



The John Fisher Catholic Secondary School

URN: 103009

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Archbishop of Southwark

02–03 October 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

Religious education (p.5)

The quality of curriculum religious education

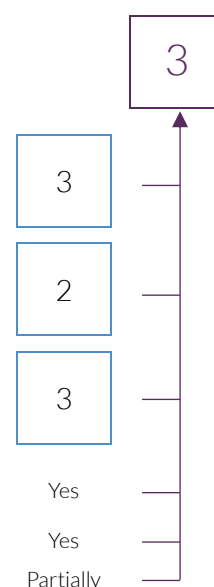
Collective worship (p.7)

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



Compliance statement

- The school is compliant with the general norms for religious education laid down by the Bishop's conference in its timetabled provision of religious education
- The school is compliant with any additional requirements of the diocesan Bishop.
- The school has acted upon previous areas for improving ensuring compliancy with timetabled provision, consistency of delivery of lessons and use of prior learning in planning.

What the school does well

- Strong strategic direction and guidance in all aspects of Catholic life, learning, prayer and liturgy at governor level.
- Opportunities for the whole community to come together in prayer and liturgy.
- Consistency of delivery of religious education lessons.

What the school needs to improve

- Develop systems of implementation beyond initial training for staff, and monitoring to ensure clarity of understanding of Catholic social teaching principles throughout the school.
- Create monitoring systems at departmental level which support sustainability of the recent rapid progress in teaching and learning.
- Build on the newly implemented prayer opportunities to provide variety and consistency of daily prayer and reflection, built on student leadership and collaboration.

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

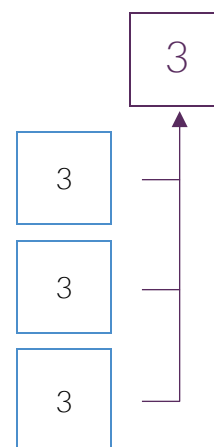
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

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



Students at The John Fisher school are happy, confident and feel secure, speaking eloquently about how and why they value the school, expressing a will to be part of the traditions of the school. Whilst students value the purpose of chaplaincy and acting as servants of God, this is not translated into high levels of participation nor collaboration in planning and leadership. Students are not able to articulate the school mission and the purpose, however, they utilise those opportunities given to them, to link morals and virtues to actions. Students are unclear about Catholic social teaching principles, and there is confusion over 'Aspire' values and whole school virtues, despite this, students do understand why these are important. Students expressed a sense of belonging within the house system and talked about their house saint and hymns providing unity and a sense of family, saying that they were encouraged to treat everyone as family. For example, a student said, 'We take our Catholic values with us beyond school.' A student when asked about impact gave the reply, 'the impact is everywhere, how I behave and relate to people outside school and in the future. Where students are offered opportunities to support others, they do so willingly, raising money for charities through events such as cake sales.

The mission statement is not well known and understood in its current form beyond the formation of good Catholic gentleman who display strong values and virtues preparing them for life. The extent to which scripture informs and shapes the school life is inconsistent and under developed. Where this is used, such as the use of the message of St Paul to act with love, students feel a sense of encouragement to act as servants for others. All years would benefit from building on this good practice which is consistent in the sixth form. Staff and students state there is a clear sense of community. They value the support and family coherence provided to them, including opportunities for private space and reflection, supporting personal wellbeing as well as spirituality and faith. The visual impact of this being a Catholic school is inconsistent, ranging from a beautiful chapel, a central

remembrance cross through to areas lacking any symbols or images to denote a Catholic school. Chaplaincy provision is growing and is currently in its infancy. The school has dedicated funding to a school chaplain since September 2024, moving chaplaincy forward. Relationship, sex and health education reflects the statutory and diocesan requirement.

