



St Margaret Clitherow Catholic Primary School

URN: 141156

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Most Reverend John Wilson, Archbishop of Southwark

22–23 January 2025

Summary of key findings

Overall effectiveness

The overall quality of Catholic education provided by the school

1

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

1

Religious education (p.5)

The quality of curriculum religious education

1

Collective worship (p.7)

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

1

The school is fully compliant with the general norms for religious education laid down by the Bishops' Conference

Yes

The school is fully compliant with any additional requirements of the diocesan bishop

Yes

The school has responded to the areas for improvement from the last inspection

Fully

Compliance statement

- Religious education is taught for a specified portion each week and constitutes at least 10% of the taught curriculum time
- The school is fully compliant with additional requirements of the Archbishop
- The areas for improvement from the previous denominational inspection have been addressed comprehensively

What the school does well

- St Margaret Clitherow is a warm, welcoming community whose Catholicity is tangible
- Pupils are highly articulate, religiously literate and engaging in their conversations
- There is an explicit and concrete care of all pupils especially the most vulnerable
- There is an explicit and concrete commitment to both the physical and mental wellbeing of all staff
- Collaboration between pupils and other adults enables deeply prayerful and reflective experiences of prayer and liturgy

What the school needs to improve

- Make more explicitly Catholic the identities of houses and classrooms to further strengthen pupils' understanding of the Catholic life and mission of the school
- Increase the rigour of monitoring to include a high level of detail to ensure forensic monitoring, searching analysis and self-challenge

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

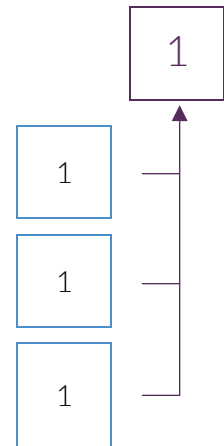
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

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



Pupils, staff and visitors to St Margaret Clitherow Catholic primary school describe it as a community where all are welcome. Pupils embrace the Catholic identity, demonstrating knowledge about the school's patron saint. Pupils describe the school as being a place where they 'learn about God and what he wants us to do.' Pupils know and can clearly articulate that they are valued. A year 2 pupil said they were 'welcomed to the school and the teachers are very kind'. Pupils can talk about Catholic social teaching and give many examples of putting it into practice. For example, supporting the local community doing litter picking, responding to a project in Malawi by raising funds and contributing to food banks. The development and growth of Mini Vinnies has had a great impact in helping pupils articulate why. A pupil stated, 'We help others because God loves us.' Another pupil stated, 'We should respect other religions,' giving an example of a Muslim friend who said she felt very much part of the community. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is exemplary with pupils showing real care for those around them and they greatly value the input of the parish priest.

The regularly revisited school mission statement, based on an acrostic of L.O.V.E. is a clear expression of the Church's mission for education. Parents stated, 'The Catholic life and mission shines throughout the school and offers a spiritual and comforting support for the children'. Staff describe the school as 'a community with Christ at the centre in all we do.' Staff fully embrace the school's mission and agree that the mission statement is known deeply, lived and witnessed throughout the school. Staff said the mission is in 'response to God's call for us all to treat others as we would like to be treated.' One member of staff said that her decision to become a Catholic was greatly influenced by her experience of working at St Margaret Clitherow. The school is exceptionally supportive especially of the most vulnerable, providing spaces such as a nurture pod and a sensory pod where pupils can be supported to access the curriculum. The recently appointed parish priest spoke of the warm welcome he received stating they are 'always happy that you are here.' Relationships, sex and health education is carefully

planned using the Ten:Ten resource, is taught across the curriculum and demonstrates strong links with Catholic social teaching.

