

Ss John Fisher and Thomas More Catholic Primary School

URN: 139467

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Bishop of Shrewsbury

09–10 July 2025

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

2

Religious education (p.5)

The quality of curriculum religious education

1

Collective worship (p.7)

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

2

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

Yes

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

Yes

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

Fully

2

Compliance statement

- The school meets the requirement as laid down by the Bishops' Conference in that it devotes at least 10% of the taught timetable to the teaching of religious education.
- The school is fully compliant with the additional requirements of the diocesan bishop in that its admissions policy is in line with the diocesan policy, its schemes for religious education and relationships, sex and health education are the required schemes, and personal, social, health and economic education is delivered through a Catholic lens.
- The school has fully addressed all areas for improvement from the previous inspection.

What the school does well

- The inspirational subject leader is passionate, driven and committed to ensuring that provision is always of the highest quality and staff are fully supported in teaching religious education.
- Outcomes for pupils in religious education are outstanding with pupils achieving higher standards in their religious education work when compared to other core subjects.
- The quality of relationships is a significant strength of the school; pupils know they are unique, loved and created in God's image and as a result they flourish.
- Very committed staff share their artistic and musical gifts to enrich provision within prayer and liturgy and pupils sing with great joy and enthusiasm.
- Ss John Fisher and Thomas More is a fully inclusive school, welcoming everyone irrespective of difference or need, ensuring the strong pastoral care procedures support all, especially the most vulnerable.

What the school needs to improve

- Review provision for prayer and liturgy to ensure it is always age appropriate with clear expectations for each year group and increase opportunities for pupils to become more fully involved in planning and leading times of prayer and liturgy.
- Ensure that leaders' and governors' monitoring of Catholic life and mission, and prayer and liturgy, is rigorous enough to result in strategic actions which improve outcomes and provision.
- Revisit the mission statement and provide opportunities for all to be able to understand and articulate clearly what the Catholic life and mission of the school is.

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

2

Provision

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

2

Leadership

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

2

2

Ss John Fisher and Thomas More Catholic Primary School is a good school, loved and valued by its very diverse community. Pupils know that they are loved and cared for and recognised as being unique and precious members of God's family and, as a result, they thrive. Gospel values inform the daily lives of the school community, with one pupil explaining, 'We forgive those who hurt us – Jesus demonstrated this when he forgave Peter who denied him three times....and then he made him pope.' Pupils understand how distinctive their school is as a Catholic community and the school's mission statement: 'Journeying together with Jesus Christ we learn to love and love to learn' has a visible impact on everyday life. Pupils have a growing understanding of Catholic social teaching and recognise that by raising funds for charity, or donating food at harvest time, they are, 'helping others and spreading belief.' They are, however, not always able to articulate this confidently. Pupils show respect for all members of the community and clearly understand the importance of valuing differences. Older pupils enjoy taking responsibility as prayer leaders, house captains and vice captains and being members of the Mini Vinnies and they would relish the chance to be further involved in leading and shaping the Catholic life and mission of the school.

Staff are supportive of the Catholic life and mission of their school, and they, in turn, are supported by it. The mission statement is known and valued, and one member of staff explains, 'We use the mission statement during restorative conversations in the classroom.' Christ is at the heart of this loving and inclusive community, where everyone is joyfully welcomed to the mutual benefit of all. A parent comments, 'I think it is good that we can all learn to live in harmony and respect one another no matter our beliefs.' Staff are very proud of their work and the impact it has on the community, with one member of staff commenting, 'We work tremendously hard to

cultivate a sense of love in each other and in the children. This love is a representation of God within the school.' Staff are good role models of gospel values, and they demonstrate this when sensitively intervening to support pupils at times of crisis. Some opportunities for the spiritual and moral development of pupils are provided but these need to be extended to enhance chaplaincy provision. The school's well planned pastoral care provision, including the use of the well-resourced nurture room and specialist staff, ensures the needs of the most vulnerable are met. The school environment, with many carefully arranged prayer focal areas, supports the Catholic life and mission of the school and pupils' understanding of the Church's liturgical year. The school's bespoke relationship and health education programme is fully embedded and complies with all diocesan requirements.

The senior leadership team, supported by experienced governors, are committed to the development of the Catholic life of the school and they are very good role models, ensuring that Christ is always at the heart of school life. They have ensured that full parity is given to all aspects of religious education and are very supportive of all parish and diocesan initiatives. Governors support staff's professional development and their well-being, and they have had some involvement in the self-evaluation of the Catholic life and mission of the school. Partnership with the parish is becoming stronger and the school benefits from regular visits by the clergy to celebrate Mass in school. Monitoring and evaluation processes at all levels are not sufficiently strategic and so they have limited impact on outcomes.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

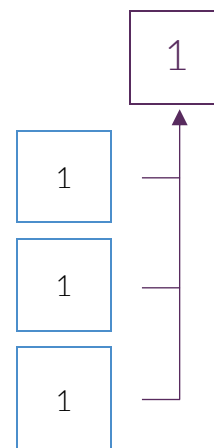
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

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' knowledge and understanding is excellent and fully supported by the embedded recap and recall practices at the beginning of lessons. This ensures that pupils remember what they learn and as a result make at least good and often outstanding progress. Attainment is high because of the secure subject knowledge of teachers and pupils achieve higher standards in their religious education work than they do in other core subjects. Pupils of all abilities are supported effectively to ensure they can access the curriculum and make appropriate progress. Pupils are becoming more religiously literate, and can respond confidently to teachers' questions. For example, children in Early Years say 'We are full of happiness' is the meaning of 'Alleluia'. Older pupils asked about the most important commandment speak with their 'talking partners' with great animation and confidence. Pupils love their religious education lessons and enjoy challenging work, including the opportunity to reflect on topics such as the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit, using appropriate vocabulary in their responses. They work independently, concentrate well in their lessons and the content of their work is usually of a very good standard. Pupils are developing a good understanding of what they can do but they do not always know what their next steps are in improving their work.

