

**Report of the Denominational (Canon 806 & Section 48)  
Inspection of**

(Inspection was carried out under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005)

**St John Fisher Catholic High School  
Park Lane, Eastfield Peterborough PE1 5JW**

DfE No: 874/5413  
URN: 110907

For Catholic Diocese of East Anglia



Chair of Governors: Mr Nick Ager

Headteacher: Mrs Kate Pereira

Denominational Inspector: Mr Patrick Harrison

Dates of Inspection: 23<sup>rd</sup> – 24<sup>th</sup> February 2022

Date and grade of previous inspection December 2013 Grade 1

**Information about the school:**

St John Fisher is an 11-18 Catholic High School in Peterborough under the trusteeship of the Diocese of East Anglia. Pupils come from the Catholic schools within the deanery of Peterborough and other schools within the Unitary Authority of Peterborough. The school has a richly diverse population. About 45% of pupils are from a Catholic background and about 20% are from other faiths. Nearly 70% of pupils are from ethnic groups, which is well above the national average. 60% of pupils have a first language other than English. 45% of pupils are eligible for Pupil Premium. The proportion of pupils who are identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities is also above average. The school provides provision for deaf pupils as part of the Peterborough Hubs network.

**Overall Effectiveness:****Grade 1 Outstanding**

St John Fisher Catholic High School provides an outstanding Catholic education for the pupils entrusted to it. Leaders and governors ensure that the mission of the school is clear and underpins the work of the school. The school community is proud of its Catholic identity and character. At the same time it is proud to work with a diverse community. It is well regarded in the local community. Religious Education is well led and pupils make excellent progress in Religious Education. The Chaplaincy provision is valued greatly and makes a strong contribution to the life of the school.

**What the school needs to do to improve further.**

- Develop systematic involvement of pupils in Key Stage 3 & 4 in the planning and evaluation of the Catholic Life and Mission of the school.
- Review the Key Stage 3 curriculum provision to increase curriculum time for Religious Education to 10%, as required by the Bishops' Conference of England & Wales.
- Provide more opportunities for pupils to take the lead in preparing and leading assemblies and other acts of Collective Worship.

**Catholic Life of the School:****Grade 1**

Pupils greatly value the Catholic character and life of the school. Respect for each other is at the heart of school life. This is reflected in the way students interact with each other, with staff and with visitors. Pupils affirmed that the school is proudly and authentically Catholic, yet remains deeply respectful of those who come from different faith backgrounds. There are a variety of opportunities for pupils to take on leadership roles for the further development of Catholic life. This is most evident within the Sixth Form, where the Sixth Form Leadership Group have taken the initiative to organise a 'Culture Day' that will build on the celebration of the community of the 'Great Get Together'. Pupils value highly the Chaplaincy provision. The contribution of the pupil Chaplaincy Ambassadors, although stalled by the pandemic, is having an impact. Pupils are keen to participate in charity projects.

The mission of the school to be "*a learning community striving to live the gift of life that God gave us*" underpins the life and work at the school. It is visible to pupils, staff and visitors in the religious artefacts and displays around the school, as well as the chapel being centrally located on the site. It is visible to all in the exemplary behaviour of pupils and in the commitment of staff to the mission of the school. The pastoral systems are influenced by the

Gospel inspired values that inform those processes. The ‘Relationship and Sex Education’ provision is based on the model curriculum provided by the Catholic Education Service. Catholic Social Teaching inspires the focus given to supporting charities and the care for the site. Governors and school leaders have demonstrated their commitment to the Catholic life of the school by supporting and encouraging the chaplaincy provision since the last inspection.

Governance and leadership of the Catholic life of the school is very strong. Governors are regularly informed of the developments through the headteacher’s reports. The link governor attends meetings of the Chaplaincy Committee to have a greater understanding of the priorities and developments. The Chaplaincy Committee drives much of the developments of the Catholic life of the school. That committee includes the headteacher, deputy headteacher, chaplain, Religious Education team and members of the Sixth Form Student Leadership Group. The key leaders are very well informed about the principles that influence Catholic education and this informs the continuous professional development of staff. The headteacher and deputy headteacher have developed specific training for staff new to the school. This has been very well received by those staff and there are plans to expand it to other groups of staff. The school participated in CAFOD’s ‘global classrooms’ initiative and have chosen to sustain those links beyond the initial project.

During the interruptions to daily school life during the pandemic, school leaders ensured that the Form Tutors maintained contact with their Form Groups and that pastoral leaders monitored the impact Covid was having on families. The Chaplain kept contact with the Chaplaincy Ambassadors and charity work continued. Feedback from parents confirms and strongly affirms their appreciation of the school and their appreciation of the impact of the Catholic life of the school. The action points from the previous inspection have all been attended to effectively.

#### **Religious Education:**

#### **Grade 1**

Pupils enjoy their religious education lessons. They like the variety of learning activities and most make progress in lessons. The outcomes at GCSE give strong indications that, given the starting points of pupils, they make excellent progress. The data for the last set of public exams were strong, with 67.2% of pupils getting a grade 4 or better for GCSE religious studies. There was a ‘positive’ progress indicator of +0.49. The ‘Centre-Assessed Grades’ (2020) and ‘Teacher-Assessed Grades’ (2021) were consistent with the data for 2019. Students in the A Level groups clearly enjoy the challenge and intellectual stimulus of their course. Their attainment remains consistently strong and they consistently achieve above their target grades. Pupils said that they wanted to learn more about other faiths.

