

DIOCESE OF LEEDS



DIOCESAN BOARD FOR INSPECTIONS

SECTION 48
FINAL REPORT

THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL
AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

ST. JOHN FISHER CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL
Oxford Rd, Dewsbury, WF13 4LL

School URN

107783

School DfE Number

382/4800

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Chair of Governors

Rev. Dr. Joseph Cortis

Headteacher

Mr. Kevin Higgins

RE Subject Leader

Mary Mollicone

Date of Inspection

22nd- 23rd November 2012

Section 48 Inspector/s

Anne Winfield and Paul Martin

INTRODUCTION

The Inspection of St. John Fisher Catholic High School was carried out by 2 inspectors over two days under the requirements of Section 48 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. The inspection reviews and evaluates how effective the school is in providing Catholic education. The process starts with the school's own self-evaluation. The inspection follows the schedule and criteria set by the National Board of Religious Inspectors and Advisors (NIBRIA).

A sample of 7 Religious Education (RE) lessons, 1 PHSCE lesson and 6 Acts of Collective Worship (CW) were observed covering all 3 key stages. In addition, meetings were held with the Headteacher, Deputy Head, Assistant Head (Pastoral), Head of RE, Leader of PHSCE, Directors of Study, Head of Sixth Form, Special Needs Co-ordinator, Chaplain, Catholic Social Worker, Learning Mentors, Chair of Governors and Foundation Governors, as well as the staff and student chaplaincy teams and representative groups of pupils and parents. A wide range of RE/Catholic Life of the School documentation was scrutinized, including the School Development Plan, RE Development plan, OFSTED report, attainment data, Spiritual Development Plan, meeting minutes from evaluations of RE and Catholic Life of the school and Chaplaincy Reports. Schemes of work, pupil progress tracking records and a representative sample of their work were also scrutinized.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

This is an over-subscribed, mixed 11-18 comprehensive Catholic school of 1187 pupils, 212 of which are in the sixth form. It is in Dewsbury (Kirklees LEA). There are 6 Catholic feeder primary schools, and pupils also come from a number of local community primaries. The school serves 9 parishes. The school has 1189 pupils on roll. Pupils come from an area of significant deprivation, with 13% on FSM. The school has fewer than average ethnic minority students. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly average. 85% of pupils aged 11-16 are baptised Catholics, with a lower percentage in Years 12 and 13. There are 76 teachers, 70 full time and 6 part-time. 54% of them are baptised Catholics. 8 teachers have the CCRS or equivalent.

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 school has a vision statement shared with all stakeholders and a motto 'Loving to learn whilst learning to love'. The school is a Specialist Sports College and has Investors in People Gold status, the Healthy Schools Award, the Safety Mark and Sportmark. St. John Fisher works in partnership with local schools to the benefit of young people in its care.

INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Inspection Grades: 1 is Outstanding, 2 is Good, 3 is Satisfactory, 4 is Inadequate

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

1

This is a summative judgement based on the 2 judgements below: Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils, provision for Catholic education (includes effectiveness of leaders and managers) and capacity for sustained improvement.

OUTCOMES FOR PUPILS, PROVISION FOR CATHOLIC EDUCATION

1

CAPACITY FOR SUSTAINED IMPROVEMENT

1

Main findings

The overall effectiveness of the school is Outstanding. St. John Fisher is a school that lives out its Mission Statement. There is an excellent shared understanding between all members of the community of the school's ministry to young people and its service to the Church. A strong commitment to that statement, and to the Spiritual Development Policy, is evident in the practices of Governors, Headteacher, Senior Leaders and other staff, and in the way they express that commitment. They ensure that the mission of the school informs all policies including those related to curriculum, staff and pupils and the general life of the school. This commitment is clear in the status and role of the RE faculty (which includes PHSCE and Music); the good Chaplaincy provision; excellent liturgy and worship; high quality pastoral care; and the opportunities to support the social, moral and spiritual development of pupils, supported by a range of partners.

Leaders and Managers at all levels are highly effective in managing, and developing the Catholic Life of the school including the provision and outcomes of Religious Education. The school completed a very detailed and accurate self-evaluation and has a very accurate view of its own strengths and areas for development. It is clear from discussions with the Chair and other Governors, the Headteacher and Senior Staff, Head of RE, PSHCE co-ordinator, SENCo, Chaplain, Social Worker, staff and pupils that the school is in an excellent position to effect further improvements and is already committed to doing so.