Leaders and governors ensure the 'Catholic ethos is at the heart of the school.' Parish links are very strong. The parish priest cited examples such as the parish Mass for holy days is held in the school. Parents are very appreciative of the strong relationship stating, 'They encouraged her and worked with the Church when she did her first Holy Communion'. Religious education is the core of the curriculum and makes links between different areas of the curriculum. For example, a geography display on Mother Earth was rooted in scripture. However, class and house names do not reflect Catholic life and mission. Parents are highly supportive describing 'an amazing school' where teachers are 'very welcoming and nurturing for the children.' Governors are highly ambitious, and their passion is very evident. The school improvement plan has Catholic life and mission as the priority and minutes of meetings show clear challenge and support. The school engages with professional training from the diocese and the Trust utilising such training to further develop the school. Staff stated they are well supported, for example a staff member shared their own experience of the huge support received when a serious health challenge caused an extended period of absence.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

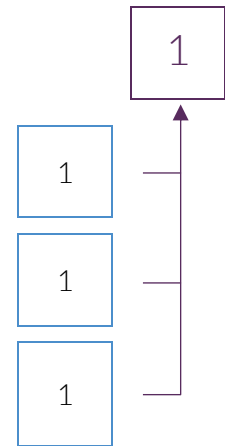
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

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



Pupils describe their religious education as the ‘most funnest’ subject because of the wide variety of teaching strategies which, pupils stated, helps them to understand the subject content. As a result, they make consistently good progress and behaviour is excellent. Pupils were able to talk at ease about different religions using key terms accurately. For example, a pupil spoke about the places of worship and holy books of Judaism and Islam using terms such as synagogue, mosque and yad. Year 6 pupils were able to talk eloquently about the Dead Sea Scrolls. Pupils showed deep theological insights. When asked about how we show people we are followers of Jesus one responded, ‘We help people even if they are not very nice.’ Work produced is well presented, of a high quality, displaying a wide variety of tasks including storyboards, extended writing and art. Assessment and marking follows the school policy and pupils can articulate how well they are doing, how to improve and therefore make further progress. In lessons pupils work independently for example in a lesson they worked independently and collaboratively creating an information poster about the mission of the diocese. Data shows a three-year trend where pupils achieve above average attainment when compared with other core subjects.

The quality of teaching is good with some outstanding. Teachers have sound subject knowledge; they demonstrate a deep commitment to religious education and have very high expectations which the pupils know. Skilful questioning enables pupils to delve deeper into subject matter. For example, in a year 3 lesson on the presentation in the temple teacher questioning led pupils to understand Simeon’s recognition of Jesus as being ‘part of God’s plan.’ Other adults are used effectively optimising learning. A parent of a child with special educational needs and disabilities, stated, the teachers ‘and class TAs adapt learning to her level while fostering her self-esteem.’ Lessons begin and conclude with a time of reflection on the theme of the lesson and pupils understand the impact their learning has upon how they live. High quality resources from the *Come and See* programme coupled with adept teacher planning creates extensive opportunities for pupils to present their work in a variety of forms such as

drama and art. A parent stated, 'the teachers are doing a wonderful job in helping my child develop his faith and understanding of God.' Celebration of effort is prominent such as Headteacher awards which are celebrated in the newsletter on the school website.

Religious education is a faithful reflection of the *Religious Education Curriculum Directory 2012* and to aid forward planning, the school engages with diocesan training on the curriculum to fulfil the requirements of the *Religious Education Directory*. Religious education has full parity with core subjects in all areas including extensive engagement with both Trust and diocesan training. In addition, religious education is integral to the school's policy on assessment and practice. Using *Come and See*, a spiral curriculum coupled with the clear vision for teaching and learning held by the subject leader, pupils are led to a greater depth of learning as they progress. The planning meets the needs of all pupils and a very broad range of enrichment activities such as Paddington tracking around the world (UNICEF), a Rabbi visit to input on Sabbath and a Polish visitor speaking about Polish traditions at Easter enhance the learning experience. Governors' self-evaluation is informed by thorough monitoring, analysis and self-challenge. This includes regular visits which include learning walks, observation and regular meetings focussed on religious education. This would be enhanced by a higher level of detail and greater rigour of monitoring.