Leadership of Catholic life and mission of the school is in its early stages. There is a strong governing body who have implemented whole school strategic policy and process changes, which has laid the foundation for the school to move quickly towards its vision of regaining a strong Catholic purpose. For example, the new behaviour policy is based on consistent actions, reconciliation and fair application. There is limited monitoring at senior leadership level on aspects of Catholic life and mission and the school would benefit from engaging all members of the school community in self-evaluation and review of provision and opportunities to be servants of the school. Leaders scheduled training on Catholic social teaching principles last academic year, however this is still not a common language with pupils or staff. Staff expressed a need for more regular formation opportunities to support them in their role of embedding these principles more deeply. Where leaders and governors have taken strong strategic actions to embed key principles, rapid progress has been made to assist in the ethical, moral and faith formation of members of the community. The school would now benefit from robust review and support of provision through a mission statement, that is owned and understood by the community.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

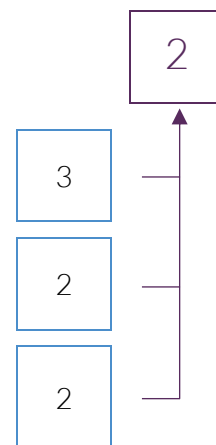
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

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



Summative data for religious education, whilst at or above local and national data, has been inconsistent over recent years. This is supported by internal data with religious education performing at least one grade less in comparison to other subjects. In the majority of their learning students enjoy their lessons and find the newly implemented curriculum informative and engaging. Students have recognised a clear change in their religious education lessons this academic year, saying lessons have been made interesting, fun and applicable to their own lives. A student commented that their lessons, 'help(s) me to understand more about my faith and to be involved more with my faith. 'Students feel safe and confident to participate in their lessons and are confident in the use of high level appropriate religious literacy. Books are mostly well presented and students respond to written feedback when asked to do so. Positive relationships, and in the majority of lessons a respectful working relationship, support all students in making progress in lessons. Students commented that they find learning about other faiths useful.

A relatively new team of teachers, supported by a new head of department, have embraced the recent implementation of consistent resources linked to the Religious Education Directory. The new curriculum scheme and related resources have supported provision, delivery and expectations of teaching and learning. Teachers are knowledgeable and encourage a high level of religious literacy to be used in lessons. The new scheme of work and consistency of delivery, has resulted in a renewed focus in lessons. The department marking, feedback and assessment policy, where applied, supports students knowing how to progress in their work. Whilst there has been considerable change, which is still emerging practice, there is a clear drive within the department. The department would now benefit from ongoing quality assurance at department level to ensure sustainability of this rapid improvement. Teachers and teaching assistants know their children, are well prepared and are therefore able to structure work appropriately to each child's needs with teaching assistants being used effectively in the classroom. In the best lessons, teachers use questioning to correct and explore misconceptions in

theological understanding. Most lessons involve moral and human dignity considerations of the topics being studied. There is currently limited enhancement of the religious education curriculum beyond the lessons to add enrichment and depth, where these do exist, such as a visit to a cathedral mentioned by a student, these are welcomed by students.

This school is on a rapid journey of improvement. Governors have made considered strategic changes to enable strong appropriately skilled leadership is now in place. This has led to rapid change in the religious education provision on offer, with adjustments in the behaviour policy that supports both student behaviour and learning. This has been clear from interactions with all leaders including those responsible for special educational needs and disabilities, SEND. Leaders have a termly plan for a scheme which follows the Religious Education Directory. Governors and senior leaders have been engaged in monitoring curriculum delivery and content last academic year with scheduled visits in place for this academic year. The school would benefit from a robust program of monitoring from the recently appointed leadership team to ensure rapid progress and delivery is maintained. Governors strategic planning includes parity in financial considerations for religious education as a core subject. The department would also benefit from parity and priority consideration in the timetable to ensure balanced distribution of lessons in this key core area. The subject leader, who is in his first term at the school, has a clear vision and is being supported to carry this out which is evident in the rapid improvement in teaching and learning.