The school's capacity for sustained improvement is outstanding. It has a very stable, knowledgeable and committed Governing Body, Senior and Middle Leaders. Areas for improvement identified in the last inspection have been successfully met and action plans resulting from excellent self-evaluation at all levels provide clear foci for further improvement. Standards and progress in RE are improving and good practice has been shared across the school. Governors are very active in supporting the school and will continue to be so as the school faces further challenges with the possibility of academy trusts in the diocese.

WHAT THE SCHOOL NEEDS TO DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER

- To raise attainment in RE at Key Stage 4 further by continuing to embed a range of teaching strategies including Differentiation and Assessment for Learning.
- To develop the staff and student chaplaincy teams to enable staff and pupils to take further leadership roles in spiritual development.
- To further develop opportunities for student voice.

PUPILS

How good outcomes are for pupils, taking particular account of variations between different groups.

1

Pupils' learning is at least good in all year groups and Key Stages. Outcomes for pupils, taking account of variations between different groups, are at least good overall and are significantly better for pupils in the lower ability range. In 2012 Year 11 achieved 59% A* - C compared with 53% in 2011 with almost 100% entry in both years. Results in the period 2009-2010 were higher but along with predictions for 2013 it is clear that there is an improving trend which bodes well for the future. Generally, Key Stage 4 results in 2012 compared well with other subjects but lag behind English and Mathematics. Tracking of GCSE Grade C/D borderline pupils during Year 11 with a range of intervention strategies had positive results with increased progress seen.

End of year assessments at Key Stage 3 indicate parity with English and Mathematics and Faculty Levelled Assessments also indicate that progress is good. Unit 8 Short Course (Edexcel) was taught to Year 9 and 84 pupils were entered for the exam, with a focus on G&T students and 87% achieved A* - C. A small number of Post 16 students study Theology at A/S and A. 22% achieved A-B grades in June 2012 and 67% at A2 with 100% A- E grades. Students not studying Theology followed the N.O.C.N. Religious Education course and there was 100% pass rate both at Level 2 in Lower Sixth and at level 3 in Upper Sixth.

Strong support from the SENCO and a range of staff including Learning Mentors, Form Tutors and Directors of Study has enabled all pupils, including those with learning needs, to make good progress. Pupils across all key stages enjoy their learning. They take advantage of a wide range of learning opportunities and as a result are well behaved, interested and motivated. Because PHSCE is taught by RE teachers, the spiritual values of the school permeate that curriculum. A Year 7 lesson on bullying was firmly focused on Gospel values and the pupils responded in a thoughtful and spiritual way, clearly enjoying the lesson.

Pupils are highly responsible in contributing to and benefitting from the Catholic life of the school. All pupils described the school as 'welcoming' and understood that they had a responsibility to maintain the ethos. There is an active anti-bullying policy which is revisited yearly during Anti-Bullying Week. Pupils are encouraged to report any bullying and know the different ways in which they can do this, including the possibility of anonymous reporting through a designated box or on the school's website. Pupils said of

the Assistant Head (Pastoral) 'I'd always go to her – she listens then acts on what you tell her', suggesting that there is a general belief that the policy is robust.

The 6thformers are excellent role models, and their committee organizes assemblies and charity fundraising, such as collections for cystic fibrosis and Macmillan. They lead worship in and outside school. All pupils take good advantage of the many opportunities for spiritual development, including retreats and pilgrimages to Walsingham and Lourdes. They are keen to participate in worship outside the school as in processing to church for a class Mass, or taking part in the living Crib and Crucifixion in Dewsbury. They value the links with their parishes and some described taking an active role in their parish, as in being a reader.

Behaviour is good around the school and in lessons, informed by the Catholic ethos of the school. It is exemplary during worship. Success is celebrated by with achievement assemblies, as well as ongoing praise and comments on work. Pupils contribute to the evaluation of events with a religious character through the work carried out by Directors of Study in monitoring daily Collective Worship and assemblies, and evaluating wider opportunities such as retreats. Confirmation preparation is held in school and all confirmandi (from other schools as well as this) benefit from this out-of hours work.

Staff and pupils are alert to the needs of others and are happy to support the work of different groups such as Macmillan, Forever Angels, the Good Shepherd and the Christmas Shoebox Appeal. They also raise funds for a school in Ghana, to which they are attached. The care of pupils and their wellbeing is outstanding. This is a truly open access school so that pupils with disabilities can access all areas of learning. The school nurse is much valued for her work in holding drop-in centres, and the Catholic Care social worker helps pupils and their families, after referral from a Director of Studies. Pupils with special needs are cared for well through the work of the Special Needs Co-ordinator and the Learning Mentors, and consequently make good progress and are happy in school.