Collective worship

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

Collective worship key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

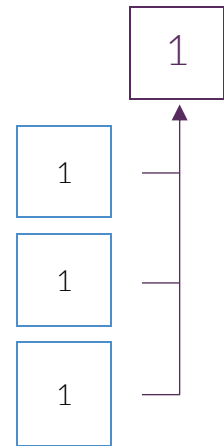
How well pupils participate in and respond to the school's collective worship

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



Experiences of prayer and liturgy in St Margaret Clitherow are deeply engaging and lead all participants to full and active participation. Pupils respond well and share their talents with pride. In one act of worship, pupils performed an inspirational liturgical dance which linked into the Year of Hope, how we treat each other and how we can make the world a better place. Pupils are very clear that they plan, prepare and lead prayer and liturgy with support from teachers. During an act of worship on Our Lady using the Joyful Mysteries of the Rosary pupils' reflection on why they are joyful included phrases such as 'Simeon got to meet Jesus,' and Jesus got born.' A pupil in response to the question why we call Mary, Our Lady, stated, 'because she is the mother of Jesus and us.' Pupils are given many opportunities for extempore prayer and readily participate. The parish priest stated, 'Non-Catholic pupils also have a good understanding of broad ways of praying that are part of the Catholic tradition'. Pupils are very comfortable with expressing how prayer and liturgy influence their lives. One pupil stated, 'I use our school prayers at home with my family.'

The quality of prayer and liturgy at St Margaret Clitherow enables all the community to fully participate. It is central to the life of the school beginning with morning prayer, time for reflection in lessons, lunchtime and end of the day. This extends to home. A parent stated their child who is new in the school 'is coming home and speaking about the prayers and offering prayers for his family.' Seasonally appropriate scripture is used very adeptly for example, the Wedding at Cana, from the previous Sunday and the Man with the Withered Hand, the Gospel of the day. This helps pupils to fully engage with scripture in a prayerful setting. Music, art and liturgical dance are used to enhance prayer, and the school has a wealth of prayer spaces within classrooms and in the extensive grounds where pupils and staff can take time either individually or in groups for reflection and prayer. The impact of the prayer life can be encapsulated by a parent of a child with very special needs stating, 'The prayers said at school...have become a cherished part of her routine.' The relationship with the parish is exceptional, the parish priest stated he feels 'so blessed to be here.'

Most staff feel that the carefully formulated and regularly reviewed policy on prayer and liturgy is very accessible. The school calendar is well planned, follows the liturgical year, highlights the patronal feast and identifies Family Fast Days linking with Catholic social teaching. Masses on holy days of obligation celebrated in the school, are well attended by both parents and parishioners. Professional training for staff is high priority using both diocesan and Trust resources. For example, a staff retreat organised by the Trust to be held at one of the schools. Leaders have a thorough understanding of planning of prayer and liturgy which impacts upon the ability demonstrated by pupils in this. Staff clearly understand the broad ways of praying which are part of the Catholic tradition and are very familiar with the Church's liturgical resources citing the new Lectionary as an example. Governors give a high priority to prayer and liturgy within school planning, and it has very generous budget. There are regular reviews of the quality and impact of prayer and liturgy, and pupil voice is integral to this evaluation. Governors meet with pupils to ascertain their thoughts and gain ideas about ways in which this can be developed.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St Margaret Clitherow Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	141156
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	8863744
Full postal address of the school	St Margaret Clitherow Catholic Primary School, Trench Road, Tonbridge, TN11 9NG
School phone number	001732358000
Headteacher	Fiona Oubridge
Chair of local governing body	James Page
School Website	www.stmargaretclicherowschool.org.uk
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	Kent Catholic Schools' Partnership
Phase	Primary
Type of school	Academy
Admissions policy	Non-selective
Age-range of pupils	4-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	15 th March 2018
Previous denominational inspection grade	Outstanding

The inspection team

Stephen C Horsman
David Hennessey

Lead
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