observations. Pupils were able to offer reflections and answers that showed a deep awareness of their learning. They listened to their teachers' comments and were able to think about how these comments could make their work better.

Staff use effective strategies to support the revisiting of previously taught concepts to check for learning and aid in deepening pupils' progress. Teachers have a secure subject knowledge of the themes being taught, which are age appropriate. They demonstrate this through their modelling and use of specific vocabulary. Expectations are high, enabling pupils to achieve well in their written tasks. Feedback was given to pupils frequently during lessons observed,

enabling them to make progress. In Early Years and Key Stage 1, it was noted how well staff got down to the pupils level to ensure they were fully engaged and learning. Pupils were questioned by staff carefully and thoughtfully. In many observations pupils spoke with their partner or wider group, recording their responses to questions asked. Opportunities for reflection on questions asked were built into lessons and gave pupils space and time for thinking either on their own or as part of a group. These were then discussed further. Learning in the school takes a variety of forms including indoor and outdoor learning areas and spaces. There are highly valued and well maintained resources used by all year groups, which help pupils to understand how to care for God's world.

The religious education subject leaders are an inspiring model for teachers within the school. With the support of governors and other school leaders, they ensure that the teaching of religious education is a faithful expression of the *Religious Education Directory* and *Come and See* programme. The headteacher and subject leaders prioritise religious education and ensure its core parity through careful checking which includes monitoring, assessments and moderation. This core parity is exemplified in the expectation that standards in religious education are at least in line, if not higher, than in English and other subjects. Religious education themes are creatively embedded throughout all subjects in the curriculum, ensuring pupils are exposed and inspired to respond through a Catholic lens in all of their teaching and learning experiences. Professional development is of the highest standard and utilises support and training internally and externally, for staff including teaching assistants. The school is an active member of its local diocesan cluster, regularly attending planned opportunities for development with other schools. Continued professional development days are carefully and thoughtfully planned across the year, so that all staff are able to engage and attend. This enables the sharing of good and best practice throughout the school.

Collective worship

The quality and range of liturgy and prayer provided by the school.

Collective worship key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

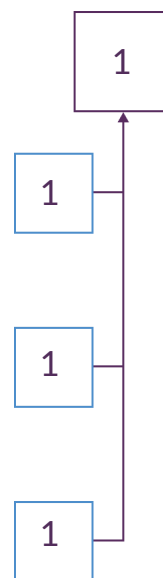
How well pupils participate in and respond to the school's collective worship

Provision

The quality of collective worship provided by the school

Leadership

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for collective worship



Prayer and liturgy is central to school life. Pupils were deeply engaged during the opportunities afforded to them during observations of celebrations of the word. They actively participate and lead many elements of worship, showing a deep respect for God and others around them including the completion of readings and writing of personal prayers. Pupils shared their understanding of a variety of prayer methods including the use of music and symbols. During worship pupils are extremely reverent and from a young age, able to offer appropriate responses to communal prayers and prayerful silence when appropriate. With their teachers' help and guidance pupils are able to plan and prepare examples of prayer and liturgy for others. Symbols of the Church are brought in procession to a focus table with care and respect, therefore clearly showing that pupils understand how relevant this is when starting prayer and worship. Pupils say that prayer and liturgy is a "calm time, which gives them time to stop and think, reflecting on things and drawing a line under their worries". They know that God has called them to complete a special task and how important their role is in carrying this out for others and themselves.

Prayer is part of the daily rhythm that upholds Catholic life at St John Fisher. Pupils use the beautiful spaces within the school grounds for spontaneous prayer freely and regularly. Pupils stated, "They know God is listening" when they are praying. Scripture is carefully chosen and adapted to each stage of development so that it is meaningful. It is often based around a theme related to the liturgical year so pupils make links to their everyday lives. Members of

Mini Vinnies spoke confidently about this and how different coloured cloths are used to represent key liturgical times of the Church year. This is central to school life and expressed in a variety of forms including music, reflection and the celebration of sacraments. Examples of hymns and music are widely used to enable pupils to join in enthusiastically, creating a joyful atmosphere. Staff are committed, skilful and confident because of the support and training they receive from within school and the parish priest. Families are frequently invited to join in prayer and celebration, and this is appreciated. Opportunities to pray outside of school are also given in the form of retreats for the pupils and the sharing of the travelling nativity.

Leaders at all levels are committed to ensuring that prayer and liturgy is central to the Catholic life of St John Fisher. Policy and practice is regularly monitored and includes input from the staff community. Leaders are clear about how pupils should confidently participate in leading worship and have a plan in place for how this is developed as pupils progress throughout the school. Leaders, including governors, have carefully planned for celebrations of the sacraments to include school and parish. Mass is frequently celebrated in the local church with the parish priest, and families are invited to receive the Eucharist. Leaders ensure that pupils participate in the celebration of Mass, especially at key moments in the Church's year including holy days and during the seasons of Advent and Lent. Staff have positively commented on the continued professional development for prayer and Liturgy provided by the parish priest. As a result this has strengthened the quality of their delivery. Leaders have made a commitment to investing in quality resources to enable staff to lead reflective and meaningful worship. Leaders are able to lead by example in the delivery of prayer and liturgy, therefore sharing their wealth of experience with the staff.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St John Fisher Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	111392
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	8763650
Full postal address of the school	Edward Street, WIDNES, WA8 0BW
School phone number	0151 424 7794
Headteacher or Head of School	Mrs Nicola Dickinson
Chair of Governors	Mrs Felicity Cunliffe
School Website	www.st-johnfisherprimary.co.uk
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Phase	Primary
Type of school	Voluntary Aided School
Admissions policy	
Age-range of pupils	4 - 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	01 May 2019
Previous denominational inspection grade	Outstanding

The Inspection Team

Sarah-Jane Carroll-Mckevitt

Lead

Alyson Rigby

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