There have been no permanent exclusions since the last inspection, and the number of students temporarily excluded has fallen by 37%. Attendance has risen in that time from 92% to 94.1%, thanks to strategies used by the school. There is a thoughtful and caring system to induct new students, including visits, SEAL days, and allocating older students as 'buddies'. The school regularly seeks to ascertain the views of parents, and acts on those views. There is a School Council and Year Council, consisting of representatives from all years. They have given opinions on matters such as uniform and catering and have been listened to. However, some pupils felt that they would like further opportunities to share their opinions about school life directly with management.

At all key stages pupils are respectful and prayerful during times of Collective Worship, with many examples of pupils planning and leading prayer in all years. Y10 had recently visited the battlefields of World War I, and prepared a 'Battlefields' Mass which they celebrated during the inspection. They wrote and delivered their own bidding prayers, read the Scriptures and one girl sang solo during Communion, helping to maintain the palpable air of solemnity and reverence throughout, right up to the reverencing of the catafalque. Individual reflections were also shared. Both Y10 and Y7 Assemblies fitted in with Anti-Bullying week, and the message was delivered clearly by a pupil presentation, all Y7 singing their school song most animatedly and the school prayer. Sixth form Assembly was led by one form, and was both reverent and appropriate.

Y7 were planning a class Mass during our visit, supported by staff so that all could contribute. All pupils respond well to liturgies, joining in appropriately and confidently. They know religious feasts and seasons and can discuss their response to prayer. They devise and use different forms of prayer, both formal and informal. Respect is always shown for the beliefs of others, and the Muslim pupil spoken to expressed her feeling of belonging and being listened to.

All pupils spoken to described their love of the school, especially the fact that they were helped to make good moral decisions through the Gospel values shown as well as discussions about the importance of God in their lives – as in a class working on ‘Abortion’ in RE. A student chaplaincy team has been formed from all years recently. They are already working with the Chaplain and Deputy Head to plan worship, and are hoping to spend an afternoon at Myddleton Grange to plan future work. They are working on a blog on the school website and hope to keep the Governors aware of their work.

These are the grades for pupils’ outcomes

How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education.	2
Taking into account:	
• the quality of pupils’ learning and their progress	2
• the quality of learning for pupils with particular learning needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
• pupils’ attainment in Religious Education	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life of the school.	1
How well pupils respond to and participate in the school’s Collective Worship.	1

PROVISION

How effective the provision is for Catholic education.

1

The department is led by an experienced Head of Faculty and includes five committed and enthusiastic specialist RE teachers of varying experience. The team is well supported by a Lay Chaplain and the Deputy Head, who is a Priest and the Line Manager. The quality of teaching is good with some outstanding practice. There was much evidence that outstanding lesson planning took into account the range of ability within each class using prior assessment information. The department has an SEN Representative who, through regular meetings with the SENCO, ensures that RE staff are made aware of learning needs to assist in the planning of differentiated lessons.

Teachers across each of the Key Stages were observed to use a wide range of teaching styles and strategies to good and sometimes outstanding effect. Most pupils were actively engaged in lessons demonstrating confidence in undertaking the range of tasks and activities presented. Lesson objectives and assessment tasks were effectively differentiated to meet the needs of most pupils. A particular strength was the use of opportunities for literacy development within each lesson. Relationships between teachers

and pupils were seen to be very positive within an atmosphere of mutual enjoyment and motivation.

The department has written levelled assessments which are used effectively at frequent intervals throughout the year to monitor and evaluate individual and class progress. These assessments coupled with on-going marking and feedback of written work, ensure that most pupils were aware of the level they were working at and generally know what they needed to do to improve. Assessment for learning is, therefore, becoming embedded in lessons and teachers were observed using a range of strategies to assess pupils' learning. The Religious Education schemes of work meet the requirements of the Roman Catholic Curriculum Directory. 8% curriculum time is allocated to RE at KS3 and 10% at KS4, This is enhanced by an additional 2% at KS3 through PHSCE / EPR taught by RE teachers. The RE curriculum makes a significant contribution to the spiritual and moral development of pupils, as does the school's comprehensive citizenship, sex and health education programmes and policies which are effectively implemented in accordance with Catholic teaching.

