

INSPECTION REPORT

Ss. John Fisher and Thomas More Roman Catholic High School, Gibfield Road, Colne, BB8 8JT

Inspection date Tuesday 26th January 2016

Reporting Inspector Colin Mason
 Simon Smith
 Sheldon Logue (Trainee Inspector)

Inspection carried out in accordance with Section 48 of the Education Act 2005

Type of School Secondary

URN 119785

Age range of pupils 11-16 years

Number on roll 750

Appropriate authority The Governing Body

Chair of Governors Mary Thomas

Headteacher Clare Hayes

Religious Education Subject Leader Ian Barden

Date of previous inspection March 2011

The Inspection judgements are:	Grade	Explanation of the Grades 1 = Outstanding 2 = Good 3=Requires Improvement 4 = Inadequate
Overall effectiveness of the school	2	
The quality of Catholic Leadership	1	
The quality of the Word	1	
The quality of the Welcome	1	
The quality of Welfare	1	
The quality of Worship	2	
The quality of Witness	2	
The following pages provide reasons to support these judgements		

CHARACTERISTICS AND CONTEXT OF THE SCHOOL

Ss. John Fisher and Thomas More Roman Catholic High school is a successful and popular 11-16 comprehensive school serving the Catholic communities of Pendle. The school is smaller than average nationally with 750 pupils on roll. The school draws pupils from five main Catholic partner primary schools, four in Salford Diocese and one in Leeds Diocese. However, increasing numbers of pupils from a growing number of schools across the Pendle district are joining the school, leading to a more diverse faith background within the pupil population. 46% of pupils are baptised Catholics. 8% are from minority ethnic groups. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is below national averages but increasing slightly and the percentage of pupils identified with additional needs is above national average. Prior attainment of pupils before joining the school is broadly in line with the national average and the attendance of pupils is slightly above national average.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL IS GOOD

Fisher More is a good and improving Catholic high school with many outstanding features. Letting 'all our bright colours shine', a line in the school prayer, is right at the heart of the school and positively influences all aspects of school life. The explicit commitment of governors and school leaders to inclusivity, respect, forgiveness and 'family' ensures that all members of the school community, whether adult or child, have a true sense of value and worth. The effectiveness of the school is further enhanced through the visible commitment of staff to 'walk the extra mile', an aspect of school life which is greatly valued by pupils who met with inspectors during the inspection. Fisher More has successfully and significantly developed since the last section 48 inspection. The school is led outstandingly well and is focussed on ensuring that all pupil outcomes, whether academic or linked to their spiritual, social moral and cultural development, are the 'best they can be' reflecting the school's fully inclusive mission and ethos.

KEY STRENGTHS OF THE SCHOOL INCLUDE:

- A clear and well-understood mission statement that places gospel values right at the heart of all policy and practice in the school.
- A highly experienced and skilled RE team, with excellent leadership, which is fully committed to providing an outstanding Catholic education for all pupils and which achieves excellent GCSE results for all pupils in Religious Studies.
- The commitment of all staff, senior leaders and governors, who work tirelessly to create an environment in which every individual is made to feel welcome, valued and respected and which has Christ at the centre.

THE QUALITY OF CATHOLIC LEADERSHIP IS OUTSTANDING

The leadership of the school understands fully its role in fulfilling the mission of the Catholic Church and is committed to ensuring that the highest priority is given to the development of the whole person. Leaders by their very actions, bear witness to gospel values and ensure that high quality provision is given to support the most vulnerable and disadvantaged in both the school and local community. Such actions strongly reflect the true spirit and ethos of the school. Ongoing self-evaluation ensures that the school constantly seeks ways to improve its provision and performance, whilst also celebrating the things which are done well. The school embraces John 10:10 to ensure that all pupils not only achieve their potential, but also leave school equipped and in readiness for a full and productive life. Governors are valued for their commitment, experience, stimulation and challenge, and they contribute directly and indirectly to the ongoing development of the catholic life of the school. Senior Leaders and Governors, have created a safe and stimulating environment in which all members of the school community can flourish. It is an environment which is enhanced through inspirational imagery based upon Scripture, the school mission and pupil engagement in an extensive range of activities within school and beyond.