As a result of an inspiring and passionate subject leader, teachers demonstrate a very high level of confidence in their subject knowledge, and this is communicated well to pupils. Thorough planning of the curriculum within teams ensures there is consistency of content being taught across the classes in this two-form entry school, and appropriate priority is given to ways of developing pupils' abilities to understand, discern and respond. Effective use is made of time to promote learning and as a result lessons are pacy, appropriately sequenced and very enjoyable. A parent explains, 'My child thoroughly enjoys religious education at school and is often sharing his findings and learnings at home with the family.' Relationships between pupils and their

teachers are a real strength of the school and pupils love and trust their teachers, with one pupil commenting, 'Teachers are funny and fair, we are all winners!' Teachers intervene appropriately to support learning and regularly do 'check ins' to ensure pupils fully understand what they have learnt. They have high expectations and pupils understand this and are keen to do well. Lessons are creative and engaging using drama, art, music and good quality resources, including beautiful Bibles, to enrich provision.

Leaders and governors ensure provision for religious education fully reflects the requirements of the *Religious Education Directory*, that religious education has full parity with other core curriculum subjects and resources are prioritised appropriately. Leaders have worked hard to make connections between religious education and other curriculum subjects, ensuring that religious education is relevant to all pupils. The subject leader for religious education, supported by a very committed senior leadership team, shows outstanding leadership. She is accurate in her evaluation of the school's provision and is secure in her understanding of how to develop the subject further. She has been well supported by the Trust and the school's leaders and governors in developing her skills and she has shared her expertise across the Trust supporting many colleagues. Leaders and governors work very effectively with schools in the Trust to the benefit of all. As a result of a wide range of monitoring practices and accurate self-evaluation, all leaders and governors are very focused in their action planning and have a clear vision for the school's continuing development.

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

2

Provision

The quality of collective worship provided by the school

2

Leadership

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

2

2

Pupils at Ss John Fisher and Thomas More enjoy the opportunities that school provides for them to pray together. They can engage thoughtfully in times of prayerful reflection, when provision is age-appropriate, as demonstrated in the gospel assembly where they prayed in a variety of ways, singing the hymn 'Here in this place' beautifully and singing spontaneously to familiar music being played by the very talented staff. Pupils show reverence and are always respectful during times of prayer. They understand the significance of lighting a candle and other traditions that support them in times of quiet reflection. Pupils have opportunities to think deeply about scripture and understand the different forms of prayer such as the rosary and praying a litany. They recognise the importance of proclaiming the gospel, for example children in Early Years understand that they should stand to greet the gospel. Through regular participation in Mass and other liturgies they can relate their times of prayer to their growing knowledge and understanding of the Church's liturgical year. Pupils have some experience of planning and leading prayer, but it is currently limited.

Prayer and liturgy are central to everyday life at Ss John Fisher and Thomas More. Pupils pray every day, and prayer leaders say they enjoy, 'Leading by example and reading at Mass.' Staff and pupils have a range of opportunities to gather in prayer, and parents appreciate the ever-growing support of the parish clergy in the prayer life of the school. One parent comments, 'The school often invites the local parish priest to celebrate Mass with the children, and I think that really showcases the Catholic life and mission of the school.' Pupils enjoy taking prayer bags home to share with their family and this offers opportunities for parents to be more involved in the prayer life of the school. Senior leaders are confident in preparing and leading age-appropriate prayer and liturgy and are good role models to all but other staff are less confident in planning prayer and liturgy independently and so provision is not consistent. Focal points

within classrooms reflect the liturgical year and are generally well resourced and sometimes include pupils' work. There are some prayer spaces within school, but pupils would like to have more, with one pupil saying, 'It would be good to have a prayer area so that we could think about God.' School works hard to encourage families to participate more actively in the wider prayer life of the school but recognises the need to be more creative in its approach to ensure engagement by the school's very diverse community.

The school's Trust created prayer and liturgy policy, and other associated Trust documents, are fit for purpose but are not yet personalised to reflect school practice and make clear who is responsible for prayer and liturgy. Governors are kept well informed of school developments through termly head teacher reports and reports from the regular meetings held between the link governor and subject leader. Leaders and governors have created an annual plan of provision for prayer and liturgy, ensuring that time is set aside for the celebration of the Eucharist, the Sacrament of Reconciliation, and other significant opportunities to celebrate together as a joyful faith community. Leaders and governors recognise the importance of providing good quality resources to enrich prayer provision and they ensure staff can avail of continuing professional development opportunities. The school's strategic planning has not focused sufficiently on the progression of skills in prayer and liturgy, and this has impacted on outcomes and provision.

Information about the school

Full name of school	Ss John Fisher and Thomas More Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	139467
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	3523448
Full postal address of the school	Ss John Fisher and Thomas More Catholic Primary School, Woodhouse Lane, Benchill, Manchester, M22 9NW
School phone number	01619983422
Headteacher	John Marciniak
Chair of governors	Ann Kowalska
School Website	www.fishermoreprimary.net
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	Corpus Christi Catholic Academy Trust
Phase	Primary
Type of school	Academy
Admissions policy	Non-selective
Age-range of pupils	2-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	21/06/2018
Previous denominational inspection grade	2

The inspection team

Roisin Moores
Siobhan Capey

Lead
Team

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

