

DIOCESE OF HALLAM

MONITORING OF THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

PRIMARY

(Three- year review following Section 48 Inspection)

School: St John Fisher, Sheffield

Date of Visit: 15th October 2020

Inspection Date of Latest S48: 6th December 2016 Projected date of next inspection: Autumn 2021

Recommendations from the previous S48 Inspection were:

- **Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching through**
 - **Ensuring all teachers have excellent knowledge and understanding of Catholic tradition and belief**
 - **Providing opportunities for all teachers to benefit from the sharing of existing outstanding practice**
- **Continue to improve pupils' attainment and progress in Religious Education by**
 - **Increasing the quality of pupils' oral responses**
 - **Further embedding in-house moderation of assessment**
 - **Consistent implementation of the marking policy**

Religious Education

The school leadership has continued to address the quality of teaching and the attainment of pupils in Religious Education in order to maintain their outstanding provision.

There is a well-organised programme of monitoring opportunities and professional development meetings, led by the RE coordinator, ensuring that Religious Education is recognised as a priority in school development. A recent monitoring exercise (in the previous academic year) highlighted the strengths of teaching, but also recognised the need to continue to encourage consistency in the application of agreed practice.

Following the disruption caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, the school leadership has been quick to give teachers additional guidance, and to encourage further innovative practice that has been a hallmark of the school's provision.

Adjustments to the marking policy have been made in order to bring a clearer focus to expectations in each lesson and to make most efficient use of teacher time in marking. 'I can' statements now feature very strongly in the criteria for successful learning. The school is also looking to develop 'wondering' questions that engage pupils' reflective skills, and has been very open to learning from the practice of other schools, and adapting new ideas to St John Fisher's way of working. Godly Play stories are also being used to good effect.

Within assessment, the school has recognised the need to find ways to record the achievements of pupils within Religious Education that tend to be orally based rather than in written work, noting that some pupil with special needs, for instance, are much higher achieving in their understanding of religious concepts.

Within the adjusted curriculum at the start of this academic year, Religious Education continues to have full provision, with clear expectations outlined by the school leadership.

Catholic Life and Collective Worship

The Catholic Life of the school still retains its prominence amidst the current restrictions brought about by the pandemic. Indeed, the school leadership is very aware of its renewed importance in maintaining the collective ethos and sense of belonging in the community.

The school website bears testament to this, with every effort made to ensure that opportunities are shared between 'bubbles', families and the wider community. Films of adapted liturgies, often led by particular classes, are freely available, as well as other excellent resources, including the weekly school newsletter, with its regular sections devoted to the Catholic Life. The increased number of visits to the website that have been recorded bears testimony to the importance of the work being undertaken.

Assembly times are seen as 'anchor' points for pupils, and they are guided by the weekly 'statement to live by' to develop their Christian values towards each other. The staff too come together in prayer at briefings three times each week as well as at professional development meetings, with different members of staff helping to lead prayer. The school's schedule for Collective Worship, covering the whole year, is an example of excellent planning, with its careful choice of themes, supported by the development of key traditional prayers and suitable hymns. The chaplaincy team continues to function despite the current restrictions on mixing.

Other school priorities


Relationship and Sex Education will be developed during the current academic year. The school leadership is considering the relative benefits of the Sheffield Local Authority scheme and the Ten Ten resources provided by the Catholic sector. The school will be consulting with its community in due course before implementing their programme.

Conclusion

This visit to St John Fisher Catholic Voluntary Academy has taken place within the restrictions of current health and safety advice, thereby meaning that it has comprised research into school documentation prior to the visit and discussion with Headteacher and RE coordinator (also Deputy Head), but not any learning walk through the school.

However, it is clear that the school's outstanding provision is being successfully maintained through excellent strategic planning, regular monitoring, timely and appropriate professional development and a strong commitment to the Catholic mission of the school, expressed in its vision of 'Love, Learn and Grow together', displayed in the 'hand' design on its website.

The only recommendation to be made from this visit is that the school continues its present efforts to develop its Religious Education, Catholic Life and Collective Worship in seeking to maintain its outstanding provision. The school leadership and staff should feel affirmed and be applauded for their continuing work.

Signed: 

Alan Dewhurst; Deputy Director of Schools - Catholic life and Religious Education