THE QUALITY OF THE WORD IS OUTSTANDING

The mission statement is a pivotal document in all school development as it is at the heart of all school policies. It is in a prominent position throughout the school and is shared with all members of the school community. The RE curriculum is regularly reviewed and all Religious Education Curriculum Directory requirements will be met by 2017. The development of knowledge, skills and understanding are seen to go 'hand in hand' with faith development at Fisher More. It was clear to inspectors that the spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) programme is well mapped and evident across the curriculum and that opportunities for pupils to engage with questions of the purpose and meaning of life, as created and sustained by God, were frequent and built into schemes of work. Recent teaching and learning initiatives in the department have included an increased focus on spiritual enrichment and experiential learning such as sacred spaces to address the big questions, meditation, bible recipes and recreating pilgrimages within the classroom. Links with chaplaincy and use of the chapel are incorporated into department schemes of work, particularly at KS3. In religious education lessons the pupils are taught by highly qualified, experienced and committed staff. Pupils identified RE as one of the strongest subjects in the school, where teaching was consistently good or outstanding, where expectations on them as learners were high and where feedback on progress was accurate, regular and valued. Key Stage 4 outcomes for learners are high. GCSE RE outcomes are consistently higher than in comparable literacy based subjects. The curriculum leader for RE has recently undergone training and is now an SLRE for the Salford Diocese and leadership at all levels within the department is reflective and highly effective.

THE QUALITY OF WELCOME IS OUTSTANDING

This school recognises the worth and value of each individual person who enters the school community and warmly embraces all that each individual brings to Fisher More. This is clearly articulated in a line from the school prayer: "Help us in forming a community in which all our bright colours can shine." The fully inclusive ethos of the school ensures that the needs of all members of the community are met with distinct and bespoke provision, so that they feel truly welcomed. Pupils and staff who spoke to inspectors, spoke with real emotion about the first Mass of the academic year, which provides an opportunity for all newcomers (staff and pupils) to be welcomed into 'Family Fisher More'. Symbolic prayer ribbons for each person are placed onto the innovative prayer net as a sign of welcome and are then present during each act of collective worship or liturgy throughout the school year. The sense of Family is established prior to pupils joining the school through a well-planned transition programme. Pupils spoke positively about this process and recognised the value of such opportunities as transition days and summer school in enabling them to feel safe and settle quickly into their new environment. Visitors are welcomed with warmth and respect and often sense immediately, on entering the school, the happy, purposeful atmosphere which is created by the friendly faces they first meet on entering Fisher More.

THE QUALITY OF WELFARE IS OUTSTANDING

The commitment of governors and senior leaders to the welfare of all members of the college community is excellent and therefore the 'Fisher More family' thrives in a climate of love for and service to each other. In recognising the uniqueness of every individual, governors and school leaders strive to ensure that all pupils and staff feel safe, are valued and treated with the utmost respect and dignity. Pupils recognised the special contribution to this area of school life made by the lay chaplaincy and the pastoral systems. The school provides a comprehensive sex and relationship education (SRE) programme that fully meets all the requirements, embracing gospel values while responding sensitively to the pressures of modern-day society. The Christ centred approach at Fisher More is interwoven in all areas of the curriculum and this enables the fullest growth of pupils in all areas of their development. Examples of how the school has regard for the views of all members of the school community and how those views have impacted on school provision and planning would include the wide range of pupil leadership opportunities e.g. prefects, school council and Junior SVP group. The views of staff are sought through formal questionnaires, calendared meetings and professional development activities such as the annual staff ethos day. The outcomes of these 'listening' activities can be seen in revised approaches to teaching and learning, the creation of the John 10:10 governors committee and the recently introduced staff forum and new chaplaincy group. Parents value the

education offered by the school and respond positively to the many opportunities offered to increase their involvement in their child's experience at Fisher More.