The Faculty, through analysis of both the results and the exam paper at KS4, is switching from the GCSE Unit 10 to Unit 8 course of study to improve motivation further as well as providing opportunities for pupils to experience greater success. This course will be used as part of the new Linear GCSE.

Pupils are provided with a wide range of opportunities to pray, reflect and bear witness to Christ as part of an extended curriculum. An active staff chaplaincy team contributes significantly to the Catholic Life provision and there are many examples of cross curricular activities notably within Art and History. Worship is age-appropriate.

In Year 7, pupils are given a copy of the New Testament and have the theme of a 'Leap of Faith', and the induction period culminates with a 'Rainbow' Mass for the whole year group. Year 8 has the theme of 'Who Am I?' They have a formal procession for Mass at St. Paulinus near the feast day of St. George, with special catechesis on the Mass. This year group has the Good Shepherd fund as its focus for charity fundraising. In Year 9, students seek to encounter Jesus in sacraments and service. They are the main supporters of CAFOD in the school; they make a visit to the National Holocaust Memorial Centre. They also process to St. Paulinus for Mass, usually around St. Patrick's Day. The importance of the sacrament of confirmation to this year group is a clear focus. The preparation takes place on Sundays, in the chapel. However, confirmation is both discussed and celebrated in school. Year 10, have a theme of 'Reaching Out'. In October, they have the opportunity to join the 'Battlefields' trip, which culminated in the Mass which happened during the inspection. The theme of 'Reaching Out' is further developed in the Advent Mass. This year group welcomes the diocesan co-ordinator and is able to go to Lourdes. Year 11 focuses on 'Passport for the Future'. They have the opportunity to go on retreat to Myddleton Grange and have a final leaving Mass, which mirrors the Rainbow Mass of Year 7.

The quality of Collective Worship is outstanding. It is central to the life of the school. The liturgical life of the school is carefully planned, varied and appropriate to the needs of pupils. Many departments, such as Music and Art, contribute to the quality of religious life. The Art department contributes images for the Chapel, for the booklets used in special Masses, and also helped pupils to win a competition to design of badge for the HCPT at

Lourdes. The Chapel is situated at the heart of the school and is used for staff briefing, which has prayer and reflection at its heart. Mass is said every day before school, which is open to staff and pupils. Worship is structured to meet the age of the pupils. Form time for those pupils not in Assembly follows the week's theme. It is planned by the students and led by them. A variety of prayer including drama and singing was evident during the inspection. Themes reflect the liturgical seasons as well as issues central to Youth e.g. Anti-Bullying week. Resources are provided by the Chaplain to support prayer and reflection in form time, to start the day, although pupils and staff supplement these to personalize prayer for their group. There are daily and weekly liturgical acts in the chapel and Eucharistic Adoration generally takes place weekly. Special year group assemblies are held near the major liturgical festivals, to enable pupils and staff to reflect on the mysteries of the season. There are some pupils of other world faiths, who worship alongside the rest of the pupils.

Pupils have the opportunity to spend time in the chapel during their free time and in a more structured way during Advent and Lent to prepare spiritually for Easter and Christmas. With the help of the Deanery priests, confession is also available for pupils. Formal or informal liturgical acts are arranged on an 'ad hoc' basis, supporting the excellent pastoral work of the school, in times of sorrow or celebration. Worship supported both pupils and staff recently when a member of staff died suddenly, and all wanted to take some part in prayer at that time. The patronal feast of the school is a day of spiritual celebration for all. Mass during the day is attended by the whole school, apart from Y11, including staff and Governors and an evening Mass is held for Y11 and their parents. This is very well attended. The school always responds to opportunities for worship of all kinds at a local or diocesan level – as visiting the relics of St. Therese of Lisieux and Pope Benedict's visit. Pupils participate in the diocesan pilgrimage to Walsingham and the yearly Lourdes pilgrimage, where they work to help the sick. Staff are supported in facilitating worship both by the excellent work of the Chaplain, an excellent induction programme and periodic 'Ethos Days' on staff training days. There are also retreats for staff.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching in Religious Education.	2
The use of assessment to support learning in Religious Education.	1
The extent to which the Religious Education curriculum meets pupils' needs.	1
The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school.	1

LEADERS AND MANAGERS

How effective leaders and managers are in developing the Catholic life of the School.