Collective worship

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

Collective worship key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

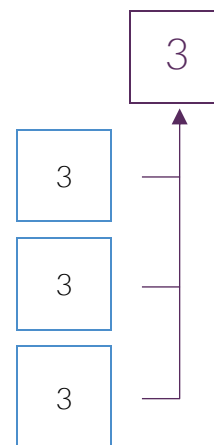
How well pupils participate in and respond to the school's collective worship

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



A daily pattern of prayer is the norm; however, it is narrow in opportunity, and mostly teacher led, reducing opportunities for deepening of spiritual growth. Students respond reverently to an invitation to prayer and are familiar with traditional prayers such as The Lord's Prayer and the school response to intercessions to the founding Saint John Fisher, 'Pray for us'. This being common practice throughout school. Students have limited opportunities to work with others to prepare prayer and liturgy. Some students undertake liturgical ministries and opportunities to input into reflections but these are limited to a few. Similarly, the school has a Faith Club which students can choose to join, however, numbers are low. There is a lack of involvement of students in the planning of new initiatives and activities, resulting in some passive children. This comes from leaders work to establish and renew the practice of prayer which had been lost. These would now benefit from students' collaboration in planning as part of their own experience and learning, while expanding their opportunities for spirituality development.

Prayer and liturgy have recently become a greater feature in the daily and weekly provision. Mass is scheduled three times a week before school which is appreciated by those who choose to attend, especially the local community. A welcome Mass is held in September for new students and parents after school. The school is privileged to have a beautiful chapel which can hold a year group, this has meant that each year group can be scheduled into the chapel for morning prayer once a week. Assemblies, whilst starting and ending with prayers and in some cases reflections, are in the main secular. In one year group, messages from the saint of the week and the virtues they model was linked to the operational messages of pathways to exam success, but was not translated into a celebration of the word. Registration sessions include prayer but vary in the extent to which opportunities of prayer lead to deeper reflection. Confessions once a week, and silent prayer at break and lunch in the chapel, are highly valued, however, uptake is currently limited. There are very few spaces for spontaneous prayer, such as focus prayer spaces beyond the chapel. The remembrance cross and

statue of Mary are underused. As such, prayer and liturgy offer participants a limited range of ways of praying which does not exemplify the richness of the Catholic tradition. The school benefits from having a dedicated part time chaplain and a team of priests from local parishes.

The school has a policy on prayer and liturgy which is linked to a liturgical calendar and plan of liturgical events. Opportunities to celebrate the Eucharist and other liturgical celebrations are not regularly planned into the school day. Whilst the Masses before the school day are a welcome addition to the community, small numbers of students attend. Holy days of obligation and other significant days such as Saint John Fisher's feast day are not celebrated in the school's calendar beyond acknowledgement. Morning prayer is planned for all pupils once a week however opportunities for reflective daily prayer alongside spontaneous reflections are sporadic and would benefit from robust whole school monitoring. The chaplaincy team have plans in place to extend the school prayer and liturgy provision, however these are not yet all in the liturgical plan. There is a commitment to introduce retreats for each year group alongside formation of a chaplaincy team of students working alongside the chaplain, these are still to be implemented. The leader's dedication to rebuild the school as a place of prayer is acknowledged by staff who commented, 'We are no longer a school that has lost its spirituality but one that is growing it.'

Information about the school

Full name of school	The John Fisher Catholic Secondary School
School unique reference number (URN)	103009
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	3195402
Full postal address of the school	Peaks Hill, Purley, Surrey, CR8 3YP
School phone number	02086604555
Headteacher	Robert Teague
Chair of governors	Andrew Theobald
School Website	http://www.johnfisherschool.org/
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Phase	Secondary
Type of school	Voluntary Aided School
Admissions policy	Non-selective
Age-range of pupils	11-18
Gender of pupils	Boys
Date of last denominational inspection	21-22 May 2019
Previous denominational inspection grade	2

The inspection team

Catherine Burnett	Lead
Sulumenty Odhiambo	Team
Patricia Slonecki	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