THE QUALITY OF WORSHIP IS GOOD

In responding to the community's needs, worship takes place regularly and recognises Christ is at the Centre. Although more work needs to be undertaken to broaden the impact worship has on the school's community and in parish life, the school's motto 'let your light shine bright' reflects the wide range of worship opportunities that meet the spiritual needs of pupils and staff. Pupils report that their worship experiences are innovative and are remembered for their impact on pupils' lives and actions. Regular class masses are an opportunity for pupils to plan liturgies and to accommodate others' ideas so reflecting prayerfully the inclusive nature of the school. Local parish priests come to school, both pastorally and to celebrate the Eucharist. They are always made to feel welcome and their contribution is greatly valued. The school chaplaincy is available at lunchtimes where SVP, pupils and adults can share in moments of reflection. The school chaplain welcomes volunteers and helps to shape ideas into practical acts of worship. In form time, classes reflect and pray together as a collective act of worship. This helps develop positive relationships within a whole school framework of worship which includes numerous opportunities for pupils to develop their outreach work. Recently, SVP worked on a video about CAFOD and its place as a school charity. During the inspection, the theme was on education, and through this, aspects of citizenship and SMSC were prominent. Pupils value their opportunities for collective worship and spiritual development.

THE QUALITY OF WITNESS IS GOOD

Fisher More is clearly very proud of its Catholic heritage spanning over fifty years in the local community. All members past and present constantly bear witness to the principles and values that are inherent in the patron saints. Within the school's mission statement is the phrase 'giving them a reason for living'. Developing aspiration helps all members of the school community to more fully understand and appreciate their part in God's creation, locally, nationally and globally. In relation to chaplaincy provision in the school there is an 'open-door' policy for all staff, pupils, parents and members of the community. The Chaplain is a visible presence in the school and in the local and national community, having been recognised nationally as part of the ACCE, training new chaplains for schools. Inspectors recognised the extensive range of Chaplaincy provision available within the school and recognised both creativity and commitment in abundance. Within the school's own self-evaluation, however, it is recognised that the impact of 'Chaplaincy' is somewhat restricted to relatively small numbers of students and that it must now strive to involve more pupils in this aspect of school life. The prominent 'Face of Christ' and 'fishing net of ribbons' clearly demonstrates the schools commitment to ensure that gospel values and Scripture are evident as a 'distinctive thread' which is constantly woven into all that is done and said in Fisher More. The strength of the staff commitment to justice, compassion, reconciliation and love is clear. They recognise the centrality of ensuring that all pupils 'have life to the full' and create a culture and ethos within the and across the school which allows 'all bright colours to shine'.

AGREED AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT:

- Governors and school leaders must ensure that the requirements of the RE Curriculum Directory are met in full within the timescale as presented to inspectors.
- Further develop the work of recently created 'new' Chaplaincy Group, so that provision is more inclusive and more members of the Fisher More community become involved in this important aspect of the Catholic life of the school.
- Develop increased opportunities to strengthen faith links between Fisher More and its primary partner schools.

30th January 2016

Dear Pupils

Thank you so much for the wonderful welcome you gave us when we came to visit you. It is clear that you are all very proud to be part of the Fisher More community. This is because you are really striving to live up to your mission statement and recognise that you are all one family.

In RE, in particular, your work is of a high standard and we could clearly see that you take your learning very seriously and are proud of your achievements. You have outstanding RE teachers who are helping you to feel confident in your learning and ability to discuss complex religious and moral issues. We were particularly impressed by the ways in which you could discuss what it means to belong, whether at school level or globally.

Your governors and Ms Hayes want to further develop the many ways in which you can experience and participate in the various acts of worship and prayer so that your faith and service to God may be strengthened and we have asked them to focus on this in the coming months.

We were very impressed by many aspects of your school. The wall displays in classrooms and on the corridors, the Face of Christ images around the school and the 'fishing net of ribbons' all seem to stimulate your thirst for knowledge and understanding and we were really impressed in the way you care for the school buildings.

There is a true sense of 'Family' within your school and the quality of relationships between students and staff were outstanding.

God bless you all.

Yours sincerely

Colin Mason, Simon Smith and Sheldon Logue

(Section 48 Inspectors)

Summary Report to Parents

On 26th January 2016 the school was inspected in accordance with Section 48 of the Education Act 2005. The full report has been made available to the school and can also be accessed via both the school website and the Education section on the website of the Diocese of Salford.

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