1

There is highly effective, rigorous monitoring of the Catholic life of the school by the Governing Body and leaders at all levels. The two-yearly review of all faculties and pastoral areas is well organised, using the talents of outside consultants as well as senior

staff when appropriate. These reviews are presented to the Governing Body so they are correctly aware of all areas of the school. There is a review of the faculty Action Plan between these reviews, and line management meetings in school occur regularly. The prayer life of the school, in Assemblies and form time, is monitored and evaluated by the Directors of Study. The school's mission is clear thanks to policies and practices such as the School Development Plan and Spiritual Development Policy, which are monitored and evaluated by a range of staff.

Pupils have a well-developed understanding of the Mission. They are encouraged to be spiritual leaders and are so, appropriately for their age. The sixth formers are good role models, leading worship and doing 20 hours community work a year. Rigorous self-evaluation at all levels leads to well-targeted planning. The leadership and management of Religious Education were judged to be outstanding. The Head teacher, senior leaders and the RE Faculty leader monitor the progress of all pupils using a very effective data tracking system. A more rigorous process of self-evaluation of Religious Education provision including, for example, the quality of teaching and learning has been implemented since the last S48 inspection and this is contributing to improved outcomes.

PHSCE is part of the RE faculty, as is Music. The faculty is part of the school review system, being reviewed every two years. These reviews involve senior leaders and an outside expert. The results are shared with the Governors. Every year, there is a review of progress on the Departmental Action Plan. The Head of Department has weekly line-management meetings with her line manager, the Deputy Head who is a serving priest as well as an active teacher.

The Governing Body is highly effective and holds the school to account well. It makes a highly significant contribution to the work of this Catholic school. Four Parish Priests serve on it, and there are foundation governors from the other 3 parishes. The Governors have a range of skills e.g. financial, legal, 'HR' that they use in support of the school. Their knowledge of the school is detailed and accurate, and they regularly receive review information presented by the Head of faculty as well as written reports, e.g. from the School Council. They play an active part in the formulation and monitoring of the School Development Plan and the SEF and there are governors linked to particular areas of the school. As part of the monitoring of school self-review, they ensure that their statutory and canonical responsibilities are met.

Governors support events in school, especially liturgies and Achievement Assemblies so they are known to the pupils as well as the staff. They show real pride in their school, and a genuine determination to support as well as challenge in a meaningful manner. The Chair of Governors is particularly proud of the recent achievement of IIP Gold standard. He devotes much of his time to the school, even accompanying a trip to the Battlefields of World War 1. He leads Governors who see their role in helping to spread the school's ethos, as well as challenging it to ensure the sustainability of the school's Mission.

The school works actively with a range of partners to further promote Catholic learning and pupil well-being. It is part of a soft federation with 3 other schools (The Dewsbury Learning Partnership) and has close links with a neighbouring community school, to the extent that some pupils from St. John Fisher attend some lessons there and some of their pupils come to St. John Fisher. This aids knowledge and understanding between different communities, as well as ensuring pupils get the best possible teaching in particular

curricular areas. The staffs of the schools have attended joint INSET. Pupils attend lessons e.g. for vocational subject at other establishments where appropriate, so that they can achieve in areas best suited to them, which would not be possible in school alone. The Head takes a lead role in diocesan education.

The inclusion of all is central to the ethos of this school. Pupils commented, “We all try to help each other.” This was certainly evident in the help a wheelchair-bound student received from others at lunchtime. There is a welcome for all people at the school, and the Deputy is a member of the North Kirklees Interfaith Group, which is increasing opportunities for young people of different faiths to meet and discuss faith issues. For a number of years, young people from the school have witnessed to their faith publicly through re-enactment of the crucifixion and being a living crib in Dewsbury. Pupils fundraise for many charities, as has been mentioned, and actively help a school in Ghana, which is run by Muslims. A number of staff visited the school in Summer, taking a financial contribution from the school so that they could buy bicycles so that girls could attend school, and essential mosquito nets. Acts of Collective Worship allow for private prayer and reflection. Beliefs and values of other faiths were challenged in RE, but with an attitude of respect to all faiths.

These are the grades for leadership and management

How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic life of the school and plan and implement improvement to outcomes for pupils.	1
How well leaders and managers monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education and plan and implement improvement to outcomes for pupils.	1
The extent to which the governing body provides effective challenge and support for the Catholic dimension of the school so areas needing development are tackled decisively and statutory and canonical responsibilities met.	1
How well leaders and managers develop partnerships with other providers, organisations and services in order to promote Catholic learning and pupil well-being.	1
How effectively leaders and managers promote Community Cohesion.	1