Teachers in the Religious Education Department use their excellent subject knowledge to engage pupils in learning. They use a range of different learning strategies and time in lessons is used well. Planning is informed by prior learning and they provide information from assessments that help pupils know how well they are progressing. Teachers adapt their learning and have a passion for Religious Education that is evident in lessons and this helps pupils to make progress in their learning. Teachers provide feedback in pupil books and during lessons. The publication of the new Religious Education Curriculum Directory (RECD) will create an opportunity for that feedback to be directly linked to the skills required to make further progress.

School leaders ensure that most of the requirements of the RECD are being met. The Key Stage 3 curriculum provision is linked to those requirements and the GCSE specification is appropriate for a Catholic school. Sixth Form students follow a ‘Core RE’ programme that is

also influenced by the RECD. The publication of a new RECD during 2022 will inform future developments of that provision. The curriculum time for RE at Key Stage 4 (10%) and in the Sixth Form (5%) meet the requirements of the RECD. However, provision at Key Stage 3 is only 7.5%, so governors and leaders need to address this.

Leadership, distributed amongst members of the Religious Education department, is strong. The subject leader and Key Stage coordinators have effective processes for monitoring and evaluation that informs department improvement. Regular and accurate information about pupil progress is used to identify where interventions are required. Religious Education is given a high profile by school leaders. The subject leader for Religious Education is line managed by the deputy headteacher. The budget is appropriate and staff in the department are provided with various opportunities for professional development. The link governor has visited the department, to be able to provide better understanding of the work of the department for the governing body.

**Collective Worship:**

**Grade 1**

Pupils readily take part in the prayer life of the school. They volunteer to read at prayers in Form, in Chapel Prayer and at liturgies. They read at assemblies when they are led by Form Groups. They listened attentively and were respectful of each other at the assemblies and at Chapel Prayers that were observed during the inspection. Pupils said that they valued the 'Thought for the Day' that is provided for Form Groups. The Chaplaincy Ambassadors are involved in the weekly voluntary Masses and the Masses for Feast Days and special events. They meet weekly with the Chaplain to help with the practical preparations. There are some examples, particularly with the Sixth Form, where pupils take responsibility for the content of assemblies and collective worship. Pupils in Key Stages 3 & 4 would like to have more opportunities for that type of leadership.

Collective Worship has a central place in the life of the school. 'Thought for the Day' is provided for Form Groups every week. The Chaplaincy calendar ensures that assemblies reflect the liturgical year of the Catholic Church and that important Feast days/special events are celebrated at Mass or other liturgies. These are carefully planned and resourced. A big feature for the school has been to incorporate elements in the liturgical action at the 'offertory' of Mass, to symbolise the school community participating at that particular celebration. This has enhanced the sense of participation at liturgies. The music department run a choir who have been increasing their repertoire of hymns so that pupils can participate more confidently at Mass and liturgies through singing.

Strategic leadership of the prayer life of the school is provided by the chaplaincy team (of senior leaders, chaplain, RE staff, link governor and Sixth Form Student Leaders). They identify the key priorities for the prayer life of the school. They meet regularly to monitor those development points. They also plan, organise and review collective worship. They enabled prayers and 'Thought for the Day' to be sustained online through the interruptions of the pandemic. Since autumn 2021 Chapel Prayers have been reintroduced, where form groups attend the chapel during morning registration in rotation for an extended time of prayer. This is led by the Chaplain, with support from Form teachers and Heads of House.

The school has been involved in a number of projects within the local community. In February 2022 a group of pupils and staff attended a Mass at Peterborough Cathedral in honour of Queen Catherine of Aragon. This was an event organised by the Peterborough deanery. Pupils and staff from the school also participated in the local 'Faith Walk' in November 2021.

# EAST ANGLIA DIOCESAN SCHOOLS' SERVICE



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## Letter to pupils explaining the findings from the Diocesan Inspection

### Diocesan Inspection of St. John Fisher Catholic High School, Peterborough

4th March 2022

Dear Pupils

#### Section 48 Inspection

I very much enjoyed my visit to your school. During the two days I was made to feel welcome and I was delighted to talk to a good number of you. You told me of how proud you are of the school. You said that it is an excellent Catholic school and that you greatly value the diversity of the school community. It is clear that your headteacher and her staff are working hard to continue to make the school a very special place.

The focus of my visit was to look at how well you learn in Religious Education and to look at the wider Catholic Life of the school. I was impressed by what I saw in the lessons I visited. You make progress in RE and you told me that you enjoy your lessons. I saw that you work well with your RE teachers and that you benefit from the variety of learning activities your teachers use.

I was able to attend some House assemblies and Chapel Prayers. I was pleased to see so many of you participating by reading from scripture, explaining themes and by reading the prayers. I heard about the work you do within your Houses to raise money for different charities. Some of the Sixth Form Student Leaders explained about their plans to celebrate the diversity of cultures within the school community. I have asked your school leaders to find opportunities for more of you to take a lead in aspects of the Catholic Life of the school, including taking more responsibility for preparing/leading prayers and assemblies yourselves.

You should be proud also of yourselves. Your behaviour is exemplary and this makes sure that the school has an atmosphere of calm purpose.

With my very best wishes

Yours sincerely

Patrick Harrison  
Diocesan Section 48 Inspector